

In late Fall 2021 (ending Dec. 15), the anti-racism task group launched a survey using the Survey Monkey platform to gain insights and feedback about racism and barriers faced in the CSSS, as well as what our society could do to improve and support members in this regard. Demographic data were also collected.

**Some highlights from the categorical “demographic” questions were:**

- In total, 59 members responded to the survey, representing approximately one-quarter of total membership (45 regular members, 9 students and post-doctoral fellows, and 5 emeritus members)
- 13% of respondents reported their ethnicity to be other than white/European
- 27% of respondents reported their age between 20 and 39, 17% between 40-49, 15% between 50-59, 19% between 60-69, and 12% over 70.

**The final four questions allowed for more free-form responses. Summaries and highlights are:**

*Regarding whether respondents experienced racism in their dealings with the CSSS, although most indicated “no”, others noted (this is paraphrased) that white/Eurocentric dominance and associated racism to minority ethnic groups is ubiquitous in Canada and that extends to the CSSS too; that lack of diversity in the society makes it challenging to address this important topic meaningfully; and that discrimination because of gender has also been experienced in the society. Others described the CSSS as welcoming and inclusive; and described changes from a white male dominated society to one with more diversity and diversity in leadership over the past decades as having been important changes.*

*Regarding free form suggestions to what the CSSS could do to address barriers and challenges related to racism and discrimination, suggestions (paraphrased and synthesized some) included:*

- Making sure to listen to people with lived experiences in this regard.
- Provide funding in the form of bursaries to members from under-represented groups.
- Make sure there is a CSSS code of conduct that has up to date language surrounding these issues, that there are repercussions for breaking the code (in any context, including at CSSS functions) and that there is a safe/confidential way that people can report discrimination (including racist behaviour); Consider an ombudsperson to review cases of discrimination which should not include that involving racism, but also religion, gender, age, and so on.
- Hold workshops by professionals on EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) at CSSS meetings; for example, focused on unconscious bias education and awareness (e.g., racism plays an important role in the process of hiring, which members should be aware of to work towards counteracting discrimination) and bystander intervention.
- Work towards better representation in the society by constantly striving towards an equitable and inclusive society to support more diversity (consider that it be started/fostered at the undergraduate- or younger- levels to cascade through over time).
- Diversity within CSSS leadership (executive, journal editors) should be promoted.
- Include a statement when renewing membership to pledge support for the CSSS's openness towards a wide variety of people, regardless of race, religion, gender, orientation, age, and physical abilities.
- Need to push for correction of issues related to historical mistreatment of Indigenous populations in Canada (see multiple recommendations related to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission); As a Science Society consider establishment of awards, scholarships, etc., targeted towards First Nations students; Consider highlighting the injustice of the past by inviting prominent Indigenous speakers to

talk at annual conference (e.g. Bob Joseph, hereditary BC chief and author of 21 Things you should know about the Indian Act); Consider tours of soil resources of local First Nations drawing in Indigenous knowledge of plants and environment; note that the role of the extension efforts of Indian Agents in efforts of First Nations to develop their agricultural resources has not been a pretty one but perhaps needs to be highlighted at some point.

- Work to create an environment at CSSS events where differences are celebrated and encouraged, a place where all can feel safe and accepted.
- Highlight BIPOC researchers/students (e.g., through the new social media and blog initiatives).
- Building on the survey, continue to seek advice about what specifically the society could do to be more welcoming and increase its membership of underrepresented and historically marginalized groups. This could include reaching out to other societies (e.g., CSA, SSSA) for advice.

