Creation of a diversity and equity book club:
Promoting a campus climate of inclusion through sustained, authentic dialog.

Jennifer Perry, Assistant Professor of Food Microbiology
School of Food and Agriculture; College of Natural Sciences, Forestry and Agriculture

Abstract: Messages of exclusion are often subtle and unintentional. While discussions of concepts surrounding equity can be complicated and uncomfortable, they are essential for the development of a respectful, accepting community. This project would establish a forum for authentic exchange of opinions and experiences surrounding issues of inclusion in science and education. A diversity-focused book club, meeting regularly throughout the academic year, would provide faculty, staff and students an opportunity to expand understanding of issues within science and the academy that lead to bias and discrimination. In moderated on and off-campus discussions, as well as an online forum, members of the university would be given the chance to interact informally and contribute to positive discussions about issues facing those among us who identify as members of the ADDRESSING categories. By cultivating awareness and competence within our greater community we can make important progress toward establishing a culture of openness and respect.

Timeline: Support is requested for a project duration of two academic years (F2018-S2020). This interval will allow for four literary selections and two rounds of data collection as indicated in the tables below.

### Academic Year 1 Timeline:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summer 2018</th>
<th>Fall 2018</th>
<th>Spring 2019</th>
<th>Summer 2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation and submission of IRB application (July)</td>
<td>Book distribution (September).</td>
<td>Book distribution (January).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Announcement and solicitation of nominations (August).</td>
<td>Off campus meetings (September, November).</td>
<td>Off campus meetings (January, March).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>On campus meetings (October, December).</td>
<td>On campus meetings (February, May).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data collection (December).</td>
<td>Data collection (May).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Academic Year 2 Timeline:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall 2019</th>
<th>Spring 2020</th>
<th>Summer 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advertisement, book distribution, initial data collection (September).</td>
<td>Advertisement, book distribution, initial data collection (January).</td>
<td>Data analysis, preparation of final report (June – August)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book distribution (September).</td>
<td>Book distribution (January).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting structure TBD.</td>
<td>Meeting structure TBD.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data collection (December).</td>
<td>Data collection (May).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Project Description:

Over the course of the previous decade, the University of Maine has seen unprecedented diversification in both student and faculty populations. Compared to 2009 data, the UMaine of 2018 represents an increase in out-of-state enrollment greater than 100% as well as increases in total number of black and Hispanic/Latino students of 55% and 350%, respectively (UMaine OIR). Faculty ranks are also becoming less homogeneous, with increases in both minority status and female members (UMaine OIR). If enrollment trends from 2009-2017 continue, The College of Natural Sciences, Forestry and Agriculture will soon be the largest University of Maine College in terms of undergraduate numbers (UMaine OIR). NSFA already boasts the highest graduate student enrollment and greatest number of pre-tenure faculty by a significant margin (UMaine OIR), putting our college at the forefront of this demographic evolution. This project seeks to establish, within NSFA, a forum for communication around issues of increasing importance as we seek to forge a respectful community capable of capitalizing on the benefits of our increasing diversity.

The creation of a book club focusing on equity issues in science and education will allow for:

1. Cross-disciplinary networking within NSFA at faculty, staff and graduate student levels
2. Greater awareness of issues facing underrepresented groups in science and academia
3. Acknowledgement of community members external to the university as integral partners in the development of an inclusive environment

As the flagship university in America's whitest state, the value of a demonstrable, sustained commitment to diversity and equity at UMaine cannot be understated. Institutional efforts on this front have been many, dating back twenty years, but the urgency around delivering a climate of inclusion is only becoming more crucial as the demographics of our campus community evolve. Much of the diversity work that has been undertaken on campus has focused on tangible outputs. As scientists, we know that if you can’t measure it, it didn’t happen. This approach, however, overlooks the fact that a culture of inclusion, just like implicit bias, is created and reinforced over time by our interactions with our environment and those around us.

