A Message from our Deans

“Embody Equity: We identify systemic issues then foster change to drive a more equitable environment inclusive of diverse people, ideas, and fields of science.”

The above quote comes from our new unified mission, vision, and values (MVV), which went live this past year. We begin with this value because it highlights our divisional commitment to equity, and because it represents something more personal: Our pledge to lead a division that continually strives to be a home to diverse scholars, learners, and staff invested in responsively elevating the human experience. The BSD Office of Diversity & Inclusion (ODI) is charged with advancing our commitment to equity, inclusion, and belonging within the division.

This 2024 Impact Report is themed, “The Building Blocks of Inclusive & Equitable Science and Medicine.” This report features a detailed look at the innovative work ODI engages in to support faculty, residents and fellows, postdoctoral scholars, and divisional staff. While we hope you walk away with insights about the office’s initiatives and programs, we also hope you see the connections between diversity, equity, and inclusion and robust research and discovery. The study of science and the practice of medicine are enhanced when members of the division can insert their full selves into the work that they do each day.

As leaders, the modeling of our mission, vision, and values starts with us. Embodying Equity calls us to remain steadfast in working toward a culture that acknowledges social ills while working to create a more just division. This 2023 ODI Impact Report is one way we wish to demonstrate that commitment.

Sincerely,

Mark Anderson, MD, PhD
Dean & Executive Vice President for Medical Affairs

Iris Romero, MD
Executive Vice Dean, Biological Sciences Division
Office of Diversity & Inclusion Team

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Program Manager
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Alex Gutierrez (he/him)
Graduate Intern 2022 - 2023
Office of Diversity & Inclusion Mission
The Office of Diversity & Inclusion works as an extension of the dean to build a division that honors an array of different lived life experiences and perspectives to advance innovation and discovery in science. We advocate for and support a culture in which inclusion is appreciated and nurtured as a central priority across the division’s departments and programs.

Our work focuses on not just race and ethnicity, but also the ways sexuality, gender, class, religion and other identities add to our community. We believe that the study of science and the practice of medicine are enhanced when scholars, clinicians, and staff can insert their full perspectives into their work.

History & Context
The Who? What? & Why?
We strive to build an understanding of history that is coupled to modern challenges in DEI. Our initiatives recognize and respond to history, are shaped by institutional priorities, and the contemporary realities experienced by members of our community.

Infrastructure
The Tools to Foster Change
We develop and advocate for sustainable programs, promising practices, and support mechanisms that allow diversity, equity, and inclusion to flourish within the BSD.

Climate
A Division for Everyone
Our office creates and contributes to a culture that is responsive to difference, prioritizes equity, and affords opportunities for meaningful assessment and accountability.

People
Recognizing and Supporting
We support and nurture a sense of belonging for all people within the BSD, with particular emphasis on fostering community for historically marginalized faculty, students, and staff in science and medicine.
Implementing and achieving diversity, equity, and inclusion within BSD happens through a dual focus on history and context.

A look at history reveals that legacies of exclusion still exist within the study of science and medicine today.

We rely on context to bring meaning to our work. We prioritize what our constituents need through assessment of their current realities.

We serve all members of the BSD. We also place emphasis on supporting those historically underrepresented in science and medicine.
Inclusion MENU Sessions

The Inclusion MENU (meeting, engaging, and understanding) brings diversity education “think shops” to our constituents in their departments, lab groups, huddles, and section meetings. The MENU is designed to engage conversations about topics that cultivate cultures of openness and dialogue. Since its inception in 2017, we have completed over 300 sessions. Topics on the MENU include, Mitigating Bias, LGBTQ Safe Space, Antiracism in Practice, Examining Privilege, and Disability Inclusion.

Postdoc DEI Course

This course for postdocs is the first in the country to bring a specific DEI curriculum to train budding researchers and scientists. This quarter long class includes sessions about increasing inclusion in the lab and developing inclusive pedagogy.

DEIJ Retreat

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice are the themes of this annual retreat hosted by members of the division’s basic science departments. Here, scientists interrogate their fields, strategize about increasing representation of underrepresented faculty, and discuss ways to connect science to the South Side community.

