

# ***Looking Outward and Reaching Inward***

## **Building Sea Grant Resilience from the lens of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DESG A/I-15)**

### **I. Introduction**

The Sea Grant network is a conglomerate of small programs that work on important, but disparate projects given the unique coastal communities that each program serves. Depending on state priorities, Sea Grant programs have addressed issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) with distinct, as well as piecemeal approaches. The Sea Grant Community of Practice (CoP) on Inclusion and Diversity (SGID) formed in 2016 to bring a systematic analysis and application of DEI principles across the network. For the first time, Diversity and Inclusion were recognized as “cross-cutting principles” in the 2018-2021 Sea Grant Strategic planning.

To build on the efforts of SGID CoP and develop a long-term resilience vision for Sea Grant, ***Mona Behl (GASG) and Jane Harrison (NCSG) will co-lead*** the Sea Grant resilience visioning effort on DEI. The theme of our resilience visioning is simple yet powerful – ***Looking Outward and Reaching Inward***. It signifies the goal to extend Sea Grant's solid foundation of "science serving coastal America's coasts;" share our 50-year success; anticipate, prepare and respond to future changes; and model the way as a visionary program that embraces and advances all aspects of DEI. Accomplishing this vision will require Sea Grant to define its role in advancing DEI; develop advanced professional capabilities; and measure and evaluate its efforts towards meeting DEI goals and objectives.

This visioning effort will focus on Sea Grant ***resilience in the broadest sense***. Resilience, as defined in the 2012 NRC report, *is the ability to prepare and plan for, absorb, recover from, or more successfully adapt to actual or potential adverse events*. Another way to consider resilience is the *ability to thrive in an environment characterized by change, uncertainty, unpredictability, and surprise*. It is related to the concept of adaptive capacity, which is "the collective efforts to reduce exposure to, or minimize the impact of, disturbances and to take advantage of new opportunities." Embracing DEI allows Sea Grant programs to take advantage of opportunities, not solely mitigate the effects of difficult circumstances.

To illustrate how DEI issues impact the resilience of Sea Grant programs, consider how changing demographics affect our relevance and ability to thrive. Sea Grant programs have the opportunity to cultivate coastal leaders who will make discoveries, facilitate stakeholder consensus, and develop new technologies to meet significant societal challenges. Yet awareness of the expertise and services provided by Sea Grant programs is often limited to historical stakeholders, who do not always reflect the demographics of the communities in which we work. Without acknowledging and actively addressing this disparity, the effectiveness of Sea Grant will be limited. Establishing and maintaining engagement with the diverse populations of our coastal communities is required to sustain Sea Grant's relevance in coastal and marine research, outreach, and education.

Our resilience visioning will examine all indicators of DEI. This includes well-known *social demographic indicators* such as ability, age, ethnicity, gender, race, religion, and sexual orientation. It also includes *diversity of environments* such as social/wellness environment, human environment, financial environment, physical/built environment, natural environment, governance/leadership environment, traditional environment, generational environment, natural environment, and cross-cutting environments, which are defined under the "Building external resilience" section.

It is important to recognize that the proposers are collaborating with SGID CoP, and together will develop baseline knowledge; coordinate the development of activities and initiatives; identify measurement and evaluation mechanisms; and prepare a final "roadmap" documenting what Sea Grant must do to build resilience by championing DEI principles over the next 10 years.

### 1.1 Outputs and Outcomes of the Visioning Effort

The primary output of the resilience visioning effort is a 10-year vision document that examines all aspects of DEI both within and outside Sea Grant. The vision document will include a list of important needs; measurable goals and objectives; corresponding initiatives and activities; and evaluation strategies to build and advance Sea Grant resilience from the standpoint of DEI. The 10-year vision will be a result of a series of activities and initiatives that will be undertaken by participating Sea Grant programs, over the period of our visioning project. We intend for the visioning effort to lead to several additional outputs/products apart from the 10-year vision document; those outputs include a best management practices document (which is already underway), multi-program proposal(s) (e.g. NSF INCLUDES), publication-quality manuscripts, training modules and/or staff development modules, and assessments.

A short-term outcome of the visioning effort is a forward-looking and strategic Sea Grant workforce that has examined how DEI principles should be defined, measured, and incorporated into Sea Grant programs. A mid-term outcome is the systematic practice of implementing DEI principles across Sea Grant network in all their operations (i.e., administration) and programmatic areas (i.e., research, extension, education, communication, and partnerships). A long-term outcome is best summed up by the SGID CoP vision statement which reads, *Sea Grant programs are strengthened from the variety of perspectives and experiences of our coastal communities. We envision Sea Grant programs as a champion in DEI efforts where all coastal community members feel welcomed and supported, and the dignity of all people is respected and valued. DEI principles are threaded into Sea Grant's cultural fabric.*

### 1.2 The Sea Grant Inclusion and Diversity Community of Practice (SGID CoP)

The SGID CoP emerged from a workshop session at Sea Grant Week in October 2016 to broaden participation in Sea Grant. The informal network comprises of members from 24 Sea Grant programs, including the National Sea Grant Office, and Sea Grant Advisory Board. Over the past ~9 months, SGID CoP has led various discussions on the following topics.

