

# Bren School Strategic Plan for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

## OVERVIEW

### Vision Statement:

The Bren School recognizes the role that academic institutions and environmental organizations in general--and our institution in particular--have played in perpetuating inequality and racism. We know that these historic trends have also laid the foundation for modern-day inequalities and discrimination, particularly unequal access to and representation in professional organizations, careers, and the wider field of environmental science.

Given the Bren School's prominent place in the environmental field and our position as an academic institution, we know that we have an urgent responsibility to reckon with our role in perpetuating these injustices. We recognize this position of power and privilege and seek to use this responsibly to help upend systemic racism. We must actively work for access and representation in the environmental field, and we must teach an inclusive vision of the field of environmental science and management.

We know these actions are vital for supporting the wellbeing of our community. We also firmly believe these actions are critical to our mission at the Bren School: to solve environmental problems. To bring just solutions to the world's most pressing environmental problems, we need diverse voices represented and heard in the places where decisions are being made.

The Bren School's ultimate goal is to be an inclusive and respectful community where the diversity of our students, staff, and faculty amplifies our ability to identify and solve environmental problems by:

- becoming a leader in training diverse environmental professionals,
- actively recruiting, supporting, and retaining diverse staff, faculty, and guest scholars,
- developing a welcoming environment so that everyone feels supported, represented, and included at the Bren School,



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- conducting research that addresses the inequitable ways that environmental harms are distributed,
- teaching an inclusive and representative picture of the field of environmental science and management.

## OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES & EVALUATING SUCCESS

Objective 1: Recruit and Support Diverse Master's and PhD Students

Objective 2: Recruit, Support, and Retain Diverse Faculty and Staff

Objective 3: Support an Inclusive Bren and UCSB Community

Objective 4: Teach and Research an Inclusive Picture of the Field of Environmental Science and Management

### Objective 1: Recruit and Support Diverse Master's and PhD Students

Strategy: Identify and target "feeder schools"

Project leadership: Student Affairs; Recruitment, Admissions, and Support (RAS)

1. Identify and build relationships with strong undergraduate programs that support students from historically underrepresented groups
  - a. Historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs), and California State Universities (CSUs)
  - b. Schools where diverse students have come from in the past
  - c. UCSB undergraduates
    - i. e.g., Promise Scholars, [McNair Scholars](#), [Smithsonian Scholars](#), [FUERTE Program](#)
    - ii. Partner with Environmental Studies to identify and recruit excellent students
  - d. Santa Barbara City College (SBCC)
2. Target recruitment materials to these identified schools
  - a. Presentations
  - b. Videos
  - c. Print material
  - d. Invitation to final presentations of group projects (GPs)
  - e. Identify individuals from feeder schools (see strategy above) to help advertise the program/recommend to top students



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3. Iteratively develop recruitment materials
  - a. Gather feedback on what works and what doesn't from our target audiences

Strategy: Identify and develop relationships with student or professional organizations that emphasize diversity

Project leadership: Diversity Committee

1. Recruit at [Diversity Forum](#)
2. Develop materials for recruiting from fellowship organizations, such as
  - a. Doris Duke Conservation Scholars
  - b. Udall Undergraduate Scholarship
  - c. Switzer
3. Attend Annual Meetings and/or advertise program at professional organizations, especially those serving underrepresented groups. Examples include:
  - a. Ecological Society of America (ESA)- SEEDS
  - b. American Geophysical Union (AGU) Bridge program
  - c. SACNAS

Strategy: Build pipeline of professionals in Environmental Science & Management

Project leadership: Diversity Committee

1. Pair Bren internships with undergraduate internships to help students see environmental careers as plausible path
2. Offer career seminars to [Promise Scholars](#), McNair Scholars, FUERTE program, Bren/ES Leadership program, etc.
3. Develop career webinar/video
4. Offer Zoom Open Houses to enhance accessibility
5. Develop materials on financial aid aspects of Bren

Strategy: Review application, admissions, and recruitment processes to reduce barriers and bias

