Promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Biomedical Research

Advisory Committee to the Director Meeting
February 26, 2021

Marie A. Bernard, MD
Alfred Johnson, PhD
Lawrence A. Tabak, DDS, PhD
Promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Biomedical Research: Addressing the Challenges in 2021

- Events of the past year 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 have arrived at a shared commitment to address structural racism: we must not allow this pivotal moment to pass
Initial Issues 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 delineate 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.
Initial Issues 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 identify effective interventions.
The NIH UNITE Initiative to Strengthen Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: *Together, We’re Stronger*

- 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
Understanding stakeholder experiences through listening and learning

Monica Webb Hooper, NIMHD; Mia Rochelle Lowden, ORIP/OD; Tara Schwetz, IMOD/OD

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

The NIH UNITE Initiative to Strengthen Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Together, We’re Stronger
Understanding stakeholder experiences through listening and learning

CHARGE

To perform a broad, systematic self-evaluation to delineate elements that perpetuate structural racism and lead to a lack of diversity, equity, and inclusion within the NIH and the external scientific community
Understanding stakeholder experiences through listening and learning

**FRAMEWORK**

Focused on **systems and institutions**, versus individuals

**ACKNOWLEDGING**

The existence of **elements that perpetuate the status quo** in biomedical research both internal to NIH and the external community leading to a lack of inclusiveness, equity, and diversity.

**CATALYZING**


**EVALUATING**

The **qualitative and quantitative data** to inform structural changes, policy changes or additions, budgetary modifications, and programmatic reform ideas.

**LISTENING**

To **accounts and experiences** related to the charges of the NIH UNITE Committees.

**INTERNAL & EXTERNAL EFFORTS**
Foundational Efforts

CREATE A PLAN TO GATHER INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FEEDBACK

- **Connected with UNITE Committee Co-Chairs** – Complete (November 2020)
  - Identified data and information needs, committee foci to incorporate into action plan

- **Established an Action Plan** – Complete (December 2020)
  - Outlined a mixed-methods, multi-modal approach
  - Defined the expected timelines

- **Conduct Initial Listening Sessions** – Complete (November 2020, December 2020)
  - Held 2 listening sessions with the UNITE Committees
Understanding stakeholder experiences through listening and learning

**Current Efforts and Next Steps**

- **Refine and Expand Qualitative Data Collection Plan**
  - Finalize Qualitative Data Collection Plan – March 2021
  - Conduct comprehensive assessment across stakeholders through listening sessions, focus groups, town hall(s), anonymous submission sites, etc. – **Expected Completion: Summer 2021**

- **Solicit Information from ICs**
  - Collect activities, materials, and other data from ICs on relevant past, ongoing, or planned activities – **March 2021**
  - Compile and analyze to inform UNITE activities – **Expected Completion: Spring 2021**

- **Publish a Request for Information**
  - Seek input on practical and effective ways to improve the racial and ethnic inclusivity and diversity of research-centered environments and workforce – **Pending Publication**
  - Summarize results and share publicly – **Expected Completion: Spring 2021**
The NIH UNITE Initiative to Strengthen Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Together, We’re Stronger

Understanding stakeholder experiences through listening and learning

New research on health disparities, minority health, and health equity
Anna María Nápoles, NIMHD; Robert Rivers, NIDDK; Michele K. Evans, NIA

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
New Research on Health Disparities, Minority Health, and Health Equity

CHARGE

To address long-standing health disparities and issues related to Minority Health to advance health equity (HD/MH/HE) in the United States by ensuring NIH-wide transparency, accountability and sustainability in marshaling resources for HD/MH/HE research
GROUP N FRAMEWORK

SCOPING REVIEW
Of intramural and extramural NIH systems, methods, measures and definitions used to track MH/HD research to identify strengths and limitations of current systems and new models

COMMON FUND INITIATIVE
Focused on driving innovation and transformation in reducing health disparities and enhancing health equity across the country

NIH PORTFOLIO EXAMINATION
Of relevant intramural and extramural stakeholders: e.g. ODP, OBSSR, Tribal Health, SGMRO, and ICs

CROSS-CUTTING RECOMMENDATIONS
- **Enhance** the necessary infrastructure to coordinate and conduct trans-NIH MH/HD research
- **Ensure** robust support for NIMHD and enterprise-wide commitment for MH/HD research
- **Expand** research on SDOH and structural racism
- **Embrace** community-driven research

• FOA 1: solicit transformative and novel investigator-initiated applications with potential impact focused on elimination of health disparities broadly and in high priority areas.