Climate by the Numbers

- 190 Chicago Pride Parade registrants
- 60 Inclusion MENU sessions delivered in 2022 - 2023
- 40 scholars enrolled in postdoc DEI course
- 212 DEIJ retreat attendees and 20 poster presentations
BSD Belong is our 2022-2023 series of programs designed to enhance learning, promote our office’s visibility, and create a sense of community among members of the division. The campaign consists of four initiatives.

**Revamped Inclusion MENU “think shops.”** Our newest think shop focuses on disability inclusion in the lab.

**Instagram: @BSD_ODEI**
Our newest social media platform on which we spotlight people in BSD and celebrate heritage months.

**Digital Learning modules focused on mitigating bias and queer and trans inclusion.**

**Our D&I Diaries Podcast** features members of the division sharing insights about their lived experiences as they relate to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

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**Unified Mission, Vision, & Values**

Bringing greater cohesion to the Basic Sciences, Pritzker School of Medicine, and UChicago Medicine, our **Mission, Vision, and Values** is a set of guiding principles to help us achieve greater heights together.

**Mission:** As part of the University of Chicago, we pursue globally impactful solutions to seemingly unsolvable challenges. Through our rigorous research, innovative education, and comprehensive care and healing, we collaborate on life-changing advancements that create meaningful results for our community and the world, including a greater, more equitable future for all.

**Vision:** Together, we elevate the human experience with knowledge and health care.

**Commit to Excellence**
We contribute our exceptional talents to all we do and empower the same spirit of excellence in others.

**Embrace Curiosity**
We stay open to new ideas, champion diverse perspectives, and drive a culture of thoughtful risk taking to deliver transformative innovation.

**Embody Equity**
We identify systemic issues then foster change to drive a more equitable environment inclusive of diverse people, ideas, and fields of science.

**Make a Difference**
We lead with heart and compassion in all our interactions. We create positive change in our areas of influence whether expanding scientific inquiry, developing the next generation of leaders, or healing our community.

**Take Ownership**
We accomplish what we say we will and hold ourselves and one another accountable for our actions.

**Grow Together**
We meaningfully collaborate with one another to create something bigger than we could ever achieve alone.
BSD graduate students and postdocs provided feedback over the course of four DEI listening sessions held through the fall and summer ‘23. We spoke about their experiences related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in their classrooms, labs and departments as well as life at UChicago and in the city.

Listening sessions showed: Students and trainees are attracted to Chicago’s rich culture of concerts, festivals, theater, etc. Students told stories of using the city’s events and organizations to find community, particularly in the case of marginalized students.

The COVID pandemic interrupted connections between trainees and walk-in administrative support. New trainees struggled to access traditional guidance from administration and peers.

"Our culture of independence means you are expected to find those resources of support on your own using your ingenuity."
-Newly Arrived Postdoc

Staff and administrative guidance is valued by students and trainees.

"I was careful about who I chose as a mentor and what lab I joined. So I'm able to feel belonging in my lab. I feel comfortable talking about topics related to identity and disparities, my mentor is very supportive of DEI."
- BSD Graduate Student

A consistent piece of feedback from all trainees was: DEI work/interests appear to be performed by a small minority of faculty. Students and trainees want more of their professors to see DEI as a priority and be more engaged in programming and support.

Through listening to students’ stories we learned that some labs create a sense of belonging and feel safe for students by practicing respect honesty and openness. Students in these labs report feeling seen.
2023 BSD Trainee Diversity Awards

Recognition of Exceptional DEI Leadership and Service

Yara Haridy, PhD
Postdoctoral Fellow Steering Committee DEI Chair, Divisional Search Postdoc Representative, Advocate for Decolonization of Paleontology.

Alexis Thornberg
Human Genetics
Data4All Co-Teacher, Target H.O.P.E. Guest Lecturer, ABRCMS Recruiter, SREU Mentor & Teacher, President UChicago Black Graduate Coalition.

Luke Dyer
Human Genetics
Expanding Your Horizons Volunteer Chair, Northern Indiana Regional Science and Engineering Fair, Deans Concil Migrant Coat Drive Lead.

