

## L&S Diversity Report 2019 Biocore Response

### 1. Who in your department is working to think through diversity issues? Do you have any formal groups charged with promoting diversity?

We expect all Biocore staff, faculty, TAs, uTAs, peer advisors, peer mentors and students to be responsible for modeling, creating, and facilitating an inclusive, diverse classroom climate and work environment for all- and state this expectation clearly in an Inclusivity Statement associated with each Biocore course syllabi (see below). That said, Associate Director Dr. Janet Batzli and faculty associate Dr. Michelle Harris are primary points of contact for ‘diversity leadership’ and for keeping diversity, inclusion, and climate issues at the top of the agenda for program recruitment, student admissions; coordination and facilitation of program and course curriculum; and for doing outreach, research, and mentoring.

#### ***Biocore Inclusivity Statement***

##### ***Creating an inclusive classroom.***

In Biocore, we strive for the utmost equity for all students, TAs, and faculty/ staff, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, (dis)ability, socioeconomic status, country of origin, or religious affiliation. Our community and our science depend on engaging and embracing different perspectives and this starts with each of us understanding and recognizing our own biases. It takes a great deal of awareness and self-work to recognize bias. Most of us stumble at times, so we all need to practice.

##### **If you experience or notice bias**

Share when you first experience or notice bias. If you are further offended and continue to experience bias, do not hesitate to bring this to your instructor’s attention and/or report the case through UW Madison’s [Bias Incident Reporting system](#)

**If you mistakenly say or do something you wish you hadn’t**—apologize, say ‘I’m sorry’ and take ownership when you have offended someone, even if it was unintentional.

Discrimination and bias are not OK. Saying nothing perpetuates inequality. Speaking up reminds us of our inclusive classroom goal. It takes everyone to create a safe, supportive and productive learning environment. If even one of us feels stifled or unaccepted, we all lose out.

### 2. This past year, what specific plans did you have in place to promote diversity? What progress did you make in implementing your plans?

We aimed to improve recruitment and retention among students of color and first-generation college students. Biocore is a desirable option for biology students searching for a high-impact, research-based program that offers small class size, cohort-based curriculum over four semesters, opportunities for mentoring, faculty contact, and support. In other words, a smaller learning community with access to the resources/ network of our large institution- the best of all worlds. The bullets below summarize some of the activities we planned, initiated or continued to facilitate in the past year:

1. Biocore staff instructors facilitated 2h **inclusive teaching workshops** each semester (fall and spring) for TAs that specifically addressed inclusion, bias, and classroom climate. Prior to this this AY (2018-19), these workshops have been facilitated or co-facilitated by MTLT or Delta program staff with Don Gillian Daniel, Devin Wixon, and Megan Schmid who continue to offer their expertise [note: Janet Batzli participated in Don Gillian-Daniels 3-part inclusive teaching workshop series in spring 2019].
2. Biocore staff proposed to teach a **new FIG course** ([Becoming a Scientist: doing biology research](#) in fall 2019) to provide early introduction to research on campus, to practice biology research, and to offer another pathway for a diverse student population to learn about Biocore.

3. In the last three years, Biocore staff have collaborated with and served as instructors in the **WISCIENCE STEM Immersion program** for URM and first-generation college students to establish learning objectives and approaches to introduce incoming students to college lectures and lab courses.
4. Three Biocore staff serve as **Chancellor Scholar mentor- friends** developing relationships with a diverse student population- some of whom chose to do Biocore.
5. Biocore initiated a **presence at SOAR** for the first time in summer 2017 and returned in 2018 for an opportunity to interact with a more diverse population of prospective Biocore students and their families.

**Please highlight any outreach efforts you have made to communicate with diverse populations outside the university.**

The [Biocore Outreach Ambassadors](#) (BOA) work with K-12 classroom teachers, students, and families to enhance science education in rural Wisconsin communities. The BOA, led by Biocore staff Michelle Harris, trains and engages ~ 40 Biocore students with diverse identities and backgrounds each year to facilitate after school science clubs, Science Nights, and in-class science activities at public schools throughout Dane County, as well as a week-long summer science camp each June at Wisconsin Heights Middle School. These ambassadors represent the essence of the WI Idea, the diverse perspectives and backgrounds of UW students, and the high energy excitement for science- in particular biosciences and Biocore. Although the target outreach audience may or may not be racially, ethnically, diverse in faith, (dis)abilities, sexual orientation, or any other measure of diversity, the ambassadors themselves are and they bring their perspectives to rural WI students, teachers, and their families.



