

Wednesday, May 6th from 4:00-5:30 p.m.

Have you been participating in the 21 day Racial Equity Challenge hosted by Food Solutions of New England (<https://foodsolutionsne.org/21-day-racial-equity-habit-building-challenge/>)?

We -- Environmental Education of New Mexico -- want to grow our Equity in EE Learning Community (<https://eeanm.org/equity-in-ee/>) and host a virtual conversation on **Wednesday, May 6th from 4:00-5:30 p.m.** for those participating in the challenge. This conversation will be focused on shared learnings from the racial equity challenge while exploring how we can take those life lessons to further strive for racial equity in our work.

Facilitation for this conversation will be provided by Shantini Ramakrishnan (EENM fellow @ Rio Mora) and Eileen Everett (EENM).

4:00-4:10 p.m. History and context of Equity in EE Learning Community

4:10-4:20 p.m. Group agreements and setting the stage

4:20-4:45 p.m.

- Lots of jobs were lost during the pandemic and eventually, as conditions improve, we may be in a position to fill vacancies for our respective organizations, be involved in the hiring process, or be applying for jobs ourselves.
- Many hiring practices -- under the pretext of efficiency and objectivity -- imbed biases in their protocols (provide examples here)
- What kind of hiring practices do we want to see for EE?
  - Specifically, how do we influence job descriptions and requirements for positions that are inclusive and embrace diversity? (XX is an equal opportunity employer is not enough!)
  - How can we improve the interviewing process to focus on candidates' attributes for the position and provide a platform to showcase diverse perspectives? (follow up question #1 as time allows)
  - How can we best mentor our youth (students, interns, family members, community members, etc.) to best navigate "the system" without disempowering their voices and perspectives? (follow up question #2 as time allows)

4:45-5:10 What kind of organizational culture do we want to cultivate for our work and for the field of EE?

5:10-5:30 Next steps (How do we want to share what we just discussed with the broader community? What do we want the Equity in EE Learning Community to look like moving forward?)

Proposed group agreements

Internal commitment

- Open to refinement & change
- **Honor confidentiality**

(stories stay, learnings go)

- Listen to understand
- Balance advocacy & inquiry
- WAIT - why am I talking;

why aren't I talking

- Actively participate - be fully present
- Lean into your learning edge
- It's OK to be raggedy

Acknowledge & respect difference & similarities

- Speak from personal experience - use "I" statements
- No representatives (don't expect a person to represent)
- Acknowledge there are voices missing
- Assume good intentions and tend to impact
- Address conflict or tension
- Take risks, ask questions, be courageous
- Silence cell phones, no texting, computers
- Have some fun with this
- No thick skin - our feelings matter

Hiring practices

- Including salary range, don't ask for salary history, consider actual cost of living (ideally based upon what a family needs to be supported)
- In terms of salary, think about realities (rather than govt guidelines)
- Adding language about organizational's commitment to the community (in addition to encourage women and people of color to apply), this could be a paragraph included in the job description (and having the organization be clear about what this looks like)
- Language is understandable to all applicants (be aware of jargon)
- Hold forums to explain job descriptions and answer questions, especially for government positions (and part of this needs to include a discussion of jargon)
- Have minimum requirements that are really needed (e.g. is a degree necessary for this job?) Make sure hoops aren't being unnecessarily added.
- using phrases that relay the openness of the employer to diversity, ie. "looking for different perspectives" ??? Be sure to add "life experience" given credit, possibly in lieu if advanced schooling.
- Educational or work experiences may or may not be relevant
- Hiring based on attributes vs work experience or degrees
- There are great articles that pop up when searching for "Hiring for attributes"

- Do you ask the same interview questions to each candidate or tailor questions more to individual candidates?
- Since most of us are in the biz of EE, it would be nice to offer the option of an outdoor interview if the weather permits.
- “Conversational interviews” are more useful
- Can we create opportunities for people to work with kids and see how they respond to that
- Zoom interviews can be challenging
- Another idyllic structure could be to ask someone to take the interviewer to a favorite nature place. which would facilitate conversation and make connections based around the environment. \* make sure the interviewee chooses the location
- Having someone who has been part of that role before be part of the interview
- Advertising positions in the community
- How do we define and environmental educator
- What is really necessary in a position description?
- Search for “hiring for attributes” and “behavioral interview questions”
- It’s important to be clear of expectations of what people should wear, etc. for an interview (goes back to having an interviewee choose a location to go for a walk or be outside)
- Giving people an option of an interview outside or inside (and showcase their attributes in the authentic)
- Bringing awareness of biases around physical appearances (e.g. hair, etc.), awareness of court cases on a state or national level around this type of discrimination
- Comfortable, be open to speaking with others, don’t need to code switch
- How does the culture of science mesh or doesn’t mesh with the cultures of who we’re working with
- Are our base values in conflict with one another?
  - But also - where are there commonalities in values / practices?
- A science perspective can mean asking questions and that can be in conflict with other ways of knowing (not sharing info)
- as long as we don't teach science as if it's the only way then there can be room for multiple realities and understandings of nature and how we can care for and connect with it.
- maybe any perspective, including western science needs to be introduced as such
- Explicitly consider your own culture, and see how that might not be a universal truth, just the way you do things.
- i think work culture needs to include accounting for people having lives outside of work. ie flexible hours for people, especially those with families to care for.
- Support a culture where people can sit in a place of discomfort

- Pausing from tasks, break bread with one another, share a meal together, bring something you've made (from your culture, a family recipe, etc.)