NIH UNITE Initiative

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7/23/21

The NIH UNITE Initiative

- Events of 2020 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

The NIH UNITE Initiative

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**

The NIH UNITE Initiative

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

U Understanding stakeholder experiences through listening and learning

N New research on health disparities/minority health/health equity

I Improving the NIH Culture and Structure for Equity, Inclusion, and Excellence

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

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

Initial UNITE Recommendations

- **Publicly commit to identifying and correcting any NIH policies or practices that may have helped to perpetuate structural racism**

Acknowledgement

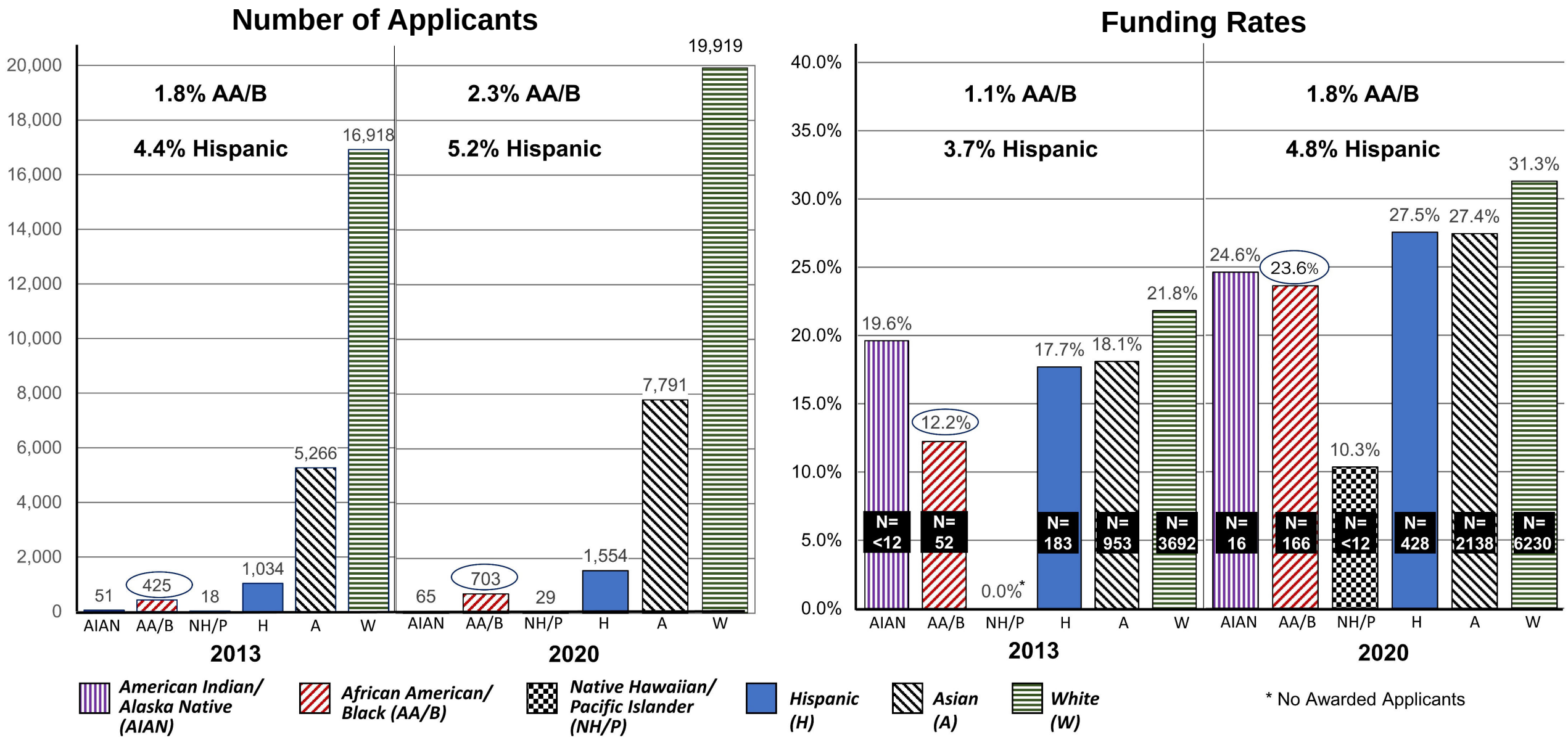
"To those individuals in the biomedical research enterprise who have endured disadvantages due to structural racism, I am truly sorry. NIH is committed to instituting new ways to support diversity, equity, and inclusion, and identifying and dismantling any policies and practices at our own agency that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

https://www.nih.gov/ending-structural-racism

Initial UNITE Recommendations and 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**

