

Considerations in Virtual Community Building

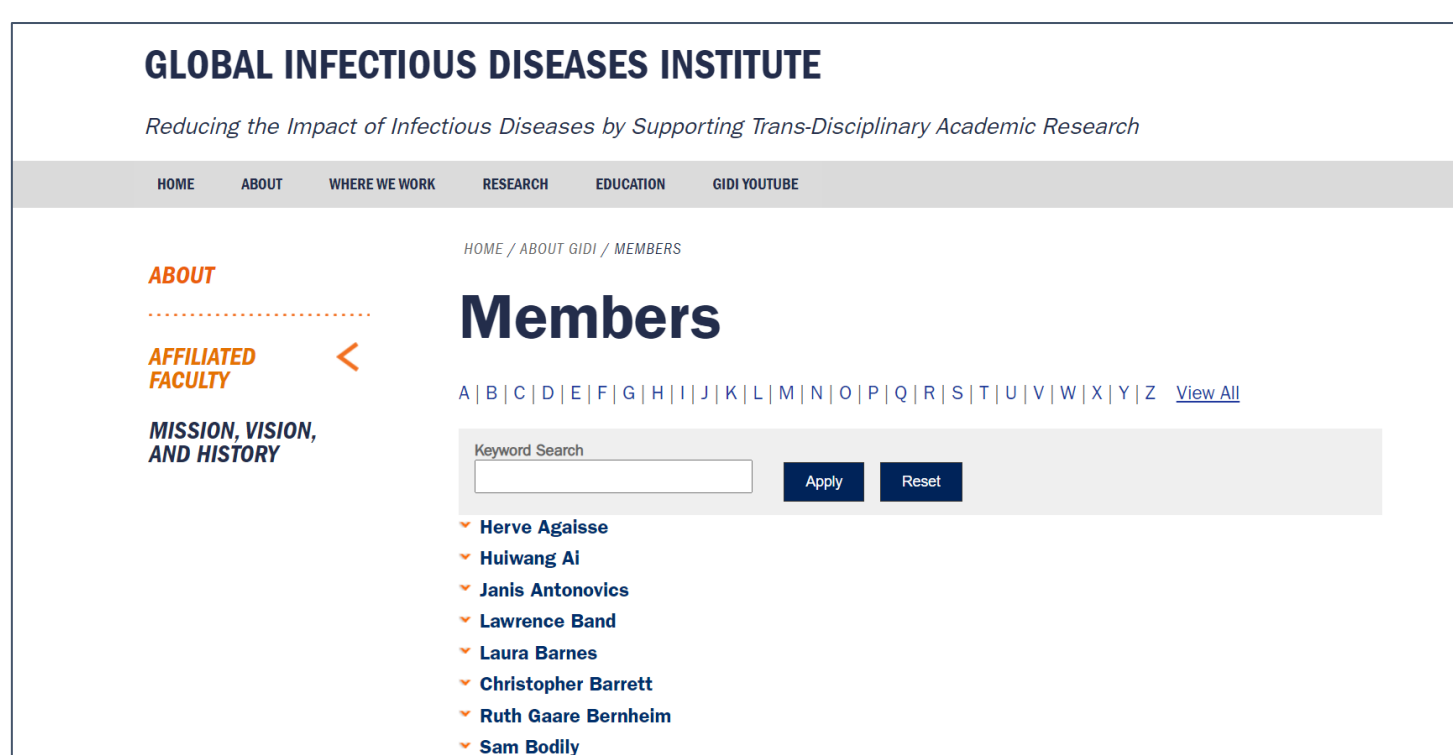
Fiona Tracy, Erin Raymond

Background

- 900 programs received RAPID grants to conduct Covid research
- PREPARE was a community of RAPID researchers, but has since expanded beyond that
- PREPARE aims to create a **research roadmap** to help inform action for the next pandemic
- I worked to define what membership looks like in a virtual community through literature search and comparative study