Project leadership: RAS

1. Identify points in the process where diverse students are lost by reviewing demographics of applicant pool, admissions pool, and matriculated pool each year
2. Update application processes to reduce barriers and bias
  - a. Consider a permanent removal of the GRE requirement pending evaluation of the 2021 admissions cycle, which is being conducted without the GRE requirement because of the pandemic
  - b. Advertise Fee Waiver process and eligibility more visibly
3. Update admissions and enrollment processes to reduce barriers and bias



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- a. Review and revise as needed Master's admissions rubrics and holistic admissions process yearly
  - b. Educate faculty on use of holistic admissions yearly
  - c. Reach out to students in pool who were not admitted but show promise, let them know how to improve their application for next year, and encourage them to reapply
  - d. Increase use of rubric in PhD admissions; discuss rubric and review process annually in a faculty meeting
4. Participate in campus-level team through the California Consortium for Inclusive Doctoral Education (C-CIDE) to deliver faculty-to-faculty training to amplify use of best practices for holistic admissions

Strategy: Enhance recruitment through connecting diverse prospective students to Bren community

Project leadership: RAS

1. Ask for volunteers among current students to contact admitted students
2. Assign each diverse admitted student two faculty members dedicated to answering their questions about the Bren experience
3. Offer Zoom admitted students event to increase accessibility of Bren recruitment

Strategy: Support student financial needs

Project leadership: Student Affairs; RAS

1. Connect students with fellowship funds
  - a. Fundraise for OneBren Diversity Fellowships
  - b. Advertise diversity fellowships in the Bren School
  - c. Allocate Professional Degree Supplemental Tuition (PDST) to students who contribute diverse perspectives in MESM/MEDS programs
  - d. Use fellowships to provide financial support for undocumented students
  - e. Nominate students to Grad Div Racial Justice Scholarships
2. Connect students with resources and support
  - a. Provide avenues for undocumented students to connect with Undocumented Student Services early in process
  - b. Make students aware of student centers and resources on campus
  - c. Connect students to Grad Div Academic Counselor
3. Connect students with employment opportunities
  - a. Support TAs search via centralized information
  - b. Offer systematic TA training, including emphasis on supporting inclusive classrooms



4. Build funds to support diverse students
  - a. Target development efforts for support of diverse students (e.g., OneBren appeal, Diversity Fund)
  - b. Consider developing hardship funding for students with financial need and make students aware of campus support for financial hardship
  - c. Support Undocumented Student Service's efforts in opening up Dream Loans to graduate students

**Strategy: Encourage Faculty to Recruit Diverse PhD Students**

Project Leadership: Personnel; Diversity Committee

1. Include demonstration of diversity recruiting in Personnel Cases
2. Consider additional ways to support diverse students in Admissions and Support process (e.g., offer 3rd year of Bren fellowship)
3. Develop powerpoint to use in seminars, including branded slide deck
4. Establish working group of faculty to develop grant proposal for opportunities like Dept. of Education HSI grants, NSF HSI grants, UC-HBCU Collaborative Initiative, UC-HSI Doctoral Diversity Initiative grants etc.
  - a. Identify programmatic advantages
  - b. Identify campus partner

**Evaluating Success:**

1. Monitor changes in demographics of applicant pool. Increase underrepresented students in applicant pool over 5 years.
2. Monitor changes in matriculated student demographics. Increase underrepresented students in student population over 5 years.

**Objective 2: Recruit, Support, and Retain Diverse Faculty and Staff**

Strategy: Diversify Bren faculty, especially tenure-track faculty

Project leadership: Faculty Executive Committee, Personnel Committee, Academic Personnel Coordinator, strategic ad-hocs, Associate Dean for DEI

1. Develop more standard, consistent process for searches allowing for thoughtful attention to broad recruitment efforts
2. Consider likely pool of diverse applicants at FTE planning stage of faculty hiring
  - a. Assess likely pool by field
  - b. Consider likely pool based on junior or senior level hires