• FOA 2: increase the competitiveness of investigators and the research base at Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs).

Examine portfolios with NIH-wide stakeholders (Targeted Completion: April 2021)

• Meet with key NIH stakeholders to focus proposed Common Fund Initiative, discuss intersectionality in HD/MH/HE research, and highlight the importance of cultural competence and community engagement in HD/MH/HE research.
New Research on Health Disparities, Minority Health, and Health Equity

Current Efforts and Next Steps

- **Conduct an accurate analysis** of current investments in HD/MH/HE research with key intramural and extramural stakeholders
  - Develop and test budget and portfolio tracking via AI data mining (Targeted Completion: December 2021)
  - Develop Analytic Budget Tool (HD/MH/HE Resource Center Dashboard) for use across NIH (intramural and extramural) to increase funding transparency by accurately reporting HD/MH/HE research funding (Targeted Completion: FY23)

- **Phase 2 – Proposed Common Fund Initiative on Interventional Research in HD FY23** (Immediate and Ongoing: Proposed FOA Release: Winter 2022)
  - Create initiative on translation of multi-level interventions to reduce HD through strategic planning process and engagement with scientific community
  - **Common Fund FOA**: focused on driving innovation and transformation in reducing health disparities and enhancing health equity across the country
New Research on Health Disparities, Minority Health, and Health Equity

Current Efforts and Next Steps (cont’d)

- **Develop Programmatic Proposals** (Immediate and Ongoing, by December 2021)
  - Establish NIH-wide HD/MH/HE Working Group. Develop infrastructure for NIMHD-based working group empowered to coordinate and track NIH MH/HD/HE research in context of Strategic Plan
  - Address research and funding gaps based on input from other key NIH stakeholders
  - Increase research using community-driven approaches to address SDOH, structural racism, behavioral interventions and prevention
  - Identify actions to address severe underrepresentation among NIH scientific faculty and staff and among NIH grantees
  - Create sustainability action plan for recommendations to ensure continuity and longevity
The NIH UNITE Initiative to Strengthen Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Together, We’re Stronger

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

Julie Segre, NHGRI; Marie A. Bernard, Acting COSWD/OD, NIA; Alfred Johnson, OM/OD

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

Extramural Research Ecosystem: Changing Policy, Culture, and Structure to Promote Workforce Diversity
To change the NIH organizational culture and structure to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the NIH workforce
FRAMEWORK
Focused on **Culture Change, Recruitment and Retention/Advancement with Accountability for NIH Internal Workforce**

**CULTURE CHANGE**
Define inclusive culture, promote positive behavior and growth opportunities, expand NIH anti-racism policies, make harassment and discrimination reporting and investigation safe and accessible, enhance anti-racism training, identify and dismantle processes that may perpetuate systemic racism

**RECRUITMENT**
Enhance and implement recruitment strategies for diversity at all levels within the NIH community

**RETENTION/ADVANCEMENT**
Establish Anti-Racism Steering Committee. Promote practices that create effective mentoring and enhance retention and promotion at all levels within the NIH community

**ACCOUNTABILITY**
Make diversity, equity, and inclusion a priority across NIH and amongst leadership. Name Diversity Officer for each I/C
Foundational Efforts

- Provide granular data on NIH workforce based on position and supervisory status. (Immediate: 2020 data will be analyzed Spring 2021 and shared publicly Summer 2021)

**NIH Workforce**
- Overall (n=18,202)
- Scientific (n=8,476)
- Health and Research (n=2,072)
- Infrastructure (n=7,654)

**Scientific Workforce** leads or has oversight over research; e.g., investigator, staff scientist, health science administrator

**Health and Research Workforce** supports research; e.g., nurse, lab technician

**Infrastructure Workforce** undergirds the scientific enterprise but not "scientific" or "health and research"; e.g., program analyst, grants management, IT

**Hispanic or Latina/o/x (any race)**
- White (alone)
- Black or African American (alone)
- Asian (alone)
- American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, Two or More Races

