

## **Proposal for an MEB Action Plan to address Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) Representation & Retention**

In light of the recent loss of Black lives due to blatant racism, prejudice, and hate, the Marine & Environmental Biology graduate student body strongly feels the need to take action. Action must begin with ourselves. We need to build a diverse student and faculty body whose perspectives will improve our ability to innovate (**Representation**). Diverse representation will also help us better address the barriers that have historically excluded certain underrepresented groups. Simultaneously, we must strive to cultivate and maintain a supportive and engaging environment to retain students and faculty of color (**Retention**). These systemic changes are critical to combat prejudice and racism in our department, our field, and beyond.

As a first step, we present our proposed action plan with key objectives and action items to improve BIPOC Representation and Retention in our department. This action plan was written with the support and input from graduate students in both Biological Sciences and Earth Sciences as well as with significant contributions from a MEB faculty working group. We are excited and committed to improving our departmental Representation and Retention and believe that these changes will benefit MEB and the wider BISC/USC community for years to come.

**How to read this document:** The action plan is divided into the major themes of **Representation** and **Retention**. **Objectives** are then listed under the relevant themes. Each **Objective** includes a series of action items that are listed as either **Short-term** (< 6 months) or **Long-term** (> 6 months). These designations refer to the time by which we estimate these initiatives will be implemented and should not be confused with a proposed timeline to completion. Many of these initiatives will require continuous maintenance post-implementation.

### **On behalf of the MBBO Student body:**

Melody Aleman  
Heidi Aronson  
Natalya Evans  
Delaney Nolin  
Gerid A. Ollison  
Nina Yang

### **Ad-hoc Faculty Working Group:**

Suzanne Edmands  
Carly Kenkel  
Naomi Levine  
James Moffett  
Cameron Thrash  
Eric Webb

## **Table of Contents**

### Important Acronyms

#### I. Increase Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) Representation in the MEB graduate student body

Objective 1: Identify and remove barriers to applying to the graduate program

Objective 2: Establish a BIPOC recruitment pipeline into the MBBO graduate program

Objective 3: Expand faculty and student engagement with K-12 and undergraduate outreach programs to increase STEM & Marine Sciences awareness

#### II. Increase BIPOC Retention by establishing an inclusive environment that is actively supportive of diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and BIPOC scientists

Objective 1: Prepare faculty in their roles as mentors, advisors, and advocates of diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and BIPOC scientists

Objective 2: Actively support the calls to action from our Black colleagues

Objective 3: Recognize and acknowledge the experiences and contributions of URM scholars, especially BIPOC scientists

Objective 4: Understand the role of systemic racism & implicit bias in teaching

Objective 5: Equip students with resources to succeed in graduate school, particularly for BIPOC & other URM students

Objective 6: Provide transparency on MEB's DEI initiatives

Objective 7: Acquire the necessary resources to maintain DEI initiatives over time

#### III. Increase BIPOC representation in MEB postdocs/faculty

Objective 1: Faculty recruitment

Objective 2: Postdoctoral Fellow Recruitment

### **Important Acronyms**

BIPOC - Black, Indigenous and People of Color

HBCUs - Historically Black Colleges & Universities

SACNAS - Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science

YRP - Young Researchers Program

JEP - Joint Educational Program

PEP - USC Prison Education Project

WiSE - Women in Science & Engineering

URM - Underrepresented Minority (racial and ethnic groups, gender identities/sexual orientations, people with disabilities, and veterans)

