

Office of Diversity & Inclusion

2024 IMPACT REPORT

The Building Blocks of Inclusive & Equitable Science and Medicine

Edition 2



THE UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO

Biological Sciences
**Diversity
and Inclusion**

Office of Diversity & Inclusion Team



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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 responsibly 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 2024 ODI Impact Report is one way we wish to demonstrate that commitment.

Sincerely,



THE UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO | **Biological
Sciences
Division**



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



Iris Romero, MD
Executive Vice Dean, Biological Sciences Division



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 experiences and perspectives to advance innovation and discovery in science. We advocate for and support a culture where 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.



The Four Pillars Guiding our 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.



The Who? What? & Why?

History & Context

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.

Partnering with colleagues focused on Health Equity

Inclusive Pedagogy

Divisional Priorities

Honoring the experiences of the people living on Chicago's South Side

Addressing Histories of Exclusion

Belonging

What is Diversity Equity & Inclusion?

Who we serve:

Faculty

Students, Residents, & Fellows

Postdoctoral Scholars

Staff



Inclusion MENU Sessions

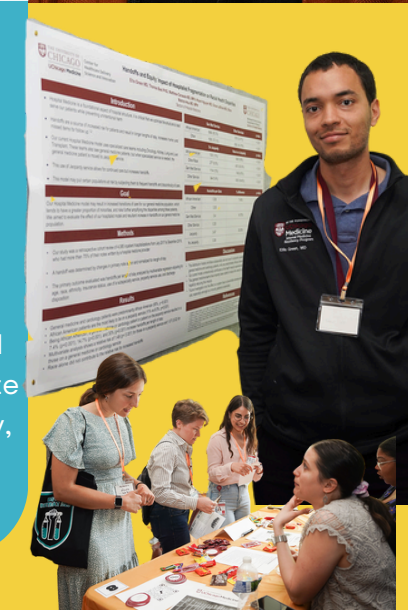
The Inclusion MENU (meeting, engaging, and understanding) brings diversity education “think shops” to our constituents in their departments, lab groups, huddles, and section meetings. The MENU is designed to engage conversations about topics that cultivate cultures of openness and dialogue. Since its 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


60 Inclusion MENU sessions delivered in 2022 - 2023

190 Chicago Pride Parade registrants



40 scholars enrolled in postdoc DEI course

212 DEIJ retreat attendees and **20** poster presentations



bsd

BELONG

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 where we spotlight people in the BSD and celebrate heritage months.



Scan and Listen



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.



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.

"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

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.

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

Climate

Recognition of Meaningful DEI Leadership and Service

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.



Selena Martinez

Committee on Evolutionary Biology

Genetics Genomics & Systems Biology

Renee Fonesca



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.

Recognition of Exceptional DEI Leadership and Service

Expanding Your Horizons Volunteer Chair, Northern Indiana Regional Science and Engineering Fair, Deans Council Migrant Coat Drive Lead.



Alexis Thornberg

Human Genetics

Human Genetics

Luke Dyer



South Side Science Festival Lead Organizer, Modern Materials and Technology Mol Bio Lead Teacher, The STEM Corps Coordinator with the Neighborhood Schools' Program (+Other Initiatives).

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



Joshua McKeever

Metabolism

Veronica Locher



DEIJ Retreat Logistics Lead, South Side Science Festival Immunology Specialist, Immunology Grad Application Support Program Founder.

Immunology

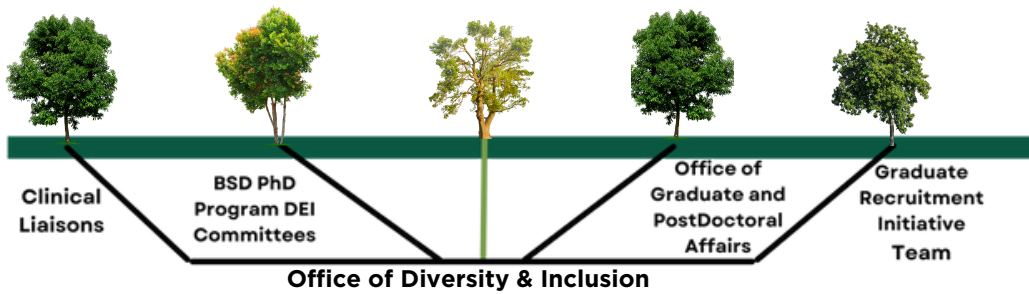
Postdoctoral Fellow Steering Committee DEI Chair, Divisional Search Postdoc Representative, Advocate for Decolonization of Paleontology.



Yara Haridy, PhD

Organismal Biology & Anatomy

The Tools to Foster Change



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.

Infrastructure

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.