The establishment of an equity-focused book club would serve a number of crucial functions within our college and in our campus community. Opportunities to meet and develop relationships with colleagues tend to be relatively few, but can play a strong role in the acclimation and retention of new faculty. These meetings will foster peer-to-peer and informal mentoring connections, while also providing skill building opportunities that can enhance communication between faculty and students and increase instructional effectiveness (Hurtado et al., 1998; NEA, 2008). Inclusion of university-external community members not only adds visibility to the spirit of the effort, but gives us the chance to weave tolerance into the fabric of our community by empowering K-12 educators to pass cultural competence onto our future students, an often overlooked method for shaping campus culture (Locks et al., 2008). The formation and support of this type of group would be a concrete demonstration of college-level commitment to inclusivity that will increasingly be required for our remote University to attract and retain top-tier students and faculty. As a state with strong Native American heritage and an increasingly large population of older residents, disparities related to ethnicity, income inequality, culture and religion are of particular significance in Maine. As a college comprised of many disciplines that are traditionally male-dominated (Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Economics, etc.), equity and inclusion are of particular significance within NSFA, both in terms of assuring the satisfaction and success of our employees and the adequate preparation of our students for success in their chosen fields. The opportunity for a diverse group of stakeholders to explore these issues collaboratively will serve to improve inclusivity in the classroom in addition to preparing our students to be voices for equity in the face of lingering challenges as they transition into professional roles.

Approaching these topics in a more informal setting, as opposed to a policy-focused one, allows for discussion of subjects that may be too sensitive or nuanced to be dealt with in official committees. Voluntary participation also allows members to engage with content of particular interest, without seeing a call to foster diversity as a chore or mandate. Maintaining the presence of this organization over time gives us the chance to learn about a wide variety of individual identities, and helps us convey to members of those groups that we see and value them, fostering a sense of belonging and contributing to retention (Leonard et al., 2002; Plata, 1996).
“In departments in which white employees believed that differences should be ignored, we found that the sense of engagement felt by nonwhite workers was lower than in departments in which white workers publicly espoused support for diversity—regardless of how many persons of color actually worked in the department. Moreover, in the “color-blind” departments, individuals from underrepresented groups perceived more bias. In the acknowledging departments, they perceived less. (Plaut, 2014)”

This effort would blend aspects of a town hall style meeting and a formal training/development opportunity, with inclusion of digital presence to facilitate wider reach. The overarching goal is to foster a community that is receptive to diverse members and possesses the competency to appropriately support students, staff and faculty who face uncommon challenges. Without achieving these aims, isolated initiatives to broaden representation in the curriculum or recruit more diverse students and faculty will be unlikely to succeed in the long term.

Nominations for book club selections will be solicited from interested faculty in the fall and spring of the academic year. Faculty nominators will agree to serve as moderators for the duration of the semester. Meetings will be held monthly (four times) alternating between campus (lunch hour) and off-campus (early evening) locations, with off-campus meetings to be family friendly. Additional dialogue will be facilitated by the establishment of a private online discussion group (Facebook or similar). Participants will have the choice to contribute however they feel most comfortable, and will hopefully not be excluded from participation on the basis of scheduling restrictions. A minimum of 20 copies of the selected book will be offered free of charge (first come, first served), but meetings will be open to the public. Participation will be solicited from faculty, staff, graduate students and local K-12 science educators.

Particular subject matter can be dictated by the interest of participants over time, but potential topics might include: unpacking intersectionality, accommodation for “invisible” disabilities, implicit bias, inclusive curriculum design, the leaky pipeline, etc. Examples of specific works that would be appropriate for this group include:

- Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom, by bell hooks
- Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People, by Mahzarin R. Banaji and Anthony G. Greenwald
- The Madame Curie Complex: The Hidden History of Women in Science, by Julie Des Jardins
- Whistling Vivaldi: How Stereotypes Affect Us and What We Can Do, by Claude M. Steele
- Blazing the Trail: Essays by Leading Women in Science, by Emma Ideal and Rhiannon Meharchand

In an attempt to assess the effectiveness of this strategy for eliciting cultural change, anonymous surveys will be provided to participants (via Qualtrics, upon approval by UMaine IRB) at the beginning and end of each semester. Surveys will assess perceived benefit of participation, change of opinion, expected change of action, perceived extent of inequity within the college/university, and other relevant indicators. Number of participants, attendees, and amount of online discussion activity will also be recorded. All collected data will be deidentified before aggregation. Following the first two offerings (F18, S19), these data will be reviewed in an attempt to optimize the format for the subsequent two semesters (F19, S20). Issues and ideas raised during discussions will be relayed to the Diversity and Inclusion (DivEIn) subcommittee of WiSTEMM for consideration.

Budget Description:

Personnel: Funds are requested to provide a small stipend for a student assistant to help with data collection, coordination of meetings, and administrative tasks related to materials procurement and distribution. ($1000/yr x 2 yr = $2000).

Supplies: Funds are requested to purchase books to be distributed to participants twice per academic year. (~$15ea. x 25 copies x 4 sessions = $1500).