**NIH Senior Leadership (n=157)**
- I/C Director, Deputy Dir, Scientific Dir, Clinical Dir, Executive Officer
Improving NIH Culture & Structure for Equity, Inclusion, & Excellence

Current Efforts and Next Steps

- Expand NIH policies to more explicitly acknowledge racial discrimination. Establish a campaign to make NIH staff aware of options for reporting racist actions. (Revised policies finalized: Spring 2021; published in NIH manual chapter: Summer 2021)

- Expand recruitment efforts for NIH investigators, including those with tenure, from underrepresented groups. (Fall 2021)

- Establish anti-racism steering committee and coordinate actions with an anti-racism plan from each institute. (Spring 2021)

- Work with NIH senior leadership to appoint a diversity, equity, and inclusion officer in every IC, with direct access to the IC Director, to track, advance, and coordinate IC-specific diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts and actively participate in NIH-wide diversity efforts. (2021, on a rolling basis)
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Extramural Research Ecosystem: Changing Policy, Culture, and Structure to Promote Workforce Diversity

Anna Ordóñez, NIMH; Ericka Boone, OER/OD; Jon Lorsch, NIGMS
Extramural Research Ecosystem

CHARGE

To perform a broad systematic evaluation of NIH extramural policies and processes to identify and change practices and structures that perpetuate a lack of inclusivity and diversity within the extramural research ecosystem

Includes developing strategies to address funding disparities and increase applications that would support individuals from under-represented groups
R01eq Applicants and Funding Rates
Type 1 and Type 2: FY2013 and FY2020 (by Race/Ethnicity)

**Number of Applicants**

- **2013**
  - 1.8% AA/B: 51 applicants, 1,034 applicants
  - 4.4% Hispanic: 16,918 applicants, 5,266 applicants
  - 2.3% AA/B: 65 applicants, 703 applicants
  - 5.2% Hispanic: 29 applicants, 1,554 applicants

- **2020**
  - 1.8% AA/B: 1,554 applicants, 7,791 applicants
  - 4.4% Hispanic: 19,919 applicants

**Funding Rates**

- **2013**
  - 1.1% AA/B: 19.6%, 12.2% AA/B
  - 3.7% Hispanic: 0%, 5.0%

- **2020**
  - 1.8% AA/B: 24.6%, 23.6% AA/B
  - 4.8% Hispanic: 27.5%, 27.4%

*No Awarded Applicants*
Extramural Research Ecosystem

Changing NIH policies, culture and structures to promote extramural workforce diversity and inclusion

FRAMEWORK

- URG CAREER PATHWAYS
- LIMITED RESOURCES/CAPACITY AT HBCUs & MSIs

Immediate Actions

- Develop Short- & Long-Term Objectives
- Evaluation & Stakeholder Engagement

INEQUITIES AT EXTRAMURAL INSTITUTIONS: ENVIRONMENT & CULTURE

INEQUITIES AT NIH: PROCESSES & PROCEDURES
Extramural Research Ecosystem

Foundational Efforts

DEVELOP A COMMITTEE FRAMEWORK AND ACTION PLAN

- Establish Committee Framework – Complete (November 2020)
  - Identify key areas of focus for the committee

- Develop Committee Working Groups – Complete (December 2020)
  - Divide committee focus in working groups

- Initial Review of Existing NIH Programs, Literature, Gaps, and Best Practices – Complete (January 2021)

- Identify Recommendations for Programmatic Efforts (In Progress)
Extramural Research Ecosystem

Current Efforts and Next Steps

- **Stakeholder Engagement** – With U committee
  - Publish RFI - Spring 2021
  - Listening sessions - Spring/Summer 2021

- **Report Grantee Demographics in NIH Databook** – With OER, U, and T committees
  - Expand existing extramural grant funding data – Spring/Summer 2021

- **Develop Possible Programmatic Proposals** (Spring 2021), e.g.,:
  - **Career Pathways** – Strengthen NIH’s centralized education, outreach and evaluation efforts for existing training and diversity programs
  - **Institutional Culture** – Provide support for academic institutions to conduct in-depth climate assessments and self-studies and to act on the results
  - **NIH Processes** – Assess interactions between NIH staff and extramural community to identify barriers and bias to inform new programs and enhance equity in NIH processes
  - **Minority-Serving Institutions** – Expand technical assistance and funding opportunities for HBCUs and MSIs
The NIH UNITE Initiative to Strengthen Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Together, We’re Stronger