- Internal professional development on diversity and inclusion topics
- Education and outreach to diverse K-12 audiences
- Diversification of advisory boards
- Recruitment and retainment of a diverse workforce

- Outreach to and engagement of new, diverse coastal communities
- Diversification of fellowship applicant pools
- Environmental justice
- Capacity and diversity in Sea Grant research

The CoP defines DEI as follows.

**Diversity:** Sea Grant recognizes and appreciates human differences, based upon, but not limited to age, race, ethnicity, national origin, sex, class, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, culture, ideology, politics, religion, citizenship, marital status, job classification, veteran status, and income and socioeconomic status.

**Equity:** Sea Grant is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of human differences. Sea Grant works actively to challenge and respond to bias, harassment, and discrimination. Equity also entails providing different individuals and communities equal voice and equal opportunities in political and social institutions.

**Inclusion:** Sea Grant is committed to building inclusive research, outreach, communication, and education programs, one whose excellence is based not only on stellar disciplinary achievement, but also on relating to people from different background and circumstances, with different needs, perspectives, and ways of thinking.

## II. Overview of Network Visioning Effort

Any strategic visioning effort provides the opportunity to reflect and imagine. To develop a 10-year roadmap on Sea Grant resilience from the standpoint of DEI, we will:

1. **Develop baseline knowledge** documenting how different Sea Grant programs are currently incorporating principles of DEI in their operations, be it, administration, research, extension, education, communication, and/or partnerships.
2. **Define Sea Grant's DEI goals and objectives** for the next 10-years.
3. **Develop a list of potential activities and initiatives** to generate ideas that help Sea Grant build and advance Sea Grant's DEI goals and objectives. These activities and initiatives will be categorized as follows.
  - a. **Breakthroughs:** Novel or breakthrough (wild!) ideas to aspire for, even if they are unlikely to be implemented.
  - b. **Must-Haves:** Realistic ideas that will be feasible, hence will be implemented, over the next 10-years.
  - c. **Possibilities:** Innovative ideas that might be possible, whether feasible or not.
4. **Develop a mechanism to measure and evaluate** whether and how Sea Grant's DEI goals and objectives are being met.

### 2.1 Developing Baseline Knowledge

To develop baseline knowledge on how different Sea Grant programs are incorporating DEI principles in their operations (administration) and programming (research, extension, education, and communication), we will develop a survey instrument that will be administered to all state Sea

Grant programs so as to solicit information on how different states are incorporating DEI principles in various aspects of their programming.

## 2.2 Defining Sea Grant's DEI Goals and Objectives

Information gathered through the survey will be used to identify challenges and opportunities, and inform ways in which Sea Grant programs can build internal resilience by operationalizing DEI principles into its programming; and build external resilience by engaging with diverse individuals and coastal communities. This information will be used to develop clear and strategic goals and objectives to develop Sea Grant resilience, over the next 10-years.

Defining DEI goals and objectives, as well as the tasks of developing activities/initiatives and a mechanism to measure and evaluate efforts, will require regular ongoing discussion with the SGID CoP, other Sea Grant personnel, and external experts. We will leverage existing in-person meetings and build virtual meetings to facilitate discussion on these topics.

***Leveraging Existing Meetings:*** We will identify opportunities for engagement at several Sea Grant meetings. For example, professional development and training opportunities on DEI will be offered at the Extension Assembly & Communicators meeting, SG Academy, and SG Association meetings (October 2017), as well as SG Week meeting in November 2018. Other opportunities that will be considered include Social Coast, National Adaptation Forum, and other regional and national meetings.

***Building a Series of Virtual Meetings:*** Through a series of brief online meetings, we will examine all aspects of Sea Grant resilience from the standpoints of DEI. Presentations will highlight discussions led during the SGID CoP meetings and solicit input on the 10-year visioning document. Meetings will showcase how adherence to DEI principles helps to build resilience across coastal communities around the nation, providing example of potential activities and initiatives that could be undertaken. An important aspect of this program will be to engage external perspectives through invited talks and panel discussions.

***Collaborating with other network visioning efforts:*** Throughout the resilience visioning process, we will communicate with leads from other network-wide visioning efforts to provide guidance and collaborate on how DEI principles can be incorporated into their vision plans.

## 2.3 Developing a List of Activities and Initiatives

Through a series of activities and initiatives, we will examine resilience from the standpoint of DEI, both within and outside Sea Grant (i.e., internal workplace dynamics and interaction with external stakeholders and communities that Sea Grant serves). Some activities and initiatives are organized under sections 2.3.1. and 2.3.2. However, we will also engage all participating programs (via email and conference calls) to develop a comprehensive list of activities and initiatives that build on existing efforts and are more forward-looking. These activities and initiatives could be categorized as under three headings – possibilities, must-haves, and breakthroughs.