R01eq Applicants and Funding Rates Type 1 and Type 2: FY2013 and FY2020 (by Race/Ethnicity)



Initial UNITE Recommendations and 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***
- **Launch a multi-phased, -tiered, and -integrated Common Fund Initiative focused on transformative health disparities research initiatives to reduce health disparities/ inequities**

Action

NIH Common Fund Transformative Research to Address Health Disparities and Advance Health Equity – Committed up to $24M

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

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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***
- **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**

Action

Funding Opportunity Title	Understanding and Addressing the Impact of Structural Racism and Discrimination on Minority Health and Health Disparities (R01 Clinical Trial Optional)
Activity Code	R01 Research Project Grant
Announcement Type	New
Related Notices	None
Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) Number	RFA-MD-21-004
Companion Funding Opportunity	None
Number of Applications	See Section III. 3. Additional Information on Eligibility.

With the commitment of up to $30.8 M by 25 ICOs:

- **Letters of intent due 7/20/21**
- **Applications due 8/24/21**

https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-MD-21-004.html

Action – *BRAIN FOA*

First NIH FOA using Plan to Enhance Diverse Perspectives as a consideration for scoring

Department of Health and Human Services

Part 1. Overview Information

Participating Organization(s)	National Institutes of Health (NIH)
Components of Participating Organizations	National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) National Eye Institute (NEI) National Institute on Aging (NIA) National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering (NIBIB) Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD) National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH)
Funding Opportunity Title	BRAIN Initiative: Reagent Resources for Brain Cell Type-Specific Access and Manipulation to Broaden Distribution of Enabling Technologies for Neuroscience (U24 Clinical Trial Not Allowed)

https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-MH-21-180.html

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

Action – *NIH Data by Race/Ethnicity, Disability Status*

Research Portfolio Online Reporting Tools (RePORT)

Search

HOME | ABOUT RePORT | FAQs | GLOSSARY | CONTACT US

REPORTS

Home > Report Catalog > Report Catalog Results

Search Results for Reports and Statistics

NEW SEARCH

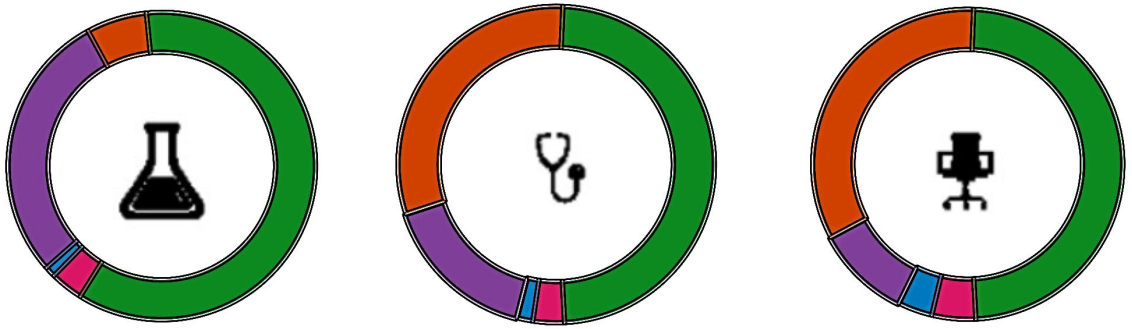
Topic: Filter by Topic
Funding Mechanism: Filter by Mechanism
Fiscal Year: 2020
Activity: All (Aggregate)
Admin Institute/Center: All NIH (Aggregate)
Variable: Disability Status
Portfolio: Extramural Programs

2 records found.

