Ushering in a New Wave of Physicians

Medical schools see a surge in student applications — and diversity — in the wake of COVID-19

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Op-Ed: Working in Solidarity to Address Anti-Asian Violence

Why Health Care Leadership Needs More Women of Color
Once COVID-19 immunity is reached on a large scale, the continued research of communicable diseases and viral infections is necessary. That goes not only for humans, but for animals as well. Advancing these efforts through research, Dr. Ebenezer Tumban, an expert in molecular virology and vaccinology within the Texas Tech University School of Veterinary Medicine, will play a huge role. “We are in the midst of a viral pandemic that may have originated from bats or unknown animal reservoirs and thus, there is a need to identify, study and control emerging infectious agents, which can affect the lives of animals including humans. I am happy to be joining a program which has a faculty body with a diverse background in biomedical sciences to help with this effort.”
Op-Ed: Working in Solidarity to Address Anti-Asian Violence and Xenophobia
By Christa Grant, Gretchen Hathaway, PhD, and D. Ekow King

Student Advocates Say Colleges Must Prioritize Safety and Equity in Planning for Fall 2021
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By Mariah Bohanon

Medical Schools Work to Develop A More Diverse Physician Workforce as Applications Surge in the Wake of COVID-19
By Erik Cliburn and Mariah Bohanon

On the cover: The University of California Davis School of Medicine’s class of 2024 is nearly 50 percent first generation students and more than 70 percent disadvantaged students due to the school’s approach to admissions.

Above: The Ohio State University College of Medicine’s holistic approach to admissions has led to a steady increase in diversity among its medical students.
A career at Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (PCOM) means more. We teach our students to treat the whole person, looking beyond just symptoms. PCOM students engage with the community and learn to collaborate as part of a healthcare team to give the best care.

PCOM recognizes the need for recruiting diverse faculty and staff we dedicate efforts to close the health disparity gap. The PCOM community cultivates an environment of inquiry, inclusiveness and respect; one that promotes discovery and celebration of our differences, and fosters an appreciation of the rich social fabric that binds us together.

**ONE COLLEGE, THREE LOCATIONS**

**PHILADELPHIA:**
- Osteopathic Medicine (DO)
- Biomedical Sciences (MS)
- Physician Assistant Studies (MS)
- Forensic Medicine (Pathway/MS)
- Clinical Psychology (PsyD)
- Educational Psychology (PhD)
- Mental Health Counseling (MS)
- Counseling and Clinical Health Psychology (MS)
- School Psychology (PsyD, EdS, MS)
- Organizational Development & Leadership (MS)
- Applied Behavior Analysis (Cert.)
- Public Health Management and Administration (MS)
- Non Profit Leadership and Population Health Management (MS)

**GEORGIA:**
- Osteopathic Medicine (DO)
- Pharmacy (PharmD)
- Physical Therapy (DPT)
- Physician Assistant Studies (MS)
- Biomedical Sciences (MS)
- Medical Simulation (Cert.)

**SOUTH GEORGIA:**
- Osteopathic Medicine (DO)
- Biomedical Sciences (MS)

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The views expressed in the content of the articles and advertisements published in INSIGHT Into Diversity are those of the authors and are not to be considered the views expressed by Potomac Publishing, Inc.
New Mexico Colleges Collaborate to Ease Degree Pathways and Campus Operations

On March 31, five public colleges in New Mexico announced the formation of the Collaborative for Higher Education Shared Services (CHESS), a nonprofit organization that will make it possible for institutions to work together to facilitate college access and completion for underserved students in the state.

CHESS will allow participating colleges to enjoy the benefits of a typical university system while retaining independence and connections to their communities, according to a news release issued by Central New Mexico Community College. The four other institutions participating in CHESS are Clovis Community College, Northern New Mexico College, San Juan College, and Santa Fe Community College.

“Collaboration is key to ensuring the success of our students and the future of higher education in our state,” Stephanie Rodriguez, the New Mexico Cabinet Secretary of Higher Education, stated in the press release. “This initiative is aligned with the New Mexico Higher Education Department’s vision to streamline and improve the student experience at our public colleges and universities across the state.”

