

PROJECT CHARTER:
Forging Allies and Connections for Equity in STEM

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Charter for Forging Allies and Connections for Equity in STEM

Purpose:

This project is a grassroots movement that aims to increase engagement of staff in STEM roles in discussions surrounding workplace culture, community, and inclusivity by intentionally Forging Allies and Connections for Equity in STEM (FACES). Allyships are relationships built to empower under-represented and/or under-privileged individuals, and expressed through actions that raise awareness of our differences and at times, which may challenge the status quo.

The STEM staff attendance at the regular training sessions, yearly Summit meetings, and listening sessions offered by the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI) has been notably low despite pervasive issues found in the 2017 workplace culture surveys. The sub-par participation is often justified by a high workload and lack of funding available to charge such activities. Although true, this results in many STEM staff becoming disengaged and not participating in open dialogues that reveal pervasive issues. This undermines the organization's efforts to improve the overall sense of community and inclusion.

Issues with retention of STEM staff from under-represented groups are aggravated by a non-inclusive workplace culture. Efforts in recruitment of diversity do not necessarily translate to a more inclusive workplace nor bring our labs closer to retaining a diverse STEM staff. Transforming an inert culture into one that embraces diversity requires intention and an active dialogue amongst staff to raise awareness to unintended but harmful behaviors, remodel group dynamics, and empower differences.

This initiative is designed to support NCAR's Strategic Plan (2020-2024), which states that it will aim to serve as *"a vibrant intellectual hub that convenes diverse people to develop transformative ideas and address significant gaps in knowledge and technology"*. NCAR recognizes the value and priority to foster a diverse and inclusive workforce and commits to building *"diversity, equity and inclusion in our research, workforce, and community activities"*. It is the goal of the FACES allyship to support the strategic plan's goal of fostering a diverse and equitable culture by improving current staff's sense of belonging and understanding of inclusion. The strategic plan also emphasizes that strategic integration across areas of expertise is critical. The FACES allyship will promote cross-lab communication and engagement, which can become a platform to connect STEM staff in various disciplines and initiate scientific collaboration.

Objectives:

The FACES allyship aims to provide a safe and welcoming platform for open dialogues related to inclusion, specifically for staff in STEM roles.

The objectives of this allyship are to:

1. provide a consistent and reliable safe space, where participants can share experiences, seek and offer guidance, and support and empower each other;
2. promote understanding of inclusion among participants and help make inclusion a more approachable topic to a larger audience at NCAR;
3. help participants gain receptiveness and be supportive of inclusion efforts.

To meet these objectives, we will facilitate regular meet-ups with open group discussions allowing staff to have the opportunity to connect with and support their peers. Through group discussions, individuals can propose solutions and share successful strategies in combating workplace bias, discrimination, and microaggressions. The regular meet-ups will serve as an opportunity to create and strengthen connections, gradually increase proximity and understanding of identities, integrate diverse identities and new-hires, and emphasize and incentivize positive practices across research groups and disciplines.

Expected Outcomes:

The focus of allyships is to create and strengthen symbiotic relationships, often connecting privileged and underprivileged individuals, or majority and minority identity representation. FACES will encourage alliances among diverse identities encompassing race, ethnicity, gender expression, sexual orientation, disabilities or special abilities, political views, age groups and generations, neurocognitive traits often manifested in learning, social, and attention functions, country of origin and primary language, religious beliefs, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, physical appearance, and all other diverse identities, acknowledged or not in the NCAR|UCAR's Diversity and Inclusion Statement.

The overarching outcome from these regular meet-ups is to create a network of allies within and across labs to empower each other and better understand challenges faced by under-represented staff in STEM roles.

In the longer term, cultural changes will reflect as measurable achievements, such as an improvement to the next culture survey indicating fewer instances of bias, along with an increase of employees feeling welcome - especially those in minority populations.

High-Level Requirements:

To establish a safe space for individuals to share their personal experiences, clear intent and guidelines for the meet-ups will be provided to all participants. Basic facilities such as a private meeting room at equally-accessible locations (i.e., rotations of meet-ups at each of the three Boulder campuses) should be available. Meeting facilitators/organizers will have designated contacts in UCAR Human Resources and in the Office of DEI, who will be able to share

valuable resources and provide strategic advising when needed. Resources and technical assistance will be necessary to develop and maintain the website.

This initiative will be successful only if we have adequate voluntary attendance from staff, and attendees should encompass all staff in STEM roles. These “include those in the majority, those at the top, those with conservative political views, as well as minorities and protected classes,” as is recommended in the *UCAR 2017 Workplace Culture Survey Focus Groups Final Report*. To help promote and encourage staff attendance, support from UCAR’s President Council and NCAR’s Executive Committee will be instrumental. Other useful resources include an email list (e.g., NCAR Google groups) and an official website under NCAR to spread awareness of the platform, provide information regarding meet-ups, and circulate other related news.

The intent is to be inclusive and reach every corner with STEM roles at UCAR/NCAR. It is our goal to recruit Lead Allies from each NCAR Laboratory, including ACOM, CGD, CISL, EOL, HAO, MMM, and RAL, and from UCP.

Timeframe Requirements:

This will be an ongoing project with no foreseeable termination period. A tentative implementation timeline for FY2020 is proposed and may be revised upon feedback from HR and ODEI recommendation:

FYQ2-3

- Recruit Lead Allies from individual Labs: ACOM, CGD, CISL, EOL, HAO, MMM, RAL, and UCP (EODS (COSMIC+UNIDATA), ETC (COMET+GLOBE+SciEd), R2O/JCSDA, SPS/CPAESS). Proposed Vehicles:
 - Staff Notes
 - UNEION mailing list

FYQ3

- Develop meet-up structure/format
- Conduct an experimental meet-up, and seek feedback from participants
- Review and finalize meet-up structure/format

FYQ4

- Define layout and content of a FACES website, and create template for advertising materials
 - First official meet-up
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