CSCCE

DEI Tip Sheet: Community member recruitment

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Your community is forming an equity, diversity, and inclusion task force to provide guidance on hosting meetings that are more inclusive and accessible. As the community manager, you put out an open call to members and eagerly prepare for the first call. Ten community members join the task force and enthusiastically start planning for a more inclusive community meeting next spring. The work of the task force is shared with the wider community, at which time several community members come forward and express concern that all task force members are white and just two of them are women. As the community manager you spend the next several weeks either defending the make-up of the task force and the open-call process or recruiting new members to join so that the task force includes diverse perspectives and individuals.

Science, on the whole, is gradually becoming more diverse. At the same time, scientific communities are increasing in number and significance for scientific careers, making inclusive member recruitment increasingly important. As a scientific community manager, you may be charged with member recruitment, forming task forces, or starting committees. Awareness of unconscious bias and being intentional to invite diverse individuals can help avoid ending up with a homogenous community, leadership team, or working group.

Practical actions

- Become familiar with unconscious bias and how it may impact recruitment efforts. If others are involved in the recruitment process, develop and circulate guidelines to raise awareness of unconscious bias and inclusive practices (or use guidelines from other groups).
- Consider how you will recruit community members from the start and make that process transparent to the community.
- Raise and maintain awareness of the diversity within your community.

Reflection questions

- What is your current approach to member recruitment? Does it consider strategies to counteract unconscious bias?

- Who currently serves on committees, task forces, and in prominent positions within your community? Is it representative of your community at large?

- What support structures are in place for community members working on diversity, equity, and inclusion? Do all members feel welcome to participate in this work? Is there adequate support so that individual members do not get burned out?

Further reading

- Sample agenda: City University of New York (CUNY) Faculty Diversity and Inclusion Conference (2019) Minding the Gap: Retaining & Sustaining the Academic Community

- Sample agenda: CUNY (2019) Diversity and Inclusion Research Conference 2019

- An online list and links of recruiting resources for faculty search committees broken down by STEM, and other academic fields

- The University of Wisconsin Madison, USA (2012) Searching for Excellence and Diversity: A Guide for Search Committees

- Paolo Gaudiano, CEO of Aleria, Executive Director of QSDI, TEDxFultonStreet (2018) Quantifying which practices bring diversity in the workplace

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