



September 26, 2020

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Cc: NAGT Executive Committee, NAGT DEI Committee

Dear Dr. Ali,

I want to thank you for helping to organize the petition and for making sure that we recognize that signing the petition brought responsibilities. Thank you for following through and reminding us that NAGT pledged to *do something*.

NAGT's broad commitment to valuing all voices is stated in our mission which is "to support a diverse, inclusive, and thriving community of educators and education researchers to improve teaching and learning about the Earth." We recognize that there is a lot of space between a stated commitment to diversity and taking meaningful anti-racist actions. I believe we are making true progress on both fronts while also realizing that we need to do more to support anti-racist work in NAGT. Some of our efforts were already underway prior to the petition, while others have evolved or arisen since then, spurred by the petition itself.

In late 2019, at the recommendation of an *ad hoc* task force, we established a high-level Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee. The DEI Committee's charge is "to facilitate NAGT's efforts to achieve its goals related to diversity of its membership, leadership, committees, award winners, and participants in all events." The DEI committee began its work in May. The charge includes a statement about the goals of the organization related to diversity. These goals do not yet exist; we are in the very beginning stages of a strategic planning process that will help us establish these goals, among others. We are currently working on a member survey that will include questions generated by the DEI committee that relate to our members' experiences and interests; the results will help inform our efforts and strategic planning process.

In the meantime, we have several efforts underway, though many are in the early stages. In the bullet points below, I have outlined these efforts and placed them in alignment with the action plan in the petition with a focus on what we are already doing and the gaps we have identified. Additional specific actions and a timeline for their implementation will emerge from the strategic planning process and additional goal-setting and planning within our organization.

1. Post anti-racism statements publicly and accessibly, and incorporate anti-racism into codes of ethics.

- In the days after the murder of George Floyd, the DEI committee worked with me, the current and past presidents, and the two vice-presidents to craft a [message on racial injustice](#) that went out to all of our members.
- We have both an [ethics policy](#) and a [code of conduct](#) on our website. The code of conduct is referred to at the beginning of all NAGT events, including webinars



and workshops. Both have anti-discrimination statements that include race along with many other factors but currently do not have explicit anti-racist statements. We have brought this to the attention of the DEI committee, and sought their input on how we might need to modify these statements.

2. **All members and all levels of leadership, in particular, should actively work to understand the lived experiences...**
 - We have recently received funding to incorporate professional development in DEI for all of our workshop leaders (Early Career Workshop, Traveling Workshop Program, and others). This includes funding to bring in (virtually or in-person, as the times dictate) people with lived experiences very different from the majority-white leaders for leader development in early 2021. We are in the process of preparing a second proposal, to be submitted this month, that will support the implementation of DEI and anti-racist sessions into our Traveling Workshops Program during the 20-21 academic year.
 - We have a lot of room to grow here—we have started with the members who are involved in leading professional development in the hopes that this approach will produce a multiplier effect.
3. **Identify ways each society and organization has previously failed Black, Indigenous, and Latinx People and other minoritized groups both structurally and individually.**
 - One need only look at our roster of awardees to see our failure. We are well aware of the problems in our organization, and have not yet taken a systematic approach to this. This is an area in particular where we anticipate that the DEI committee and our member survey will help provide actionable insights.
4. **Interrogate written policies and procedures to identify bias, then revise and redesign policies and evaluation criteria to be anti-discriminatory.**
 - In the last five years, we have moved all of our nominations for committees and leadership to an open nomination process from what was an informal process that limited nominations to people already known by the individuals in leadership roles. With open nominations, individuals may self-nominate or be nominated by others, and the process is intended not to be onerous. This has led to several successful nominations that have expanded the diversity of our leadership.
 - We still have work to do in this area, particularly in two areas: recruiting nominations and designing evaluation criteria. These are tasks where we can look to the DEI committee for their expertise and connections into the community, and we seek to implement recommendations as soon as possible.
5. **Question unspoken rules.**
 - As an Executive Director still in my first year, I am very much still in a learning process, becoming aware of the unspoken rules that are in place within the organization. At this time, I encourage everyone—staff and elected leadership—not to make assumptions about how things work, but to ask. I think this is a start.
 - Our research journal, the Journal of Geoscience Education, is one of the sites of those unspoken rules, and we have worked to broaden our associate editor community and to question the “in-crowd” aspects of journal article submission in our relatively small community.



6. Acknowledge and address the impacts of historical and ongoing exploitation in the geosciences.

- One of our goals is “to emphasize the societal relevance of geoscience and its cultural significance for all people”. We acknowledge the historical and ongoing exploitation and its impacts, and also emphasize in our work that different cultures bring different, valuable perspectives. We do not have specific, organizational actions in place at this time.
- At the Earth Educators’ Rendezvous, we have focused on inviting plenary speakers who speak to these issues, including Daniel Wildcat and Karletta Chief.

