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Committee members

Dániel Apai (Chair, faculty),
 Rachael Amaro (grad. student),
 Peter Behrooz (faculty),
 Gurtina Besla (faculty),
 Katia Cunha (faculty),
 J. Serena Kim (faculty),
 Don McCarthy (faculty),
 Kelly Merril (staff),
 Marcia Rieke (faculty),
 Christina Williams (postdoc)

Our Website

<https://www.as.arizona.edu/steward-diversity-and-inclusiveness-committee>

Chair's Letter by Dániel Apai

Welcome to the first newsletter of the Steward Observatory and Department of Astronomy Diversity & Inclusiveness committee! Our Committee was established in 2017 with a faculty endorsed charge from our Director/Department Head, Buell Jannuzi, to promote and sustain a welcoming and supportive learning and working environment for everyone. We have the responsibility to coordinate the various ongoing efforts that further the improvement of the environment of Steward Observatory and the Department, with special emphasis on increasing the diversity of our community. From the day our committee was launched I was impressed by the dedication of its members: this is the only committee I know of for which there were more volunteers to serve on the committee than places on the committee! Our committee usually meets twice a month to review progress on our projects and to discuss new ideas, concerns, and suggestions.

Our committee decided to launch a Newsletter to help communicate our goals and progress to the Steward Observatory community. We plan to publish a Newsletter in each semester to provide summary, news items, and updates on ongoing projects.

Our committee and Steward members contributed a broad range of ideas, small and big, on how to further improve our community. In order to chart our course for the current and next semesters, in May 2019 we reviewed a list of about two dozen ideas and concerns, and identified five high-level goals to pursue. These goals included assessing how could the diversity of our incoming graduate student classes be improved and multiple pathways to better communicate with our community, both to listen and to inform. To address the communication challenge inherent to large organizations, we decided to reorganize the Committee's website, to establish the Newsletter, start a listening tour, and to develop multiple formal and informal communication channels.

This first Newsletter provides you with an update on our progress. We look forward to continue working with the Steward Observatory Community on these important issues!

Other resources

- College of Science Climate Committee ([Click here](#))
- AAS Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion in Astronomy Graduate Education ([Click here](#))
- Cal-Bridge program ([Click here](#))
- U. Arizona Equity, Inclusion & Title IX ([Click here](#))
- U. Arizona Ombuds Program ([Click here](#))
- Campus Counseling and Psych Services (CAPS) ([Click here](#))
- LGBT+ Inclusivity in Physics and Astronomy: A Best Practices Guide is available ([Click here](#)).

U. Arizona Student Resource Centers:

- African American Student Association ([Click here](#))
- Asian Pacific American Student Association ([Click here](#))
- Adalberto & Ana Guerrero Student Center ([Click here](#))
- Disability Resource Center ([Click here](#))
- Immigrant Student Resource Center ([Click here](#))
- LGBTQ Affairs ([Click here](#))
- Native American Student Affairs ([Click here](#))
- Women and Gender Resource Center ([Click here](#))
- Veterans Education and Transition Services ([Click here](#))

Promoting a Healthy and Welcoming Environment for our students, staff, and faculty

As members of the University of Arizona community, we share a responsibility to maintain productive working relationships characterized by trust and mutual respect. We demonstrate that commitment by fostering a working and learning environment free from all forms of discrimination, abuse, or harassment.

The University's [Nondiscrimination and Anti-harassment Policy](#) prohibits discrimination, including harassment and retaliation, based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or genetic information; click [HERE](#) for a closer look at the policy. Sex discrimination includes sexual harassment and unwanted sexual conduct of any kind, as prohibited by the Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. More information about Title IX is available [here](#) and [here](#).

