

BLUElab DEI Plan 2020-2021

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCY

Purpose of Alignment with this Area: We aim to develop an organizational culture that supports all members and promotes intercultural competence within teams and cognizance of equity and inclusion in interacting with community partners. The work BLUElab does has an implicit need for members to understand their own power & privilege and how that translates to design decisions and the design process. Building this level of awareness will not only lead to a more inclusive environment within the org, but ultimately will improve the quality of the work the org is doing as well

2020 Current Status & Gaps

One improvement that was made is that we put on a series of workshops in collaboration with C-SED for all new members! These workshops were not as well attended as we hoped and received feedback that there were too many that took up a lot of time. Moving forward we can take the workshop on understanding identity and distribute it to teams as a great workshop to have to start off the school year and to show members how to work more equitable with others.

There is currently no structure or model for teaching intercultural competence or how to work with community partners other than passed down institutional knowledge within teams.

Over the past year, the executive board tried to create a survey to gather data on all of its current members asking about race, school, and other topics for people to fill out as they wish, but no major changes were made using that data.

Many of our project teams are international and it can cost a lot of money for an individual to spend on plane tickets and finances while within the community. We do not know if teams take on this cost themselves, or whether they rely on the students to fund themselves. In the latter scenario, this can create a divide financially between those who want to get more involved and have the money as opposed to those who do not.

2021 Vision

By the end of Winter 2021, the council will work with project teams to understand how they have been successful in teaching intercultural competency, and work with this information and experts at C-SED or Ginsberg Center to formalize these practices as part of standard work and expectation of a BLUElab team.

Action Plan

June - August 2020

- The council will discuss ways the organization can get more involved in DEI initiatives across campus and how to integrate lessons into more general meetings
- Develop a new DEI agreement for all teams to agree to based on suggestions and feedback from BLUElab members.

September - November 2020

- Conduct interviews to gather feedback from project leads about how intercultural competence is currently being taught on a team by team basis.
 - This includes processes used by international teams when members travel abroad and interact with different communities.
- Gather data about our current diversity as an organization and figure out ways to address issues we may come across.
- Consolidate information about what has worked and what hasn't worked, consult expert.
- Determine if we would like to have DEI training across BLUElab as a whole for all team members and leadership or not.
- Brainstorm / draft way to structure teaching intercultural competency on team by team level. See what works best within each team and share learnings with other teams.

December - January 2020:

- Present findings to all BLUElab members to get feedback and suggestions on ways to add structure to teaching cultural competency.
- Meet with C-SED to discuss the possibility of conducting more workshops in F21, whether for the entire organization, or on a team-by-team basis depending on the F20 results.

By April 2022:

- Will understand the ways in which cultural competency is and is not being taught and learned in BLUElab.
- Will have created and refined current ways of promoting cultural competency
 - Refining first year and/or the entirety of BLUElab member workshop program
 - Created guidelines / how to guide for including cultural competency as key part of BLUElab team work
 - Find ways to emphasize the importance of DEI across all BLUElab project teams.

BIAS AND DISCRIMINATION ACCOUNTABILITY

Purpose of Alignment with this Area: We aim to ensure that incidents of discrimination and bias are documented and addressed in order to create a culture of accountability and address concerns surrounding inclusion. As well as documenting incidents of discrimination and bias, we would like to arm members and leaders in BLUElab to know how to spot incidents of bias and how to deal with them appropriately, specifically with the existing systems at UM.

2020 Current Status & Gaps

A weak bias reporting system was established in 2017 for internal use, but it is ineffective and does not leverage the support that already exists at UM in an official capacity. We lack both official policy on incidents of discrimination, bias and harrassment, as well as any type of dialogue about these incidents within BLUElab.

2021 Vision

By the end of Winter 2021, all members of BLUElab will be aware of BLUElab's policy for discrimination, bias, and harrassment, and be empowered to react appropriately to these incidents if they happen.

Action Plan

June-August 2020

- Make amendment to BLUElab constitution with policy for harrassment, bias, and discrimination.

September - October 2020

- Schedule workshop with OSA and SAPAC on what to do when bias occurs, making it mandatory for all Project Leads.

November - January 2020:

- Discuss adding these topics to the BLUElab values, so that they will be taught to all new members, therefore including awareness of these issues as part of BLUElab's organizational culture.

By April 2021:

- All Project Leads and council members will have attended workshop on recognizing and responding to bias
- Plans will be in place to inform new members of these policies during recruitment in F21.