

Environmental Justice Working Group Charter
The Johns Hopkins University
Sustainability Leadership Council
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This paper seeks to justify the need for and outline the roles of an Environmental Justice Working Group of the Johns Hopkins University Sustainability Leadership Council.

Introduction

Events of recent months have heightened public awareness of police brutality against BIPOC individuals, increased national dialogue on historic and contemporary forms of systematic racism, and made evident the disproportionate exposure of BIPOC individuals to public health threats such as COVID-19. These are only a few in an endless list of topics related to the inequalities and inequities experienced by BIPOC communities. As we reflect on recent events and discussions, we are reminded that, Black, Brown, and indigenous communities have and continue to experience violence and oppression related to their relationship with and access to the environment, land use, and natural resources. Consequently environmental justice, social justice, and sustainability are inextricably linked.

As the SLC was chartered to give advice and make recommendations to the Provost on establishing Johns Hopkins as a leader in higher education environmental sustainability, the SLC would be unable to perform its function to the fullest extent without addressing issues of Environmental Justice in its work.

Structure

The Environmental Justice (EJ) Working Group will not follow the structure of the other SLC working groups. Rather than sit within the purview of one of the four subcommittees, the EJ Working Group will report directly to the SLC Steering Committee. As this working group is intended to be representative of the entire SLC, it will draw membership from all four working groups. Ideally, each subcommittee will contribute one student and one faculty or staff member to the EJ Working Group. Membership is on a volunteer basis, akin to the other working groups of the SLC, though members may be invited to serve on the WG if the Steering Committee believes they would be a notable asset to the work of the group. These working group members will self-appoint one or two leads who will serve as meeting facilitators and rapporteurs to the larger Steering Committee as requested.

Outlining a formal structure for the EJ Working Group ensures that the work of the group is formally incorporated into the operations of the SLC and ensures longevity of these efforts.

Scope of Work

The Environmental Justice Working Group will serve to hold the SLC subcommittees, working groups, and their members accountable for intentionally incorporating themes on environmental justice into their work. Tasks of the EJ Working Group may include:

- Assist with planning SLC signature events such as a this fall's Environmental Justice Panel Discussion
- Draft, edit, and distribute documents outlining the SLC's efforts to incorporate EJ issues into its scope of work
- Work with subcommittees to identify opportunities to incorporate Environmental Justice themes at the subcommittee-level
- Work with working groups to identify opportunities to incorporate Environmental Justice themes at the working-group level
- Identify and/create opportunities for JHU to participate as a discussant, lending our expertise and support to influence policy change on issues of climate change and environmental justice
- Identify and support student involvement in applied learning and professional projects paired with environmental NGOs, businesses, and/or governmental organizations that can enhance the curricular experience and provide exposure to topics of environmental justice locally, nationally, and globally
- Assist in the development and management of an EJ dashboard that would serve as a resource, data, and research library for efforts and information related to environmental justice within the City of Baltimore
- Promote coordination and communication between different research groups working on projects related to environmental sustainability and to identifying opportunities for new funding and projects involving multiple JHU divisions that strengthen sustainability research