AAUW - American Association of University Women

## I. Increase Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) Representation in the MEB graduate student body

### Objective 1: Identify and remove barriers to applying to the graduate program

1. **(Short-term) Recognize that an emphasis on grades/GREs during the initial contact phase may discourage interest and applications**
  - 1.1. Faculty should be aware of language used in initial communications
    - 1.1.1. Bad → "before we go further can you attach a copy of your transcripts/GRE scores to evaluate if you would be a good fit for the program".
    - 1.1.2. Good → "what are some of your experiences that make you excited about this field?"
2. **(Short-term) Eliminate the GREs as an application requirement**
  - 2.1. Not only does this address the inherent biases against people of color in standardized testing, but it also relieves a large financial pressure on students (taking the test = ~\$205-225 & sending scores = ~\$30 per school)
    - 2.1.1. [#GeoGRExit: Why Geosciences Programs Are Dropping the GRE](#)
    - 2.1.2. [Geo GRExit database](#) of schools & programs that have gotten rid of or made GRE optional
    - 2.1.3. [Bio/Biomedical programs that have dropped the GRE](#), including programs at Ivy league institutions and at USC
  - 2.2. ETS offers a 50% fee reduction for the GRES but the process for obtaining fee waivers is not clear and can take a long time. [GRE Fee Reduction Instructions](#)
  - 2.3. GRE in pandemic times presents a significant barrier for students in general.
    - 2.3.1. Read this Twitter account of a professor testing out the online at-home GRE test: [Account of taking the online GRE test](#)
      - 2.3.1.1. Science wrote about this as well: [Graduate programs drop GRE after online version raises concerns about fairness](#)
    - 2.3.2. Another account of a GRE Instructor taking the at-home exam: [She Took The GRE At-Home Test. Here's What It Was Like](#)
3. **(Short-term) Update the MEB/MBBO website pages with pertinent information**
  - 3.1. Some ideas include:
    - 3.1.1. Update application information. [UCSB's Marine Sciences Program \(IGPMS\)](#) has recently revamped their website and it could be a good reference
    - 3.1.2. Explicitly state on our website for students to contact potential advisors early in the process
    - 3.1.3. Update faculty profiles on the website, enable student/post-doc profiles
    - 3.1.4. Post departmental demographics data on the website (e.g. application, enrollment, etc). Texas A&M University has a page dedicated to this for their entire university system: [TAMU Student Demographics](#)

- 3.1.4.1. USC provides its demographics without breakdown by department: [Faculty and Student Diversity at USC Dashboard](#)
    - 3.1.5. List of FAQs. Example: [MIT/WHOI Joint Program](#) has FAQs including statement on COVID-19 Impacts
    - 3.1.6. Include an anti-racism statement in solidarity with BLM. [Texas A&M University \(TAMU\) Oceanography](#) has a great example on their homepage.
    - 3.1.7. Add a copy of our Code of Conduct
  - 3.2. This may also expand to developing an online presence for MEB and GPMBBO e.g. a Twitter account for sharing announcements and announcing student & faculty research, etc.
    - 3.2.1. Discuss who is responsible for social media upkeep (students, faculty, admin?)
- 4. (Short-term) Fee waiver for applications**
- 4.1. Improve transparency: What is the purpose of our application fee? Where is this money going?
  - 4.2. Possible removal of the fee. Application fees can be restrictive to students which may limit the number of schools they choose to apply to.
    - 4.2.1. Department of Chemistry at USC does not have an application fee [Department of Chemistry | Prospective Students](#)
    - 4.2.2. MEB applicants have had their application fee waived after reaching out and expressing financial concerns. This needs to be an obvious statement on the website or on the application form.
- 5. (Short-term) Ensure that this statement (or similar) is prominently displayed on the MEB admissions page.**
- 5.1. *The University of Southern California strongly values diversity and is committed to equal opportunity in employment. Members of all racial and ethnic groups, gender identities/sexual orientations, people with disabilities, and veterans are encouraged to apply.*
- 6. (Short-term) Discuss incorporation of student representation on the admissions committee**
- 6.1. Other student groups have also asked for this as a way to give the student body, which is often more diverse than the faculty body, a say in the admissions process.
  - 6.2. There are multiple possible configurations whereby graduate students could be involved with differing levels of information access. These should be discussed.
- 7. (Long-term) Annually assess demographics of MBBO applicants, accepted and enrolled students.**
- 7.1. Determine if we are losing students in the pipeline.
    - 7.1.1. Assess the demographic breakdown of our accepted/enrolled student body compared to those who apply and those who interview

- 7.1.2. Demographics data should be made publicly available on our website. See [Representation, Objective 2.4](#) & [Retention, Objective 2.1](#) for more details.

