



Conversation on Systemic Racism NOTES

Advanced Photon Source (APS)

Date: June 25, 2020

Time: 9:00-10:00am

System: Bluejeans Events

Format: Facilitated discussion of focus group questions

Facilitators: Tom Padilla, Monica Billinger and Lynnean Celmer, Briana Blazek and Tressa Alcantara

Panel: Stephen Streiffer - APS Lab Director, Arista Thurman - Chairman of PSC D&I, Tom Padilla - H&R Manager for PSC, Monica Billinger - Manager of DEI at ALI, John Byrd - Division Director for ASD, Jim Kerby - Project Manager of APS-U, Bob Hettel - Director of APS-U, George Srajer - Deputy ALD of PSC, Jonathan Lang - Division Director of XSD, Beth Schlesinger - Head of Communication of PSC for CEPA.

Not Takers: Kyle Webb and Tracy Thomas

Participants: 181

- Intro by Lynnean Celmer
- Monica Billinger talked about the purpose of the call
- Stephen Streiffer talked about current events regarding racism and the importance to Argonne National Laboratory and the commitment to improve diversity. We want to hear employee concerns.

Discussion Questions:

1. How do you feel about the events (protests, social movements, reforms) in the aftermath of the George Floyd killing?
2. What do you think are some implications for the Lab?
3. What do you see as your role?
4. What is the role of ANL leaders?
5. Do you feel you are supported when it comes to diversity and inclusion challenges?

Comments:

- Disappointed and sad about the events and what you see going on in the country. Looking at the television you would think this happened in 1960 not 2020. Disappointed it is happening

but recognize it is not the first time this has happened. Would it have even come up if someone did not have a camera and record the event? Concerned for my children.

- Talked about his own experience in the past and being the only white person who was different on a college bus. He immediately sensed being the one person who was different. Can't imagine having to experience that on a daily basis. Was surprised when Obama was elected president because he didn't think the country was ready but was hopeful. Now feels like we have regressed. Some people who were closet racist have come out as very racist. We can't allow that to continue and hope we can make a start here.
- Talked about where he lives is very diverse place and spouse is a minority. His children walk around wearing hoodies and worries about them. They are good children but worried they could be mistaken for someone else and could be hurt. New to Argonne and the area and finds Chicago is not as diverse as the place where he lives as the people in Chicago are more split. He is interested in seeing diversity at ANL.
- If we want our demographics to match the demographics of the community, what steps can the lab take to make that a reality? Question is motivated by previous participant comments. The person is very rarely seeing people of color like them, particularly scientist, and feels pressure from that. What will the lab do to change that?
 - If we are going to change the demographic of the APS then we need to work harder at recruiting to find diverse candidates. We have given lip service to that in the past but need to make a commitment to target places where we can attract under represented candidates. Need to make sure we are giving those talented individuals an opportunity to become part of our community. Argonne often hides behind the statement of we have low turnover (about 5% a year) but tired of that excuse. We need to move more quickly to broaden the diversity to reflect society and the talent that is out there. Need to be proactive in our recruitment.
 - We need to get better at workforce planning so we can design the recruiting strategies that put us where we need to be with diversity. Identify where we can recruit a diverse workforce and then do it.
- Racism has been going on for years in this country. We have talked a lot about solutions but nothing has been done. One of the ways to overcome this is through education and integration. Remembers 10-15 years ago ANL had a program to bring in people from under represented communities. Why did that program stop? Need to grow diversity in the scientific community. Suggests going into the community and work with others to show them what we do and bring them to the lab. Another issue is the fear of the unknown. We tend to (flock) interact with people who look and think like us. Chose his neighborhood because it was the most integrated city in the area. Feel like this has been very beneficial for his children.
- We see a lot of activism and protest. Everyone thinks someone else is the racist but we all have implicit bias. Took the Harvard implicit bias test and was shocked by the results. The first step to overcoming racism is to identify your own bias. There are very good resources to help you overcome your own bias. Will provide the link to the test.
- We need to look in the mirror and realize we are part of the problem. If you look at the leadership on the call they are all white men. We need to have more minorities and women in leadership roles. We need to do better mentoring people to prepare the future generation so they can become leaders.
- A lot of comments on students and postdocs. Recently a few articles were in the scientific press (WIST) specifically addressing postdocs. Asserts that people are selected through their network

and who they know instead of through an open process. We need to be more intentional in making the process for Post Docs more open and equitable, beyond who we know and commit to a much more open, thorough netting when looking at candidates to avoid implicit bias.