3. Actively identify candidates for Exceptions to Open Recruitment
4. Seek out opportunities to attract non-tenure-track faculty of color (as research scientists, affiliated researchers, Adjunct Faculty, etc.)
5. Review Presidential Postdoctoral Fellows yearly for promising prospective faculty
6. Raise endowment for Environmental Justice Chair
7. Continue to train each search committee on best practices for inclusive searches
  - a. Set the criteria for searches before they are conducted
  - b. Continue to appoint one search committee member with responsibility for equity
8. Enhance faculty mentoring
  - a. Provide best practices for faculty mentoring to assigned mentors
  - b. Establish responsibility for overseeing mentoring
9. Develop and contribute environmental justice cluster proposal to Mellichamp hiring opportunity focused on racial justice
10. Develop more standardized, consistent processes for personnel evaluation (promotion and tenure)
  - a. Develop guidance on writing personnel documents
  - b. Criteria for teaching, research and service
  - c. Add examples of contributions to diversity in each category to guidance documents

**Strategy: Evaluate and enhance diversity of Bren visitors**

Project leadership: Zurich and seminar committees

1. Intentionally incorporate diversity into Zurich Distinguished Visitors program; Identify and host diverse visitors, including those with a focus on climate justice
2. Use Bren seminars to identify and develop relationships with diverse (particularly early-career) scholars in the field
  - a. Appoint a faculty member to the Seminar committee
  - b. Establish process for hosting Bren Seminar visitors to enhance their visit and to introduce them to more faculty and students
  - c. Add and fundraise for environmental justice series within the Bren Seminar series
3. Develop and advertise visitors/sabbatical program

**Strategy: Increase diversity of postdoctoral scholars**

Project leadership: Diversity Committee

1. Host Chancellor's Postdoctoral Scholars
2. Attract postdoctoral scholars from the NSF's Broadening Participation Postdoctoral Fellowships



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3. Continue to apply best practices for equitable searches in postdoctoral scholar searches, such as:
  - a. Engage an Equity Advisor in postdoctoral scholar searches
  - b. Advertise post-doctoral positions widely

Strategy: Increase staff diversity

Project leadership: Assistant Dean; Associate Dean for DEI

1. Advertise staff positions to a broad audience within realistic scope (advertisement through UCSB Jobs website, Bren website, and local print outlets)
2. Train staff search committees to consider equity in review and selection of candidates
3. Identify and provide support needed for underrepresented and other staff, e.g., [ASAP](#), [Work-Life](#) Coordinator, [Family Friendly Workplace](#)

Evaluating Success:

1. Monitor demographics of faculty applicant pools.
2. Monitor faculty diversity. Increase women and underrepresented faculty over 5 years.
3. Monitor staff diversity. Increase underrepresented staff over 5 years.
4. Monitor visitor diversity. Increase underrepresented visitors within 1 and 5 year time periods.
5. Monitor postdoctoral fellow diversity. Increase underrepresented postdoctoral fellows over 5 years.

### Objective 3: Support an Inclusive Bren Community

Strategy: Embrace a culture of equity and inclusion among faculty and staff and in the classroom

Project leadership: Diversity Committee, Associate Dean, Master's Committee, PhD Committee

1. Train faculty and staff
  - a. Offer yearly faculty and staff training on diversity topics, such as anti-racism, LGBTQIA+ issues, immigration, cultural fluency, accessibility, inclusive classrooms, avoiding microaggressions, mentoring, bystander intervention, and an overview of environmental justice topics
    - i. Create a culture that is not defensive
    - ii. Make space for open conversation
    - iii. Support norms of accountability
    - iv. Develop skills for supporting students



- v. Practice sensitive communication
    - vi. Emphasize a culture of safety and support
    - vii. Learn how to handle microaggressions in professional settings
  - b. Regularly disseminate Faculty Code of Conduct
  - c. Recognize participation in additional trainings within the personnel process for faculty and annual review process for staff
  - d. Work with the Vice-Chancellor for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to augment existing campus trainings and require diversity training
2. Create a more inclusive classroom environment
  - a. Write template language on inclusivity for class syllabi and share with instructors
  - b. Develop and implement tools, templates, and techniques for instructional practice that address DEI
3. Develop, disseminate, and discuss a suite of diversity activities consistent with APM210(1)d, the personnel policy governing diversity contributions for faculty
4. Update facilities and infrastructure to create a more welcoming and accessible physical environment
  - a. Add facilities that support families (e.g., family room for nursing infants, place for students with children)
  - b. Evaluate images and messages posted on walls and around the building to ensure these are inclusive
  - c. Consider art competition to represent diversity and/or equity issues in environmental science, and then display the art in the halls of Bren