### 2.3.1 Building internal resilience

Internal resilience, as referred to in this document, addresses the question: ***How DEI helps Sea Grant become more resilient in the face of turbulent change***, i.e., by being diverse, equitable,

and inclusive in our operations/administration, how can we hold together under severe stress and remain effective, as well as take advantage of opportunities when they arise.

To this end, we have already identified a few activities and initiatives that will help Sea Grant build internal resilience. Some activities and initiatives are as follows.

**Expanding SGID CoP:** A paper outlining “best practices” is being developed based on all discussions led during the CoP meetings. The CoP will solicit additional feedback to include additional topics/discussions that are not included in the aforementioned list.

**Facilitation of Regional Collaboration:** To facilitate regional collaboration, we will identify regional leads (1-3 individuals from each region) who will be responsible for coordinating different aspects of DEI in their regions. Depending on the needs of a particular region, the regional leads may collaborate to form working groups and may meet (virtually) more frequently, if/as need be.

**Developing Training Modules:** Based on discussions that we have regionally and nationally through SGID CoP, we will collaborate to develop training kit modules on important topics and best practices across the network.

- **Develop modules for SG network leadership.** For example, guidance could be developed to assess target audiences reached and those not reached during an annual staff meeting. Resources required may include state demographic reports.
- **Develop modules for SGID CoP.** For example, a training could be developed so that SG personnel learn how to extend this conversation with partner organizations.

### **2.3.2 Building external resilience**

External resilience, as referred to in this document, addresses the question: ***How can Sea Grant help others (individuals/communities/stakeholders) to build resilience by honing in on DEI principles and making sure that no one is left behind.*** In other words, how do we help those outside the SG network (individuals/communities/stakeholders/partners) overcome adversity and adapt positively to changes?

One way to think about building external resilience is by engaging experts both within and outside Sea Grant around discussion on different resilience tracks, namely “environment track” or “focus area track.” For example, under “environment track,” we could examine DEI principles from the perspectives of various environments that individuals/communities live in. These environments are comprehensively documented in several National Academies reports.

- **Social/wellness environment:** Interconnected and resilient communities (e.g., religious and immigrant communities) vs. those that lack strong social networks and resilience.
- **Human environment:** Day-to-day stressors (e.g., poverty, unemployment, poor health, homelessness, etc.), chronic barriers to resilience (e.g., homelessness), invisible communities (e.g., those who are not homeless, do not live on food stamps, but have limited amount of social connections)
- **Financial environment:** Changes in economic environment (e.g., rising costs, declining industries, loss of jobs, rapid growth, etc.); communities that experience rapid economic

boom and accompanying population influx who are vulnerable due to lack of experience/awareness.

- ***Physical/Built environment:*** This includes interdependencies of various elements in the physical or built environment. For example, critical infrastructure, supply chains, etc.
- ***Natural environment:*** The way in which communities view natural environments (i.e., function vs. asset) determines how they approach resilience.
- ***Governance/leadership environment:*** Different government agencies have different definitions of, and priorities/capabilities for resilience. For example, it can be more challenging for city governments and/or leaders to build resilience to long-term stressors like chronic homelessness, than to frequent hazards.
- ***Cross-cutting environment:*** Interaction of one or more of the environments mentioned above.

DEI principles could also be examined from the perspectives of different focus areas as follows.

- ***Healthy Coastal Ecosystems:*** For example, we could address questions like, how can Sea Grant help in anticipate, prepare, and respond to changes in ecosystems, etc.
- ***Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture:*** For example, we could address questions like, how can Sea Grant help respond and prepare for changes in fisheries, including, serial depletion, habitat degradation, changes in food web caused due to overfishing, etc.
- ***Resilient Communities and Economies:*** For example, we could address questions like, how does Sea Grant prepare individuals, businesses, and communities, in different environments (see above), prepare and respond to changes in weather, water, and climate.
- ***Environment Literacy and Workforce Development:*** For example, we could address questions like, how does Sea Grant impart education and training on resilience; and how does Sea Grant contribute to making individuals more resilient (resilient learners), etc.

### III. Measurement and Evaluation of DEI Goals and Objectives

An important aspect of this effort is to develop a mechanism to measure and evaluate efforts toward meeting the goals and objectives of Sea Grant's DEI resilience visioning. By identifying baseline DEI knowledge and best practices with the survey, we will be able to determine (with the aid of future assessments) whether we are achieving the goals and objectives set forth, and whether the activities and initiatives undertaken are successful. If not, they will require iteration.

## IV. Timeline

	2017				2018							
	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
<b>Developing Baseline Knowledge</b>												
<b>Define Sea Grant's DEI goals and objectives</b>												
<b>Develop a list of potential activities and initiatives</b>												
<b>Develop a mechanism to measure and evaluate</b>												
<b>Draft 10-year Resilience Visioning Plan</b>												

## VI. Participating Sea Grant Programs

AK	DE	IL-IN	MD	MS-AL	NJ	OR	RI	VA
CA	GA	LC	MI	MIT	NY	PA	SC	WA
CT	GU	ME	MN	NH	NC	PR	USC	WI