What Would Dr. King Say?
NIH Activities to Foster an Inclusive Scientific Environment

Marie A. Bernard, M.D., NIH Chief Officer for Scientific Workforce Diversity (COSWD)
Over Time, The Pendulum Swings...

Let us realize the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice.
THE NEED FOR DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES IN SCIENCE

Watch our new video to learn about COSWD's mission

diversity.nih.gov/sites/default/files/media-files/video/coswd-full-video.mp4
Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health is the most shocking and inhuman
URGs more often experience missed or delayed diagnosis of dementia than Whites.

Proportion of missed or delayed diagnoses of dementia in claims data by race/ethnicity (yellow = missed/delayed)

LACK OF DIVERSITY OF STUDY POPULATION

In Biogen’s phase 3 trials, 89% of participants were White and 9% were Asian.

Source: November 6, 2020: Meeting of the Peripheral and Central Nervous System Drugs Advisory Committee Meeting Announcement - 11/06/2020 - 11/06/2020 | FDA
LACK OF DIVERSITY OF STUDY POPULATION

In Biogen’s phase 3 trials, **89% of participants were White** and 9% were Asian.

However, in the US population, Alzheimer’s prevalence **differs by race and ethnicity**.

Source: November 6, 2020: Meeting of the Peripheral and Central Nervous System Drugs Advisory Committee Meeting Announcement - 11/06/2020 - 11/06/2020 | FDA

WHY DIVERSITY MATTERS: MORE INCLUSIVE CLINICAL AND COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH

B/AA, Hispanic, and Native American physicians more likely than white physicians to practice in underserved communities (1).

Sources:
WHY DIVERSITY MATTERS: MORE INCLUSIVE CLINICAL AND COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH

B/AA, Hispanic, and Native American physicians more likely than white physicians to practice in underserved communities (1).

Patients who have a choice are more likely to select health care professionals of their own racial or ethnic background (2).

Sources:
Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, ‘What are you doing for others?’
NIH UNITE Initiative – Together, We’re Stronger
UNITE Overview

• Established to identify and address structural racism that may exist within the NIH-supported and the greater scientific community

• Acts as a think tank to promote equity, generate bold ideas, and catalyze new actions
The NIH UNITE Initiative

Focus Area 1:
Elevating Health Disparities and Minority Health Research Across Institutes and Centers
UNITE inspired initiative - ComPASS

• **Community Partnerships to Advance Science for Society** (ComPASS)
• Supported by the NIH Common Fund
• Community-Led
• Leveraging Structural Interventions and Multi-Sectoral Partnerships
• Intervening on Social Determinants of Health
• Health Equity Focus
  • Improve Health Outcomes
  • Reduce Health Disparities
  • Advance Health Equity Research
ComPASS Initiatives

HEALTH EQUITY

Community-Led, Health Equity Structural Interventions (CHESIs)

Health Equity Research Hubs (Hubs)

ComPASS Coordination Center (CCC)
Community Partnerships to Advance Science for Society (ComPASS) Award Locations by State and U.S. Territory
NOFOs Related to Minority Health and Health Disparities

2018-2023

Number of FOAs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>FOAs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>2020</td>
<td>65</td>
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<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>204</td>
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Other Ongoing Activities

• Resource Portal for Advancing Health Equity in Research
• Facilitate equitable support for health disparities and minority health research
• Interdisciplinary Collaborative Workshops on Innovative Research Approaches to End Structural Racism
• Ensuring NIH-wide transparency, accountability, and sustainability of health disparities and minority health research
• Facilitating analyses of grant application and award data
Focus Area 2:
Promoting equity in the NIH-supported biomedical research ecosystem
UNITE related initiative - Faculty Institutional Recruitment for Sustainable Transformation
NIH UNITE-RELATED FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

NIH Science Education Partnership Award (SEPA) (PAR-23-137).
• R25 program to support K-12 STEM education projects
• Generate resources to increase career opportunities for individuals from diverse backgrounds, including those underrepresented in biomedical research.

Research With Activities Related to Diversity (ReWARD) (PAR-23-122).
• R01 to support health-related research of scientists making a significant contribution to DEIA and who have no current NIH RPG funding.
• Provides funding for both the scientific research and the DEIA activities of investigators.
NIH UNITE-RELATED FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Instrumentation Grant Program for Resource-Limited Institutions (RLI-S10, PAR-23-138).
- Aims to enhance research capacity and educational opportunities at resource-limited institutions
- Provides funds to purchase modern, scientific instrumentation.