CHESS will simplify student transfers between schools, reduce duplication of student and employee records, and eliminate the need for multiple admission applications. These and other methods are intended to reduce common obstacles for students of color, first generation, and those from disadvantaged communities by giving them greater flexibility in completing two- and four-year degrees. The joint effort will also allow for sharing data and processes among institutions, thus helping each college become more efficient in its operations.

“The key to success for higher education institutions in the 21st century is collaboration,” Richard Bailey Jr., PhD, president of Northern New Mexico College and a CHESS board member, stated in the news release. “And we are excited about the doors of opportunity that CHESS will open not only for our colleges, but for students across the state and beyond.”

READ, WATCH, LISTEN

READ: The Campus Color Line: College Presidents and the Struggle for Black Freedom
University of California, Los Angeles scholar Eddie R. Cole reveals the myriad ways that college and university presidents played a role in the civil rights movement by advocating either for, or more often against, racial equality. The book centers on the time period between 1948 through 1968 when many White college presidents advocated for policies that hurt Black communities and had repercussions beyond education. Cole also examines the impact of Black presidents’ push for racial equality during these years, creating what Ibram X. Kendi calls a “stunning and ambitious origins story.” Published by Princeton University Press

WATCH: Operation Varsity Blues: The College Admissions Scandal
This riveting new documentary focuses on the 2019 college admissions scandal and the man at its center, Rick Singer. The film provides a fascinating look at Singer’s life as a college admissions counselor who learned to game the system. It features multiple FBI recordings of his conversations with wealthy parents who were willing to pay big bucks for their children to attend prestigious universities, no matter the ethical or legal implications. Smith juxtaposes this sordid storytelling with commentary from higher education experts who frame the scandal as just one example of privilege run amok in a society that places more value on institutional prestige than on actual education — or morality. Streaming on Netflix

LISTEN: The Washington Post Live: Higher Education: Rethinking the Possibilities with André Dua and Leslie Fenwick
Dua, a senior partner at strategic management firm McKinsey & Company, and Fenwick, dean emeritus of the Howard University School of Education, address the challenges of higher education amid a changing economy and widening social inequality. Fenwick — one of two finalists for President Joe Biden’s Secretary of Education — discusses the social and financial implications of reducing student debt as well as how government can help promote educational equity through methods such as addressing the digital divide for underprivileged students. Dua, whose work includes leading McKinsey’s Inclusive U.S. Economy Initiative, gives his perspective on how higher education can be reimagined to increase participation while providing students with viable job market skills. Originally aired March 26, 2021 on washingtonpost.com/podcasts
When the University of Kentucky launched its Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Implementation Plan, it did so to accelerate progress for communities of color across the campus.

As part of that plan, UK President Eli Capilouto and faculty leaders in the African American and Africana Studies (AAAS) program announced the establishment of the Commonwealth Institute for Black Studies (CIBS) – a multidisciplinary program that highlights UK’s growing research around issues of race and racism.

“The challenge of systemic racism is one of the twin pandemics confronting our country,” Capilouto said. “To this challenge, we bring a growing cadre of talent among faculty who are working across the broad spectrum of issues confronting Black, Indigenous and people of color in our community, our state and our country. The Commonwealth Institute will serve as an intellectual home and base of support for this critical work.”

Housed in the UK College of Arts and Sciences, CIBS is a multidisciplinary research institute, which serves as a think tank for Black studies. The interdisciplinary institute establishes research clusters across the campus and will promote UK’s growing research and scholarship on topics of importance in African history and African American history, such as slavery and the quest for freedom, racial discrimination and violence, and the long struggle for civil rights.

Our commitment remains firm ... we teach, research, heal and we work to dismantle systemic racism.

This is who we are.
**Sororities May Soon Open Membership to Nonbinary Students**

On April 10, more than two dozen sororities from the National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) voted on a proposed policy amendment that could potentially open membership to nonbinary students. The vote took place during the organization’s annual membership meeting.