- Know 4 people who are PHD's that are minority that left the lab due to lack of advancement opportunities. Retention needs to be a focus as well. We need to look at roles and how we can promote people. Racism comes in all forms not just against African Americans it is all nationalities and races. We need work on our own implicit bias. One of the things we can do is be more transparent about the demographics of the laboratory so we know ourselves. We are working on making our diversity and inclusion and demographics more accessible. They are published but difficult to find but it should not be buried on the web site. If we are going to move the needle on this issue we need to be much more active in recruiting from minority institutions, mentoring staff and building networks for people without opportunities. We can't just be diversity and inclusion but equity and inclusion.
- On a lab trip meet a minority person who grew up in Chicago and spent a summer working here in the early 80's and it changed his life. He went on to become an engineer and he said "I didn't know I could do this." This is an amazing way to get people in the door and lead to STEM careers, even if they do not end up at Argonne.
- Opinion given on the George Floyd issue and how she felt very mad and hurt. Expressed that the police system needs reform. Feels there are stereo-types against African American citizens who are often thought of in a bad light and people need to be educated about their history. Gave an experience of an African American farmer who could not get a loan for his farm because of being black. Sad that African American women have to worry about the safety of their husbands and sons. Shared a story of a grandmother with an African American grandson who was arrested on sight because police thought he was doing something to a caucasian woman, not knowing it was her grandson, who had done nothing.
- Thanked everyone for having this tough conversation but it is important. Has been doing a lot of self-work to identifying his role in systemic racism. One of the things he learned is that he is one of the biggest barriers. Not because he wants to be but because of how much it is ingrained in our society and it supports the system. Suggests that all examine our own roles in this. The good news is there are some great resources to help you. Will share some of the resources that he and his wife have collected over time.
- As a French citizen, she had a hard time explaining what was happening to her kids mainly due to her upbringing. Where she comes from talking about race was banned by the government in 1970's so she grew up not thinking about race and if you talked about race you were racist. We are one human race and your ethnicity does not define you. Where you come from will shape your views on the topic. However, educating people about African American history is important. Another point is during a webinar she attended yesterday someone asked "What is the link between the death of George Floyd and the lack of diversity in science?" It was explained that when you go through school if you only see people who are the same as you, it enforces biases, so then when you see someone who is different you think they cannot be a scientist or they are up to something. This was a really eye-opening thing. Next, she mentioned that if we want to increase diversity, we need to get more involved with elementary schools to promote science. Possibly have schools come to tour the APS. What can we do to push these things more?

- Argonne does have a program that goes out to elementary and high schools. Also, independently participated in “a Day of Science” with a local middle school where he spent a day talking about ANL with student and found it very rewarding. Will share the information on the program.
- In regards to Internships and summer students, Meredith Bruozas, Director of Educational Outreach programs at ANL, is very familiar with the Chicagoland region and can be a great resource in helping. We will invite her to come over and give more information on the programs that she has been running and the work they are doing which can be a big opportunity for engagement. **ACTION ITEM.**
- Leadership needs to look at divisions and groups to identify those who are significantly under represented with minorities and women and step in to mandate change. It will not happen on its own, what is the incentive to change?
 - This is a real issue that we have been too static in what we are doing. We recognize that if we leave it to chance nothing will change. APS needs to make sure that everyone who wants a mentor has a mentor for career development. Look at the demographics of APS so we know where the challenges are. Hold leaders accountable for diversity, equity and inclusion, looking not only at APS’s processes but Argonne’s process. Mandate the expectation that we will have a selection of diverse candidates.
 - Argonne has very little presence not only in the community but the entire Chicagoland area. We need to make a point to say this is how we will reach out to the community. This lab does not do that. Other labs have created STEM high schools for underrepresented groups in the community and got the community to embrace the school. Argonne does not have a community presence. We need to come up with a good plan to get the University of Chicago engaged with us as well.
 - One of goals is to have a community presence in Chicago metro area for a robust pipeline so Argonne is seen as premier place for underrepresented groups to work. They are working with the Educational Outreach program at ANL to partner with groups like the National Society of Black Engineers to showcase Argonne as a place of choice to work for STEMS.
- In the past the National User Facility org has sponsored a workshop at ANL for minority institutions. ANL is currently involved with the ACT-SO program designed to promote STEM for high school students with a national and local presence and that has been successful. Also working to engage with a program called GEM, a graduate program for improving minorities access to education.
- The changes are not easy. It will take dedication and commitment, it will not happen on its own. We will dedicate the appropriate resources and that is the commitment the APS, laboratory and University of Chicago need to make, so we can make a difference. If something is worth doing it is worth putting in the necessary resources both time and money to make a difference.
- Been a part of Women in Science & Technology (WIST) for almost 3 decades, during this time, has been involved in discussion on how to find, hire and support women in science. Over the years some lab directors have been supportive in making needed changes, while others have put their emphasis elsewhere. Feels people are ultimately uncomfortable hiring people they don’t know or whose mentors they do not know, as it is considered a risk. Also feels things seem to get stuck for women scientist and even more so for minorities. When openings come

up managers want to hire quickly. It is not a pipeline issue, it is a management issue and that recruiting should be done with professional assistance/recruiters who can find the right people. This needs to be more than it is a nice thing to do.

- Closed by noting that in changing the face of PSC we have to be more active in engagement in our local communities and the Chicagoland area as well as engagement with underrepresented minorities in the hiring process. Gave credit to the leaders in HR for their work over the last few years in implicit bias training for hiring committees. We will reach out to ANL HR department to get professional assistance in our recruiting methods. We have to start making changes and quit making excuses. It is important that we keep this conversation going.
- The PSC D&I Committee will continue to work together with the PSC Communities to get these issues addressed. D&I meetings are held the first Thursday of each month at 1:00pm and communication on the meetings will be sent out.