

USSD COMMITTEE CHARTER COMMITTEE ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION (DEI)

Approved – August 25, 2022

COMMITTEE DESCRIPTION

The mission of USSD's Committee on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) is to intentionally foster diversity, equity, and inclusion within the dams industry to provide a diverse and inclusive environment, and to focus on opportunities within the dams industry to champion members of diverse and under-represented identities and backgrounds related to race, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, social and economic status, age, disability, religion, and more.

The Committee's vision is to identify growth opportunities, expand USSD's reach and empower the industry to cultivate an inclusive and diverse environment that offers equity to all professionals.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The annual meetings of the Committee are open to all who have an interest in DEI. The Committee will keep the membership informed through contributions to the official newsletter, semi-annual meetings, and activity announcements. Activities may include training, technical sessions, or group discussions.

The Committee will collaborate and/or assist with other committees in developing and promoting DEI activities under each of USSD's strategic domains of Community and Connections, Advocacy and Awareness, Recruitment and Growth, and Education and Professional Development. This will include assisting in development of annual conference content, developing and/or sponsoring workshops during the conference or as standalone events, encouraging articles for publication in "Dams and Levees, Bulletin of the United States Society on Dams," and providing input to the USSD Board to set DEI goals for the USSD Board and USSD committees. There are many DEI resources available, and we will solicit external support for DEI initiatives, including sponsorships.

In addition to collaboration with USSD and USSD committees, we will collaborate with ICOLD and other ICOLD country member organizations. We will share ideas and resources to develop our global partnerships.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

At the annual USSD conference in 2022, the "Women Who Give a Dam" event planning committee petitioned and received the USSD board's approval for an ad-hoc committee on DEI. The ad-hoc committee was then charged with developing a charter for the proposed standing DEI committee.

As part of promoting the "Women Who Give a Dam" event, the planning committee published an article in USSD's Bulletin that solicited interest in the event. They received positive responses and requests for collaboration from USSD members and other parties, including several organizations involved in the hydropower industry. The positive response indicated the need for a standing committee within USSD.

The first “Women Who Give a Dam” event consisted of a panel session and a luncheon with a keynote speech. Both events were successful and received positive feedback via email and on social media. “Women Who Give a Dam” was pioneered and developed by Zara Plasencia, Amanda Adams, Melinda Dirdal and Merry Dang.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The pioneers of the Committee have established the following responsibilities:

- Help USSD set and achieve DEI goals through collaboration with the USSD Board and standing committees;
- Coordinate DEI activities with other USSD and/or ICOLD committees; Identify topics and organize workshops, seminars, and webinars, both within and outside of the national conference;
- Serve as a resource for USSD leadership on DEI programs;
- Through coordination with the USSD staff, solicit funding (sponsorships) for DEI related initiatives, including, but not limited to, compensation for external DEI experts, keynote speakers, workshops/trainings, luncheons, and social hours.
- On an annual basis, the Committee will:
 - Host an annual meeting at the annual conference to update the members;
 - Identify relevant topics and develop a program to address these topics;
 - Organize DEI activities as part of the annual conference, such as technical sessions, luncheons, or other events; and
 - Aim to recruit, retain and promote more diverse members to USSD membership and leadership roles through DEI committee activities

CHAIR, VICE CHAIR, AND ADVISORY BOARD

Position	Name	Email
Chair	Merry Dang	mdang@asi-group.com
Vice Chair	Melinda Dirdal	mdirdal@schlabel-eng.com
YP Vice Chair	Josh Porterfield	josh.porterfield@rizzointl.com
Advisory Board	Zara Plasencia	zara@zamini.com
Advisory Board	Amanda Adams	amanda.adams@stantec.com
Advisory Board	TBD	TBD

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals and objectives of the Committee are aligned with the USSD Strategic Domains, including:

- Community and Connections
 - Coordinate committee activities with ICOLD activities
 - Promote USSD as an organization that welcomes all professionals
 - Create a network of professionals passionate about DEI initiatives including the industry’s under-represented groups
- Advocacy and Awareness
 - Promote DEI initiatives aligned with the USSD’s missions and values
 - Expand awareness about dams and levees by engaging diverse members of the industry

- Communicate with committee members to share goals and successes
- Recruitment and Growth
 - Foster career paths that will grow the talent pool for our industry by promoting the industry to diverse and under-represented groups
 - Attract students and young professionals, who typically have strong interest in DEI
 - Provide valuable information to industry employers including minority/woman/disadvantaged owned businesses
- Education and Professional Development
 - Lead the development of DEI goals within the USSD organization
 - Identify DEI opportunities within the dams industry
 - Identify education and training opportunities relating to DEI;
 - Develop and deliver relevant DEI related training sessions, and/or promote delivery of technical training sessions by diverse professionals, including those from under-represented groups.

MEMBERSHIP

As defined in the annual roster.

USSD DEI Committee Member Roster – September 2022

Amanda Adams	Shawn Calendine
Amanda Dolezal	Silas Sanderson
Amanda Queiroz De Paula	Stephanie Williams
Dana Miller	Tara McFarland
Ed Toms	Tiffany Adams
Gabriela Martinez Lyvers	Tracy Owen
Georgette Hlepas	William Empson
Intesar Albu-Attiya	Yulia Zakrevskaya
James Demby	Zara Amini Plasencia
John Atkins	
Josh Porterfield	
Junior Lagade	
Justin Phalen	
Katelyn Noland	
Kwestan Salimi	
Lucky Nagarajan	
Mara McClain	
Matt Muto	
Melanie Walling	
Melinda Dirdal	
Merry Dang	
Mohammad Amin Hariri Ardebili	
Nichole Tollefson	
Phoebe Percell	
Renée Fernandez-Lipp	
Scarlett Kitts	