As of press time, the results of the vote have yet to be shared publicly.

If the policy change does go into effect, it would amend guidelines on who can participate in the formal sorority recruitment process. Currently, NPC policy states that its 26 “women-only” sororities can recruit an “individual who consistently lives and self-identifies as a woman, regardless of the gender assigned to them at birth,” which includes transgender women.

Despite the NPC’s formal policy, the organization allows its independent sororities to make their own rules regarding membership. Delta Phi Epsilon, a historically Jewish sorority, made history in 2017 as one of the first NPC sororities to open its membership to nonbinary students.

Some Greek organizations have welcomed nonbinary members for years. The Tau Delta sorority at Otterbein University edited the language in its constitution and its songs to be gender neutral in 2015. The chapter decided to be more intentional about gender inclusion after some members expressed concerns that they would be unwelcome if they were open to openly identify as anything other than female, according to the university’s news service.

“Gender-inclusive chapters demonstrate diversity by educating the community as well as the chapters about all identities. I believe that Greek Life is stereotyped as extremely feminine for sororities and extremely masculine for fraternities, but there can be a happy medium,” Tau Delta President Reyana Bates told the news service.

Prior to the vote on allowing nonbinary members, the NPC created the Gender Identity Study Group in 2016 to disseminate information to member organizations on questions of transgender inclusion. Although the NPC has taken action to become more inclusive of different gender identities, fraternities and sororities as a whole remain a controversial presence on college campuses. In recent years, many critics — including some former fraternity and sorority members — have called for the end of campus Greek life, alleging that it perpetuates a culture of exclusion, racism, sexism, homophobia, and substance abuse.

In a January study by the website Best Value Schools, nearly 60 percent of college students said they have a negative sentiment toward Greek life, and 56 percent reported the value of Greek life has decreased since the onset of the pandemic.

**New Jersey Will Soon Require DEI Education in K-12 Schools**

New Jersey became the newest state to require diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) education for K-12 students after Democratic Gov. Phil Murphy signed a bill mandating DEI classes in public schools in March.

The legislation will go into effect during the 2021-2022 academic year. The new policy aims to teach students about “economic diversity, equity, inclusion, tolerance, and belonging in connection with gender and sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, disabilities, and religious tolerance,” according to the bill, which was first introduced in July 2020.

Schools will be required to provide age-appropriate lessons that examine the effects that unconscious bias and economic disparities have on both individuals and society. The New Jersey Commissioner of Education will provide sample learning activities and resource guides that districts can use in creating their new DEI curriculum.

New Jersey is one of the smallest states geographically in the country but has a significantly diverse population, with 45 percent of its nearly 9 million residents being people of color, according to the state’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

“I believe that one of New Jersey’s greatest strengths is our diversity,” Gov. Murphy told CNN. “By teaching students about diverse histories, experiences, and perspectives from an early age, we are enriching their academic experience.” The governor, who is White, stated that he was proud to sign the bill into law.

New Jersey joins California, Connecticut, Vermont, Virginia, Nevada, Nebraska, and Indiana in passing similar bills that require ethnic studies education.

Although ethnic and racial justice studies have become more popular and research has shown that diverse curricula can benefit all students, some lawmakers have opposed the requirement, saying it infringes on parents’ rights and could potentially expose children to sensitive topics.

New Jersey Republican Assemblyman Brian Bergen has proposed a bill that limits the mandatory diversity curriculum to grades 9-12. Bergen has stated that he believes it should be up to parents to teach “different identities or sexual preferences” and not state school systems, CNN reports.
INSIGHT Into Diversity administers Campus Climate Surveys for Health Profession Schools

Purchase a single survey for administrators, faculty, staff, and students for only $6,975.

To purchase or learn more about Viewfinder® Campus Climate Surveys, visit viewfindersurveys.com or email Lenore Pearlstein at lpearlstein@viewfindersurveys.com.
ARIZONA
José Luis Cruz, PhD, has been appointed president of Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff. Cruz was the executive vice chancellor and university provost at the City University of New York in New York City.