AAS Diversity & Inclusion Report

The AAS Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion in Astronomy Graduate Education recently released a report with recommendations for department best practices. We are organizing teams around each of the main themes (Recruiting / Admissions, Mentoring, Doctoral Program and Process, Departmental Climate, Data Collection, and Accountability) to advocate for continued improvement at Steward. To do so, these teams will be asking for your help, both to understand current problems, as well as to seek solutions. For example, a team is working on a graduate student timeline that includes tips for successfully navigating academic and non-academic career paths. We would appreciate hearing advice that you are finding (or found) helpful.

Please write to Rachael Amaro (rcamaro@email.arizona.edu) or Peter Behroozi (behroozi@email.arizona.edu) to share your feedback.

Full final AAS Task Force report ([click here](#)) .

Steward Observatory Initiatives to Promote Diversity & Inclusion in STEM

At Steward Observatory and the Department of Astronomy, we strongly believe that diversity and inclusion are the foundation for research and academic success. Every member of our community has a role in building and sustaining inclusive working and learning environments at all levels. As such, we are spearheading a large number of initiatives to build such environments: The Steward Observatory Diversity and Inclusiveness Committee ([URL](#)) is comprised of representatives from the faculty, staff, graduate student and postdoc communities. The committee is charged with overseeing efforts to ensure that Steward Observatory and the Department of Astronomy promote work and learning environments that: 1) are welcoming and sensitive to each person's unique needs; and 2) enable everyone to achieve their highest possible goals. Members of Steward Observatory and the Department of Astronomy are leading or supporting a significant number of initiatives focused on improving diversity and inclusion in STEM fields over a range of career stages. Links to the websites of some of these programs are found on the left panel of page 3, with contact information for Steward members.

Examples of Steward Observatory Initiatives to Promote Diversity & Inclusion in STEM

1. Diversity Journal Club
2. Steward Postdoc Mentoring Program
3. Mentorship and Education in SClence for Tucson (MESCIT)
4. Spanish Astronomy Lecture Series
5. TIMESTEP: Tucson Initiative for Minority Engagement in Science and TEchnology Program
6. Tucson Women in Astronomy (TWA)
7. UA Native American STEM students
8. Warrior-Scholar Project (UA branch)
9. Women in STEM Student Council
10. Black Hole PIRE Project
11. New Physics and Astronomy Faculty Workshop
12. SAGANET.ORG (Social Action for a Grassroots Astrobiology Network)

Bridge Partnership programs

Cal-Bridge Program (click here) to promote diversity among our graduate student applicant pool.

DIVERSITY JOURNAL CLUB

The Diversity Journal Club aims to engage with the Steward Observatory community at all levels on topics of equity, inclusion, and diversity. The goal is to address the needs of our community and discuss meaningful changes to make Steward a more welcoming and inclusive community.

Organizers: Nicolas Garavito Camargo, Samantha Scibelli, Erin Maier
URL: https://www.as.arizona.edu/diversity_coffee/

MESCIT (Mentorship and Education in SClence for Tucson)



UA undergraduate students provide one-on-one math tutoring and mentoring for underrepresented K12 students. MESCIT was started on February 2018 serving the Native American students at Ha:san high school, and was expanded to also serve the refugee students at Mansfeld middle school in September 2019.

Organizers: Irene Shivaei, Everett Schlawin, Ryan Keenan, Gurtina Besla

URL: <https://ireneshivaei.weebly.com/mescit.html>

STEWART POSTDOC MENTORING PROGRAM

Steward Observatory offers a program for secondary mentoring to support the development of postdoctoral researchers. This mentorship program started this past summer and matches postdocs with faculty mentors. The program also hosts professional development workshops to support postdocs during this important phase of the STEM pipeline.

Contact: Christina Williams, Erika Hamden, Jared Males

SPANISH LECTURE SERIES (Astrocharlas)



The Spanish Astronomy Lecture Series is an event for the Hispanic Community of Tucson. Every semester a professional Astronomer gives a 45 min Astronomy talk entirely in Spanish, followed by observing. After the talk, the observatory 21-inch telescope is open for the public.