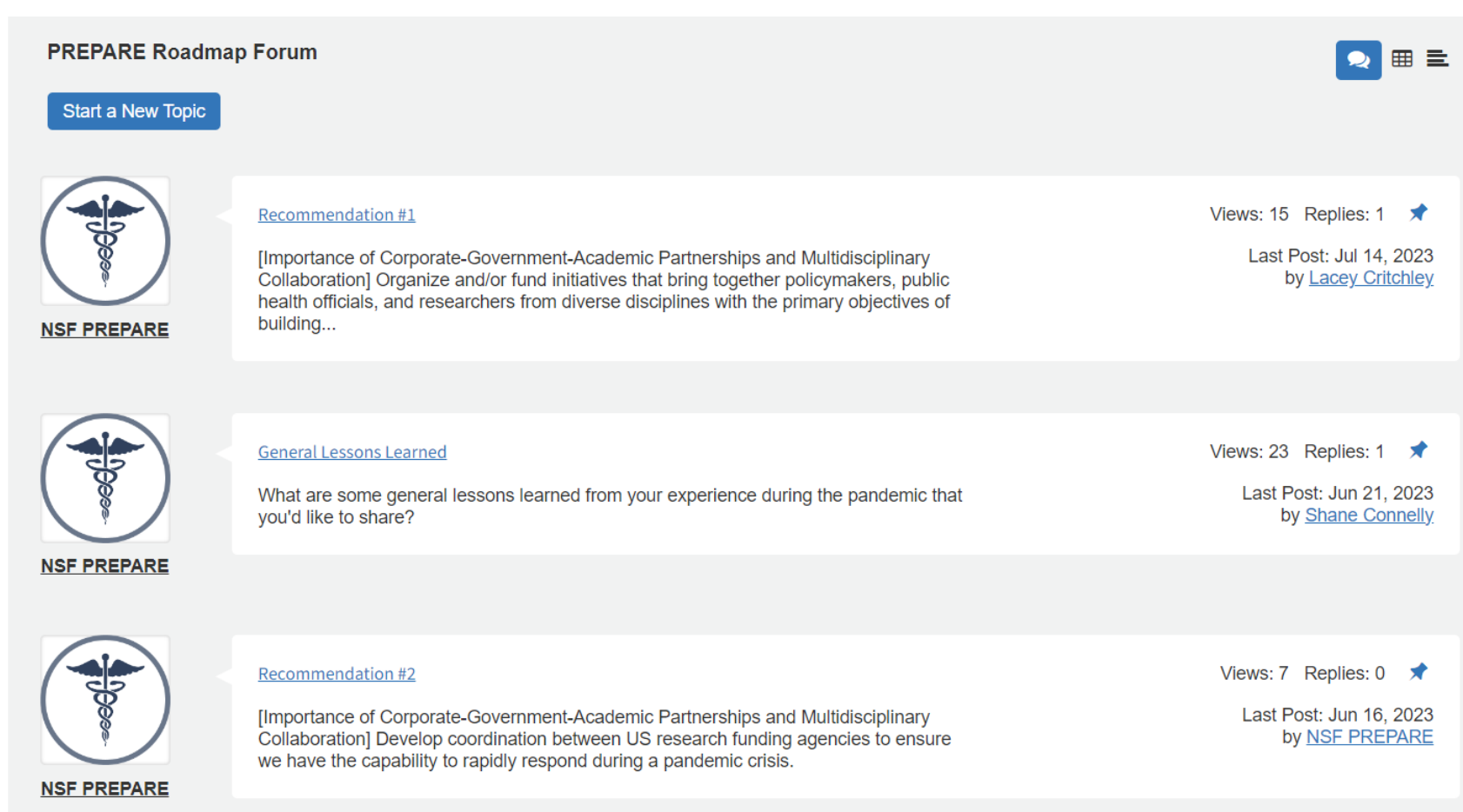
Member Directory

- Creating identities and making identifications leads to the production of trust
- Trust mediates the relationship between sense of virtual community and knowledge-sharing
- Relevant to diversity, equity and inclusion; knowing who people are creates a space for commonality and diversity, two crucial aspects when considering DEI
- Knowing the other members may increase motivation to join the community and participate



Forums

- Forums allow personal identification beyond a member biography, as you are actively sharing your thoughts
- People engage in forums to seek information more often than to share information
- Forums create a space for member to member communication, as well as organization to member communication



