

Terms of Reference for the Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity (JEDI) Committee of The Oceanography Society (TOS)

for public posting

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Preamble:

Mission Statement of TOS: The Oceanography Society (TOS) was founded in 1988 to advance oceanographic research, technology, and education, and to disseminate knowledge of oceanography and its application through research and education. TOS promotes the broad understanding of oceanography, facilitates consensus building across all the disciplines of the field, and informs the public about ocean research, innovative technology, and educational opportunities throughout the spectrum of oceanographic inquiry. TOS welcomes members from all nations. Any individual, business, or organization interested in ocean sciences is encouraged to join and to participate in the activities and benefits of the society.

Values Statement of TOS: As a professional society, TOS is committed to supporting a community that encourages the open expression and exchange of ideas, that is free from all forms of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, and that is welcoming to all members and to those who participate in its activities. In pursuit of that commitment, TOS is dedicated to the philosophy of equality of opportunity and treatment for all participants.

This Terms of Reference document defines the purpose, mandate, composition, and operation of the Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity (JEDI) standing committee of TOS, established by TOS Council in October 2020. This is a living document and will be reviewed annually at the January JEDI Committee meeting or as requested by TOS Council.

Purpose Statement:

The Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity (JEDI) committee supports The Oceanography Society (TOS) in embracing and celebrating our differences, broadening participation, and creating a culture of belonging. The JEDI Committee works closely with the TOS Council to facilitate the recruitment, participation, and retention of diverse individuals in its membership; address injustice, discrimination, and harassment in the ocean science and related disciplines; and ensure that the benefits of ocean sciences are accrued by all members of the Society.

Mandate Statement:

Specifically, the TOS JEDI Committee works to:

1. advise TOS Council on best practices to improve outreach, recruitment, retention, promotion, and inclusion of diverse individuals in our membership;
2. advise the broader ocean science community in how to dismantle barriers to equitable participation and promote benefit-sharing;
3. foster a community dialogue around justice and equity in ocean science;
4. provide safe space for supporting those who feel discrimination, and honor the feedback we receive;
5. hold ourselves accountable to fully integrate pro-equity and inclusivity core values;
6. support and amplify ongoing efforts in the field to accomplish the above.

Code of Conduct and Rules of Engagement:

Members of the JEDI Committee abide by the Society's Code of Conduct established in 2018 (https://tos.org/pdfs/TOS_Ethics_Policy_approved%20revisions%2012_16_2019.pdf).

The Code establishes standards of behavior related to professional and personal scientific integrity, conflicts of interest, and adherence to law and regulations. Forms of personal misconduct include discrimination, harassment, and bullying. The Code also includes guidelines for reporting complaints of misconduct to the Society's Ethics Committee (<https://tos.org/ethics>).

In addition to this formal policy of TOS, members of the JEDI Committee abide by the following "rules of engagement" (inspired by suggestions from *Unlearning Racism in Geoscience* deliverables found here - <https://urgeoscience.org/> and from the "Inclusive Scientific Meetings" guide prepared by 500 Women Scientists - <https://500womenscientists.org/inclusive-scientific-meetings>):

- 1) We strive to dismantle imbalances of power and privilege during our interactions. Such examples include, but are not limited to, imbalanced dynamics that may occur between:
 - a) Black, Indigenous, and People of Color and white committee members
 - b) Late and early career committee members
 - c) Those that are comfortable expressing their opinions and those that are not
 - d) People of different genders
- 2) We strive not to invalidate anyone else's story with our own spin.
- 3) We assume that everyone has good intentions and yet that they can still unintentionally hurt others with their statements.
- 4) During meetings, we strive to be conscious of body language and non-verbal responses that may indicate feelings of disrespect or harm, and We strive to create welcoming and accessible synchronous and asynchronous meeting spaces so that committee members can contribute fully and to the best of their abilities.

- 5) We recognize and respect that stories, opinions and reflections shared in committee meetings can be very personal and make individuals vulnerable.
- 6) We agree to maintain confidentiality to protect and value every committee member's vulnerability. All stories and opinions shared during committee meetings and deliberations cannot be shared, posted, or copied outside the committee without permission by the person who shared the story or opinion.
- 7) We strive to create a culture of independent decision-making and respectful dissent. To this end, committee members are encouraged to respectfully challenge assumptions and ideas without personal attack, and communicate without being defensive.
- 8) We are open to being held accountable to our actions and words.
- 9) We agree that openly and passively aggressive interactions have no place in this committee. This applies to all modes of communication - in person, virtual meetings, email, Slack, etc. Examples include sarcasm, feigned surprise, speaking over others, centering whiteness, or other similar harmful behavior. Anyone engaging in such behavior will be respectfully, but firmly, counseled by any committee member to desist, regroup, and reflect.
- 10) to pause and address such warning signs.
- 11) We strive to speak from our own experiences instead of generalizing (i.e. "I" instead of "they", "we", "you")
- 12) We listen actively and respect others when they are talking.
- 13) While we will strive to agree, we recognize that the goal is not agreement, but rather to gain a deeper understanding together.
- 14) We will remind ourselves of these ground rules at the start of each year.