### **Objective 2: Establish a BIPOC recruitment pipeline into the MBBO graduate program**

1. **(Short-term) Maintain faculty and graduate student engagement with Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS)**
2. **(Short-term) Establish active recruitment efforts by creating a list of schools for targeted outreach.**
  - 2.1. Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCUs)
  - 2.2. Other Minority Serving Institutions
  - 2.3. Community Colleges
  - 2.4. Institutions with undergraduate marine biology/ocean sciences majors/minors as well as field stations with outreach programs
3. **(Short-term) Establish “ambassador” contacts within relevant departments of target schools**
  - 3.1. Send updated information about graduate program, offer to do CV/application workshops or grad program informational session to interested students
  - 3.2. Graduate students host panels on how to apply to graduate school at the universities identified above, highlighting MEB as a viable option.
  - 3.3. Create a virtual symposium for these groups where graduate students (and faculty?) present their research

### **Objective 3: Expand faculty and student engagement with K-12 and undergraduate outreach programs to increase STEM & Marine Sciences awareness**

1. **(Short-term) Read [How to Recruit and Retain Underrepresented Minorities](#)**
  - 1.1. For K-12: “To develop diverse future marine science leaders and stewards, the traditional template for recruitment and retention of underrepresented minorities needs to change. At the K–12 level, and through various advanced stages of education, students are asked, ‘What do you want to be when you grow up?’ However, in our experiences interacting with student audiences across the country, we have found that this is not the right question. Students frequently desire to exact change or solve problems in their local communities or in global challenges. To this effect, Jaime Casap, Google Education Senior Evangelist, has recommended instead asking kids, ‘What problems do you want to solve?’”
  - 1.2. For higher education: “For the future marine science workforce to reflect the diversity of the nation, programs that increase the number of young underrepresented minority professionals need to be supported and expanded, while we also continue exploring new strategies. Much attention thus far has focused on undergraduate training, but fewer resources are allocated to support underrepresented minorities with PhDs during the research and postdoctoral

phases of their careers. This particular place in the STEM pipeline has not received as much attention, but is also where critical losses occur.”

- 2. (Short-term) Create a list of programs and opportunities for faculty & graduate student involvement**
  - 2.1. Make this list easily accessible to enable those interested in expanding outreach efforts
  - 2.2. Some programs include Young Researchers Program (YRP), Joint Educational Project (JEP), Women in Science & Engineering (WiSE), and the USC Prison Education Project (PEP)
  
- 3. (Short-term) Continue & increase engagement and mentoring with existing outreach programs at USC**
  - 3.1. We already have a network of MEB students & faculty involved in various programs including YRP, JEP, and WiSE to serve as a good starting point
  
- 4. (Short-term) Participate in the DIA (Diversity, Inclusion, and Access) JumpStart program through the USC Graduate School.**
  - 4.1. Aims to recruit URM students from outside institutions and community colleges for a 10-week fully-funded summer research internship (more info [here](#)). Application fees are waived if a student then chooses to apply to a USC PhD program.
  
- 5. (Long-term) Initiate new programs with existing outreach programs and partnerships**
  - 5.1. Host a semesterly workshop series with JEP or other campus outreach programs that engages faculty and students to address specific community needs.
  - 5.2. Host outdoor field trips with schools in the LA area, e.g. to Wrigley. Natural History Museum of LA (handicap accessible), etc.
  - 5.3. Collaborate with existing USC programs including JEP and PEP to design relevant coursework to teach in the community
  
- 6. (Long-term) Establish new outreach programs**
  - 6.1. Host an on-campus REU for BIPOC & other URM scholars in collaboration with Earth Sciences or other BISC sections.
    - 6.1.1. Suggest a program specifically for BIPOC students
    - 6.1.2. Suggest a program specifically for URM students (broader category e.g. can include non-BIPOC women, first-gen, etc)
    - 6.1.3. Existing developments to be aware of that we may be able to work with:
      - 6.1.3.1. WIES is considering an on-campus REU that we may be able to collaborate with.
      - 6.1.3.2. C-DEBI had an REU for community college & URM students. Can we maintain this through MEB and/or WIES (e.g. with help from USC/Dornsife) since C-DEBI is winding down?
  - 6.2. Host a seminar / panel for undergraduates, emphasizing the diversity of career paths in marine sciences and explaining the grad school process.

