



SETAC and SETAC North America Inclusion Report Version Date: August 2024

Preamble

As we continue our journey towards a more inclusive society at Global SETAC, and SETAC North America, it does us well to continually assess and report on any identified gaps and progress made in the areas of justice, equity, diversity, and accessibility towards inclusion (inclusion) at SETAC. We all recognize that societal barriers to inclusion have been long established, and there is still a lot left to do. This is true of the sciences, and within the environmental sciences; SETAC is no exception. We find it useful to reflect on the work that has been done, while acknowledging what is left to do. We periodically update our inclusion report first published in late 2021, so it serves as a living document of our work in the area. We use each of these reports to reaffirm our commitment to justice, equity, diversity, accessibility and inclusion at SETAC.

SETAC North America conducted its first self- assessment in this area, for programs available to its members, in November of 2021. At that time, in the absence of a framework for such assessments for societies, we gathered assessment questions from several resources for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) reporting and modified them to fit a member association, including: [integrity next](#), [global reporting initiative](#), [non-profit quarterly](#), and [tool kit for equity](#). At the end of the initial self-assessment, we were pleased to see that SETAC North America had been working not only to remediate and rectify shortcomings in our policies and practices, but to lead in this area over several years; however, we also captured some deficiencies and areas that can use improvement. Since then, we have been diligently working to rectify those.

SETAC North America sought opportunities to collaborate with other scientific societies in learning about and growing inclusion. In 2019, SETAC North American joined 51 other scientific societies in what is now called the Societies Consortium on Inclusion in STEM. In February of 2022, SETAC North America was accepted to join the cohort two of Amplifying the Alliance to Catalyze Change for Equity in Stem Success [ACCESS+](#) to test the Equity Environmental Scanning Tool (EEST), which is a framework for assessment of equity at STEM societies. In March of 2022, SETAC North America conducted a workshop with leadership and membership representative to gather feedback and ideas for inclusion work. Both of those engagement have been helpful in building on our work in inclusion.

In our Inclusion report, we capture progress we've made as well as remaining deficiencies and areas that can use improvement and make recommendations for suggested solutions. As such, this report reflects organizational accomplishments and current status and identifies gaps and future projects.



Methods

The SETAC North America Inclusion Report reflects organizational accomplishments and current status and also identifies gaps and future projects in inclusion as of date. The report is organized into a series of probing questions regarding the state of inclusion within the society's strategic work, leadership, employees and members, partners and vendors, and programs (publications, awards, communication, events, and career development). In a change from the first version of the self-assessment report, questions are grouped by the aforementioned areas and statements about gaps are underlined for emphasis.

Definitions

Justice

The maintenance of a just and fair system where all are treated fairly.

Equity

The provision of the resources and opportunities that each person needs based on their individual circumstances, in order to reach equal outcomes for all.

Diversity

The appreciation of the presence of people of varied personal characteristics that make us different from one another, knowing that leads to excellence.

Accessibility

The delivery of equitable access to everyone along the continuum of human ability, experience and logistical parameters.

Inclusion

The supply of equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized based on personal characteristics that make us different from one another.

Belonging

The feeling of being a part of something bigger while being allowed the space to stand alone.

Vision, Mission, Values, and Strategy

Does the society have a commitment to Inclusion?

Embracing inclusion at SETAC has been a journey. SETAC has long been focused on advancing its mission with an eye on scientific excellence and recognizes that scientific excellence can only be achieved by global collaboration and cooperation. While SETAC was incorporated in the US in 1979, by 2002, we have become a global society. Throughout that time there were disparate work towards inclusion (e.g., the SETAC North America Women group activities started in 2004). However, in 2017, SETAC first formally articulated its focus on equity and inclusion in a



policy statement when adopting the SETAC [Sustainability and Social Responsibility Guidelines](#).

Months later, in the 2018 SETAC strategic plan, SETAC expounded on what it considers to be mission-related fields to include fields such as one health, indigenous knowledge and values, science communication, and sustainability, among others – fields that are closely related to “intersectional environmentalism”. Intersectional environmentalism is an inclusive approach to environmentalism that advocates for the protection of both people and the planet where social justice and environmental protection overlap. In that same plan, SETAC cemented diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) as organizational [values](#).

