BRIDGE: A GRADUATE STUDENT-LED EFFORT TO INCREASE THE DIVERSITY OF SPEAKERS INVITED TO CAMPUS

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WHY BRIDGE?

Geoscience has a diversity problem. In order to train the next generation of geo-scientists, we must attract and retain members of UR groups. BRIDGE focuses on department colloquia as a platform for achieving this goal. Colloquia provide speakers with visibility, opportunities to share their work, and the possibility of new collaborations. Colloquia also provide young scholars with models of what they would like to be. (Nittouer et al. 2018). A lecture series thus offers practical opportunities to harness departmental energy and resources to promote and retain UR geo-scientists.

WHAT IS BRIDGE?

BRIDGE aims to increase the visibility of early-career, underrepresented (UR) scientists in the earth, environmental, and sustainability sciences and related fields, highlight exceptional broader impacts, and facilitate mentoring relationships with grad students. To address these aims, we host 3 events:

BRIDGE2Science: traditional technical talk in host department

BRIDGE2Impacts: freeform event (talk, workshop, panel) on broader impacts

BRIDGE2Students: lunch with graduate students

OUTCOMES & TESTIMONIALS

Increase Visibility of UR/EC Scientists

83 members of the UMass community representing 17 departments have attended BRIDGE2Impacts events:

• "Speaking with a knowledgeable person of color in a faculty position."
• "It has opened my eyes to the type of questions we need to ask ourselves in regards to working in academia as a person of color."
• "I find that one of the surest ways to learn about my options in regards to my career is by listening to the stories of scientists and their journey to their current position. Dr. Greenlee was a great example of how when our interests align with opportunity, if we're intentional about it we can do the work so we can turn. Long story short, I find it valuable to know the paths that other people have taken to their current career."

Highlight Exceptional Broader Impacts

"Coming in, I wasn’t really sure how to see connections between housing policy and ecology - but Dr. Greenlee changed that perception right away. If we were to plan a series of co-production, our curiosity about our science seems to generate a wealthy amount of research topics and questions."
• "It showed me how something I'd consider 'natural' (the occurrence of bed bugs) still has unbalanced patterns within our socioeconomic structure. A fascinating (and terrible) reminder of the disparity between high and low incomes in the US."
• "I never really saw my interdisciplinary work as a broader impact, but I’ve realized that even the act of community building across disciplines and departments can be a broader impact. Especially if we pool together our stakeholders and are able to produce knowledge that is more useful for them."
• "It showed how you could tie fields that usually don’t work together to produce something impactful!"

Facilitate Mentoring Relationships

38 students have attended BRIDGE2Students from 12 departments:

• "Dr. Greenlee’s discussion at the end of his presentation on how we can work to make our research more interdisciplinary."
• "I appreciate the opportunity to sit down with faculty from another institution in a low-stakes environment and having the opportunity to ask questions/discuss topics that are usually not viable in my labpartment."
• "I would have liked to understand Dr. Greenlee’s framework for developing interdisciplinary collaborations. It’s important to know how to decide when to say no when there are so many opportunities to collaborate and the pressure to produce is huge."
• "Hearing about Dr. Greenlee’s path to his career."
• "It helped me think about the necessity of networking and how valuable it is in developing future collaborations."

SURVEY QUESTIONS FOR BRIDGE2Students/BRIDGE2Impacts EVALUATIONS

1. What did you find most valuable about this event?
2. Did this event change your perception of an academic career trajectory?
3. Are there any topics/questions that you wish were raised?
4. How did this event change your perception of broader impacts?
5. Is there anything you would share that structure or timing of the event?
6. Do you have anything else you would like to share?

What are other questions that could be asked to collect feedback or provide potential future directions?