- 6.2.1. We can collaborate with WiSE, ENST, rest of BISC for a Biology & Environmental Science Career Day
  - 6.2.2. Establish a relationship with and encourage participation in USC's Neighborhood Academic Initiative, a college prep program that provides a pipeline for URM students to get into USC with scholarships.
- 7. (Long-term) Discuss how MEB can motivate and encourage students to participate in outreach to marginalized groups**
- 7.1. Can we provide incentives for students to contribute to outreach?
    - 7.1.1. Example: YRP provides a small stipend for its graduate student mentors (e.g. \$300 in travel/research money)

## **II. Increase BIPOC Retention by establishing an inclusive environment that is *actively* supportive of diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and BIPOC scientists**

### **Objective 1: Prepare faculty in their roles as mentors, advisors, and advocates of diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and BIPOC scientists**

- 1. (Short-term) Identify areas for improvement in the department**
  - 1.1. Reach out to [Campus Wellbeing and Education](#) which provides Department Consultations and Group-Level Interventions.
- 2. (Short-term) Equip faculty with online resources**
  - 2.1. Create a list of resources for faculty to reference. A starting point can be the below:
    - 2.1.1. [Three ways to help women of color and indigenous women graduate students thrive \(opinion\)](#)
    - 2.1.2. More resources can also be found on the web such as [Malhi Lab Resource List](#)
- 3. (Short-term) Equip faculty with in-person training**
  - 3.1. Mandatory training on conflict resolution for both faculty and graduate students to increase effective communication and improve graduate student-advisor relations.
  - 3.2. Mandatory annual workshop for faculty (and students) on identifying, preventing, and handling microaggressions.
    - 3.2.1. An excellent breakdown of microaggressions in a easy-to-read chart from UCSC: [Tool: Recognizing Microaggressions and the Messages They Send](#)
    - 3.2.2. A breakdown that includes gender and disability microaggressions in addition to racial: [Microaggressions in Everyday Life](#)
  - 3.3. Mandatory annual workshop for faculty (and students) on implicit bias, privilege, etc.
  - 3.4. USC Health Center workshops may be a good place to start: [USC Health Center | Request a Workshop](#)

## Objective 2: Actively support the calls to action from our Black colleagues

1. **(Short-term) Read [A Call to Action for an Anti-Racist Science Community from Geoscientists of Color: Listen, Act, Lead](#)**
  - 1.1. Faculty and students should read the call for action from the BIPOC community from Geoscientists (linked above).
    - 1.1.1. To quote: “The time has passed for predominantly white scientific organizations to post photos of happy, multiracial groups on their websites in place of actually diversifying their leadership and members. The time has passed for academic units to use images of their isolated Black student/postdoc/faculty member to project more racial harmony than actually exists...It is neither a time for reactive posturing nor the tired responses of ‘more research is needed’ and ‘this is a difficult problem.’ **We are scientists. Solving difficult problems is what we do.**”
  - 1.2. The call to action includes a link to sign on and this should be something to be discussed and considered. How can we drive change as individuals *and* as a community in support of our colleagues.
    - 1.2.1. [Sign On – A Call to Action for an Anti-Racist Science Community from Geoscientists of Color: Listen, Act, Lead](#)
2. **(Short-term) Read [An Open Letter: Scientists and Racial Justice](#)**
  - 2.1. There is also an option at the bottom to sign the open letter.
  - 2.2. This letter clarifies the distinction between science as a method and science as an enterprise. To quote: “The scientific method is an objective means to better understand nature, whereas the scientific enterprise is a reflection of society’s values and decides whose interests are represented in the formulation of research questions and directions.”
3. **(Short-term) Read [White Academia: Do Better](#)**
  - 3.1. This is a call to action for academia that our action plan aims to answer.
    - 3.1.1. To quote: “Higher education has a problem. It’s called White supremacy.”
4. **(Short-term) Additional further reading to educate ourselves on the barriers and bias faced by our BIPOC colleagues**
  - 4.1. [The Diversity–Innovation Paradox in Science | PNAS](#)
  - 4.2. [Cognitive Reserve and Racial Privilege in STEM](#)
  - 4.3. [Racism in Science: We need to act now](#)
  - 4.4. [African Americans in evolutionary science: where we have been, and what’s next](#)
  - 4.5. [My Dream Come True: An Open Letter to My Colleagues](#)
  - 4.6. [Becoming Anti-Racist: Being a better advisor, lab mate, and a friend to Black Colleagues](#)
5. **(Short-term) Create a Code of Conduct for the department that is signed by members of MEB**