CALIFORNIA
T. Shá Duncan Smith will serve as the inaugural vice president for diversity, equity, and inclusion and chief diversity officer for Santa Clara University. Smith previously served as the assistant vice president and dean of inclusive excellence and community development at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania.

Mary J. Wardell-Ghirarduzzi, EdD, will serve as the inaugural vice president for diversity, equity, and inclusion at the University of the Pacific in Stockton. Wardell-Ghirarduzzi was vice president for diversity engagement and community outreach at the University of San Francisco.

David C. Wilson, PhD, has been selected as dean of the Richard and Rhoda Goldman School of Public Policy at the University of California, Berkeley. Wilson previously served as senior associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and a professor of political science and psychological and brain sciences at the University of Delaware in Newark.

CONNECTICUT
Marietta Vazquez, MD, has been appointed associate dean for student diversity at the Yale University School of Medicine in New Haven. Vazquez was a professor of pediatrics for the school and the founding director of Yale Children’s Hispanic Clinic.

INDIANA
Deepti Chadee has been selected as president of the Association of College Unions International in Bloomington. Chadee is the director of the senior year experience at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth.

MARYLAND
Diane Forbes Berthoud, PhD, will serve as the inaugural vice president and chief diversity officer at Central Michigan University in Mount Pleasant. Berthoud was associate vice chancellor for student affairs and director of the Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

MICHIGAN
Shawna Patterson-Stephens, PhD, has been appointed vice president and chief diversity officer at Central Michigan University in Mount Pleasant. Patterson-Stephens was associate vice chancellor for student affairs and director of the Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

MISSOURI
Laraine Davis has been selected as vice president for Community and Government Relations at Maryville University in St. Louis. Davis previously served as vice president for Next Generation Talent and manager of the Community Champion Program for Wells Fargo Advisors in St. Louis.

NEW JERSEY
Cindy R. Jebb, PhD, has been appointed president of Ramapo College of New Jersey in Mahwah. Jebb was a Brigadier General for the U.S. Army and dean of the academic board of the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, New York.

NEW YORK
Felipe Henao has been selected as dean of students for the New York Institute of Technology’s New York City and Long Island campuses. Henao previously served as the assistant dean of students at Mercy College in New York City.

Patricia Ramsey, PhD, will be the first woman to serve as president of Medgar Evers College in Brooklyn. Ramsey was a senior executive fellow at the Thurgood Marshall College Fund in Washington, D.C.

NORTH CAROLINA
Debra J. Barksdale, PhD, has been appointed dean of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro School of Nursing. Barksdale was the associate dean of academic affairs and a professor of nursing at Virginia Commonwealth University.

OKLAHOMA
Kayse Shrum, MD, will be the first woman to serve as president of Oklahoma State University (OSU) in Stillwater. Shrum previously served as president of the OSU Center for Health Sciences in Tulsa.

WASHINGTON
Lorna Hernandez Jarvis, PhD, will serve as the inaugural vice president for institutional equity and diversity at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma. Jarvis was chief diversity officer and associate vice president for diversity, equity, and inclusion at Whitworth University in Spokane.

Has your campus recently hired a new administrator? INSIGHT Into Diversity would like to publish your news. Please email editor@insightintodiversity.com.
A 2020 HEED Award recipient and a four-time Diversity Champion, Oklahoma State University continues to build on its commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Over the past decade, OSU has seen a 103% increase in enrollment of students of color, a 107% increase in this population earning an OSU bachelor’s degree, and a nearly 90% increase in faculty of color.

OSU is one of seven institutions to have earned the award nine consecutive years — and the only one in Oklahoma — to receive the HEED Award nine years running.

These distinctions recognize progress, even as we recognize the call to do more.

We are proud of this university, the mission it represents, and all that’s to come. At OSU, we cultivate Bright Minds for a Bright Future and the Brightest World for All!

