

NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION POLICY STATEMENT ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

In today's highly competitive environment, when everyone is fighting for limited resources and talent, having a workplace that integrates diversity and inclusion into its business practices is not just a good idea, it is a vital component for organizational success. Research shows that organizations are more productive, innovative, and better able to attract talent when they embrace diversity and inclusion. For a scientific agency like NOAA, innovation is a key driver of growth. Without diversity, we limit our ability to innovate. Without inclusion, diversity becomes meaningless, and any benefits associated with diversity will not be realized. The two concepts are inseparable, and begin with an inclusive environment.

We must strive to create inclusive workplaces that are free of discrimination, harassment, and reprisal, where integrity, fairness, teamwork, and equity are the norm, not the exception. These are environments where employees feel they truly belong and are safe to be their authentic selves, and where every person is treated with dignity and respect. When we create these types of environments, we can attain inclusion. It is then, and only then, when we reap the full benefits of diversity and can embrace the unique perspectives that diversity provides us to propel us towards greater success, both individually and organizationally.

Because there has been so much individual focus on diversity and inclusion, there can be a tendency for individuals to assume a "check the box" mentality. Where they host or attend a training class or some other event on diversity and inclusion and feel they are done. However, diversity and inclusion are so much more than that. They are not concepts to be understood solely through training and organizational initiatives, but rather by adopting a cultural attitude that embraces them -- a mindset rooted in the basic components of good leadership. It is impossible to articulate how critical a role diversity and inclusion play in helping NOAA effectively accomplish its mission.

I strongly support diversity and inclusion and reaffirm my commitment to seeing that NOAA not only embraces these concepts, but fully integrates them into our business practices and our organizational culture. It is not something that can be done by simply implementing a broad-sweeping organizational initiative. Each and every one of us needs to be fully committed to achieving this goal if we are to be successful. All of us share in the responsibility for creating and maintaining an inclusive workplace. At its most basic level, this means treating everyone with dignity and respect. If we cannot afford our colleagues that simple courtesy, no matter what the organization does, we will not be able to create a truly inclusive environment.

Creating inclusive environments that value diversity can be difficult because it forces us to embrace that which is different from us. It challenges our beliefs and requires not only a fundamental change in what we do, say, and think, but also to constantly self-assess and adjust our behaviors. This can be difficult, but the benefits of diversity come from a unique mix of all of our differences where together we are far better. So, I challenge each and everyone one of you. Take the time to self-reflect and ask yourself, "Am I doing all I can do to create and inclusive environment in my workplace?" Then, personally commit to helping make NOAA a

more inclusive environment. If we all work together, we can make NOAA the best it can be, and achieve the goal of becoming a Model Workplace.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Neil Jacobs', with a stylized, flowing script.

Dr. Neil Jacobs

Assistant Secretary of Commerce for
Environmental Observation and Prediction,
Performing the duties of
Under Secretary of Commerce
for Oceans and Atmosphere