[In 2021](#), SETAC World Council reaffirmed SETAC’s [commitment to fostering inclusivity in a statement](#) and promptly directed all five geographic units to ensure they are ensuring inclusion in all policies considering regional characteristic and needs. Further, in 2021, the SETAC North America Board of Directors established a DEI ad hoc committee to 1) intentionally build a pipeline to leadership that is reflective of the diversity in the field of environmental science; 2) identify and address policies and structural barriers in SETAC that prevent full participation both in the society and in career development; 3) ensure DEI principles and practices are incorporated into every program under their purview.

SETAC and SETAC North America have been systematically promoting inclusion in its programs by embedding inclusion considerations into all policies, processes and programs through are using a three-pronged approach:

1. Removing barriers
2. Guarding against systematic bias
3. Creating welcome spaces

SETAC World Council officially ratified [SETAC’s Inclusion Strategy](#) in September 2022.

Discipline

Does the society promote inclusion in its field?

Over the last number of years, the array of topics covered at SETAC has expanded into areas that are directly connected to diversity, equity and inclusion. Topics covered include: the intersection of indigenous knowledge and western knowledge, impact of environmental pollutants on culturally sensitive species and subsequent impact on affected communities, environmental justice, one health, and cumulative risk, and climate change.

**Does the society promote inclusion in scientific discussion?**

One of SETAC's three founding principles requires balanced engagement from three sectors (Academia, business, and government), and it has since been expanded to be multistakeholder engagement. Lots of work (sessions and publications) has gone into promoting civil scientific discourse though there is a recognized need for more education and bystander training for when bias clouds conversations. More recently, SETAC prepared [strategies for inclusive scientific discourse](#) to use and to promote within our membership.

Culture

Does the society promote an inclusive culture?

Yes, though of course there is always more that can be done as noted in the preamble. Our organizational [values](#) include Inclusion as a standalone value. Governance has reaffirmed our [commitment to fostering inclusivity](#). To foster inclusivity, we focus on 1) creating a safe space 2) reducing barriers to participation, and 3) creating a welcome place.

Over the years, many of our members have created identify-oriented communities and affinity groups, which we fully support by providing them a platform. To ensure a safe place we adhere to a [Code of Conduct](#) and a [Code of Ethics](#).

When we have heard concerns about culture, it was typically about incivility during scientific discourse, so we have since developed [Inclusivity in Scientific Discourse Strategy](#) and have been prompting those.

We expect those who participate in our programs to abide by our [Code of Conduct](#) and [Code of Ethics](#).

as well as our [Participants Policy](#). All policies are focused on fostering a welcoming environment. We have a [problem resolution process](#) in place to deal with concerns when they arise.

There is a need to communicate about our inclusion efforts to promote a more welcoming environment.

How does the society support the 2sLGBTQA+ community?

To foster a welcoming environment to the LGTBQ+ community, we have embraced pronouns (on name badges (virtual and in person) and during introduction). We also ensure that spaces are gender neutral. For example, we make it known that regardless of where we meet, our members are welcome to use whatever bathroom they may choose.

How does the organization actively exercise inclusivity?

We apply an inclusion lens to all programs, policies, and projects at SETAC. One of SETAC's three founding principles tripartite (academic, business, and government sectors) representation, ensuring that different perspectives are awarded the same weight when reviewing our programs



and policies. In 2018, we extended that to be multi-stakeholder engagement to the broadest parameters of inclusion. Examples of how we exercise inclusivity include:

- We actively seek a diversity of speakers for our meeting programs.
- We have an open call for leadership positions (board, program committee members), and for recognitions and awards and allow for self-nomination.
- We offer grants and reduced registration fees for those with financial need including scientists in middle- or lower-economy countries, early career members, and students to remove barriers for participation. We also have had grants for under-represented scientists (e.g., Indigenous people).
- We have recently established “affinity groups,” providing tools and resources to members who wish to engage with others with common characteristics and shared passions and pursuits.

Leadership

Does the society promote an inclusive leadership?