7. Acknowledge environmental injustice in geoscience,

- As a society focused on geoscience education, we have sponsored and continue to sponsor initiatives that bring an environmental justice perspective, including InTeGrate. InTeGrate tested and produced curricular materials at the undergraduate level that focus on [social and environmental justice](#).
- We also see *educational* injustices in geoscience, and we seek to identify those and support all of our members in addressing those injustices. The 2019 Earth Educators’ Rendezvous was purposefully hosted at Tennessee State University, an HBCU, and brought to light many issues of educational injustice to our members.

8. Acknowledge the inequities inherent to fieldwork while affirming that cutting-edge geoscience happens in many different spaces.

- This is a deeply ingrained issue. NAGT recently supported a project to develop online field experiences, in an effort to accommodate the loss of field opportunities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. An explicit goal of online field experiences was to capitalize on the opportunity to broaden access to field opportunities that may be inaccessible for a variety of reasons. In addition, we support the development of teaching activities that use all geoscience methods, not just field work.
- We have supported the development and distribution of educational materials that promote diverse field experiences through grant-funded projects and our [Teach the Earth](#) web portal.
- This is an area of much needed growth, particularly with respect to anti-racism.

9. Address issues of workplace culture that are active threats to safety, wellbeing, and careers, ...

- We agree with this statement that there are issues in workplace culture. Internally, NAGT has a small staff, none of whom are full-time, and whose appointments span multiple organizations. Externally, supporting our diverse community is part of our mission, and that includes supporting them within the culture of their home institutions, which may be fraught with these issues. Where we can, we make every effort to acknowledge the contributions of individuals in a way that is recognizable to their home organizations. We are aware that many academic geoscientists are not recognized for their contributions to education and professional service, for example, so we make a concerted effort to explicitly acknowledge individuals for the work they have done. For example, we provide letters acknowledging significant contributions to Teach the Earth that describe



the peer review process that activities undergo and describe it in language that is likely to be familiar to tenure and promotion committees.

10. Geoscience societies and organizations must actively advocate and create accountability for income parity for Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and other minoritized geoscientists, especially women, trans, genderqueer, and disabled geoscientists of color.

- We agree. Although advocacy is part of the mission of NAGT, workplace advocacy has not traditionally been part of this effort. We will explore this in our strategic planning process.

11. Actively diversify nominations and awards committees

- This is one of the key tasks of our new DEI committee. First, the survey that the DEI Committee designed will ask questions about why NAGT members have nominated (or not nominated) someone for an award. Some possible reasons could include the lack of visibility of the nomination process and timelines, or perhaps that the nomination process is too lengthy. We hope to find out from our members concrete ways that we can help improve the process and diversity nominations. In addition, the committee is looking at the awards themselves to make sure that they cover a diverse group of people, in their naming structure and what they stand for. Finally, NAGT will begin to active promoting awards among geoscience organizations for marginalized groups.

12. Actively recruit and pay Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and other minoritized geoscientists as journal editors and reviewers, session conveners, and mentorship event participants.

- We have and continue to actively recruit minoritized geoscientists throughout all of our programs, to include the associate editors and reviewers for the Journal of Geoscience Education and workshop leaders. Our journal does not pay editors or reviewers. As a small non-profit, pay is challenging, but we provide stipends to all of our workshop leaders.

13. Directly sponsor networking events.

- This past year has exposed weaknesses in our system for supporting participation, which often focuses on travel stipends. In the coming year, we intend to focus fundraising efforts on supporting participation that allows us to support registration fees and would be more broadly applicable.
- Our minority student scholarship fund supports participation of underrepresented students in field experiences—again, this past year brought challenges that highlighted some of the weaknesses in this approach that we hope to address.

14. Publish annual, data-rich reports

- We are looking forward to publishing our first annual report with membership and financial data at the end of the 2020 calendar year.

15. Finally, organizations should no longer relegate “Diversity” to non-technical sessions or fireside chats,

- We are making some progress here. NAGT just had its 6th annual Earth Educators’ Rendezvous; diversity has been a prominent theme at the Earth Educators’ Rendezvous the past several years that has solicited contributions in a variety of formats.



- The proposed changes in the preparation of leaders in the Early Career Workshop and Traveling Workshops program (mentioned in #2) are meant to move the needle towards this goal, where “diversity” will not be an optional session in a professional development workshop but integrated throughout all of the programming.

Thank you again for your important work and your follow-through.

Sincerely,

Anne E. Egger
Executive Director, NAGT