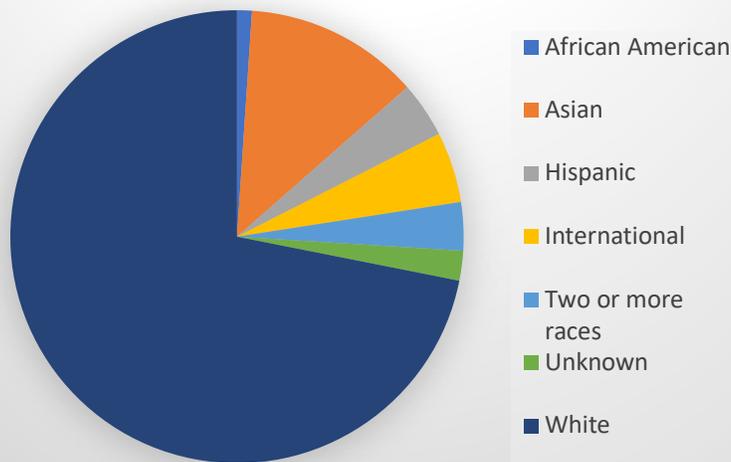
**Some of the 2018-19 Biocore Outreach Ambassadors**

**What are the greatest challenges remaining in your department/ unit?**

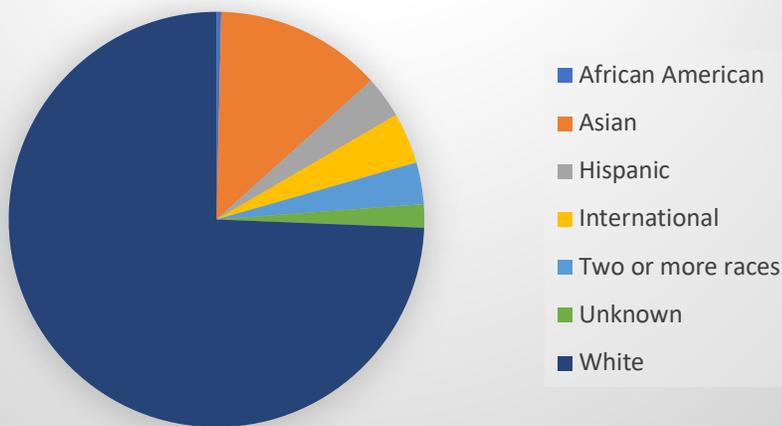
Biocore faces challenges in program visibility, recruitment, retention, and outreach to diverse student populations. According to enrollment reports and data digest available through RO and APIR, once a minority, first generation college student, or student of color begins Biocore they are equally likely to slightly less likely to complete the Biocore program as compared to white students.

The pie charts below report student racial and ethnic identities for incoming and outgoing Biocore students in two-year cohorts from 2014 to 2018. During that time, the incoming cohorts included ~28% who identify themselves as students of color with varying ethnicities, while the outgoing cohort graduated ~25% of those same individuals. Although this decrease is slight, it indicates a need for work on both recruitment and retention.

**Student populations (%) STARTING Biocore  
2014-2018 (n=377)**



**Student populations (%) COMPLETING Biocore  
2014-2018 (n=377)**



**What barriers do under-represented students, staff, and faculty face?**

**Implicit bias among students, instructors:** We recognize that all individuals hold implicit bias and, among our Biocore staff, we are getting better at identifying situations and contexts where bias threatens to undermine student learning or teaching (particularly among TAs). In the time that bias reporting has been in existence on campus, I am only aware of one incident that was reported – and it did not even involve a Biocore class but rather a Biocore student came to ask whether they should report an incident that happened in another class. As opposed to reportable incidents, there are other more subtle, nuanced and likely unintended/unconscious situations and issues that arise and pass without being addressed. We do what we can with in-house training for TAs and all Biocore staff who have participated in inclusive teaching workshops. Still, with limited resources, expertise, and opportunities for dialog among our students/ instructors we sometimes find ourselves in reactive rather than proactive mode when addressing issues that arise.