Governance positions are open to all SETAC members in every geographic unit. At SETAC North America, we have an open call for nominations to the board and for committee volunteers. We offer financial assistance to governance members, as needed, so economic situations are not a barrier to inclusion (e.g., expenses associated with attending board meetings and our annual meeting). The nominations committee utilizes a matrix approach to organize the slate of board candidates to ensure balance in many areas including individual diversity. Board members and committee chairs receive inclusion training. Further, all guidelines and standard operating procedures for SETAC programming call for consideration of our values. As we update governing documents, we are clarifying individual diversity as it is defined in our values for consistency. We continue to communicate about [expectations and pathways to leadership](#) and to advertise opportunities for leadership (program committee chairs, members and board members) widely.

Is a member of the society’s management responsible for ensuring equal rights and treatment of all employees and members, regardless of their ethnic origin, gender, age, handicap, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, social background, or political views?

Yes, the Executive Directors.

How does the society maintain knowledge of inclusion issues?

We maintain knowledge through our work with other like minded societies and through training, reading, self-study and reflection. SETAC North America actively seeks opportunities to engage in such issues. For example, SETAC North America is a member of the Societies Consortium on Inclusion in STEMM. The consortium started to review sexual harassment and quickly expanded its purview, recognizing that sexual harassment is often an extension of misogyny and racism. SETAC North America is also part of the [ACCESS](#) network. Further, staff and leaders are active



in self-study and research, which we broadcast via articles in our newsletters and on our social media, and we supplement with mandatory training programs. Starting in 2020, all SETAC North America staff and board regularly receive training in inclusion issues such as awareness, microaggression, bias, and harassment.

What are the metrics for individual diversity in the society leadership and staff?

Through our work in inclusion over years with many scientific societies, we recognize that inclusion is best measured by measuring the program and practices meant to bring inclusion. Therefore, we assess inclusion by continually assessing our programs and policies with an inclusive lense. We measure the success of programs aimed at removing barriers (e.g., meeting attendance grants) by measuring participation in such programs and our ability to serve all who need them. We measure policies (e.g., creating inclusive places and problem resolution process) by the measuring knowledge of such policies and their effectiveness. We survey meeting attendees and ask questions about the meeting culture, inclusion, and suggestions for improvement on both.

We do not measure nor mandate the disclosure demographic information for staff, board or our membership. As an international society, demographic categories are incredibly complex. Further, abiding by global data privacy rules, precludes us from collecting such data. Globally, we take the approach that if we are deliberate in our recruitment (for members, editors, leadership), reduce barriers for participation (financial or otherwise), and create a welcoming culture, then all will feel welcomed.

Is the organization's management committed to ensure a work environment free of physical, sexual, mental, and verbal abuse, threats or other form of mistreatment?

Yes. At present, all employees are remote. We apply the standards of our code of conduct to online meetings and written communications. We define our meeting locations as a workplace. When we meet in-person, we set clear expectations for behavior and provide a straightforward reporting process to protect both employees and members. We employ a restorative justice process for problem resolution and take all complaints seriously.

Do leaders and employees get training in inclusion issues?

Starting in 2020, the board and staff receive regular reminders of inclusion issues such as awareness of microaggression, bias, and harassment. Guidance on inclusion is also provided to volunteers.

Individuals: employees and members

Does the organization have measures in place to ensure equal rights and treatment of all employees and members?

Yes. To ensure equity, all employees and members have access to same benefits and are subject to same policies. Shared policies include the [code of conduct](#), [code of ethics](#), and [participant policies](#) that cover inclusive behavior as well as safe and responsible behavior. In the event that



the aforementioned protective policies are breached, employees and members are able to report in a safe and confidential manner, outlined in the [whistleblower policy](#) and we work towards closure through a defined [problem resolution process](#).

