Increasing Diversity in the US Ocean Studies Community

Committee

Lekelia Jenkins

Chair

Lekelia Jenkins is an Associate Professor in the School for the Future of Innovation in Society at Arizona State University, where her research interests center on the human dimensions of marine sustainability solutions, including fisheries conservation technologies and marine renewable energy. Jenkins also studies and practices science dance as a means of science engagement, science communication, and social change. She is an International Science Council Fellow, National Geographic Explorer, Fulbright Scholar, and Alfred P. Sloan Research Fellow in Ocean Sciences.. For her work to advance diversity and inclusion in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Medicine , she was named an American Association for the Advancement of Science IF/THEN Ambassador and a member of the inaugural cohort of the American Geophysical Union Leadership Academy and Network for Diversity and Inclusion in the Geosciences (LANDInG) Fellows. She received a B.S. in biology with a minor in dance from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County and a Ph.D. from Duke University. Jenkins is a member of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine’s Ocean Studies Board.

Paul H. Barber

Member

Paul Barber is a Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) where he serves as Vice Chair of Undergraduate Studies. He is also the Director of the Program for Excellence in Education and Research in the Sciences (PEERS), the largest academic support program at UCLA for science, technology, engineering, and medicine (STEM) majors from underrepresented and underserved backgrounds. Barber is the Founder and Director of The Diversity Project, focused on diversifying marine science and previously served as the Equity Advisor for the Division of Life Sciences. His research focuses on using genetic/genomic tools to understand the evolution of marine biodiversity, and to support conservation of marine ecosystems. In addition, he studies STEM education related to improving the success of underrepresented minorities and publishes on advancing diversity in STEM. He is the recipient of multiple awards, including the U.S. Presidential Early Career Award for Science and Engineering, the UCLA Distinguished Teaching award, the UCLA Diversity Equity and Inclusion Award, the UCLA Gold Shield Prize, and the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science Distinguished Student Mentor Award. In 2017 he was named a Howard Hughes Medical Institute Professor, and in 2020 he was elected to the California Academy of Sciences. He received a B.S. in ecology and evolutionary biology from the University of Arizona, a Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley, and was a National Science Foundation Minority Postdoctoral Fellow at Harvard University. Barber has previously served as both co-chair and organizer for the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine's Indonesian-American Kavli Frontiers of Science symposia.

Xavier Basurto

Member

Xavier Basurto is a Professor of Environmental Social Sciences at the Doerr School of Sustainability at Stanford University. Previously he was the Truman and Nellie Semans/Alex Brown & Sons Professor of Sustainability Science at Duke University. His work explores the prospects and limitations of self-organization, or self-governance, for social-ecological sustainability, particularly in the Global South. In 2020, he served on the committee that designed the Duke University-wide course on race, racism, social injustice, and inequality. In 2023, Basurto was selected for the Distinguished Mexican Nationals Award, granted by the Mexican Government to "nationals that have developed a distinguished international career, serving as a role model, inspiration, pride, and prestige to people in their home country." He received an M.S. in natural resources, and an M.P.A. and a Ph.D. in natural resource management, with a minor in cultural anthropology, from the University of Arizona.

Erin Borry

Member

Erin Borry is an Associate Professor at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Her research focuses on workplace rules and red tape, rule behavior, public administration in pop culture, and social equity. She currently serves on the on the editorial boards of Public Administration Review, the Social Science Journal, Journal of Social Equity in Public Administration, and Journal of Public Affairs Education, and Public Performance & Management Review. Borry has published several papers on equity, diversity, and justice as it relates to public administration and workforce development. She received a an M.P.A. from Rutgers University-Newark and a Ph.D. in public administration from the University of Kansas.

Corey Garza

Member

Corey Garza is the Associate Dean of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the College of the Environment and Professor in the School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences at the University of Washington. He has held positions as a professor of marine science at California State University, Monterey Bay and as a research ecologist with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). His research focuses on the use of autonomous technologies to study spatial dynamics in coastal ecosystems. He also focuses on the development of programs to increase diversity in the ocean sciences. For the last 12 years, he has overseen National Science Foundation and NOAA programs focused on improving student diversity in ocean science and leadership training programs that aim to create inclusive training and work environments in science, technology, engineering, and medicine fields. Garza is a fellow of the California Academy of Sciences and sits on their board of trustees. He currently serves on the board of directors for the American Geophysical Union and previously served on the board of directors for Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science. He received a B.S. in biology from California State University, Los Angeles and a Ph.D. in ecology, evolution and marine biology from the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Nancy Knowlton

