

# **Students of Color Environmental Collective**

GSI Course



# Disclaimer

It is not the responsibility of POC to combat the microaggressions and racism of our own oppression. It is your responsibility as a GSI, someone in higher power/authority (especially if you are white) to hold your community accountable.

# Disclaimers

We created and based this entire presentation on the needs of our peers and have included information that they have passed onto us to share with you. We wanted to stress that this isn't a checklist for diversity, but an introduction to the steps you should be taking to become a GSI that works with and helps protect students of color.

Being diverse and inclusive is an ongoing learning process- you will not learn everything you need to from one course and in one semester

Quote from Tervalon: “The equating of cultural competence with simply having completed a past series of training sessions is an inadequate and potentially harmful model of professional development...” (pg 119)

# Discussion Groups!

- Environmental Justice Word Cloud Activity
  - Enter a couple words that represent your definition of EJ
  - Respond at:

[Pollev.com/dantegonzalez053](https://Pollev.com/dantegonzalez053)

- Open discussion



# About SCEC

Students of Color Environmental Collective is a group intended to be a healing space for students of color to seek refuge from white-dominated environmental and social justice spaces, to learn more about the intersections between environmental and social justice, and to raise conversation about environmental racism and justice on and off campus.

# #EnvironmentalismSoWhite

Campaign to address the lack of diversity in the College of Natural Resources and their failure to protect, support, and address the needs of students of color in the college.

## Demands

1. Just hiring process
2. Mentorship and support (recruitment and retention)
3. Improved environmental justice curriculum

# CNR by the Numbers

UCB Faculty College of Natural Resources\*, AY1999-00--2018-19



Sources: UCB Faculty Personnel Records, AY1999-00--2018-19.  
Faculty FTE data as of 4/30/2019.

\*Includes multiple appointment & part-time faculty.  
\*\*URM=African American, Native American, & Hispanic.

## Hiring Trends by Discipline

The tables below show budgeted FTE whereby faculty with less than a full time position are counted according to the fraction of their appointment (hence the number of budgeted FTE is lower than the headcounts on the charts on the previous page). The first table below shows the distribution of new Berkeley faculty FTE with start dates from 2013-14 to 2017-18 (5 year period). The second table provides an overview of the budgeted FTE for the current faculty. Note: URM includes both men and women.

New Berkeley Faculty Appointed 2013 to 2018, by Discipline ( Budgeted FTE)							
Discipline	# hired	# women	% women	% available*	# URM	% URM	% available*
L&S Humanities	43	24	56%	54%	3	7%	12%
L&S Social Sciences	68	29.5	43%	59%	10.5 <sup>†</sup>	15%	15%
L&S Bio Sciences	24	8	33%	54%	2	8%	12%
L&S Physical Sci.	33	7.5	23%	28%	2	6%	8%
Engineering	55.5	15	27%	25%	5	9%	11%
Chemistry	11	1	9%	38%	2	18%	11%
CNR	24	5.5	23%	56%	1	4%	14%
CED	12.5	6.5	52%	50%	3.5	28%	18%
Business	24	6	25%	42%	2	8%	17%
Law	16.5	6	36%	54%**	2.5	15%	12%**
Public Health	11	1	9%	72%	2	18%	25%
Public Policy	5.5	3.5	64%	55%	0	0%	26%
Social Welfare	5	5	100%	80%	2	40%	26%
Education	4.5	3	67%	69%	3	67%	23%
Information	3.5	1	29%	36%	0	0%	15%
Optometry	4.5	2	44%	79%**	0	0%	7%**
Journalism	2	2	100%	65%**	0	0%	24%**

\* The estimated availabilities are derived from the Survey of Earned Doctorates (US, PR, 2010-2014), except as indicated below.