	Report Title	Topic	Variable	Start Year	End Year	Format
▶	Research Grant Investigators by Mechanism, Gender, Race, Ethnicity, and Disability Status, FY2016-FY2020	Investigators, Funded Investigators, Funding Rates Investigators, Gender Investigators, Race/Ethnicity	Disability Status FY Gender IC Mechanism Race/Ethnicity	2016	2020	VIEW REPORT

https://report.nih.gov/sites/report/files/docs/NIH_Principal_Investigators_by_Gender_Race_Ethnicity_and_Disability_2016-2020_02_23_2021_PDF.pdf

Action – *NIH Internal Data FY 21, Q2*



	SCIENTIFIC OCCUPATIONS	HEALTH & RESEARCH OCCUPATIONS	INFRASTRUCTURE OCCUPATIONS
Hispanic or Latino	3.5% 300	3.2% 300	4.6% 356
White	60.5% 5,235	48.5% 1,037	49.0% 3,766
Black or African American	6.4% 550	30.7% 656	33.7% 2,592
Asian	28.6% 2,472	16.0% 342	10.0% 772
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.1% 7	0.1% 3	0.1% 6
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.4% 32	1.0% 22	1.0% 77
Two or More Races	0.7% 59	0.5% 11	2.5% 115

Employees classified in the five racial groups or Two or more races are all non-Hispanic or Latino. Employees classified as Hispanic or Latino may identify with any combination of the five racial categories.

https://www.edi.nih.gov/people/resources/advancing-racial-equity/nih-workforce-profile-fy21q02

Initial UNITE Recommendations

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

Action

Anti-Racism Steering Committee

ARSC Membership

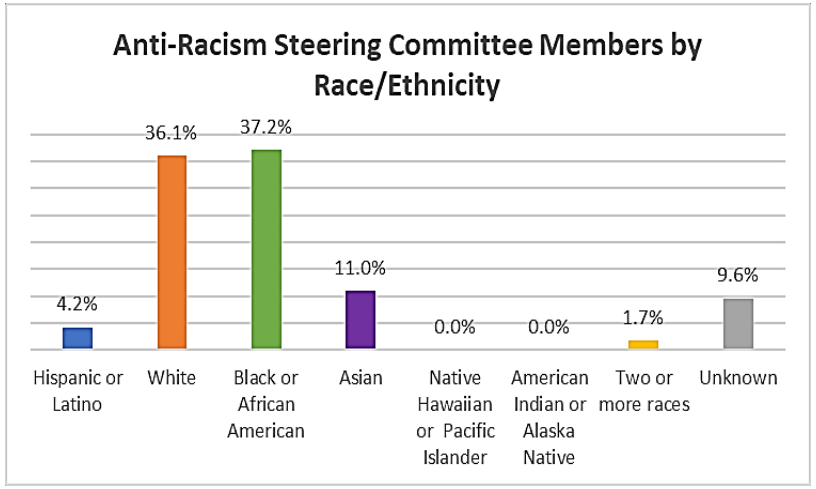
- 480+ members from across NIH – all race/ethnicities, job categorizations, and pay levels