Member

Nancy Knowlton is a coral reef biologist and the Sant Chair for Marine Science at the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, where she also served as editor-in-chief of the Ocean Portal, and senior scientist emerita at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute. She was formerly professor at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California, San Diego and founder of the Scripps Center for Marine Biodiversity and Conservation. Her areas of expertise include marine biodiversity and conservation, and evolution, behavior, and systematics of coral reef organisms. Her revolutionary studies of reef bleaching and speciation provide fundamental insights into differentiation and mutualism. Her work has revealed new, unexpected levels of diversity in the marine microbial environment. She is a member of the National Academy of Sciences. Her other honors include the Peter Benchley Award for Science in Service of Conservation (2009), Heinz Award for contributions benefitting the environment (2011), election to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (2013), and the Women's Aquatic Network Woman of the Year Award (2018). Knowlton received a B.A. in biology from Harvard University and a Ph.D. in zoology from the University of California, Berkeley. Knowlton is a member of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine's Ocean Studies Board and is currently serving on the Art/Science Collaboration for Healthy and Resilient Gulf of Mexico Communities workshop planning committee and on the U.S. National Committee for the Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.

Kenneth Maton

Member

Kenneth Maton is an Emeritus Professor at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. His research focuses on minority student achievement through ongoing evaluation and implementation assessment of the Meyerhoff Scholars Program. He also studies psychology and social policy through a national interview study of psychologists seeking to influence social policy, and Baltimore City Youth Relations with School Police, focusing on group study to obtain "youth voice" on police-student relations in schools. He has published several books and papers on community psychology and the psychology of the social environment. Maton received a Ph.D. in community-clinical psychology from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

George I. Matsumoto

Member

George Matsumoto is the Senior Education and Research Specialist at the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute. Previously he worked at Flinders University of South Australia as a Marine Biology Lecturer and Hopkins Marine Station as a National Science Foundation Post Doctoral Scholar where his research focused on gelatinous zooplankton using SCUBA, human occupied vehicles, and remotely operated vehicles around the world to collect specimens and observations. He has been awarded the QuikScience Ocean Leadership Award for commitment to Ocean Education and recognized as an Association for Sciences of Limnology and Oceanography fellow. He has served on a number of local, regional, and national boards including the National Marine Educators Association Board. He is part of the first American Geophysical Union Leadership Academy and Network for Diversity and Inclusion in the Geosciences (LANDInG) cohort and serves on the National Association of Marine Laboratories Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. He received a B.A. in marine botany from the University of California, Berkeley and a Ph.D. in biological oceanography from the University of California, Los Angeles. He previously served on the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine's Ocean Studies Board.

Jean May-Brett

Member

Jean May-Brett was the Director of the Math Science Partnership (MSP) Program and STEM Partnership Coordinator for the Louisiana Department of Education before her retirement. Her duties included oversight of the MSP program in Louisiana providing math, science and technology professional development to classroom teachers through focused projects. May-Brett worked with public and private partners in an effort to develop regional and state science, technology, engineering, and medicine (STEM) initiatives. She is a Tandy Scholars Champion of the Classroom, received the Outstanding Leadership in Science Education award from the National Science Education Leadership Association, and has been recognized as the Outstanding High School Science Teacher in Louisiana. She is a past-president of the Louisiana Science Teachers Association, the Louisiana Environmental Educators Association, the Southern Association of Marine Educators, and the National Marine Educators Association. May-Brett has held numerous positions on committees and served on the Council for the National Science Teachers Association. She was a member of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA's) Science Advisory Board and its Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Program Advisory Committee Working Group. She has served on the Management Council of the Central Gulf of Mexico (CGOM) Consortium for Ocean Science Exploration and Engagement (COSEE), and three terms on the Governor's Environmental Education Commission. She is currently chairing the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine's Board on Gulf Education and Engagement.

Amelia Moore

Member

Amelia Moore is an Associate Professor of Marine Affairs at the University of Rhode Island and co-chair of the diversity committee in the College of Environment and Life Sciences. Her research has examined small island sustainability, field ecology, and the evolution of the marine sciences from the perspective of cultural anthropology and feminist science and technology studies. Her current work focuses on the development of antiracist and anticolonial research frameworks within the ocean and coastal sciences. She is also the president of the anthropology and environment section of the American Anthropological Association. Moore received a B.A. in environmental biology from Columbia University and a Ph.D. in sociocultural anthropology from the University of California, Berkeley.