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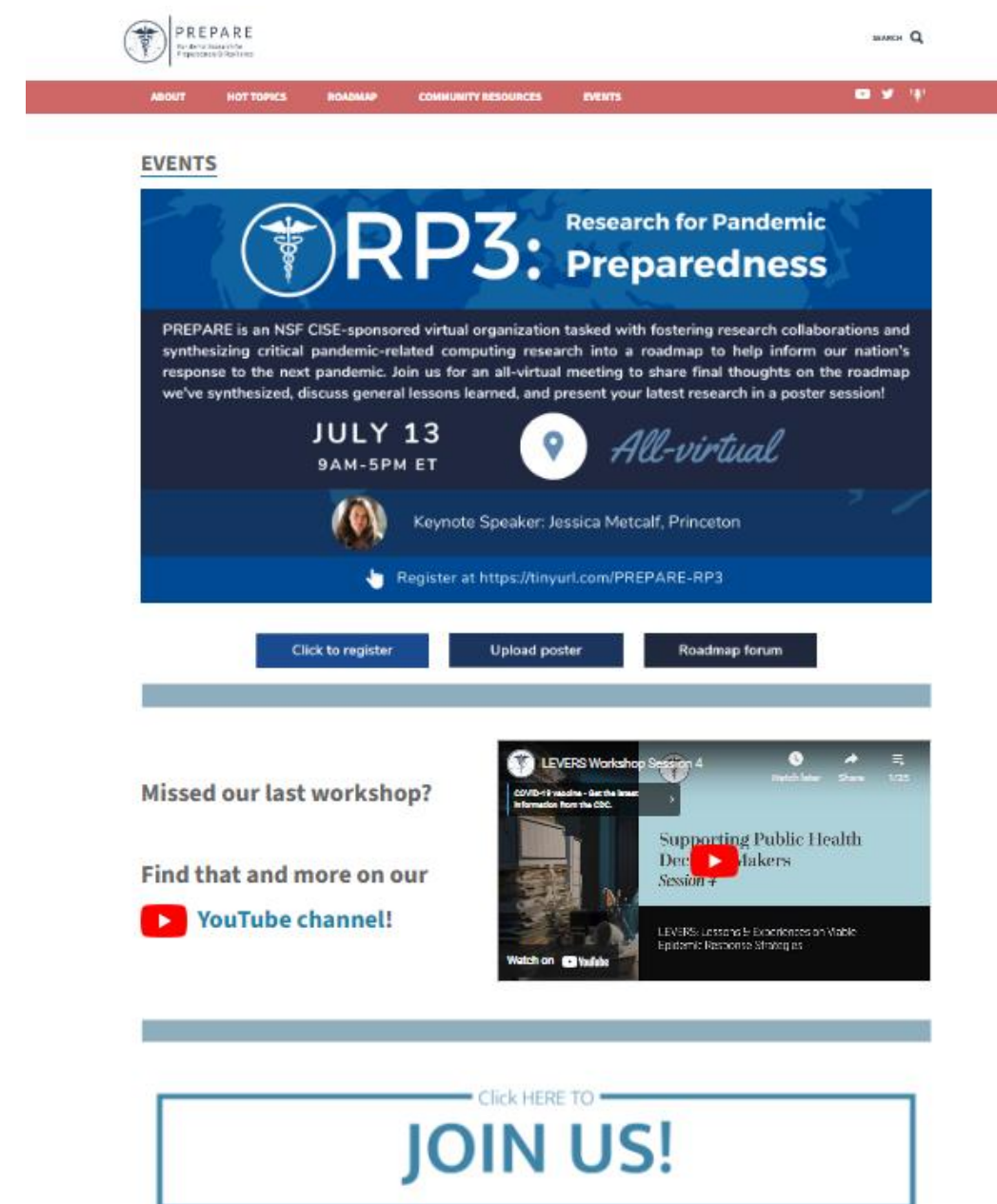
Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

What does the literature say?

- The virtual community needs to be a space of both commonality and diversity
- The ability to listen to each other is crucial
- Virtual conferences have increased overall participation and various forms of diversity

Recommendations

- Member biographies should be an aspect of the member directory
- Creation of intentional statement at the start of a workshop/meeting centered around respectful engagement
- Anonymous form where members can report uncomfortable language and suggest alternative verbiage



User Interface

- Quality characteristics: usability, functionality, reliability, efficiency
- Usefulness and ease of use are important factors to determine acceptance and use of info systems
- Change Join Us! button and add new membership tab to make it clearer

Content Library

What does the literature say?

- Content libraries are useful for engagement in a virtual community
- Accessible way for non-members to see what the organization is working on
- incentive to join

Recommendations

- All resources should be available in one place (YouTube channel, podcast, etc.)
- Event calendar; members can add relevant events to a master event calendar
- RSVP feature embedded in the calendar for ease of use

