The stated purpose of the International Arctic Research Center (IARC) at the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) is “Understanding the Arctic to make a difference,” with the following core research values: 1) useful & actionable, 2) deep understanding, 3) grounded in place, 4) inclusive & diverse, 5) innovative & skillful, 6) collaborative.

IARC is committed to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in all of its forms. We define diversity as the presence of people with different genders, sexual orientations, beliefs, religions, and ways of knowing are our strength, fostering diverse thoughts and ideas.

One of IARC’s core values is actively cultivating an environment of diversity and inclusion where all individuals and groups feel welcomed and heard. Through the work of the IARC Diversity and Inclusion Working Group (IARC D&I WG), we affirm that our different experiences, expertise, and Inclusivity as an approach where we respect, welcome, encourage, and engage diverse perspectives.

IARC’s pursuit of equity consists of promoting ethical and balanced research practices that ensure the benefits of science and education accrue to the communities we work with. Equity differs from equality as a guiding principle by recognizing that the diverse circumstances and histories of individuals and communities necessitate diverse strategies and resources to achieve community-determined outcomes.

Recent efforts of the Diversity and Inclusivity Working Group within IARC to cultivate diversity, equity, inclusion, and access include:

1. Develop IARC’s Statement on Diversity and Inclusivity (7)
2. Organize/collaborate on trainings and events including
   - Breaking the Prejudice Habit workshop
   - Difficult Dialogues workshop funded by Alaska Climate Adaptation Science Center (AK CASC)
   - Land Acknowledgment workshop(s) by Melissa Shaginoff (8)
3. Integrate diversity and inclusion as a core value into the IARC Strategic planning process
4. Develop an IARC Land Acknowledgment statement (7)
5. Create spaces for making diversity a visible priority
   - monthly formal working group meeting
   - monthly reading and discussion group (9)
   - instructional design integrates DEI thinking in course environment and pedagogy
   - diversity minute in monthly all-IARC meetings
   - diversity items in the IARC newsletter
   - IARC D&I shared drive with resource library, working group documents and relevant DEI presentations (10)
6. Actively address challenges faced in DEI work
   - address the challenge of time constraints by the all-volunteer membership
   - create a DEI coordinator position and seeking leadership approval and funding
   - address equity in our work

We envision actively collaborating with the broader University of Alaska community and beyond in its efforts to foster a culture of respect, diversity, equity, inclusion, and caring. We will accomplish this by exercising an open mind, engaging respectfully, focusing on team goals not individual, building trust, welcoming new ideas and perspectives, and embracing change.

Diversity helps build a professional culture of inclusion, caring, and respect.

Team diversity and interpersonal skills (social sensitivity and emotional engagement) can influence research outcomes by affecting important aspects of team function including communication patterns, problem solving, and group creativity (4,5,6).

Everyone is welcome to the IARC D&I working group. At IARC, we recognize that inclusion is an ongoing process that has to be woven into all that we do in research, education, and outreach.

References
1. https://www.bigaagvik.org/
3. https://www.inspiringgirls.org
6. https://www.chakib.org/

Land Acknowledgment
Everywhere we live and work is on Native land. IARC is located on UAF’s Tooth ‘Yeddha’ campus, the traditional homelands of the Dené People of the lower Tanana River. We recognize, appreciate, and honor Indigenous peoples and their past, present, and future land stewardship. We are committed to building long-term reciprocal relationships with Indigenous organizations, knowledge holders and community members to create relevant information and to take action in support of their sovereignty and self-determination.

IARC’s Land Acknowledgement is a living document and evolving as we grow and learn together on this journey.