

# GFDL DEIAC Annual Newsletter 2022-2023 Shaping Tomorrow Together



## IN THIS ISSUE

- DEIAC Highlights from the past year
- Welcoming GFDL's Organizational Culture Officer
- Strengthening Employee Retention Survey
- GFDL Staff Highlights
- DEIAC Mission and How To Join

In 2020, a pivotal step was taken by GFDL employees with the establishment of the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Committee (DEIAC). This initiative was ignited by the profound insights gained from the October 2019 GFDL science review's call to promote a culture of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. Beyond its role as a committee, this initiative embodies a commitment to shaping the evolution of our lab.

DEIAC's mission beats at the core of our team's spirit. It revolves around cultivating an environment where diversity thrives, equity is upheld, and inclusion and accessibility becomes second nature. This means extending a warm welcome to individuals from all walks of life, allowing our unique experiences, knowledge, and skills to blend harmoniously, and creating a space where everyone's uniqueness finds its belonging.

Through this newsletter, DEIAC invites you to step into the journey of the past year. Within these pages, the spotlight shines on the steadfast progress driven by DEIAC members through their inspiring initiatives – spanning from engaging with students on college campuses to holding Community Forums at GFDL. This remarkable journey also includes the appointment of GFDL's first-ever Organizational Culture Officer, Shawna Norris, and the creation of the GFDL Values poster.

Amidst these reflections, DEIAC expresses its gratitude to **YOU** for your continued support and participation, which was essential in turning aspirations into reality and shaping the significant impact and accomplishments we celebrate today. Let's continue our journey together on this empowering path to cultivating an inclusive environment, where each individual feels valued, respected, and empowered here at GFDL.



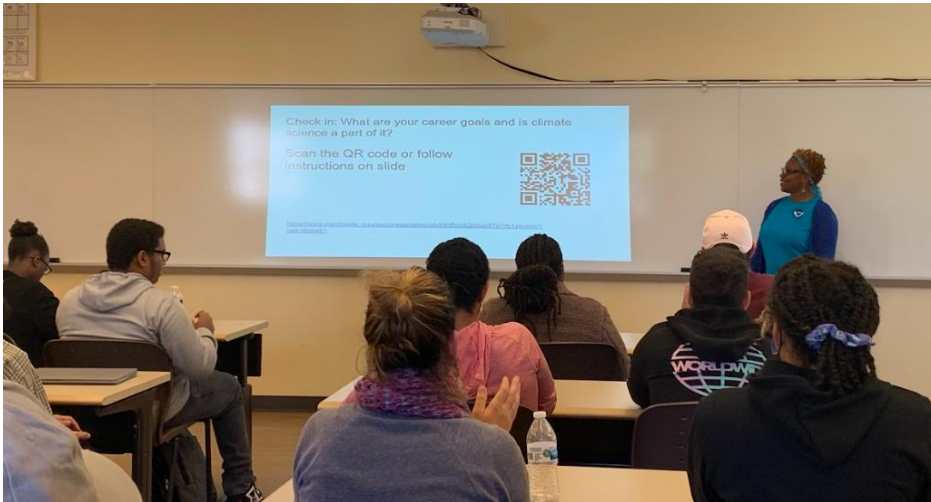
With Respect and Unity,  
The GFDL Diversity, Equity, Inclusion,  
and Accessibility Committee

INTERESTED IN JOINING DEIAC OR HAVE IDEAS?  
CONTACT US!

[OAR.GFDL.DEIAC.MTE@NOAA.GOV](mailto:OAR.GFDL.DEIAC.MTE@NOAA.GOV)



## Community Outreach!



GFDL DEIAC Member, Latoyia Kirton, speaks to students from Bronx Community College about career opportunities with NOAA.

As part of the DEIAC's dedication to make hiring at GFDL more equitable, DEIAC members partnered with others from GFDL and CIMES to engage in outreach efforts targeting students from diverse backgrounds. These events featured panelists who shared their work, as well as their incredible journeys to get here. Events that we are aware of are listed below. If you have any outreach activities you would like us to feature in the future, please let us know!

### Organizations we have worked with this year:

Bronx Community College, University of Maryland Baltimore County, The City College of New York, Mercer County Girls and Boys Club, The National Society of Black Engineers, The National Society of Black Physicists, Hunter College, Princeton Young Women's Conference, Prison Teaching Initiative, Monmouth Junction Elementary School

### GFDL Scientists Spark Curiosity in Elementary Students at Local Science Fair

Led by DEIAC's own Lori Sentman, Eight GFDL employees and affiliates served as visiting team members at the 16th annual Monmouth Junction Elementary School Science Fair on Saturday,



February 4, 2023. This non-competitive event focused on fostering a love of science at an early age and drew 145 participants, including 95 projects on display. The air was filled with excitement as the scientists visited projects and engaged in rich discussions with the students.

Their engagement introduces and inspires a diverse group of next generation scientists to the excitement of scientific discovery. It also conveys a sense of appreciation for the natural world and a greater awareness of the need to protect the planet's environment and the creatures inhabiting it.