**Strategy: Improve equity and inclusion within the student body**

**Project leadership: Student Affairs, Diversity Committee**

1. Expand inclusion training in Orientation and beyond to include implicit bias, microaggressions, race, ethnicity, sexuality, disability, immigration status
2. Distribute Code of Conduct to students, faculty, and staff
3. Communicate values up front and frequently through words and actions of leadership
4. Provide institutional funding and staffing to student inclusion activities
  - a. EJ Club and EJ Symposium
  - b. Bren Women's Caucus
  - c. Anti-racism Caucus
  - d. Black Graduate Students of Bren
5. Develop thoughtful pathways for students to access the specific resources they need
  - a. Provide faculty with information about resources and how/when to share these with students
  - b. Have faculty disseminate resources on an ongoing basis in classes





- c. Advertise campus resources on website and in student forums and trainings.  
Examples include:
  - i. Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
  - ii. Undocumented Student Services (USS)
  - iii. Office of Black Student Development (OBSD)
  - iv. Resource Centers (e.g., Resource Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity (RCSGD))
  - v. Graduate-level organizations at UCSB and nationally
    1. Black Graduate Student Association (BGSA)
    2. Asian Pacific Islanders Graduate Student Alliance (APIGSA)
    3. Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS)
    4. Out in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (oSTEM)
    5. Queer and Trans Graduate Student Union (QTGSU)
    6. American Indian Graduate Student Alliance (AIGSA)
    7. Graduate Students for Diversity in Science (GSDS)
  - vi. Multicultural Center
  - vii. Women's Center
  - viii. Latino Business Association (LBA)
6. Hold regular events for discussion (e.g., DEI lunches, discussion of readings, etc.)
7. Collaborate with the broader UC Santa Barbara campus community to facilitate opportunities for students of color to connect across campus (e.g., Graduate Division Graduate Scholars, Organized Research Units)

Strategy: Develop and support mentorship programs

Project leadership: Student Affairs, Associate Dean, Career Development

1. Enhance student mentoring
  - a. Create mentorship program in the mold of [Dream Scholars](#) program within Bren for underrepresented students
  - b. Support Brentorship programming
  - c. Develop Bren BIPOC alumni panel
2. Develop mentoring and support plans for postdoctoral scholars at the Bren School
  - a. Develop mentoring plan to be consistent across the Bren School
  - b. Host yearly introductory event for postdoctoral scholars
  - c. Ensure post-doctoral scholars are informed of and included in Bren School events
3. Encourage faculty participation in Undocumented Student Services mentoring program and Graduate Scholars program

**Strategy:** Offer forums for feedback

**Project leadership:** Student Affairs, Associate Dean, Dean

1. Collect and disseminate yearly anti-bias information and response protocols
  - a. Student Code of Conduct
  - b. Response protocols for aggression, violence, and bias against students from marginalized groups
  - c. Give formative feedback from Dean for agents of microaggressions, including faculty and students
2. Continue climate questions on end-of-year student surveys, analyze trends, identify emergent issues.
3. Hold Associate Dean DEI office hours for community to provide feedback on DEI initiatives
4. Hold yearly Dean's town hall, including update on diversity initiatives
5. Design and distribute online anonymous feedback form for students and the Bren community

**Strategy:** Incorporate diversity and inclusion into career services

**Project leadership:** Career and Alumni staff, Career and Alumni committee

1. Invite guest voices to discuss barriers to environmental careers for marginalized and underrepresented communities and to represent diverse experiences in environmental careers
2. Identify opportunities for careers related to environmental justice
3. Highlight career tracks of alumni from marginalized groups
4. Develop relationships with employers so that pipeline is established for highly trained students with diverse backgrounds for jobs in demand from particular employers (Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), etc.)
5. Expand internship funding, particularly for internships with organizations that serve vulnerable communities
6. Support and collaborate with alumni communities of color, including Bren Alumni Students of Color Association (BASCA)