Membership of the JEDI Committee:

Committee size and structure:

The JEDI Committee consists of at least six (6), and no more than ten (10) volunteers from TOS membership. The committee make-up ideally includes a spectrum of representation of TOS members (e.g., career stage, identities, nationalities, geographic regions). The TOS At-Large Councilor and the newly created JEDI Councilor will be additional members of the committee in an *ex officio* capacity. The JEDI Committee will be co-chaired by two TOS members who have demonstrated experience and interest in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in geosciences.

Committee member appointment:

TOS Council oversees the request for nominations, including self-nominations, for new JEDI Committee members. Requests for nominations occur in early summer of each year. Nomination, evaluation, selection and appointment of new committee members is overseen by the TOS Council, based on eligibility and selection criteria defined below. New committee member terms begin at the start of each new year. Any JEDI Committee member may request to resign from the committee at any time; vacated positions will be filled at TOS Council's

discretion. If issues of misconduct arise, the TOS Council has the authority to terminate the appointment of any committee member.

Terms of committee member service:

Members of the inaugural committee, established in October 2020, serve staggered one (1), two (2), three (3), or four (4) year terms, per their appointment by the TOS Council. Thereafter, new committee members serve a three (3) year term. Committee members may serve more than one (1) term after the first term expires, following successful renomination and appointment. Based on self-nomination, co-chairs will be elected to serve one-year terms by committee members annually at the first meeting of the new year.

Meetings:

- 1) The JEDI Committee holds monthly virtual meetings of 60-90 minutes to discuss committee business, led by the Committee Co-Chairs or representatives that they designate. All Committee members will strive to attend these virtual meetings as best as they can.
- 2) Where possible, an in-person gathering of the JEDI Committee may be arranged in association with the biennial Ocean Sciences Meeting. If a formal committee meeting is needed at this gathering, options for virtual participation are arranged so that all committee members may participate.
- 3) The Co-Chairs set the virtual meeting schedule after surveying all committee members for availability and considering accommodation for the various time zones that committee members live in.
- 4) The Co-Chairs develop a provisional agenda for each meeting and circulate for comment at least three business days prior to every scheduled meeting.
- 5) Notes and action items of the meetings are collected by the TOS Executive Director and provided in a written summary to the Co-Chairs for review, with care and attention to maintain confidentiality. The written meeting summary is voted for approval at the following committee meeting to become part of the TOS official record. These official records are made available to the TOS Council as the co-chairs or TOS Executive Director deem necessary.
- 6) Virtual meetings are not recorded.
- 7) The JEDI Committee will communicate via multiple channels, including virtual meetings, committee email (to jedicommittee@tos.org), shared online documents (hosted in TOS's Google Workspace, managed by TOS Executive Director), and online chat platforms (hosted in TOS's Slack account, managed by TOS Executive Director). All committee members strive to participate as best as they can across these platforms. All committee members keep in mind the need for confidentiality when using these platforms.
- 8) The TOS At-Large Councilor and the TOS JEDI Councilor, in their ex officio roles, serve as liaisons between the JEDI Committee and TOS Council at Council meetings. JEDI Committee co-chairs may also be invited to participate in TOS Council meetings.

- 9) The JEDI Committee Co-chairs provide a written report of JEDI Committee activities to TOS Council two weeks prior to quarterly TOS Council regular meetings.
- 10) The JEDI Committee co-chairs meet virtually with the Executive Director once a month, offset from the monthly committee meetings, to organize committee business. Notes of these meetings are recorded by the Executive Director and available to all committee members to review, but are not subject to voting for approval.

Decision making:

- 1) The committee and/or ad hoc smaller champion groups reach decisions following the consensus model recommended by Seeds for Change (www.seedsforchange.org.uk). A main feature of this model is allowing sufficient time for respectful deliberations on all perspectives, to encourage independent decision-making, and to foster a culture of dissent. In essence, consensus means that "no decision is made against the will of an individual or a minority of individuals. If significant concerns remain unresolved, a proposal can be blocked and prevented from going ahead. This means that the whole group has to work hard to find win-win solutions that address everyone's needs." We do this to share power, build a stronger community, make better decisions, get things done, and protect minority needs and opinions. This means we are willing to work toward a solution that is best for everyone, not just what is best or most expedient for some.
- 2) When proposals are ready for a decision, the co-chairs clearly state the proposal/item up for decision and ask if anyone wants to:
 - a) block a proposal:
 - i) "A block always stops a proposal from going ahead. It expresses a fundamental objection. It isn't "I don't really like it," or "I liked the other idea better." Some groups say the block means "I'll need to leave the group if this goes ahead". The group can either start work on a new proposal, or look for amendments to overcome the objection. In cases where the block stems from a fundamental disagreement with the aims of the group it might be more appropriate for the individual to leave."
 - b) stand aside
 - i) "You want to object, but not block the proposal. This means you won't help to implement the decision, but you are willing for the group to go ahead with it. You might stand aside because you disagree with the proposal, or you might like the decision but be unable to support it because you don't have the time or energy. The group may be happy to accept the stand aside and go ahead, or they may work on a new proposal. A critical question is whether the proposal requires everyone to implement it. For example, it might be fine for some people not to get involved in particular group activities. On the other hand, if the group agrees on a health and safety policy, it is vital that everyone is willing to put it into practice."
 - c) has reservations

- i) "You are willing to let the proposal go ahead but want to make the group aware that you aren't happy with something in it. You may even put energy into implementing it once your concerns have been acknowledged/addressed."
 - d) agrees
 - i) "You want to support the proposal and are willing to help implement it."
- 3) All volunteer members of the committee have equal weight in decision making, including the *Ex Officio* members.
- 4) A minimum of two-thirds of volunteer committee members needs to be present (or have their opinions known by the TOS Executive Director ahead of time, if they cannot attend) for any major decision making in virtual meetings. In addition, at least one of the *ex officio* members must be present.
- 5) Co-chairs identify any items expected for a decision at least three business days in advance of the meeting, to allow committee members who may not be able to participate in the virtual meeting to express their decision.
- 6) When "champions" are moving forward initiatives supported by the committee, they can seek consensus approval from the co-chairs in the interim between committee meetings, without having to seek approval of the full committee, unless the co-chairs recommend that the full committee needs to weigh in.
- 7) Together, co-chairs of the JEDI committee can make decisions on behalf of the committee at their discretion in logistical matters, or TOS publications.
- 8) The TOS JEDI committee co-chairs can make executive decisions on behalf of the JEDI Committee.

Nomination & Selection Process for JEDI Committee Members by TOS Council

Committee member nomination process:

The nomination form will ask for the following mandatory information:

- Member category (regular, early career, or student)
- Name, Organization, and Contact Information
- Current country of residence
- A PDF of current resume or curriculum vitae (max 2 pages) including current position; educational background; professional awards or honors; service to or participation in scientific, educational, mentoring or policy activities; experience with committee leadership and/or involvement in activities to make science more inclusive; and up to 5 relevant publications or other types of professional activities.

- Question: Please describe any prior experience with participating in, supporting, and/or leading institutional activities to promote justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in science (200 words or fewer)
- Question: Please explain your interest and motivation for being a member of the TOS JEDI Committee, and any suggested actions you think TOS could take to improve participation in the field (200 words or fewer)

The nomination form will also ask for the following voluntary information:

1. How do you define your gender identity?
2. How do you define your racial and/or ethnicity identity?
3. Which country do you live in?
4. Which categories best describe your educational attainment? (Select all that apply)
 - a. High school diploma or equivalent
 - b. Vocational training
 - c. Associate's degree
 - d. Bachelor's degree
 - e. Master's degree
 - f. Doctorate degree
 - g. Professor
 - h. Other degree: Please specify_____
5. Do you have a long-lasting or chronic condition (such as a physical, visual, auditory, cognitive, emotional, or other condition) that requires ongoing accommodations for you to conduct daily life activities (such as your ability to see, hear, speak or to learn, remember, or concentrate)?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Prefer Not to Answer

Why do we ask for this voluntary information? Applicants are also asked to provide some personal identity information to help the evaluation committee to understand the demographics of the applicant pool and assess how different dimensions of diversity are maintained through the selection process, and if our efforts to recruit diverse audiences are effective. In particular, TOS strives to increase representation of diverse genders, races and ethnicities, and nations in the oceanographic community. Provision of this demographic information is voluntary. Demographic data will be summarized and reported to the evaluation committee in aggregate, without personally identifying any applicant. Demographic data will only be available to the TOS

Executive Director and TOS President, who are not part of the evaluation committee.
Aggregated and anonymized demographic data may also be used in TOS's annual reports.

Committee member eligibility criteria:

To be eligible for JEDI Committee memberships, individuals must

- Have a background in oceanography, marine science, ocean engineering, marine policy, ocean education, or a related field.
- Be a TOS member in good standing from any member category (regular, early career, or student) and from any institution or country
- Have sufficient experience to benefit from and contribute to the JEDI Committee.
- Provide compelling interests and motivation for wanting to be a member of the committee.