Wild Animal Initiative

Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion Committee

Progress Report

2021.09.02

This is a summary of all of WAI’s JEDI activities through September 2, 2021. Future reports will be published quarterly.

Committee members

Current

- **Staff**: Cat Kerr, Luke Hecht
- **Board**: Nikolai Vetr, Stien van der Ploeg

Former members

- **Staff**: Jane Capozzelli

Committee management

- The Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion Committee will go by its acronym JEDI internally.
- We meet quarterly and ad hoc as needed. Meeting facilitation will happen on rotation.
- JEDI tasks and projects will be tracked and managed in Asana.
- Nik will communicate progress and recommendations by the committee to the board of directors in the board meeting following each JEDI Committee meeting.
- Luke will communicate progress and recommendations by the committee to the staff in the staff meeting following each JEDI Committee meeting.
- WAI has an email distribution list that reaches each member of the committee: jedicommittee@wildanimalinitiative.org.

Transparency

- Stien will work with Hollis Howe to publish progress and recommendations by the JEDI committee on our website on the Equity page on a quarterly basis. Recommendations should be added regardless of adoption of recommendations.
- WAI will publish the JEDI Standard Operating Procedures on its website.
- WAI will annually share in January its reflections, achievements and lessons learned.
• In the board and staff bios on the website include if a person serves on the JEDI committee.

Current activities by the committee and the organization

1. Standing responsibility: WAI employees can seek advice, feedback, or support from Committee members on JEDI-related issues that personally affect them.

2. In its planning for 2022, WAI will consider JEDI under each Objective in its ORCAs rather than setting it as a distinct result. That would probably include (1) updating each of the Objectives to mention the JEDI aspects of success, (2) adding Results under each Objective that measure progress on relevant DEI goals, (3) adding specific Actions as necessary to support those specific results. Staff will then reflect on how it worked at the end of next year.
   a. Starting 2022, the committee quarterly checks in on ORCAs — are people advancing on JEDI components of the ORCAs they set?

3. Board of directors compensation: research if (some) board members should be offered compensation to increase diversity, and if so, how do we ensure that is fair, simple, and without conflict of interest.

4. Include the JEDI committee and its objectives in the organization’s Bylaws under the committee section.

5. Review the call for proposal process and the candidates for JEDI.

6. Review the onboarding process for inclusion and equity.

7. Determining if and what kind of further training we want and need. Doing a type of training with the full staff and board in 2022 is important; until then committee members can individually choose a training to increase their ability to do their JEDI committee work.

8. Consider if the following actions could effectively increase our BIPOC network:
   a. Talks: we can proactively offer them, for free, to specific networks that we want more representation of in our field and that possibly also have less access to quality content. This means that we might not have capacity for all of the EA talks that we get asked for. Stien thinks this is okay because EA communities are already relatively interested in WAW and there are more existing structures for them that would lead to interest in our work without our influence.
   b. Mentorship: offer 1-on-1 mentorship for BIPOC on your specialization, either monthly for a period of time, or on an as needed/requested basis.
   c. Blog content: Create relevant content like having more blog posts about the importance of diversity to create a field of welfare biology; profiling relevant work done by various researchers; guest blog authors.
   d. Exhibit: sponsor, support, or host tables at relevant events organized by BIPOC.
   e. Increase reach: do more research into mailing lists and networks that are hosted by BIPOC. E.g. MinorityPostdoc, HBCUs, BIPOC STEM at Oxford, etc.
9. Review our style guide for JEDI concerns and opportunities.

Completed activities

1. In March 2020, executive director Michelle Graham participated in Encompass’s Foundational DEI Institute (since then renamed Racial Equity Institute). Prior to joining WAI, board member Stien van der Ploeg attended the same training as well. Michelle shared relevant lessons learned with all employees.

2. In WAI's manager-free meeting and in staff meetings, the importance and implementation of equity and inclusion and increasing diversity were discussed, as well as the need to contribute to anti-racism in the movements and communities we are active in.

3. In our Philosophy Cafe, employees discussed diversity, equity and inclusion in the effective altruism movement, the importance of JEDI for EA success, and challenges with creating safe spaces in EA while still being open to discuss out-there concepts.

4. We launched a committee in late 2020 and determined compensation, membership, power, priorities, meeting frequency, tracking tasks. In 2021, board members joined the committee.

5. WAI’s recruitment and hiring process adopted methods to minimize the influence of bias.
   a. We collect demographic data (e.g. on race, ethnicity, gender, etc.) at each stage of the application process to track how well our evaluations and efforts are reaching a wide range of applicants.
      i. The demographic data should not be viewed by any decision makers until the end of the process. Instead, a third party assigned to the hiring process (e.g. an uninvolved staff member) will track the results.
      ii. Once the application submission round is closed, the third party will remove the EEO data and save it to a separate location, ensuring that decision-makers do not have access.
   b. Questions are included in the interview process to assess the candidate's concern for prioritizing JEDI.
   c. We advertise widely to ensure our job postings reach a broad audience. General goal: cast a broad net and counteract the homogeneity of our existing networks. To reduce biases, we emphasize reaching out directly to twice as many people as initially come to mind, if we reach out to anyone to apply.
      i. We still need to increase the number of places we post to include more BIPOC hosted platforms.
   d. Work tests are compensated.

6. The committee provided feedback on WAI’s salary algorithm: Overall the salary algorithm seems thoughtful and good. JEDI concerns:
i. We had some uncertainty about bias slipping into determination of title scale, but the planned actions to counteract this, as described in the salary algorithm, seem reasonable.

ii. Though acknowledged in the document, the salary algorithm was very US-centric. To be more inclusive of employees outside the US, the stated starting ideals should be applicable to all. To guarantee no undue financial stress to employees who reside outside the US, exchange rate fluctuation should be acknowledged. Salary algorithm is configured in dollars but if the price of the dollar changes significantly, the income of employees abroad will too. WAI should at minimum guarantee pay won’t decrease.

iii. Both these concerns were addressed in the final version of the salary algorithm.