## Welcoming Our Organizational Culture Officer!

A pivotal moment in our journey was the appointment of GFDL's first-ever Organizational Culture Officer, Shawna Norris. This milestone underscores our commitment to inclusivity, ensuring that every voice is heard and valued. Working with GFDL Associate Director, Lauren Koellermeir, DEIAC crafted a job description for a 1-year LANTERN position. In April we welcomed Shawna Norris into the fold as GFDL's Organizational Culture Officer. Shawna brings over two decades of experience leading DEIA initiatives, holds master's in public administration and health and wellness coaching, and is working on a Ph.D. in Strategic Leadership.



Shawna Norris

Shawna is excited to be a part of GFDL and has expressed, "As a career Federal employee, I have experience on both sides of the leadership equation. Therefore, I have a very balanced perspective when it comes to organizational culture. Since there are so many nuances associated with leading people while managing expectations, policies, and procedures, my goal is to spark the necessary internal conversations to bridge the seen and unseen communication and information gaps between leadership and personnel. My intended outcome is to act as a guide to support the generation of inclusive, holistic solutions that will further unify the GFDL team and sustain a positive workforce culture within the lab."

During her time with us, Shawna will conduct an extensive internal review of GFDL (known as S.E.R.V.E.), the results of which will help inform strategies to improve the culture and employee experiences. It goes without saying that we are lucky to have Shawna here, and hope that you are able to speak with her in person or via email. Shawna's unique blend of experience and education equips her to guide us towards a more inclusive and positive future for our lab.

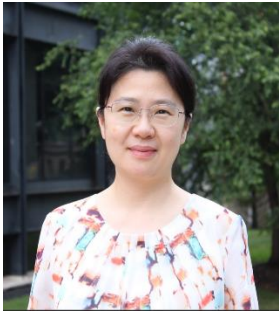
## Strengthening Employee Retention Via Engagement (S.E.R.V.E.)

We're excited to announce a game-changing initiative that's set to redefine our organizational culture. Introducing S.E.R.V.E. - Strengthening Employee Retention Via Engagement - a powerful strategic endeavor meticulously crafted to infuse our organizational culture with unwavering commitment to GFDL's Core Values: *Excellence, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility, Belonging, Service, and Integrity.*

But it's more than a project; it's a rallying call to action for business excellence and workplace vitality. S.E.R.V.E. represents the driving force behind targeted strategies that not only foster behaviors, but also sculpt a culture that thrives, enhancing the very core of our organizational well-being.



## Community Testimonials



"As a member of the DEIA committee for two years, I always feel welcomed and like I belong within the team. It's a rewarding experience working with a group of people full of passion and creativity in advocating the values of DEIA and embracing the values within the working culture of GFDL."

- Mingjing Tong, Meteorologist, DEIAC Member

"Being a new DEIA committee member, this year has been an eye-opening and truly transformative experience. During my 21 years at GFDL, I have prioritized and been very active in educational outreach and mentoring. By serving on the committee, I gained awareness of the many facets and impacts related to DEIA. It is rewarding to make positive contributions by driving leadership accountability and communicating change priorities within GFDL."

- Lori Sentman, Physical Scientist, DEIAC Member



"Whether it is the challenge of understanding fundamentals of the Earth as a system, developing accurate warnings on extreme events, or contributing to the climate change challenge, a key strength of GFDL is in its ability to inclusively entrain a diverse set of perspectives to optimize progress. GFDL is more than the sum of its parts when those parts reflect the diversity of the communities we serve."

- John Dunne, Oceanographer

"Co-Chairing GFDL DEIAC has been such an empowering experience. In some ways I feel like I have grown up at GFDL so being able to help make the lab feel like a place where everyone can feel a sense of belonging is a very special honor!"

- Vee Narinesingh, Postdoc, DEIAC Co-Chair



## Thank you to all DEIAC Members!

Jessica Liptak (co-chair), Veeshan Narinesingh (co-chair), Latoyia Kirton, Ilam Shah, Shawna Norris, Jessica Luo, Mingjing Tong, Lori Sentman, Sammy Ghazal, Mitch Bushuk, and Shuai Wang

## DEIAC Mission

At GFDL, we believe that diversity, equity, inclusivity, and accessibility are moral imperatives. They are an essential part of our Core Values, governing our code of conduct, and guiding our every action and goal.

The GFDL mission is to be a world leader in the development of comprehensive, integrated and unified models of the Earth system comprising the atmosphere, oceans, land, biosphere, cryosphere, and ecosystems; and application of these models for the seamless understanding, predictions and projections of the Earth system, from hours to decades and from global-to-regional spatial scales, accounting for natural variations and forced changes.

Meeting this mission requires innovation, strong collaborations, and teamwork. Innovation within an organization is highly fostered when the constituents' diverse perspectives, experiences, opinions, and backgrounds are included, welcomed, respected, considered, and valued. GFDL is committed to fostering a vibrant, diverse, inclusive, interactive, accessible, and equitable community in order to fulfill the NOAA mission objectives and exercise improved leadership in science, service, and stewardship.

**INTERESTED IN JOINING THE TEAM  
OR HAVE IDEAS?**

Reach out!

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