*Regarding the question on what the CSSS could contribute to address racism and/or any associated barriers/challenges outside of the CSSS (e.g., more broadly in professional fields, academia, or beyond):*

- Promote inclusion in related academic fields, and try to reach to the secondary school level to raise awareness around STEM field options.
- Hold members accountable for their actions both within and beyond the society.
- Resources to help recruit and train a new generation of scientists.
- Actively support perspectives and worldviews that people of diverse backgrounds bring, even when (or especially when) those perspectives challenge a Euro-centric worldview (such as our 'productionist', extractive approach to agriculture and our focus on economic rather than relational goals for human well-being).
- Prepare a Grounded in Soil blog post about racism in soil science.
- Support education about how racism affects scientific studies - along the lines of racism leads to people choosing not to study soils, so we lose their intellect and different worldviews.
- Support/promote mentorship for racialized members.
- Provide workshop or training materials on how to address barriers or challenges when they are encountered. This may provide under-represented and marginalized individuals with tools that can help to build confidence to call out individuals or groups.
- Serve as an example of progress (toward ethnic representativeness and for other equity seeking/deserving groups too).
- The Education committee may be an avenue to improve representation among people entering the soil science field (e.g., there are large issues with lack of Indigenous people in the field, and the few people tend to be over-burdened with the "diversity file").

*Regarding the question: Is there anything else you would like to share or recommend regarding the task group and actions moving forward?*

- Those who belong to the historically dominant culture should bear much of responsibility for combating racism.
- Formulate and state the society's position and stand behind it. Have an antiracism statement that prospective members have to read/ agree to upon registration for the society or that prospective attendees have to sign before attending the annual meeting. CSSS members may like to share success stories of how they overcame discrimination, or how they have succeeded despite facing systemic barriers. You may want to delegate an ombudsperson to handle any case where a disrespectful or

hurtful event occurred. You could have a representative on council that handles EDI matters, so it remains a visible and ongoing work in progress. You may want to encourage members to stand up for others, when they see a member being disparaged or bullied in a racist / discriminatory way. Our society will evolve to be more inclusive and welcoming/accepting when everyone is involved, so there have to be some regular reminders of what we stand for and who we are, to be sure that it is understood and ingrained in the members' DNA.

- Focus EDI efforts on youth.
- Coordinate with other professional scientific societies, both in Canada and abroad, who may be working on the same issues or who have previously worked on them. There are many good ideas already out there that can be utilized.
- Expand to a broader focus on discrimination in all forms (race, gender, sexual orientation, age, etc.). Opportunities for Indigenization and decolonization could also be examined.

**As starting points to make progress based on the survey, the task group suggests the following potential action items to the CSSS Council:**

- Council should develop a Code of Conduct for members built around our values as a society. This should include a clear statement and policy against discrimination (and for equity, diversity and inclusivity) that includes a statement about behavior outside of CSSS functions in the society.
  - Address this policy at the opening of the annual meeting and AGM;
  - Post the policy prominently on the society website and in social media profiles
  - Include an anti-discrimination tagline on society email correspondences;
  - Consider adding a council member focused on these issues (and who can serve as an ombudsperson if/when needed) to demonstrate an ongoing commitment to work towards a better society;
  - Have members read and agree to a statement when registering for membership, conference attendance, applying for society awards, etc.
- Support EDI initiatives at our annual meetings by hiring professionals to give training on allyship, bystander intervention, and implicit bias aimed mainly at members without lived/living experience; and to provide mentorship to those facing discrimination and barriers.
- Specifically acknowledge and address injustices toward Indigenous people (in line with the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission), especially considering the relationship between western agriculture and natural resource extraction (related to soils) and Indigenous peoples. E.g., bring prominent Indigenous speakers on these issues to CSSS meetings to raise awareness, consider financial support for Indigenous students (e.g., travel awards), consider tours to publicly accessible local Indigenous focused and led museums and centres at CSSS meetings (e.g., the Huron-Wendat Centre in Quebec City, the Museum of Human Rights in Winnipeg) to promote education and support these organizations.
- When disseminating information about Council positions and Council nominations, specifically address/encourage the importance of diversity on council.
- Highlight BIPOC researchers/students through the social media and blog initiatives, newsletter, and our website.
- Explicitly highlight the historical and ongoing role of racism in science (and soil science) in a CSSS blog.
- Expand the mandate of this ad-hoc committee to include all forms of discrimination (racial, gender, sexual orientation, etc.).