To ensure equity amongst staff, the SETAC North America [employee handbook](#) has clear guidelines regarding ethics, harassment, violence in the workplace. It has provisions to ensure equity in benefits (financial, health care). Parental leave is offered for birth, adoption, or foster care placement of a child with an employee equally, regardless of parental gender. We recognize some government holidays and in doing so make sure to include some that have positive inclusion implications (Juneteenth). We offer accommodations for disabilities. We also offer religious accommodations if an employee's religious beliefs or practices conflict with their work schedule or policies. As of the third quarter of 2021, salaries are based on a national salary survey, four clear staff classes with set pay ranges, and there are no indications of a gender pay gap. To combat the gender pay gap in employment, we provide pay ranges in job postings. We also invite applicants from underrepresented groups to apply for job openings.

All members are treated equally and receive same benefits based on membership level.

Does the society utilize inclusive performance management?

As of 2021, SETAC as a global organization has established clear staff performance expectations and competencies as well as staff roles. The organization utilizes an open performance evaluation process utilizing a transparent rubric to mitigate against bias. Where incentives are given, they are allocated based on performance and do not utilize base salary in calculation equation to ensure equity.

Does the organization have measures in place to prevent any kind of employee or member mistreatment?

We have a [code of conduct](#) and zero tolerance policy for bullying and harassment, which we enforce.

Does the organization provide employees and members an opportunity to give feedback and complaints to management and governance?

Yes, we have a [whistleblower policy](#) and a defined [problem resolution process](#). Additionally, the Board regularly surveys employees on workplace climate and culture. These surveys are confidential to the extent they can be with such a small team. The Board provides feedback to the Executive Director, who is responsible for fostering a safe and welcoming work environment.

Does the organization offer accommodations?

Yes, we accommodate employees and members with physical or mental disabilities and special needs (e.g., dietary restrictions). Accommodations vary based on situation and have included scheduling changes, providing sign language interpreters, and closed captioning. Staff accommodations are outlined in employee handbook. Guidance on inclusion for staff for our programming is summarized in internal checklists. Accommodations for the membership and the



public participating in our programs viewing our digital print materials and materials or attending our events are advertised in various locations on our website. We provide some guidance on inclusive best practice to our members, authors, and meeting attendees. These practices include using pronouns, enabling audio captioning for online meetings, including alt text on images, considering color schemes for figures and tables, and moderator tips for encouraging diverse audience participation. We are always exploring ways to better enable our website to be move beyond basic ADA and ACA compliance.

Does the Society have special groups for diverse audiences?

At SETAC North America, we have several affinity groups for diverse audiences including students, senior resources, women chemists. The SETAC North America Inclusive Diversity Committee also has several affinity groups within it including for Black, LGBTQA+, International Scholars, and others.

Does the organization intentionally recruit members and participants from underrepresented groups?

As a global society, we recruit on the geographic unit level. We recognize the need to recruit members to our field in general and to SETAC in particular with inclusion considerations. In North America we are engaging more with institutions whose members have been traditionally under-represented at SETAC such as Indigenous Groups, Hispanic Servicing Institutions and Historically Black Colleges and Universities. We make a concentrated effort to market the annual meeting to specific groups that have been historically under-represented at SETAC. While doing so, we inform them of the meeting attendance grants in case there were financial barriers, and we try to create avenues for engagement.

Vendors

Does the organization utilize diverse suppliers and vendors?

SETAC North America has used vendors from small local businesses, were feasible, preferentially.

Programs

Does the society promote inclusive programs?

As a society built to promote science, we work to be inclusive in our programs, which include meetings, workshops, publications, and awards. We have established initiatives to reduce barriers and others to create a welcome place. One of the barriers to full participation in SETAC may be financial, since there are costs to membership, which provides access to our journals and discount to meeting registration fees. Other barriers may include language abilities since the language of SETAC has been English, as well as physical abilities of individuals. Finally, we have also established a few initiatives that aim to create a welcome environment and create comradery. A few of our initiatives are discussed below by program:



SETAC Membership

We provide discounted membership fees for various demographics (e.g., students) and based on the economy of country of residence (e.g., low-income or high-income economy).

SETAC Publications

Our publications program includes two peer-reviewed journals, the SETAC Globe, Books, and Fact Sheets. Scientific publications, other than journals, are freely open to the public and accessible virtually, such as our Fact Sheets and many of our books. Our newsletters – the SETAC Globe and the SETAC News – are also publicly available. Our publications program provides funding for professional editing to authors for whom English is a second language.