That’s the Cowboy way.
Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month

AAPI Heritage Month, celebrated each year in May, is intended to develop awareness of and celebrate the rich cultures and contributions of America’s fastest growing demographic group. In 2021, this time for celebration falls in the midst of a worsening crisis of racism and violence against some of the nearly 20 million AAPIs living in the U.S. today. The March murder of six women of Asian descent during a shooting in Atlanta and an escalating number of anti-Asian hate crimes has brought this often overlooked population to the forefront of the nation’s anti-racism movement. In solidarity with this community, we highlight recent releases by six celebrated authors who convey diverse AAPI experiences through the power of fiction, poetry, and essay.

**Days of Distraction: A Novel**
*By Alexandra Chang*

A Chinese American technology reporter navigates the challenges of institutional racism and sexism within her profession while questioning her role in an interracial relationship. Chang’s quasi-autobiographical novel employs a fragmented form of storytelling that uses everything from overheard conversations to historical records, earning her high praise for humor, emotion, and originality. *Published 2020 by Ecco*

**Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning**
*By Cathy Park Hong*

Hong’s witty collection of 2020 essays won the National Critics Circle Award for Autobiography and has been acclaimed for its ability to weave personal narration with astute critiques of racial consciousness in the U.S. The book explores her Korean American upbringing and personal conflicts with her own identity while critiquing broader assumptions about Asian Americans — leading one *New Yorker* magazine critic to write that Hong’s essays “bled a dormant discomfort out of me with surgical precision.” *Published 2020 by One World*

**On Earth We’re Briefly Gorgeous**
*By Ocean Vuong*

Celebrated author Ocean Vuong’s latest novel tells the story of a Vietnamese American son, nicknamed Little Dog, through a series of nonlinear letters to his illiterate mother. *On Earth We’re Briefly Gorgeous* details the protagonist’s personal and family history, ranging from his grandmother’s escape from an arranged marriage during the Vietnam War to Little Dog’s own trauma caused by the abuse he suffers for his queer identity. *Published 2019 by Penguin Group*

**Pidgin Eye**
*By Joe Balaz*

This collection of poetry, written in Pidgin (Hawai‘i Creole English), balances humor, history, spirituality, and protest. Spanning 35 years of Balaz’s work, *Pidgin Eye* examines the beauty and culture of Hawai‘i, his beloved homeland, and its people. The collection serves as a critique of colonialism and militarization while also challenging the idea of monolingualism within poetry. *Published 2019 by Ala Press*

**This Is One Way to Dance: Essays**
*By Sejal Shah*

Shah is a former creative writing professor, the daughter of Gujarati immigrants from India and Kenya, and a recipient of a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship in fiction. In her debut memoir essay collection, Shah highlights immigration, race, culture, geography, and belonging through her South Asian American identity. The essays span a range of writing styles and give readers a journey of Shah’s career changes and world travels while she analyzes cultural distances and differences. *Published 2020 by University of Georgia Press*

**We Are Not Free**
*By Traci Chee*

This National Book Award Finalist follows a group of 14 teenage Nisei, second-generation Japanese American citizens, who are forcefully uprooted from their lives in San Francisco to a remote internment camp in Utah after the 1941 bombing of Pearl Harbor. A work of vibrant historical fiction for young adults, *We Are Not Free* gives a realistic portrayal of an often overlooked stain on American history and explores the ways in which racism and fear can be used to strip away the humanity of others. *Published 2020 by HMH Books for Young Readers*
The College of Veterinary Medicine at Kansas State University participates in the national interest of building a veterinary work force to serve the ever-changing community and society. Our goal is to create culturally proficient DVM graduates who will function in today’s society as leaders in diversity, inclusion and equity in their communities, nation and world.

When I started veterinary school, one of the goals I had was to become some part of inspiring others that look like me to become a veterinarian. Dr. Walter Bowie paved the way for me to fulfill this goal at K-State. Being a recipient of a scholarship named in his honor with the commitment of bringing diverse populations together is an incredible feeling.

- Melissa Riley

Third-year veterinary student and inaugural recipient of the Dr. Walter C. Bowie Scholarship.