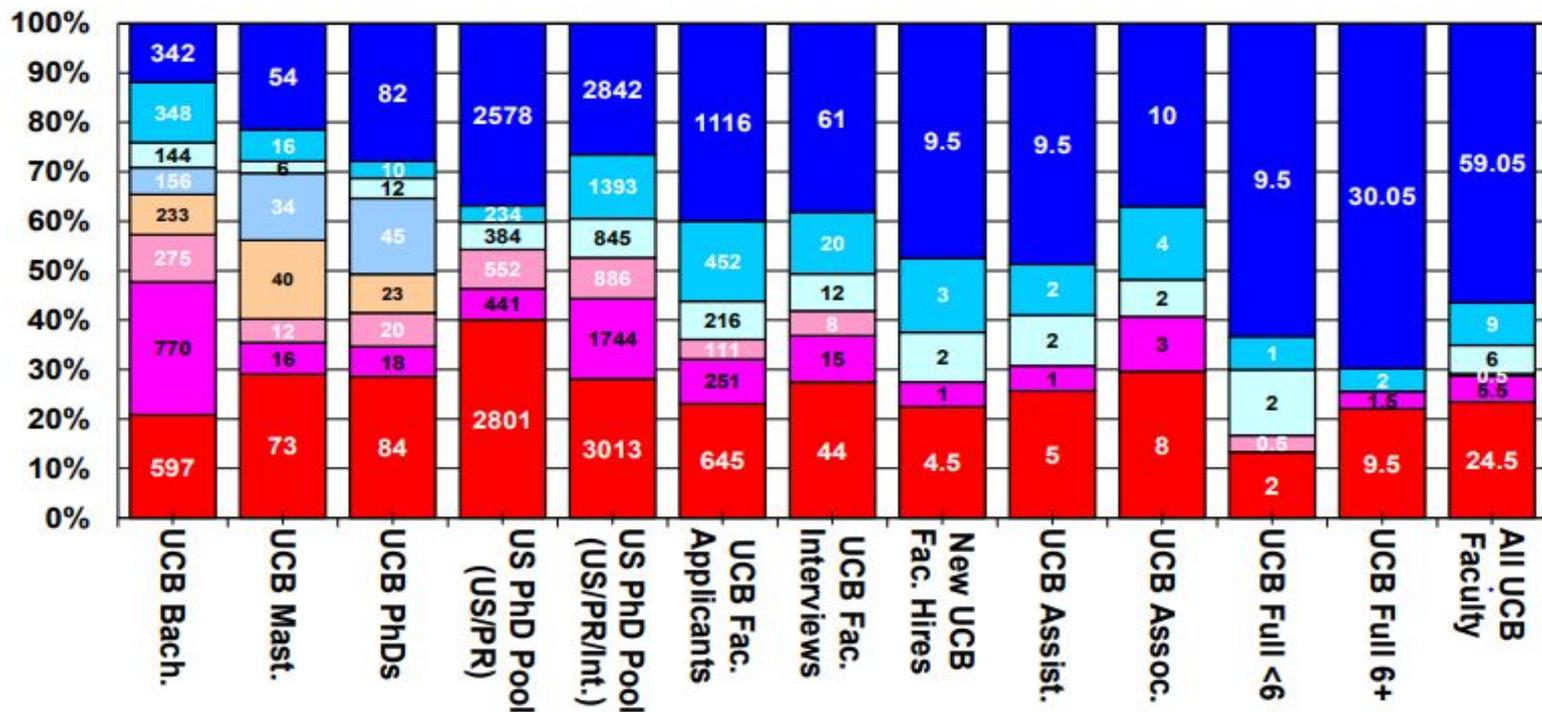
\*\* The availability is based on UCB professional degree recipients.

† 8.5 of the 10.5 URM hires were in African American Studies and Ethnic Studies.

# Recognizing the Problem

1. Lack of representation and diversity in CNR faculty
2. SOC's are a minority group in CNR
3. Lots of SOC in CNR have said they don't feel safe or protected
  - a. Not necessarily physical safety
  - b. Cultural and historical erasure
  - c. Invalidation of SOC experiences
4. Problematic things in classes by professors, GSIs, other students!
  - a. Extraction, Tokenization, Projection
5. Dismissal/lack of support of SOC
6. SOC dropping out of CNR, low retention
7. Less SOC pursuing graduate studies, doctorates, etc.
8. Repeat

# UCB College of Natural Resources, Diversity Pipeline\*, AY2018-19



Sources: UCB Degree File, 2013-14--2017-18; Survey of Earned Doctorates (All US PhDs, 2013-17); UCB APRecruit, AY 2012-13—2018-19; Faculty Personnel Records, AY2014-15—2018-19 (Spring). Faculty FTE data as of 4/30/2019.

\*All data (degrees, pool, & faculty FTE) are cut to dean level. UCB degree data does not supply race/ethn. for Int. students. Unknown gender/race/ethn. are excluded from pool/applicant analysis. Includes multiple appointments and part-time faculty.

\*\*URM=African Am./African/Black, Native American, & Hispanic.

# Every Encounter Counts

- As undergrads, we spend a lot more face time with our GSIs than with our professors.
  - Interactions with GSIs can affect how we perceive different majors, colleges in the university, and academia in general
  - As students of color, we are often alienated from key conversations that allow us to build relationships with both or professors and GSIs.
- Pronouncing names
  - Never dismiss someone's name as "unpronounceable."
  - "I see this happen all the time. (The GSI) sometimes won't even try to pronounce someone's name because it's a name they haven't seen. The minute you say 'I'll never be able to pronounce that!' is the minute that you alienate that student from trying to build a relationship." - *anonymous*

# Ineffective Strategies

1. Do Nothing: Give guidance about the conflicting conversation, don't allow students to take over the conversation. Make attempts to bridge differences being that come up.
  - a. Usually, an instructor's anxiety comes from about their perception and need for self-protection , which can constrict a facilitator's concern with understanding and helping their students-( it shows students that race talk should be avoided)
2. Sidetrack the Conversation: Instructors have to be aware of and anticipate the many defense strategies that students use to avoid talking about race talk
  - a. (This applies to both students and instructors)

# Ineffective Strategies cont.

3. Appease the participants: Don't allow sidetracking, avoiding confrontation w points being made by participant, stressing commonalities and not differences, discussing superficial/not deep issues
4. Terminate the discussion: Don't ask for individual conversations or table the discussion
5. Become Defensive: Students/trainees may engage in self-protective behavior by attacking the content of the message or challenge the credibility of the communicator to deflect from perceived racism, accusations of being biased.