We are uncertain whether the issue with retention is associated with bias that arises within diverse groups of students, but by fostering safe conversations about [constructive and destructive group behaviors](#) at the beginning of each group project we aim to give students the language to diagnose dysfunctional group behavior as they arise. At the end of each group project, we require students to fill out a Group Effort Analysis (GEA) form to assess each member of their group and themselves on how they performed and what they can do to improve. In the middle of the semester, the comments are deidentified and distributed to students so they become better aware of how their behavior impacts others. When bias arises, it is often first identified by instructors through the GEA forms and addressed during face-to-face ‘group coaching’ or mediation meetings. See p. 6 of the Biocore rubrics [.pdf for the GEA analysis and rubric.](#)

**Future Plans: In the next year, what specific plans are you developing to promote diversity among undergraduate and graduate students, staff, and faculty? Please feel free to develop a five-year plan if a one- year plan seems inadequate. Do you have plans to reach outside the university?**

1. **New FIG course implementation:** Janet Batzli, Michelle Harris, and Seth McGee will be teaching *Becoming a scientist: Doing biology research* FIG course paired with HIS 201 and Chem 109. Understanding that FIG courses generally attract more diverse student populations, we anticipate opportunities for bridging our FIG and Biocore as an option for those students.
2. **Implement targeted recruitment for Biocore Peer Mentors:** The [Biocore Peer Mentors](#) are a group of high achieving, experienced Biocore students who are trained (Biocore 401- Peer Mentor Training) to work with incoming first year students to help them establish study groups, navigate Biocore, college life, and the biosciences at UW more generally. In the next year, we plan to work with the Physics Learning Center to utilize their **model of recruiting peer mentors**, particularly targeting those with diverse identities and backgrounds. We aim to increase diversity among this sub-group of Biocore students who will serve as mentors and as models for success among our student population. We hope to implement this new recruiting strategy in 2019-2020.
3. **Request funding and FTE for 50-75% Office Assistant** who would be added to the ‘diversity leadership’ team within Biocore and have primary responsibility for coordination of Biocore visibility via website, social media, SOAR, and inclusivity/ bias training of Biocore Peer Advisors and Biocore Outreach Ambassadors. In AY 2018-19, Baila Khan worked as an LTE office assistant to assist in program administration, website migration, and SOAR coordination. In addition, she volunteered as an undergraduate TA and coordinator for Biocore Outreach Ambassadors. Baila provided both essential services for the Biocore program as an Office Assistant and incidentally provided wonderful perspective on diversity as a person of color, first generation Pakistani American, and a devout Muslim. In the process of working with Baila, we recognize how her work, her background, and perspective has enriched our program staff with particular emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusivity. **In order to continue this work and move it forward, we need additional 101 funding to support a 50-75% staff position (Office Assistant) in Biocore.**



Baila Khan welcoming students at SOAR

Prepared by Janet Batzli, Associate Director, Biocore

#### Biocore Staff

Jeff Hardin, Faculty Director Biocore, Integrative Biology Chair

Janet Batzli, Associate Director, Biocore

Michelle Harris, Faculty Associate, Biocore

Seth McGee, Lab Manager, Biocore

Carol Borcharding, Program Administrator, Biocore

Baila Khan, Office Assistant (2018-19)

#### Faculty Affiliates

Evelyn Howell, Landscape Architecture, Biocore 381 Course Chair

Shelby O'Connor, Pathology, Biocore 383 Course Chair

Paul Bethke, Horticulture, Biocore 485 co-Chair

Elaine Alarid, Oncology, Biocore 485 co-Chair

Amy Moser, Oncology, Biocore 587 Course Chair

Irwin Goldman, Horticulture, CALS

Erik Dent, Neuroscience, SMPH

Steve Johnson, Comparative Bioscience, Vet

Anne Griep, Cell and Regenerative Biology, SMPH

Trina McMahon, Civil and Environmental Engineering and Bacteriology

Jeff Hardin, Integrative Biology, L&S

Bill Bement, Integrative Biology, L&S