Selena Martinez
Climate
Committee on Evolutionary Biology
Women in Science Program Mentor at the Field Museum, Mentor to Native Students in Biology at Tribal and Public Universities, Teaches Evolutionary Biology at Ross Elementary in Topeka KS.

Renee Fonesca
Genetics Genomics & Systems Biology
Brave Space Alliance Volunteer, Creator of the Genetics Grad Program Outreach Event and Database, Bret Harte Spanish Language Assistant Group Organizer for Spanish Speaking Migrant Students.

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Overview
The DEI work that we do is made possible through teamwork and collaboration. Maintaining an interconnected web of organizations, offices, and leaders allows our office to pull levers of change throughout the division.

Levers of Change
Basic Science DEI committees within graduate programs serve as the local experts, innovators and leaders in DEI.

Above, Dr. Tang’s Cancer Research Community Building Committee visits the Holocaust Museum as a part of their heritage museum program.

Innovations & Collaborations
Collaborating with the BSD Diversity Committee enabled new programs like:
- The DEIJ Retreat
- Diversity & Inclusion Assistantships

Building & Maintaining Networks
The Warner-Reynolds Leadership Academy supports a network of women faculty leaders.

BSD PhD students develop their networks at National Diversity in STEM Conferences.

Guiding Policy
The office helps clinical departments’ DEI liaisons design and execute annual departmental operating plans. Similarly we strategize and coordinate with the chairs of basic science departments and graduate programs.

Celebrating Diversity
Pride Parade
Maintaining annual community events ensures everyone feels welcomed, valued, and celebrated.
In partnership with Basic Science Deans and Chairs, our office co-leads searches for faculty who specialize in inclusive pedagogy.

**A Culture of Inclusion**
As part of our faculty DEI liaisons initiative, departments launched individual DEI steering committees and websites.

A thoughtful and interconnected organizational structure enables a system of guidance and feedback for growth.

**Funding DEI Efforts with Small Grants**
- Number of Projects Funded ‘22–‘23:
  - Research: 6
  - Conferences/Programs: 6
  - Professional Development: 8

  Example: Investigating the Lived Experiences of Black NICU Fathers
  Example: Black and Latina Women in Medicine Conference
  Example: Attending a Visiting Scholar Residency Program

**Small Grants are Used by Everyone**
- 65 Grants awarded to date
  - Faculty: 32
  - Trainees: 11
  - Students: 14
  - Staff: 8

  Example: Present morphology research at ICVM Conference
  Example: Study professional identity formation in LGBTQ+ physicians

  * ICVM: International Congress of Vertebrate Morphology

**DEI Steering Committee Leadership**

**Divisional Search Recruits**
- Dr. Pavitra Muralidhar: Ecology & Evolution
- Dr. Rebekah Israel Cross: Public Health Sciences
- Dr. Jasmine Nirody: Organismal Biology & Anatomy

**Systematic Feed Forward and Feedback**
- GRIT: Graduate Recruitment Initiative Team
- PDA: Postdoc Association
- FOC: Faculty of Color

**Infrastructure**
Through initiatives focused on fostering a sense of belonging of faculty, staff, trainees, and graduate students of the BSD, our office engages a large constituency across the academic spectrum.

We coordinate community building activities like the Chicago Pride Parade. We also facilitate professional development opportunities through the small grants program.

58% of BSD Graduate Students are Women

Diversifying the life sciences is essential to support rapid advances in biological and medical research.

27% of BSD Staff belong to groups historically underrepresented in STEM

43% of BSD Faculty are Women

Who We Support & How

- Visiting Undergraduates
- PREP Scholars
- Graduate & Medical School Students
- Postdoctoral Scholars & Residents
- Research Staff
- Faculty

- Workshops with Pipeline Programs
- Cultural Events & Leadership Training
- Professional Development Training
- Inclusion Menu Sessions
- Rising Stars Seminar & Divisional Faculty Search

Recognizing and Supporting

People

University of Chicago Comprehensive Cancer Center DEI Open House

Dr. Kunle Odunsi and Juan Ápiz Saab

BSD Black women faculty meeting with Dr. Valerie Montgomery-Rice, President of Morehouse School of Medicine
People

Community Building
We hosted over 60 faculty, students, and trainees at our faculty of color community building activities. Through this initiative, faculty are able to connect with one another and the next generation of scientists and clinicians. This creates a multi-generational network for mentoring, resources, and support.