Jamese Sims

Member

Jamese Sims is the Chief Executive Officer of Thee Anomaly, LLC, a meteorology consulting firm and the creator and host of Thee Anomaly Podcast. Dr. Sims previously served as the Strategic Advisor for Federal Partnerships in the Mississippi State University (MSU) Office of Research and Economic Development where she worked closely with senior university leadership on strategic opportunities related to the research missions of MSU. Previously she served as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Senior Science Advisor for Artificial Intelligence. In 2020, Sims established and chaired the NOAA Science and Technology Synergy Committee to coordinate strategic planning of NOAA’s emerging science and technology and, from 2019-2021, she served as co-chair of the NOAA Diversity and Professional Advancement Working Group, a NOAA-wide employee resource group focused on the recruitment, retention and advancement of underrepresented groups within the NOAA workforce. Sims received a B.S. in meteorology from Jackson State University, and a Ph.D. in atmospheric sciences from Howard University.

Wendy Todd

Member

Wendy K’ah Skáahluwaa Todd is a Professor of Indigenous Science at the University of Alaska Southeast - Juneau, in the Department of Natural Sciences. She serves as President of the Xáads Kil Kuyaas Foundation 501 (c)3 and the Indigenous Geoscience Community. Her geoscience research examines microbial diversity and geochemistry of metalliferous groundwater ecosystems from groundwater ecosystems as critical drivers of global biogeochemical cycling and environmental health. In addition, she advocates for the use of multiple knowledge systems in scientific research, using both Traditional knowledge and Western knowledge systems. The social science research she conducts focuses on increasing belonging, access, justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (BA-JEDI) in the geosciences to identify pathways to dismantle persistent barriers in the recruitment, retention, and representation of racial, ethnic, and cultural groups. Todd was awarded Professional of the Year by the American Indian Science and Engineering Society in 2019 for her work in Native education, policy, and environmental science. She received a B.S. in molecular and microbiology from Portland State University and her Ph.D. from Oregon Health and Science University in environmental science & engineering and estuary and ocean systems.

Whitney Tome

Member

Whitney Tome is a Principal with The Raben Group where she leads consultations to help organizations develop and initiate diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies. Previously, she was the Director of Diversity and Inclusion at the National Parks Conservation Association, the Executive Director of Green 2.0, and has advised and mediated complex ocean stakeholder process for regional ocean planning meetings. Whitney is the winner of the International Chamber of Commerce’s International Mediation Competition in Paris, France. She received a B.A. in political science from Middlebury College and a J.D. from American University’s Washington College of Law.

Nikki Traylor-Knowles

Member

Nikki Traylor-Knowles is an Associate Professor at the University of Miami, Rosenstiel School of Marine, Atmospheric, and Earth Sciences. She is a cell biologist who uses genomics, microbiology, and molecular biology techniques to study the mechanisms of coral immune function. Traylor Knowles is the Founder and Director of Black Women in Ecology, Evolution and Marine Science, a non-profit whose mission is to develop a global community that elevates and supports Black women in the science, technology, engineering, and medicine (STEM) field through collaboration, driving equitable spaces, science, and leadership. She is a Fulbright Scholar and an elected council member to the International Coral Reef Society as well as the Director of the Voss Marine Invertebrate Collection at the Rosenstiel School. Traylor-Knowles received a B.S. and M.S. in cell and molecular biology from Johns Hopkins University, a Ph.D. in biology from Boston University, and completed a National Science Foundation Ocean Sciences Postdoctoral Fellowship at Hopkins Marine Station, Stanford University. She has served as organizer for the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine's Israeli-American Kavli Frontiers of Science symposium and is also a National Science Foundation and Kaleta A. Doolin Foundation 2023 Ocean Decade Champion.

Angelo Villagomez

Member

Angelo Villagomez is a Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress, where he focuses on Indigenous-led conservation. Born in a village on an island in the western Pacific Ocean, next to the Mariana Trench, and trained in Western scientific methods, Villagomez is a conservation advocate who uses Indigenous knowledge and values and the scientific method to address modern threats including habitat loss, fishing, and climate colonialism. Villagomez worked for 14 years at The Pew Charitable Trusts, where he was an advocate for the designation and expansion of the national marine monuments in the Pacific islands and a policy expert on global shark conservation. Villagomez received a B.A. in biology from the University of Richmond and a B.A. in environmental policy from Rollins College. He is a member of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine's workshop planning committee for an Inclusive and Equitable Ocean.

Kelly Oskvig

Staff Officer