NIH Strategic Investments in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Marie A. Bernard, MD; Treava S. Hopkins-Laboy, MS; Alfred C. Johnson, PhD; and Lawrence A. Tabak, DDS, PhD

HHS Equity Learning Session  |  August 18, 2021
NIH DIVERSITY LANDSCAPE
NIH DIVERSITY LANDSCAPE
Chief Officer for Scientific Workforce Diversity (COSWD)

**MISSION**
To lead the science of scientific workforce diversity, work across NIH and beyond to foster diversity, equity, and inclusion, and enhance creativity and innovation of science.

**GOAL**
To be the NIH scientific leader in creating cultures of inclusive excellence, allowing NIH and NIH-funded institutions to benefit from a full range of talent.

- Build the evidence – using the NIH as a test bed for innovative scientific programs
- Disseminate the evidence – through work with the full scientific community, from trainees to established tenured scientists
- Act on the evidence – piloting integrated, institution-wide systems to address bias, faculty equity, mentoring, and work/life issues
Chief Officer for Scientific Workforce Diversity (COSWD)

RESEARCH
NIH Workplace Climate and Harassment Survey
Summary Findings Report

PROGRAMS
Faculty Institutional Recruitment for Sustainable Transformation (FIRST)

PRODUCTS
NIH Distinguished Scholars Program

diversity.nih.gov
Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Strategic Focus on Workforce Demographics, Data Driven Strategies, and Workforce Transparency

Biennial Workforce Reports

Workforce analyses

- Applicant flow
- Career development programs
- Director’s Awards
- Recruitment, retention and relocation incentives

Barrier Analysis
NIH DIVERSITY LANDSCAPE
NIH Civil Program – Office of Human Resources

Provides central oversight of administrative inquiries into allegations into all forms of harassment and related inappropriate conduct, increasing consistency in management response across the NIH.

Manages enhanced phone and web-based allegation reporting systems for both anonymous and non-anonymous reports.

Coordinates with EDI to respond to Management Directive 715 (MD715) on NIH Anti-Harassment efforts.

Collaborates with partner offices to conduct climate assessments, provide targeted training and outreach, and ensure corrective action is taken in a timely manner across the entire NIH community.

Provides communications and role-based toolkits [https://civilworkplace.nih.gov](https://civilworkplace.nih.gov)

Harassment doesn't work here.
Division of Program Coordination, Planning, and Strategic Initiatives

Tribal Health Research Office
• Single point of contact for all Tribal Nations for NIH
• Gathers meaningful input via NIH Tribal Advisory Council
• Build research capacity; expands research

Sexual & Gender Minority Research Office
• Expanding health disparities research to be inclusive of SGM populations
  • NIH funded 502 SGM-related projects in FY 2020 (66.8% increase from FY 2015)
  • SGM Administrative Supplements Program funded $6.1 million in research since 2015
• Champion civility and inclusivity in the workplace

Office of Research on Women’s Health
• Addressing health impacts of intersectionality
• Building interdisciplinary research careers in women’s health
• Pearls of Wisdom series
NIH DIVERSITY LANDSCAPE
National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities

Promote research to understand and to improve the health of racial/ethnic minority populations

- Social epigenomics research to understand mechanisms

Advance scientific understanding of the upstream causes of health disparities and develop interventions to modify

- Understanding and Addressing the Impact of Structural Racism and Discrimination on Minority Health and Health Disparities

Develop and test interventions to reduce health disparities

- Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics℠ - Underserved Populations (RADx-UP)

Ensure appropriate representation of underrepresented populations in NIH-funded research: Inclusive Participation

- Community Engagement Alliance (CEAL) Against COVID-19 Disparities
NIH DIVERSITY LANDSCAPE
The NIH UNITE Initiative

- Events of the last 18 months have brought into sharp relief the ongoing reality of racial injustice in our country, and the responsibility of all of us to address this issue.
- A series of intense Institute and Center Director meeting discussions were held to identify initial issues.
- Two self-assembled affinity groups at NIH (8CRE, AA/B Scientists) and the Anti-Harassment SC met with NIH leadership for candid discussions that informed next steps.
- We arrived at a shared commitment to address structural racism: we understood that we must not allow this pivotal moment to pass.
The NIH UNITE Initiative

Initial Needs Identified:

▪ We must ensure that biomedical research and the administrative system that supports it is devoid of hostility grounded in race, sex, and other federally protected characteristics

▪ In this new initiative, we are committed to delineating elements that may perpetuate structural racism in biomedical research, both within NIH and the extramural community, leading to a lack of personnel inclusiveness, equity, and diversity
The NIH UNITE Initiative

Initial Needs Identified:

- All ideas must be given an equal and fair review, without regard to current dogma, precedents, or who presents the ideas.

- As COVID-19 has made painfully clear, health disparities and inequities continue to contribute to morbidity and mortality in our nation, making it essential to redress the fundamental causes of these disparities/inequities and identify research programs that could lead to effective interventions.
The NIH UNITE Initiative

**Understanding stakeholder experiences through listening and learning**

**New research on health disparities, minority health, and health equity**

**Improving the NIH culture and structure for equity, inclusion, and excellence**

**Transparency, communication, and accountability with our internal and external stakeholders**

**Extramural research ecosystem: changing policy, culture, and structure to promote workforce diversity**
Initial UNITE Recommendations/Actions

• Publicly commit to identifying and correcting any NIH policies or practices that may have helped to perpetuate structural racism — Published 3/1/21
Acknowledgement

“To those individuals in the biomedical research enterprise who have endured disadvantages due to structural racism, I am truly sorry. NIH is committed to instituting new ways to support diversity, equity, and inclusion, and identifying and dismantling any policies and practices at our own agency that may harm our workforce and our science.”

— Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D., NIH Director

https://www.nih.gov/ending-structural-racism
Initial UNITE Recommendations/Actions

• Publicly commit to identifying and correcting any NIH policies or practices that may have helped to perpetuate structural racism – Published 3/1/21

• Continue to aggressively implement approaches to address the “Ginther Gap” and enhance portfolio diversity - Ongoing
R01eq Applicants and Funding Rates Type 1 and Type 2: FY2013 and FY2020 (by Race/Ethnicity)

**Number of Applicants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2020</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.8% AA/B</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>65</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.4% Hispanic</td>
<td>425</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.3% AA/B</td>
<td>1,034</td>
<td>1,554</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.2% Hispanic</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>29</td>
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</table>

**Funding Rates**

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<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1% AA/B</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7% Hispanic</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8% AA/B</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
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• Continue to aggressively implement approaches to address the “Ginther Gap” and enhance portfolio diversity - Ongoing
• Launch a multi-phased, -tiered, and -integrated Common Fund Initiative focused on transformative health disparities research initiatives to reduce health disparities/ inequities – RFAs published 3/26/21
Two FOAs released 3/26/21:

1) **RFA-RM-21-021** — Transformative Research to Address Health Disparities and Advance Health Equity (U01 Clinical Trial Allowed) - https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-RM-21-021.html

2) **RFA-RM-21-022** — Transformative Research to Address Health Disparities and Advance Health Equity at Minority Serving Institutions (U01 Clinical Trial Allowed) - https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-RM-21-022.html

Committed up to $24M
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• Continue to aggressively implement approaches to address the “Ginther Gap” and enhance portfolio diversity - Ongoing
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• Ensure a robust NIH Enterprise-wide commitment to support the NIMHD FOA focused on the effects of structural racism and discrimination on health disparities/inequities; encourage funding levels that are commensurate with overall IC resources — RFA published 3/23/21 with 25 ICOs
Understanding and Addressing the Impact of Structural Racism and Discrimination on Minority Health and Health Disparities (R01 Clinical Trial Optional)

With the commitment of up to $30.8 M by 25 ICOs:
- Letters of intent due 7/20/21
- Applications due 8/24/21

Initial UNITE Recommendations/Actions

• Develop a sustainable process to systematically gather and make public the demographics of our internal and external workforce - Ongoing
NIH Data by Race/Ethnicity, Disability Status

Search Results for Reports and Statistics

Report Title: Research Grant Investigators by Mechanism, Gender, Race, Ethnicity, and Disability Status, FY2016-FY2020

Variable: Disability Status

Start Year: 2016

End Year: 2020

**NIH Internal Data FY 21, Q2**

### RACE & ETHNICITY

#### SCIENTIFIC OCCUPATIONS
- Hispanic or Latino: 3.5% (300)
- White: 60.5% (5,235)
- Black or African American: 6.4% (550)
- Asian: 28.6% (2,472)
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: 0.1% (7)
- American Indian or Alaska Native: 0.4% (32)
- Two or More Races: 0.7% (59)

#### HEALTH & RESEARCH OCCUPATIONS
- Hispanic or Latino: 3.2% (68)
- White: 48.5% (1,037)
- Black or African American: 30.7% (656)
- Asian: 16.6% (342)
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: 0.1% (3)
- American Indian or Alaska Native: 1.0% (22)
- Two or More Races: 0.5% (11)

#### INFRASTRUCTURE OCCUPATIONS
- Hispanic or Latino: 4.6% (356)
- White: 49.0% (3,166)
- Black or African American: 33.7% (2,592)
- Asian: 10.0% (772)
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: 0.1% (6)
- American Indian or Alaska Native: 1.0% (77)
- Two or More Races: 1.5% (115)

Initial UNITE Recommendations/Actions

• Develop a sustainable process to systematically gather and make public the demographics of our internal and external workforce - *Ongoing*

• Develop a performance expectation for IC Directors to be accountable for equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts and actively participate in NIH-wide diversity efforts through a diversity, equity, and inclusion officer or other means appropriate for the IC, in coordination with SWD and EDI - *Initiated*
Initial UNITE Recommendations/Actions

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• Expand the Distinguished Scholars Program to Senior Investigators hired with tenure and enhance recruitment of researchers from underrepresented groups as candidates for open IRP investigator positions - *Initiated*
UNITE Recommendations
Going Forward

• To facilitate HD/MH/HE research, the President’s budget has proposed increased funding for NIMHD, NINR, NHLBI, and FIC
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UNITE Recommendations
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• Develop actionable data dashboards that track and provide visualizations of intramural workforce and NIH HD/MH/HE research investments with key performance indicators and metrics
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• Additional FOAs that focus on IC-specific disease/topic areas related to HD/MH/HE
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• Additional FOAs that focus on IC-specific disease/topic areas related to HD/MH/HE
• Develop programs to spur institutional culture change in support of inclusivity and equity
UNITE Recommendations Going Forward

• Increase URG career opportunities, starting with increasing IC participation in Science Education Partnership Award (SEPA) – targeting K – 12 STEM education
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• Develop programs to expand NIH interactions with and support of HBCUs, TCUs and other MSIs
• Change physical and virtual representations at NIH to more accurately reflect the diversity of our society
• Publish revised NIH internal guidance for reporting racial discrimination
The NIH UNITE Initiative

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- Victoria Rucker. Center for Information Technology/NIH Office of the Director

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