- 5.1. Post the Code of Conduct on the department website as an open letter signed by faculty
  - 5.2. Post a physical copy of the Code of Conduct visibly in labs
- 6. (Short-term) Initiate discussions among faculty and within lab groups on anti-racism in academia and create individual lab action plans.**
- 6.1. Hold a faculty meeting dedicated to discussing this DEI Action Plan
  - 6.2. Anti-racism actions at the individual lab level could include
    - 6.2.1. Periodic journal club meetings focused on social justice research, e.g.
      - 6.2.1.1. Bias in academia - [The Diversity–Innovation Paradox in Science & Topic choice contributes to the lower rate of NIH awards to African-American/black scientists](#)
      - 6.2.1.2. Police brutality - [Procedural justice training reduces police use of force and complaints against officers](#) & [Risk of being killed by police use of force in the United States by age, race–ethnicity, and sex](#)
      - 6.2.1.3. See [10 simple rules for building an anti-racist lab](#)” for additional ideas
      - 6.2.1.4. Reference [Retention, Objective 1](#) for more readings
    - 6.2.2. Periodic journal club meetings focused on the work of BIPOC scientists
    - 6.2.3. Create a Slack channel for sharing anti-racism resources
    - 6.2.4. Encourage lab members to take an implicit bias test
      - 6.2.4.1. Ex: [Project Implicit \(Harvard\)](#)
        - 6.2.4.1.1. Acknowledge that these implicit bias assessment tests are flawed and not particularly effective, but they are a good starting point for conversation
        - 6.2.4.1.2. News article discussing IAT: [The world is relying on a flawed psychological test to fight racism](#)
        - 6.2.4.1.3. Peer-reviewed meta-analysis of IAT impacts: [A meta-analysis of procedures to change implicit measures](#)
    - 6.2.5. Create paid positions for undergraduate student researchers and actively recruit BIPOC
    - 6.2.6. Participate in the recruitment “pipeline” discussed above for increasing BIPOC representation in graduate students and postdoctoral scholars
- 7. (Short-term) Speak out against racist claims if published in journals**
- 7.1. Make a statement indicating MEB faculty will cease to publish, review, or edit for that journal.
  - 7.2. This recently occurred in Angewandte Chemie, a high tier chemistry journal, and it received similar backlash. Source: [Chemistry World](#)

**Objective 3: Recognize and acknowledge the experiences and contributions of URM scholars, especially BIPOC scientists**

1. **(Short-term) Actively invite URM speakers to our Tuesday Seminars to share their research.**
  - 1.1. This would be a great opportunity to provide a platform for URM researchers as well as expose our student body to diverse perspectives.
  - 1.2. Add a prompt to encourage invitations to URM scientists when sending emails out to solicit speaker nominations
  - 1.3. [Geoscientists of Color](#) (an opt-in list of BIPOC Geoscientists)
  - 1.4. [Diversifyeeb.com](#) (an opt-in list for Ecologists and Evolutionary Biologists)
  - 1.5. [Black Women in Biology, Eco/Evo and Marine Science](#) (an opt-in list for Black women in Biology, Ecology, Evolutionary Biology, and Marine Science)
  
2. **(Long-term) Incorporate content from URM scholars in graduate (and undergraduate) course material.**
  - 2.1. Faculty should strive to include relevant content by URM scholars where possible
    - 2.1.1. When assigning literature for students to read, consider including pictures of the authors in the syllabus.
    - 2.1.2. BISC 582 opens with a lecture on the History of Oceanography. This would be a perfect opportunity to highlight the contributions from BIPOC and URM scientists. A list of people to add to the lecture could include:
      - 2.1.2.1. Eunice Foote (the first person to identify anthropogenic climate change)
      - 2.1.2.2. Jeanne Baret (the first woman to circumnavigate the globe)
      - 2.1.2.3. Sylvia Earle (first female chief scientist at NOAA)
      - 2.1.2.4. Evan B. Forde (the first Black scientist to participate in submersible research dives).
    - 2.1.3. For course content related to climate change and ecology, acknowledge black and indigenous perspectives:
      - 2.1.3.1. [The knowledge of native peoples in coastal science | California Sea Grant](#)
      - 2.1.3.2. [The role of Peruvian scientists in collating the records from fisherfolk to identify ENSO](#)
      - 2.1.3.3. [Racism derails our attempts to fight the climate crisis | TheWashington Post](#)