- Supports research capacity needs assessments and action plan development at resource-limited institutions.
Assessment of Climate at Institutions (ACt) Award (RC2 - Clinical Trial Not Allowed) (PAR-24-038). The objective of this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is to solicit applications to conduct institutional climate assessments using validated survey instruments and to develop action plans for positive change in the recruitment, hiring, retention, and advancement of faculty, including those from groups underrepresented in biomedical and behavioral research (see NIH’s Notice of Interest in Diversity).
Additional Activities

• NOFO Under Development: Research Capacity Building Program to Enhance Workforce Diversity

• Review Integrity and Bias Awareness Training requirement launched (NOT-OD-23-156)

• December 2023 – Program Officer / Scientific Review Officer Training for Inclusive and Equitable Interactions with Applicants and Grantees

• DEIA Prize Competition – 10 institutions at 100k each
Engagement and Access for Research-Active Institutions (EARA)
MOSAIC Program Updates

- Enhance diversity of faculty in research-intensive positions
- Diversity-focused K99/R00s and UE5 Mentoring Hubs (AAMC, ASBMB, ASCB, ASM – *need neurosci.*)
- 23 NIH ICOs currently participate in MOSAIC
- 130+ K99s awarded FY21-23 by 17 ICs (~50% success rate)
- MOSAIC scholars - ~75% women, ~70% URM
- ≥42 scholars have already started or accepted faculty positions
- Scholars’ bios: go.usa.gov/xuR35
Faith is taking the first step even when you don’t see the whole staircase
Focus Area 3:
Promoting equity in the internal NIH workforce
Medical Student Research Opportunities

• In collaboration with OITE, the Medical Student Summer Opportunities to Advance Research Program (M-SOAR) program was piloted Summer 2023

• 1st Year Medical Students, in good standing, committed to integrating clinical research and translational approaches into career

• 88 applicants, 23 accepted into program, 16 participated in program

• Supported by OITE & UNITE Pilot Project Fund (UPPF) FY 2023.
Listserv for Federal Affinity Groups for NIH Vacancy Announcements

- Initiated by ARSC Non-Scientific Subcommittee, in partnership with Office of Human Resources.
- Goal is to broaden and increase the pool of applicants from underrepresented populations who apply to NIH job vacancy

Implemented October 2022

nih.gov/ending-structural-racism
**Recommendation:** Career Development Program for staff GS11 and below to develop a more diverse talent pool to take on increasing responsibilities.

**Program Timeline**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Restructure NIHTC to accommodate growth</td>
<td>✓ Refine and understand target population pool</td>
<td>• Conduct focus groups</td>
<td>• Create web presence and communications plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Assess model program success measures</td>
<td>✓ Draft program objectives</td>
<td>• Use feedback to refine objectives</td>
<td>• Launch outreach communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Mobilize COR resources</td>
<td>✓ Identify learning activities to meet objectives</td>
<td>• Identify stakeholders to champion rollout</td>
<td>• Disseminate call for nominations</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Compile inventory of all IC programs serving target population &amp; assess potential program overlaps</td>
<td>✓ Clarify how success will be evaluated</td>
<td>• Secure Training with instructors</td>
<td>• Schedule pilot participants</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Hire training specialist</td>
<td>✓ Prepare focus groups</td>
<td>• Leverage non-training program supports/SMEs</td>
<td>• Deliver pilot program</td>
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<tr>
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<td>• Draft eligibility, evaluation, and cohort management standards</td>
<td>• Evaluate program success</td>
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<td>• Report results of Pilot</td>
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**Partnership with the NIH Office of Human Resources (OHR)**
Address Disparities in NIH Director’s Awards

- Reviewed current award categories for plain language, expanded definitions, and incorporated examples from across NIH.
- Created new award categories focused on expanding opportunity and access.
- Reviewed the NIH Director’s Awards approval committee, created a scoring rubric and components to reduce bias.
- Created guidance for nominators, IC Awards Coordinators, and IC leadership to change the approach for nominations.
Focus Area 4:
Improving the accuracy and transparency of racial and ethnic equity data
RFI and Listening Session Reports
Internal NIH Data Gathering

2023
NIH Workplace Civility and Equity Survey

DEIA Inventory
Fostering Transparency

• Office of Extramural Research (OER) Data dashboard
• UNITE Evaluation Working Group
• Ending Structural Racism Data Hub
• Launched UNITE Advocates Program for internal NIH communications
• UNITE Onboarding Program for New NIH employees, Trainees, and Contractors
UNITE has led to broadly applicable initiatives

A rising tide lifts all boats
Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable… Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.
Thank You to UNITE Committee Members

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Special thanks to UNITE Program Manager, Tammy Reddick Lockett

+ = Staff Support Members

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The NIH UNITE Initiative to Strengthen Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Together, We’re Stronger.