Refreshments: Funds are requested for the purchase of light refreshments to be made available during meetings. ($30 x 4 meetings x 4 semesters = $480).
**Total funds requested:** $1990 per year x 2 years = **$3980**

**References**


University of Maine, Office of Institutional Research (UMaine OIR). https://umaine.edu/oir/
Curriculum Vitae:

Jennifer J. Perry, Ph.D.

University of Maine
College of Natural Sciences, Forestry and Agriculture
School of Food and Agriculture
5735 Hitchner Hall, Orono, ME 04469
207-581-2940
jennifer.perry@maine.edu

EDUCATION

The Ohio State University, 2010

Ph.D. in Food Science and Nutrition – Specialization in Food Microbiology
Dissertation: Ozone based treatments for inactivation of Salmonella enterica serovar Enteritidis in shell eggs
Advisor: Ahmed Yousef

University of Maine, 2006

B.S. in Food Science and Human Nutrition – Concentration in Food Science
Summa cum laude with high honors
Undergraduate honors thesis: Effect of extrusion on starch and dietary fiber composition of an oat based, ready-to-eat breakfast cereal model system
Advisor: Mary Ellen Camire

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

University of Maine, School of Food and Agriculture
Assistant Professor of Food Microbiology 2016 - Present

Stonyfield
Product Developer 2013 – 2016

The Ohio State University, Department of Food Science
Lecturer; FST/Microbiology 5546 Food Microbiology Laboratory 2010 –2013

The Ohio State University, Department of Food Science
Postdoctoral Researcher; Food Microbiology 2010 –2013

The Ohio State University, Department of Food Science
Graduate Fellow 2006 - 2010

University of Maine; Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition, Department of Microbiology
Student Laboratory Assistant 2003 - 2006

Jeanie Marshal Foods Inc.
Quality Assurance Intern 2005
TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2017: Applied Food Microbiology and Sanitation (FSN 238, University of Maine) Instructor
2017: Organic and Natural Foods (FSN 555, University of Maine) Instructor
2017: Independent study (FSN 397, University of Maine) Instructor
2017: Problems in Food Science and Human Nutrition (FSN 581, University of Maine) Instructor
2017: Food Microbiology Lecture (FSN 438/529, University of Maine) Instructor
2017: Food Microbiology Laboratory (FSN 439/529, University of Maine) Instructor
2016: Introduction to Food Science (FSN 330, University of Maine)
Guest lecturer
2015, 2016: Food Product Development (FSN 520, University of Maine)
Guest lecturer
2010 – 2013: Food Microbiology Laboratory (FST/Micro 5546, The Ohio State University)
Primary instructor and curriculum developer
2009 – 2012: Food Microbiology (FST/Micro 5536, The Ohio State University)
Guest lecturer: probiotics and biocontrol, pathogenic fungi, poultry processing.
2008 – 2010: Food Microbiology Laboratory (FST/Micro 636.02, The Ohio State University)
Lead teaching assistant
2006 – 2008: Food Microbiology Laboratory (FST/Micro 636.02, The Ohio State University)
Teaching assistant

MENTORING

- Currently advising one PhD candidate, one MS student (1 PhD, 2 MS students to start Fall 2018)
- Participating as research mentor for seven additional SFA graduate students
- Currently supervising research by six UMaine undergraduate students from four departments (SFA: Andrew Martel, Alison Brodt, Kilee Nile; MBMS: Amelia St. John; MLS: Ella Glatter; Forestry: Savannah Gaines)
- Undergraduate research advisor for Alexandra Chirakos, current Notre Dame graduate student (2013)
- Undergraduate research and honors thesis advisor for Abigail Snyder, current Cornell Ph.D. student (2010-2012)
- Capstone research advisor for Jessica Price, Columbus METRO High student (2011-2012)
- Undergraduate research advisor for Danielle Sharpnack, subsequent OSU Integrated Biomedical Sciences Graduate Program Ph.D. graduate (2010)
PUBLICATIONS

Peer-reviewed journal articles


Conference Presentations and Posters


12. Snyder, A, JJ Perry and AE Yousef. 2012. Isolation and characterization of bacteriophage for the control of Enterohemorrhagic Escherichia coli on fresh produce. Poster, International Association for Food Protection Annual Meeting, Providence, RI.
13. Perry, JJ. 2012. Enhancing food safety with antibacterial viruses. Invited lecture, Ohio Valley Institute of Food Technologists Annual Symposium, Columbus, OH.
17. Perry, JJ and AE Yousef. 2010. Pasteurization of shell eggs with sequential heat-ozone treatments, targeting Salmonella Enteritidis in the yolk. Poster, Institute of Food Technologists Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL.