#### Objective 4: Understand the role of systemic racism & implicit bias in teaching

1. **(Short-term) Training for graduate Teaching Assistants**
  - 1.1. GEOL 593: This is being spearheaded by Emily Cooperdock (ES) for the Teaching Practicum for students
  - 1.2. Coordinate with Rory Spence for BISC 593
  
2. **(Long-term) Training for faculty**
  - 2.1. Mandatory Unconscious Bias Training is being developed for Fall 2020 (acc to email from President Folt, 6/11/20), along with other initiatives for faculty, staff and students

## Objective 5: Equip students with resources to succeed in graduate school, particularly for BIPOC & other URM students

1. **(Short-term) Survey the student body on demographics & satisfaction**
  - 1.1. Establish an external, neutral party to collect and aggregate data anonymously
  - 1.2. Conduct a Demographics Survey of current students.
    - 1.2.1. This can help serve as a baseline for us to evaluate the efficacy of our DEI action plan
    - 1.2.2. Talk to Doug Burleson about what data we currently have access to
    - 1.2.3. Conduct student-led “unofficial” survey for preliminary data collection
  - 1.3. Conduct a “Satisfaction” Survey of current students to assess whether MEB is meeting grad student needs as a means to identify what’s working well for students as well as areas for improvement.
    - 1.3.1. Per the Call to Action from Geoscientists of Color ([Retention, Objective 1.1](#)), “Perform regular culture surveys and use their outcomes to improve inclusiveness and equity.”
      - 1.3.1.1. This is in progress
2. **(Short-term) Provide incoming students with relevant resources**
  - 2.1. Grad students should compile a “Welcome Package” for all incoming students including a list of relevant resources for distribution along with our “Living Guide”
    - 2.1.1. Include active organizations and community events on/off campus that students can engage with if they are looking for a community that may not be readily available within MEB, yet.
      - 2.1.1.1. Examples: [Campus and Student Affairs Resources](#) & [PhD Academy](#)
    - 2.1.2. Documented list of funding opportunities, especially for URMs.
      - 2.1.2.1. [USC Awards and Fellowships Database](#)
      - 2.1.2.2. [JHU | Underrepresented Graduate Funding Opportunities](#)
      - 2.1.2.3. [JHU | Graduate Funding Opportunities](#)
      - 2.1.2.4. Funding for conferences: GSG, WiSE, external fellowships
      - 2.1.2.5. Funding for grad school education: NSF, DOJ, AAUW, etc.
      - 2.1.2.6. These should be shared and easily accessible on the MEB website
    - 2.1.3. List of opportunities for outreach (See [BIPOC Representation Objective 5](#))
  - 2.2. Include more programming for MEB Mentorship Program (e.g. the student orientation discussed below)
    - 2.2.1. Provide guidelines for Mentors & Mentees
    - 2.2.2. Ensure Mentors check in with Mentees (need to set explicit expectations)
3. **(Short-term) Conduct a MBBO first-year graduate student orientation**
  - 3.1. 1-2 day orientation that involves faculty & graduate students to introduce new students to graduate life, expectations, responsibilities, etc.
  - 3.2. Discuss diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives (perhaps request a presentation from Dornsife’s Office of Diversity: [Graduate Training and Mentoring](#))

- 3.3. Clearly state how students can address issues with their advisors, professors, staff and students (i.e., in instances of racism, discrimination, sexual harassment)
  - 3.4. Point students towards available mental health resources.
  - 3.5. Go over major / relevant programs including “Grad school bootcamps” such as PhD Academy, WiSE PhD programming (e.g. Mentorship Program), etc.
- 4. (Long-term) Designate faculty (and/or students) to serve as additional supporters and allies for BIPOC students.**
- 4.1. Identify the necessary training and make these resources available for students/faculty who are interested