Divisional Search Recruits



Dr. Pavitra Muralidhar
Ecology & Evolution



Dr. Rebekah Israel Cross
Public Health Sciences



Dr. Jasmine Nirody
Organismal Biology & Anatomy

Funding DEI Efforts with Small Grants

Number of Projects Funded '22-'23

Research

6

Example:
Investigating the Lived Experiences of Black NICU Fathers

Conferences/ Programs

6

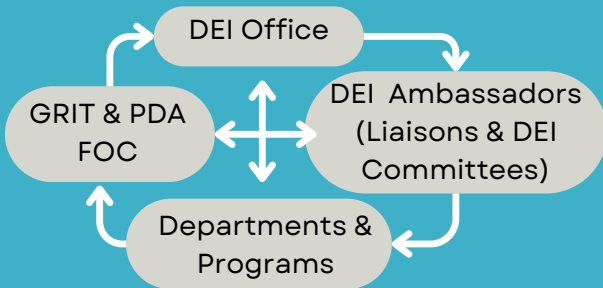
Example:
Black and Latina Women in Medicine Conference

Professional Development

8

Example:
Attending a Visiting Scholar Residency Program

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

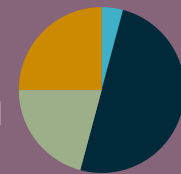


Systematic Feed Forward and Feedback

GRIT: Graduate Recruitment Initiative Team
PDA: Postdoc Association
FOC: Faculty of Color

Small Grants are Used by Everyone

65
Grants awarded to date



- Faculty
- Trainees
- Students
- Staff

Example:
Present recent findings at ICVM Conference

Example:
Study professional identity formation in LGBTQ+ physicians

* ICVM: International Congress of Vertebrate Morphology

Recognizing and Supporting

People



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

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

27%

of BSD Staff belong to groups historically underrepresented in STEM

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

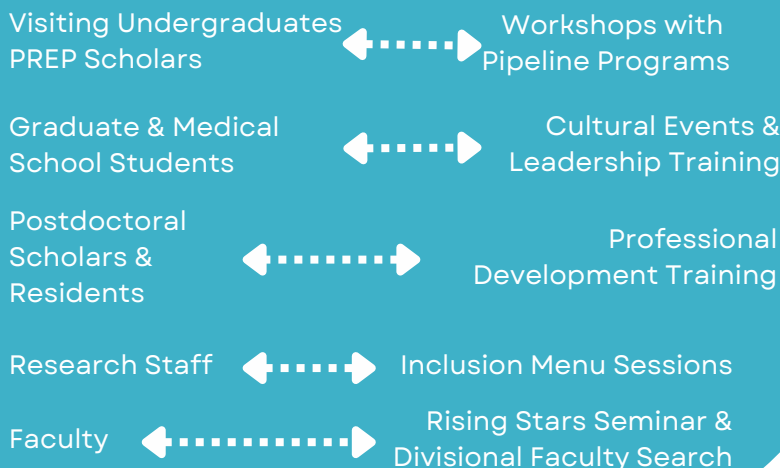
43%

of BSD Faculty are Women



Dr. Kunle Odunsi and Juan Ápiz Saab

Who We Support & How



University of Chicago Comprehensive Cancer Center DEI Open House

People



LGBTQ Resident Group with Dr. Carl Streed and other Clinical Faculty

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.



Faculty & Student Mixer

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.



WRLA Cohort, Spring 2023



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.



Ivy Plus Puerto Rico Recruitment Fair

Liaisons are the office's formal connection to the clinical departments

DEI Faculty Liaisons from Clinical Departments



Jessica Haack
Psychiatry



Paramita Das
Neurosurgery



Chelsea Dorsey
Surgery



Stephen Estime
Anesthesia



Barrett Fromme
Pediatrics



Daniel Kurz
Neurology



Ernst Lengyel
OB/Gyn



Anne McCall
RadOnc



Monica Peek
Medicine



Candice Norcott
Psychiatry



Sharmilee Nyenhuis
Pediatrics



Melissa Pessin
Pathology



Kortnee Roberson
Family Med



Alexis Warren
Ophthalmology



Jennifer Wolf
Ortho Surgery



Carina Yang
Radiology

Liaisons work at the department level to advance DEI

Graduate Program DEI Committee Representatives



Axel Concepcion
BioChem & Molecular Bio



Bob Keenan
BioChem & Molecular Bio



Cara Brook
Committee on Evolutionary Bio



Margarot Carroll
Microbiology



Daria Esterházy
Immunology



Emily Marshall
Medical Physics



Juan Mendoza
Immunology



Stephanie Palmer
Integrative Biology



John Novembre
Genetics



Haky Im
Genetics



Wei-Jen Tang
Cancer Research
Community Building Committee



Joseph Thornton
Ecology & Evolution

Volunteer-based DEI committees design innovative interventions for their local program community.

Answering the Call. What You Can Do!

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.

Establish & Assess Metrics

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.

Craft Policy in DEI Committees

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.

Learn & Educate

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



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



**Elevating
the human
experience**