**Strategy:** Develop robust communication strategies for DEI

**Project leadership:** Communication Staff, Associate Dean

1. Incorporate communication about DEI into regular Bren communications to students and alumni



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2. Review and revise website
  - a. Use Grad Div document regarding website content as a guide for reviewing
  - b. Develop content on DEI
  - c. State on the website that Bren is welcoming to all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, immigration status, etc.
  - d. Create public-facing archive of progress on DEI initiatives to improve transparency

Strategy: Expand capacity of the Bren School to implement DEI objectives

Project leadership: Associate Dean

1. Expand capacity of the Bren School to implement DEI objectives
  - a. Hire student support for Associate Dean for DEI
  - b. Collaborate with Vice-Chancellor for DEI to enhance Bren School capacity
  - c. Appoint Graduate Diversity Officer
2. Collaborate across campus to implement DEI objectives
  - a. Support campus efforts to institutionalize campus climate survey
  - b. Advocate for new staff positions to support diverse students and faculty across campus
  - c. Meet biweekly with other Associate Deans for DEI to collaborate on campus and divisional issues
  - d. Meet monthly with Vice Chancellor for DEI to bring campus efforts to the Bren School
  - e. Develop campus relationships with cognate departments, student services

Evaluating Success:

1. Monitor trends in responses to end of year (EOY) surveys for improvements
2. Monitor trends in responses to campus climate survey (when implemented) for improvements
3. Monitor ad-hoc student feedback

### Objective 4: Teach and research an inclusive picture of the field of environmental science and management

Strategy: Expand EJ Curriculum

Project Leadership: Masters Committee



1. Offer additional coursework in distribution, equity, and EJ either as electives or core courses
  - a. Expand ESM 296: Equity in the Environment to be offered twice throughout the year
  - b. Seek opportunities for seminars and courses in such topics as decolonizing conservation, history of the environmental movement and EJ, representation in environmental decisionmaking
  - c. Collaborate with other departments on campus to co-host events, co-list classes, and recruit other students (e.g. Environmental Studies, Black Studies, Environmental Humanities Center)
2. Integrate distribution, equity, and EJ into current courses
  - a. Offer faculty workshop on including EJ/equity considerations into existing coursework
    - i. Develop case studies and examples of environmental justice / injustice for use across core and elective courses
    - ii. Coordinate content across syllabi following similar procedures to those used to coordinate MEDS curriculum
  - b. Ensure diversity of authorship in the scientific references highlighted and taught in courses
    - i. Crowdsourcing ideas of scholars across fields/disciplines
3. Support EJ in Group Projects and Eco-E Projects through mentorship, workshops, and collaboration with and support of the EJ Club in their leadership in this issue
4. Increase engagement with EJ symposium

**Strategy:** Expand, support, and communicate research on equity

**Project leadership:** Dean, Associate Dean for DEI, Communication staff

1. Develop shared understanding of different language disciplines use to describe environmental justice/equity/distributional issues
2. Target development of EJ-focused GPs
3. Include EJ themes and impact in research communications
  - a. Develop communication process to support dissemination of existing EJ research
4. Identify areas of expertise both at Bren and around UCSB
  - a. Offer these as student resources
  - b. Cross-course sharing
  - c. Increase research and student collaboration with other departments, including Black Studies, Chicano Studies, Environmental Studies, Political Science, Sociology, Probability and Statistics, etc.

5. Develop and invest in community relationships (e.g., Chumash bands, EJ organizations, etc.)

**Strategy:** Hire faculty members with expertise in environmental equity

**Project leadership:** Faculty Executive Committee, Associate Dean for DEI

1. Prioritize environmental justice hire in FTE planning
  - a. Develop job description
  - b. Invite seminar presentations from representative scholars
2. Raise endowment for EJ Endowed Chair
3. Include environmental justice as an area of expertise in hiring materials as appropriate
4. Submit racial justice Mellichamp cluster proposal in environmental justice with collaborators across campus

**Evaluating Success:**

1. Monitor responses in EOY survey
2. Track changes to curriculum requirements and content