# Negative Outcomes

- Greater misunderstandings among racial groups
- Increased anger and tension between one another,
- and lost opportunities to increase awareness and understanding (teachable moments)

# Ways you can help

1. Remember and recognize the shared feelings and experiences of CNR/the world as unsafe, exclusive, and undiverse places for students of color
2. Call out/address problematic behavior from students
  - a. You are in the position of power in sections. If you see something or hear insensitive comments, take the initiative to correct and educate.
3. Frame conversations through environmental justice
4. When appropriate, lead by example and acknowledge your privilege showing that acknowledgement of this fact is not a personal attack and can be used constructively
5. Note the following effective strategies!

# Effective Strategies

1. Understand one's racial/cultural identity: An effective facilitator must be aware of their own worldview- values, security, biases, & prejudices to understand impact, allow for empathetic understanding & decrease risk of defensive behavior
2. Acknowledge and be open to admitting one's racial biases: model truthfulness, honesty, & openness- freedom from constant vigilance of guarding/denying biases
3. Be comfortable and open to discussing topics of race and racism: Being genuinely comfortable with these topics & engaging in them outside of the class translates to comfort of students with these topics
4. Understand the meaning of emotions: Help yourself and others address and make sense of feelings & emotions that come up to reduce anxiety & hitting a roadblock
5. Validate and facilitate discussion of feelings: Allow for a space of expression and openness of strong feelings and be receptive to them

# Effective Strategies cont.

6. Control the process and not the content of race talk: Don't deal with issues simply on a content level
7. Unmask the difficult dialogue through process observations and interventions:
8. Do not allow a difficult dialogue to be brewed in silence
9. Understand differences in communication styles: This may elicit stereotypes- be aware of your own communication style, be cognizant of differences and mistaken interpretations, acknowledge and deconstruct communication styles
10. Forewarn, plan, and purposefully instigate race talk: instigating difficult dialogue in a step by step fashion reduces resistance via a (roleplay) exercise, film, video, or assignment
11. Validate, encourage, and express admiration to participants who speak when it is unsafe to do so

# Intersectionality

1. Recognize that regardless of the class you're teaching, there are bound to be intersecting discussions about race, gender, class, etc
2. Recognize the importance of being conscious about environmental justice in all environmentally centered courses.
  - a. some students may not take any ESPM courses that discuss race specifically, although many in this interdisciplinary field cover the history of natural resource management and the way that issues of policy and resource management are closely tied with issues of migration, exploitation of labor, local knowledge, oppression, and slavery.

## **Student Anecdotes**

We wanted to include stories and quotes directly from our peers. We've chosen to omit names of classes and students. Quotes are paraphrased.

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# A negative experience

Negative: If their material is particularly traumatizing in nature:  
Labor, agriculture, immigration, modern medicine

“In class, a professor presented triggering images without any warning. The ways in which they presented the images of slave labor was incredibly insensitive.” - *anonymous*

# A positive experience

Positive: incorporating EJ themes into everyday curriculum - encouraging them to bring intersectionality to light.

“I had a class that was pretty science-y, not the type of class that talks about environmental justice. However, our GSI made the time to educate us about indigenous herbology and was able to introduce the intersection of modern holistic medicine’s appropriation of indigenous practices. It was a great learning moment.” - *anonymous*

# A Negative Experience

Negative: Making assumptions about a student's background based on their race, gender, ethnicity, etc.

“I remember sitting in discussion and talking about farm labor and worker's rights. All of my white peers had been looking at me, expecting me to speak about it since I'm Latina. I remember another student actually turned to me and said, “So (omitted), do you have anything to add? I'm sure you know a lot about these things.” It was embarrassing that they all assumed I was an expert just because I am a Latina.” - *anonymous*

# Positive Experience

Positive: Acknowledging systemic power structures in the classroom and openly recognizing privileges.

“At the beginning of the semester, the GSI acknowledged that in the classroom setting, there is often an imbalance in which white students (particularly white male students) are more likely to be called on and contribute to discussions. He said he would make the effort to call on women and students of color when they wanted to contribute to discussions. He didn’t put POC on a pedestal, but he recognized and used his privilege to allow POC to contribute on their own terms to a greater extent than in other discussion settings” - *anonymous*

# Discussion Groups 2

What have you learned?

How has this information related to your personal experiences as an undergrad or as a GSI?

What have/might you be worried about being a first time GSI?

# Q & A