Peer-reviewed Journals

- The journals have a strategic goal is to "Foster inclusive science that reflects the disciplinary, human, and geographic diversity in the environmental sciences community." Specifically, they have prioritized better engaging the Southern Hemisphere and developing nations because these regions are very much affected by environmental change. The leadership monitors progress or lack thereof by periodically assessing publication trends by global region. The results are reported to editorial staff, the editors, and the SETAC World Council and are also summarized in communications in our Newsletter and presentations at our meetings, as appropriate.
- Journals subscription comes with membership, and we offer highly discounted article processing rates for open access. Both journals participate in programs that offer reduced rate or free access to researchers in countries with low, or lower-middle economies as defined by the World Bank.
- The journals handle manuscript submissions in a double-anonymous fashion. Early in 2016, recognizing the need to ensure inclusion in the Global SETAC journals' program, SETAC started exploring the idea of double-anonymous peer review. Redacting the personal information from submissions is a well-established approach to ensure equity as a guard against the overt and unconscious biases of reviewers, such as affinity bias and the halo effect. After extensive deliberation and with input from all stakeholders, SETAC switched to double-anonymous peer review in 2018.
- The journals program uses a matrix and a single slate approach to identify editorial boards to ensure a rounded group.
- To be more inclusive, the program adopted an easy way to change an author's name on a publication without the need to contact all co-authors. The program also recently adopted "Mx." as an honorific, where an honorific is required by the publisher.
- We plan to ensure equity by expanding the author base, reviewer pool, and editorial board participation by creating inclusive mentorship and training programs and building the English-language editing program.



SETAC Awards

Nominations to our awards program are open to all. To protect the society from potential association with unethical conduct, we have instituted a requirement for an [ethical self-disclosure](#) from candidates or nominees for awards or honors such as leadership positions in governance (e.g., boards and council) or within the society and its programs (e.g., publications and awards). SETAC and SETAC North America Awards Programs had historically included some awards named for individuals. Named awards were sunset in March of 2022 in North America and in May 2024 at the global level. Named awards were sunset not to cast judgment on those for whom awards were named but because named awards often lead to feelings of exclusion among those who are members of underrepresented groups whose scientific contributions continue to remain unrecognized.

SETAC Communications

The Global SETAC Communication program has built guidelines to ensure equity. For example, the society newsletter's style guide requires that members are referred to by name without honorifics. Further, the Global SETAC Communication program follows best practices for inclusion (for example color, motion) for print and electronic communications and strives to educate members to do the same. We recognize that the use of images, graphics, colors and formatted text can enhance the appeal of online and printed materials and assist communication, but they also introduce some accessibility challenges. At SETAC, we try to use larger and scalable font sizes, keep contrast high, embrace white space, consider color blindness, use alt text for images, turn off animations by default, provide labels for buttons, to name a few of the options we include when formatting content.

SETAC Events

SETAC events (webinars, symposia, and meetings) are planned by the various Geographic Units. SETAC North America Meetings plans its annual meeting and various focused Topic meetings and workshop. We do the following to promote accessibility, equity, and inclusion:

- We take many things into consideration as we select venues and vendors during the [event planning process](#).
- We internationally create diverse event program committees utilizing the matrix approach.
- We provide discounted registration fees for various demographics (e.g., students, early career, seniors, participant from middle- and low-economy countries) to reduce financial barriers.
- SETAC North America also provides grants to offset costs of meeting attendance focused on financial needs to reduce the barriers exactly where needed for students as well as professionals.

Selection of student grants is based on merit. The meeting attendance grants program for student was modified in 2022 to anonymize applications to guard against affinity bias and the halo effect.