**Invited presentations**


3. **Perry, JJ.** 2012. Bacteriophage for control of foodborne pathogens and application for antibiotic resistant isolates. Ohio Valley Institute of Food Technologists Annual Meeting, Columbus, OH.

**Patent Applications**


**Publications in preparation**

1. Camire, ME, K Savoie, **JJ Perry** and B Calder. Maine consumers want more information on fermenting foods at home. To be submitted to *Food Protection Trends*.


3. **Perry, JJ,** M Pena-Melendez and AE Yousef. Decontamination of inoculated *Salmonella* Enteritidis on in-shell nuts by gaseous ozone processing. To be submitted to *Food Microbiology*.

---

**FUNDING RECEIVED**


---

**SERVICE**

- Co-advisor University of Maine Food Science Club (2017)
- Faculty judge for The Ohio State University Denman Undergraduate Research Forum (2013)
- Design and supervision of The Ohio State University Food Science and Technology department/Central Ohio Technical College culinary practicum for graduating students in culinary arts (2012)
- Judge for Ohio Valley Institute of Food Technologists Annual Meeting poster competition (2012)
- Member of The Ohio State University Food Science and Technology department Mission Oriented Teaching Committee (2011-2012)
• Faculty judge for The Ohio State University Russel Klein Nutrition Research Symposium (2011)

HONORS AND AWARDS

• CUGR Faculty Fellow (2017-2019)
• Journal of Food Science Tanner Award recipient (2017)
• Institute of Food Technologists Emerging Leaders Network Member (2017)
• Stonyfield CODE Role Model Award for excellence in open communication (2015)
• Stonyfield Let’s Fish Award for teambuilding (2015)
• Third Place: John C. Ayres poster competition, Institute of Food Technologists Annual Meeting (2010)
• Finalist: Institute of Food Technologists Nonthermal Processing Division Graduate Research Paper Competition, IFT Annual Meeting (2010)
• First Place: Ohio Valley Institute of Food Technologists Poster Competition, OVIFT Annual Meeting (2010)
• Finalist: Edward F. Hayes Graduate Research Forum, The Ohio State University (2010)
• First place: Institute of Food Technologists Nonthermal Processing Division Graduate Research Paper Competition, IFT Annual Meeting (2009)
• Third place, team leader: Disney/Institute of Food Technologists Student Association Student Product Development Competition (2009)
• University Fellow, The Ohio State University (2006-2007)
• First place, team leader: Institute of Food Technologists Student Product Development Competition (2006)
• University of Maine Presidential Merit Scholar (2002-2006)

MEMBERSHIPS

• University of Maine Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine (WiSTEMM)
  o Advisory committee
  o Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee (DiEIn)
• Institute of Food Technologists
  o Teaching and learning workgroup (2018)
• International Association for Food Protection
• World Aquaculture Society
• Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society
• Phi Tau Sigma Honor Society
OUTREACH

- **Brewing Microbiology Short Course** (Developed and delivered 2016).
- **The Ohio State University: osu.edu front page December 2012**
  [http://www.osu.edu/features/2012/a-cornucopia-of-research.html](http://www.osu.edu/features/2012/a-cornucopia-of-research.html)
- **Our Ohio Magazine: Help Wanted, science and technology open up career opportunities in food and agriculture.** By Callie Wells, November/December 2012.
- **OSU Extension: Secretary of Agriculture: Ohio State's Ag Research Plays 'Essential Role' in Health Issues.** By Martha Filipic, July 2, 2012.
- **Ohio Farm Bureau, Town Hall Ohio (radio): Salmonella.** September 13, 2010.
- **OSU Extension: Chow Line – Recalled or not, handle eggs safely.** By Martha Filipic, August 27, 2010.
  [http://oardc.osu.edu/5882/Average-Shoppers-Are-Willing-to-Pay-a-Premium-for-Locally-Produced-Food.htm](http://oardc.osu.edu/5882/Average-Shoppers-Are-Willing-to-Pay-a-Premium-for-Locally-Produced-Food.htm)
- **Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center: OSU Scientists: Egg safety should always be considered.** By Martha Filipic, August 26, 2010.
  [http://oardc.osu.edu/5882/Average-Shoppers-Are-Willing-to-Pay-a-Premium-for-Locally-Produced-Food.htm](http://oardc.osu.edu/5882/Average-Shoppers-Are-Willing-to-Pay-a-Premium-for-Locally-Produced-Food.htm)
- **OSU onCampus: To infinity and beyond, Ohio State team takes ‘Buzz Lightyear’ snack idea to national competition in Anaheim.** By Martha Filipic, June 3, 2009.