Organizers: Nicolas Garavito Camargo, Raphael Hviding, Gurtina Besla, Tom Fleming

URL: <https://www.as.arizona.edu/astrocharlas/>

TIMESTEP (Tucson Initiative for Minority Engagement in Science and TEchnology Program)



TIMESTEP is a bi-weekly discussion group about topics of professional development for undergraduates in STEM fields at U. Arizona. Meetings are open to all students, with programming designed to supporting student retention and graduation.

Contact: Gurtina Besla

URL: <https://lavinia.as.arizona.edu/~timestep/>

Communication Portal

The SO D&I committee welcomes your thoughts and suggestions on making Steward the best place possible to work and thrive.

We can be reached via email ("*so-diversity-input*" address at the domain *list.arizona.edu*)

Committee Charge

SUMMARY

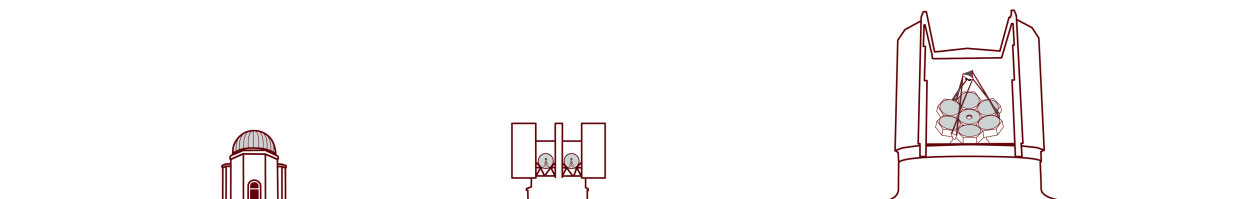
This committee will oversee efforts to ensure that Steward Observatory and the Department of Astronomy promote work and learning environments that make all people feel welcome, and that enable everyone to work at the highest levels possible. The committee will be expected to interact with College of Science and university-level diversity efforts both to learn from others and to show what is working for SO/DA. The issues confronting the diversity committee will vary across the Observatory and the Department, and solutions will need to be tailored to the various groups within the Observatory and Department.

The goals of the Diversity Committee are:

- Sustain diversity in the department by ensuring a healthy and inclusive climate, welcoming and supportive to all students, faculty and staff regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability status.
- Enhance diversity in the department at all levels through increased recruitment of students, faculty, and staff.
- Build on the inclusive climate in the department to maximize the retention and graduation of undergraduate and graduate astronomy majors, eliminating disparities in graduation rates among diverse groups.
- Implement best practices for mentoring and career development for faculty, students, and staff that promote equitable opportunities for career success. Periodic training in mentoring and diversity awareness should be arranged by the committee.
- Ensure that Steward benefits from College of Science and University-level diversity and inclusion activities, and informs the College of Science and University-level groups of results from activities at Steward.

The committee will be responsible for providing assessments of the work and learning environments to ensure that an inclusive and supportive atmosphere is being maintained. The committee should develop and implement a procedure to collect input from the constituents of SO/DA on real and perceived problems and concerns; and by assessing that information establish and maintain a prioritized list of problems that need to be addressed (considering both urgency and impact). The committee should develop a short- and long-range plan to address these issues and should report to the faculty against those plan milestones. The committee shall translate the goals into a set of concrete steps to be taken both in the short term (few months time scale) and in the longer term. The committee may wish to develop a plan for equity, diversity, and inclusion. The University of Arizona sits on the original homelands of indigenous peoples who have stewarded this land since time immemorial. Aligning with the university's core value of a diverse and inclusive community, it is an institutional responsibility to recognize and acknowledge the people, culture and history that make up the Wildcat community. At the institutional level, it is important to be proactive in broadening awareness throughout campus to ensure our students feel represented and valued.

Committee members



Newsletter editors: Serena Kim and Katia Cunha and the
Diversity and Inclusiveness Committee