- SETAC North America makes a concentrated effort to market the annual meeting to specific groups that have been historically under-represented at SETAC. While doing so, we inform them of the meeting attendance grants in case there were financial barriers, and we try to create avenues for engagement.
- For virtual events, we recommended that all participants add their pronouns to their profile. For in-person events, starting 2022, we print pronouns (as provided by participants during meeting registration) on badges, whereas in 2019, we provided stickers for that purpose.
- Starting in 2020, we make the scientific program of our meeting virtually accessible for those who cannot attend or do not want to attend in person. While the pandemic propelled us forward, those plans were luckily in place before the start of the pandemic and allowed us to quickly pivot our meeting.
- We actively invite diverse plenary speakers.
- The call for session chairs and presenters is open to all. Abstracts authors are kept anonymous to the chairs and both authors and chairs are kept anonymous from the program committee to guard against unconscious bias such as affinity bias or halo bias.
- We collect community inclusion data. We survey meeting attendees and ask questions about the meeting culture, inclusion, and suggestions for improvement on both. Staff use survey response to suggest action as needed.
- We provide accommodations for participants of various needs. We comply disability laws where we host events (e.g., with the Americans with Disabilities Act ([ADA](#)) and Accessible Canada Act ([ACA](#))). We hold our events at ADA- and ACA-compliant facilities. We also provide extra services to ensure that we are as inclusive as feasible.
 - Mobility: We require that the setup of structures and furniture ensures that aisles are accessible, and ramps are available, as needed.
 - Auditory: We provide sign language interpreters, if requested in advance. We provide captioning for where feasible.
 - Visual: We use larger and scalable font sizes, keep contrast high, embrace white space, consider color blindness, use alt text for images, turn off animations by default, provide labels for buttons.
 - Dietary: We provide options for people with dietary restrictions and require that food is well labeled.
 - Childcare: We provide childcare information and make lactation rooms available.
 - Language: Interpretation is sometimes offered, as feasible. For example, virtual events hosted by SETAC Latin America have included simultaneous interpretation (English, Spanish or Portuguese) and the websites were presented in three languages.
- To foster a welcoming environment to the 2SLGTBQA+ community, we have embraced pronouns (on name badges (virtual and in person) and during introduction). We also ensure that spaces are gender neutral. For example, we make it known that regardless of where we meet, our members are welcome to use whatever bathroom they may choose.
- We host several side-events planned for specific demographic to make everyone welcome:
 - New Member Welcome (Breakfast)
 - Woman in SETAC Symposium – since 2004
 - Student Mentor Gathering – since 2008



- Senior Resource Group Mixer – since 2014
- Meeting Guide Buddy Program – since 2015
- Gathering of Empowered Minds by Inclusive Diversity Committee – since 2018
- We are also aware of several groups that like to meet more privately such as SETAC North America Women Chemists and the LGBTQA+ members
- We require meeting participants to abide by code of conduct and meeting participant policies. To guard against hate and bullying and enforce our code of conduct, in 2019, we started widely advertising cell phone numbers of key staff to facilitate reports of incidences during our meetings. It was then that we also started discussions about establishing a more visible Ally Program for in-person events. The idea was to train a few individuals (e.g., staff, board members, program committee) in how to respond to reports of hate or bullying and make them highly visible to attendees. SETAC North America events went virtual in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic so the program was never established. We provide “best practices for an inclusive meeting” to session chairs.
- We are working with our membership on centering social events on inclusive activities. For example, we encourage accessible activities and discourage alcohol centered event.

How does the organization actively guard against bias in programs?

We apply an inclusion lens to all programs, policies, and projects at SETAC.

Examples of ways we guard against bias include:

- In our journal publications program, we use a double-anonymous peer review process, wherein the reviewer does not know the identity of the author, and vice versa.
- In our meetings program, we anonymize session and abstracts proposals as well as meeting attendance grant applications at review as of 2022.
- We regularly review and update criteria and judging rubrics used for awards and grants.
- We use matrices of scientific and individual diversity when recruiting leadership for governance.
- We actively collect feedback on experiences after events. We address any concerns raised through our problem resolution process.

Areas for Improvement

We are resolved to continue to nurture inclusion in SETAC as workplace and in SETAC leadership and programs. We identified several areas that needed improvement for SETAC North America during our first assessment in 2021 and have remedied some completely and are in the process of remedying others. We plan to continue our work in inclusion as reported here plus we specifically plan to:

- Continue to communicate about our inclusion efforts to promote a more welcoming environment.
- Develop a program to systematically recruit members and participants from diverse background especially those traditionally under-represented at SETAC.