### Objective 6: Provide transparency on MEB’s DEI initiatives

- 1. (Long-term) URM recruitment and retention in MEB**
  - 1.1. Publicly release department metrics broken down by race and gender including but not limited to: application, admission, acceptance rates as well as graduate degree completion rate, publication metrics, and outreach work. This report should be updated annually and made available on the MEB website for transparency.
    - 1.1.1. [TAMU Student Demographics](#)
- 2. (Long-term) Progress on implementing DEI action plan**
  - 2.1. Host an annual “All-Hands” Faculty-Student meeting to update on DEI Action Plan implementation
  - 2.2. Compile annual reports on ongoing anti-racist initiatives in the department and post on MEB’s website. This would include a breakdown of how and where funds have been allocated and faculty involvement in anti-racist initiatives

### Objective 7: Acquire the necessary resources to maintain DEI initiatives over time

- 1. (Short-term) Set up a DEI taskforce to monitor implementation of the Action Plan**
  - 1.1. A committee with representation from MBBO student body and from faculty
  - 1.2. Overhaul of MBBO graduate student government is in discussion
- 2. (Long-term) Discuss & allocate budget for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives**
  - 2.1. Are there discretionary funds that can be available?
  - 2.2. We need to adequately compensate BIPOC speakers, host workshops, etc.

## III. Increase BIPOC representation in MEB postdocs/faculty

### Objective 1: Faculty recruitment

- 1. (Long-term) What ideas do faculty have to improve the recruitment process?**
  - 1.1. We know this can be complicated given the tenure system, hiring freeze, etc.

1.1.1. Read [The five things no one will tell you about why colleges don't hire more faculty of color.](#)

1.1.1.1. To quote **quality**: "Typically, 'quality' means that the person didn't go to an elite institution for their Ph.D. or wasn't mentored by a prominent person in the field. What people forget is that attending the elite institutions and being mentored by prominent people is linked to social capital and systemic racism ensures that people of color have less of it."

1.1.1.2. To quote **pipeline**: "...there aren't enough people of color in the faculty pipeline.' It is accurate that there are fewer people of color in some disciplines such as engineering or physics. However, there are great numbers of Ph.D.s of color in the humanities and education and we still don't have great diversity on these faculties. When I hear someone say people of color aren't in the pipeline, I respond with 'Why don't you create the pipeline?' 'Why don't you grow your own?' **Since faculty members are resistant to hiring their own graduates, why not team up with several other institutions that are 'deemed to be of high quality' and bring in more Ph.D.s of color from those institutions?...**"

1.1.2. Read [Research: Decoupling of the minority PhD talent pool and assistant professor hiring in medical school basic science departments in the US](#)

1.1.2.1. To quote: "...**faculty diversity efforts that rely primarily on enhancing rates of PhD graduates (i.e. "filling the pipeline") can only have their desired impact if they are coupled with efforts to get these candidates on the market and hired.** This would require making faculty positions and work environments attractive and supportive to these scientists, ensuring the proper types of support (e.g. funding, mentorship and sponsorship) to allow URM postdocs to effectively progress to independence, and ensuring institutional faculty recruitment, evaluation, and retention processes support scientists from all backgrounds."

## 2. **(Long-term) Discuss the possibility of having student representation on search committees**

2.1. Increasing diversity of faculty in addition to students will allow for the all-important mentoring relationship where URM students feel heard and supported.

2.1.1. Read [Graduate Students of Color: Race, Racism, and Mentoring in the White Waters of Academia](#)

2.1.1.1. To quote: "Looking at the literature, we find at least several thematic ways that 'the experience' of graduate school is not the same for graduate students of color: (1) racism, discrimination, and racial microaggressions; (2) isolation and lack of integration and belonging; (3) mental health, stress, identity, and coping; and of course, (4) lack of mentoring."

## Objective 2: Postdoctoral Fellow Recruitment

1. **(Long-term) Establish a dedicated fund for a fellowship position to support a BIPOC post-doc.**
  - 1.1. This may need to be done in partnership with Dornsife/Provost
  - 1.2. Discuss a partnership with WiSE to help support a female BIPOC/URM post-doc.