

Our lab is actively working towards creating an open and inclusive environment, and has worked together to create this diversity and inclusion statement. **We welcome all potential collaborators to the lab (including undergraduates, graduate students, visitors, early-career researchers, and established scientists), recognizing and valuing your unique intersecting identities.** We prioritize taking time to discuss improvements that could be made regarding diversity and inclusion, as well as learning from other labs and professionals in the field. We fully support the [vision and mission](#) set forth by the Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion at John Carroll University, and we commit to holding ourselves responsible for actively dismantling systemic injustice on campus and off.

Our commitment to inclusion stems from our knowledge that scientific excellence depends on creativity, that creativity emerges from diversity, and that the advantages of diversity are realized through inclusion. Everyone deserves the agency to live their personal and professional lives to the fullest extent they wish, but historical and contemporary injustices have excluded many people from doing so. We believe that diverse perspectives help ensure that the best ideas for promoting social and environmental justice are heard and acted upon.

We believe that these statements are not enough and that actions are a necessary part of dismantling inequities in our field. Some of the actions we are taking to that end include:

- *Actively recruiting students from diverse backgrounds to the lab, and supporting them during their time in the lab and beyond. Support may include, but is not limited to: assistance securing scholarships and other forms of financial support, mentoring relationships with professors, graduate students, and senior undergraduates related to coursework, feedback on writing assignments, job applications, and CVs, and open, honest discussion of career goals and professional development, prioritizing the student's needs and goals. (All lab members)*
- *Supporting undergraduate students in their general biology coursework by welcoming them to ask questions, checking in on them, and informing/reminding them of available resources. Fostering interest in scientific research and inviting students to lab meetings. (Catalina, James)*
- *Normalizing discussions about race, identity, justice, and inclusion in our professional and personal lives, and reading at least one DEI themed paper per semester as a group. (All lab members)*
- *Bringing our science out of the lab and to the communities where we live and work by participating in outreach events like Current Science at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. (All lab members)*

• *Providing professional mentorship for diverse students through scientific societies or similar programs, including the Ecological Society of America's SEEDS program, the American Society of Ichthyology and Herpetology's Cashner Student Award, and EEB MentorMatch (James)*

• *Engaging in substantive and ongoing collaboration with students, early career researchers, and established researchers in the countries in which we work. Examples include advising or co-advising students, serving on thesis committees or as an external thesis reader, co-authoring publications, sharing equipment and other resources, financially subsidizing participation by local students in field work, and providing professional development (James)*

• *Providing leadership on justice-oriented campus work, including sitting on JCU's student government DEI committee (Carly), participating in the Environmental Issues Group (Molly, Gianna), participating in justice-centered service through the Arrupe Scholars program (Molly, Carly), leading the S-STEM summer bridge program (James), participating in a student organization investigating building a community garden to help combat food insecurity (Jasmine), working as a Peer Health Advocate (Katie), and working with a Cleveland-area high school student to develop a program to bring students to JCU for on-campus programming (Jake)*

We recognize that our commitment to equity and inclusion is ongoing and needs to be updated and re-evaluated. We also recognize that we will make mistakes. When called out for those mistakes, we commit to acknowledging and learning from them, and improving our behavior in the future.

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James Watling
Carly Anderson
Katie Benaquista
Gianna Merlo

Catalina Valderrama Robles
Grace Burkin
Elena Kessler
Molly Russell