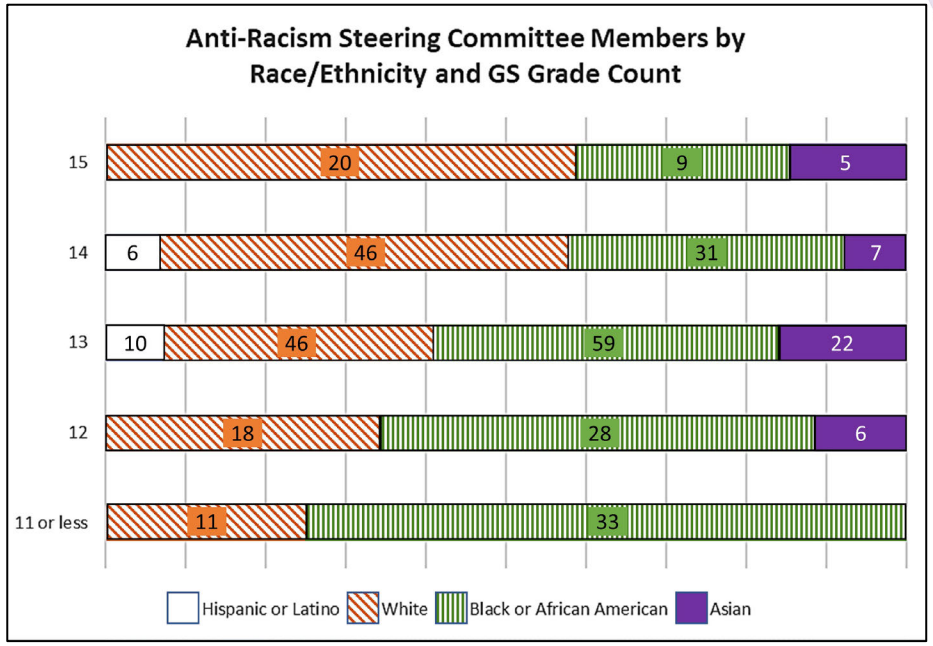
Goal

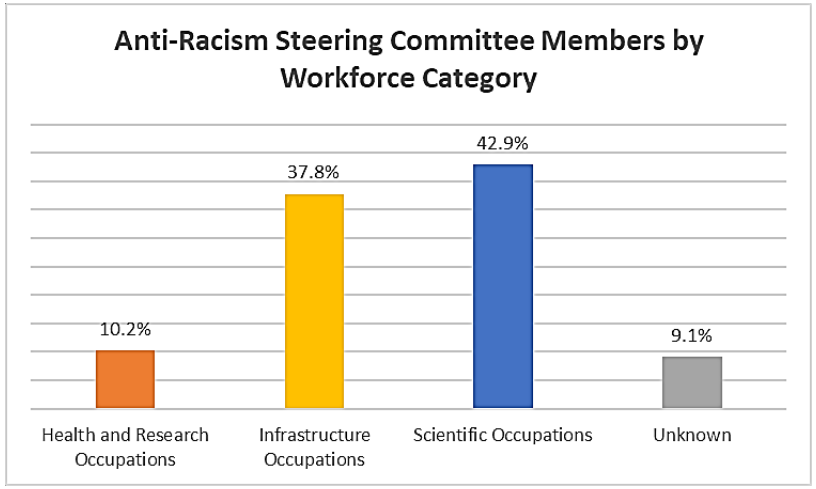
- Address issues regarding policies and procedures.
- Does not address individual cases

NIHANTIR-STEERINGCMTE@mail.nih.gov

ARSC Demographic Data from EDI







- 471 members of the NIH Racism Steering Committee.
- The pay plan breakout is as follows: GS = 370, GP =7, AD = 1, CC = 3, ES = 4, RF = 21, RG = 22, 1 Unknown.
- Grade distribution is provided for the GS pay plan only.
- Demographics for all Fellows and Contractors (n=42) are unknown.
- Demographics for 3 FTEs is unknown (3 race, 1 disability and 1 sex).
- To maintain confidentiality and protect individual identification from deductive disclosure risk,some categories, are suppressed for reporting purposes

Initial UNITE Recommendations and Actions

- **Implement policy changes that promote anti-racism and remove barriers to professional growth for staff from diverse backgrounds, including underrepresented groups -** ***Initiated***
- ***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.***
- **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 and Actions Going Forward

UNITE Actions/Priorities Going Forward – Next 6 Months

- To facilitate HD/MH/HE research, the President's budget has proposed increased funding for NIMHD, NINR, NHLBI, and FIC
- Continue to listen and learn from a wide variety of stakeholders, including those who are not frequently engaged
- 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
- 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 Actions/Priorities Going Forward – Next 6 Months

- Increase URG career opportunities, starting with increasing IC participation in Science Education Partnership Award (SEPA) – targeting K – 12 STEM education
- Examine NIH staff (e.g., PO, SRO) interactions with applicants (e.g., URG applicants) to address bias or inequities that may impact funding opportunities
- 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

Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere

Martin Luther King, Jr

Cell
Leading Edge

CellPress

Commentary

Affirming NIH's commitment to addressing structural racism in the biomedical research enterprise

Francis S. Collins,[1,*] Amy Bany Adams,[2] Courtney Aklin,[3] Trevor K. Archer,[4] Marie A. Bernard,[5,6] Ericka Boone,[7] John Burklow,[8] Michele K. Evans,[6] Sadhana Jackson,[2,9] Alfred C. Johnson,[10] Jon Lorsch,[11] Mia Rochelle Lowden,[12] Anna María Nápoles,[13] Anna E. Ordóñez,[14] Robert Rivers,[15] Victoria Rucker,[5,16] Tara Schwetz,[3] Julia A. Segre,[17] Lawrence A. Tabak,[3] Monica Webb Hooper,[13] Carrie Wolinetz,[3] and NIH UNITE

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The NIH UNITE Initiative

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