- 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

Extramural Research Ecosystem: Changing Policy, Culture, and Structure to Promote Workforce Diversity

Carrie Wolinetz, OSP/OD; Sadhana Jackson, NINDS, NCI; Amy Bany Adams, NINDS
CHARGE

To ensure Transparency, Accountability, and Sustainability of all UNITE efforts amongst NIH Internal and External Stakeholders.
Transparency, communication, and accountability with our internal and external stakeholders

**FRAMEWORK**

**COMMITMENT**
To identify and correct elements that may perpetuate structural racism across the entire NIH workforce and the biomedical research community leading to a lack of inclusiveness, equity, and diversity of thought.

**EVALUATION**
Of qualitative and quantitative data and conducting analyses to inform structural changes, policy changes or additions, budgetary modifications, and programmatic reform ideas.

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION**
Of the overall goals of the UNITE Initiative, data that inform those goals, and efforts to attain those goals to internal and external stakeholders.

**COORDINATION, HARMONIZATION**
Across the UNITE Committees to limit redundancy and ensure consistent efforts to attain UNITE’s goals over the course of the initiative and beyond.

Transparency, Accountability, and Sustainability
Develop an Action Plan – Complete (January 2021)
- Outline a framework based on transparency, accountability and sustainability
- Establish short, medium and long-term goals based on recommendations from 8CRE, Senior NIH Black scientists, and UNITE

Coordinate UNITE communication with NIH Stakeholders - Complete (January 2021)
- UNITE Co-Chairs
- Office of Communications and Public Liaison (OCPL)

Generate Tracking Tools for UNITE Efforts – Complete (February 2021)
- Establish UNITE liaisons’ committee
- UNITE action tracker, data repository

Foundational Efforts

Transparency, communication, and accountability with our internal and external stakeholders
Publicly commit to identifying and correcting any NIH policies or practices that may have helped to perpetuate structural racism (w/ OCPL) – February/March 2021

- Webpage
  - Central portal for anti-racism policies and efforts
  - Acknowledge internal, external workforce demographics and funding metrics

- External Facing Awareness Campaign
  - Editorials in scientific journal, mainstream media, townhall style meetings

Launch Internal Awareness Campaign – March 2021

- “Racism, Discrimination, and Harassment don’t work here!”
- Implement and communicate policy changes promoting anti-racism (with Committees I and U)

Diversify the portraiture around the NIH – Spring/Summer 2021

- Digital campaign of UNITE: “Together We’re Stronger”
- Additional portraits and exhibits reflecting our goals for recruitment and retention
  - starting with Buildings 1, 10, 31
Summary of Initial UNITE Recommendations

- Publicly commit to identifying and correcting any NIH policies or practices that may have helped to perpetuate structural racism
- Continue to aggressively implement approaches to address the “Ginther Gap” and enhance portfolio diversity
- Launch a multi-phased, -tiered, and -integrated Common Fund Initiative focused on high-risk, high-reward investigator-initiated projects to reduce health disparities/inequities
- 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
- Develop a sustainable process to systematically gather and make public the demographics of our internal and external workforce
Summary of Initial UNITE Recommendations

• Implement policy changes that promote anti-racism and remove barriers to professional growth for staff from diverse backgrounds, including underrepresented groups

• Appoint a diversity, equity, and inclusion officer in every IC, with direct access to the IC Director, to track, advance, and coordinate IC-specific equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts and actively participate in NIH-wide diversity efforts

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

**UNITE Co-Chairs:**
- Marie A. Bernard, National Institute on Aging/NIH Office of the Director
- Alfred Johnson, NIH Office of the Director/Office of Management
- Lawrence Tabak, NIH Office of the Director

**UNITE Program Manager**
- Victoria Rucker, Center for Information Technology/NIH Office of the Director

**UNITE Program Support**
- Jordan Gladman, NIH Office of the Director
- Jejeola Oresanya, NIH Office of the Director
- Bryant Maldonado, NIH Office of the Director

### Committee Co-Chairs

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### Staff Leads

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*Note: The list includes the names of the individuals who are leading the initiative, along with their respective roles and institutions.*
A marathon, not a sprint...together, we’re stronger.