Our office connects groups of residents and fellows across departments through identity-specific groups: House Staff Diversity, House Staff Pride.

Establishing a Diverse Network
The Rising Stars Seminar is an opportunity to network with the next generation of faculty candidates before they enter the job market. Over the course of two days we hold a virtual seminar highlighting the work of postdocs selected from applicants across the country by department chairs. The symposium culminates in a virtual networking session enabling faculty and speakers to connect and form collaborations.

Professional Development
Each spring, the Warner-Reynolds Leadership Academy brings together women from across the Biological Sciences Division, including mid-career faculty, staff, trainees, and students from diverse backgrounds. The academy provides a vibrant and conducive space for learning, professional development, collaboration, and crucial conversations to enhance leadership skills.

Recruitment
Our office conducts active outreach with underrepresented minorities to encourage them to explore science and medicine with the goal of increasing the diversity of perspectives in the classroom and the broader sciences. Through recruiting events, attending conferences, and building connections at Minority-Serving Institutions and Historically Black Colleges and Universities, we are contributing to a future scientific and medical workforce that is more diverse and inclusive.
Liaisons are the office's formal connection to the clinical departments.

**DEI Faculty Liaisons from Clinical Departments**

- **Psychiatry**
  - Seeba Anam
- **Neurosurgery**
  - Paramita Das
- **Surgery**
  - Chelsea Dorsey
- **Anesthesia**
  - Stephen Estime
- **Pediatrics**
  - Barrett Fromme
- **Neurology**
  - Daniel Kurz
- **OB/Gyn**
  - Ernst Lengyel
- **RadOnc**
  - Anne McCall
- **Medicine**
  - Doriane Miller
- **Psychiatry**
  - Candice Norcott
- **Pediatrics**
  - Sharmilee Nyenhuis
- **Pathology**
  - Melissa Pessin
- **Family Med**
  - Kortnee Roberson
- **Ophthalmology**
  - Alexis Warren
- **Ortho Surgery**
  - Jennifer Wolf
- **Radiology**
  - Carina Yang

Liaisons work at the department level to advance DEI.

**Gradate Program DEI Committee Representatives**

- **BioChem & Molecular Bio**
  - Axel Concepcion
  - Bob Keenan
  - Cara Brook
  - Juan Mendoza
  - Stephanie Palmer
  - John Novembre
  - Wei-Jen Tang
  - Joseph Thornton
- **Committee on Immunology**
  - Barret Fromme
  - Haky Im
  - Wei-Jen Tang
  - Joseph Thornton
- **Community Building Committee**
  - Daria Esterházy
  - Emily Marshall
- **Medical Physics**
  - Emily Marshall
- **Microbiology**
  - Margarot Carroll
  - Bob Keenan
- **Cancer Research Community Building Committee**
  - Wei-Jen Tang

Volunteer-based DEI committees design innovative interventions for their local program community.
You can implement department and program level interventions on DEI committees.

Include students/trainees in faculty recruitment initiatives. Create inclusive application rubrics. Engage the local community with events.

Craft Policy in DEI Committees

How often are seminars given by people of color or women? Do members of your group open up about their backgrounds?

Identify tangible points for change, design interventions, and see if change occurs. Then adjust.

Establish & Assess Metrics

Workshops offered by our office teach methods to build inclusive cultures.

Learn & Educate

Departments should seek out opportunities to learn about DEI in an effort to foster a sense of safety and belonging.

Build Visibility

Who and what you showcase, celebrate, and remember reflects the priorities of your department.

A wall of diverse alumni, stories in newsletters, and websites highlighting faculty, staff, and learners can create inspiration and opportunity for further diversifying your group.

Answering the Call. What You Can Do!