The Dr. Walter C. Bowie scholarship is named after the 1947 K-State Doctor of Veterinary Medicine graduate who went on to become a highly respected veterinarian and educator. Dr. Bowie served as a longtime dean of the Tuskegee School of Veterinary Medicine.
On March 16, the occupants of three Asian-owned businesses were violently attacked. Among the eight people who were murdered, six were identified as Asian women. A perusal of the news cycle will tell you that this incident is not an anomaly. More than 3,795 hate crimes directed at Asian American Pacific Islanders (AAPI) have been reported since March 19, 2020, according to the advocacy group Stop AAPI Hate, many of which specifically targeted East Asians.

It is fair to ask ourselves and each other: Have we taken a strong enough stance in response to anti-Asian racism and xenophobia? Does the model minority myth play into our lack of understanding and reaction to hate crimes against Asians and Asian Americans? This myth has driven a huge wedge between the AAPI community and other communities of color. It is a stereotype that has led to the mass misperception that Asian Americans are the “well-behaved” citizens of marginalized populations; they work hard, keep their heads down, are submissive, and are successful. The model minority myth is dangerous to all AAPIs and paints only a weak version of the Asian American story. It neglects the many diverse experiences and identities of the Asian diaspora. We must recognize the stereotypes that we may have about Asians from popular media, as these limited stories neglect to represent the lives of all AAPI people in the U.S. — those who came as refugees to escape violence, those who are living in poverty, or those who are not highly educated. We need only apply concepts related to intersectionality to adequately debunk this myth.

If higher education institutions are truly interested in the concepts of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), it is time for senior staff and DEI practitioners at all levels to shine a light on ourselves when it comes to our level of concern for anti-racism efforts in support of our AAPI students, colleagues, and community members. As leaders of the DEI mission for institutions of higher education, we need to take a more intentionally inclusive and intersectional approach to address identity-based hate crimes, marginalization, and oppression. We know that there are a wide variety of options, ranging from policies and procedures to courses and programs, that address anti-racism. We are now at an important moment in our work. Just as we needed to take a more inclusive approach to lean into the discussion of adding religious and interfaith dialogue and accessibility as part of diversity efforts, we need to reach out, embrace, and support AAPI communities as part of our social justice work ethos. We have the skills to be at the forefront of our communities when it comes to addressing the increase in xenophobia, including addressing how it affects our ability to advocate and support each other across identity groups.

To quote Audre Lorde, There is no hierarchy of oppressions. There is no benefit in comparing the various forms of racial oppression, except in cases where we are comparing our methods for combating similar forms of marginalization. “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere,” stated Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. In the U.S., many groups are targets of White supremacy, including various groups of African heritage and AAPI heritage. Many ethnic and racial groups have survived and thrived in the face of racism and other forms of oppression. The increase of xenophobia and anti-Asian hate crimes can be a catalyst that reignites the racial tension between the Black and AAPI communities that has been part of American history. As many Black and Asian people are working in solidarity to support the Black Lives Matter movement, we need to recognize that this is similar to the “Yellow Peril Supports Black Power” movement, in which Asian Americans supported the Black Panthers and the fight for civil rights. Today, however, many AAPI folks may be wondering, Why is there no one coming to our rescue? Some may respond “They will be fine,” or “They are not for us, so why should we help them?”

As senior leaders of colleges and universities and as DEI practitioners striving to create an inclusive and equitable environment for AAPI colleagues and students, we must at a minimum consider the following:
• What level of effort have we put in to addressing anti-Asian rhetoric, both prior to and after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic?

• How knowledgeable are we of AAPI history?

• Have our responses to condemn anti-Asian racism and violence been adequate? Have they been consistent with our responses to the marginalization and oppression of other groups?

• How are we supporting our AAPI students and colleagues? Are we having constructive conversations with them about their group's exclusion from some areas of our work and academic missions?

• How are we acknowledging the fears and validating the concerns that AAPI folks are experiencing and expressing?

• Are we creating anti-racism and anti-hate coalitions that allow for greater intercultural engagement with, deeper levels of empathy for, and understanding of each community's history, challenges, successes, and values?

As senior staff and DEI practitioners, we are skilled at leading discussions around challenging issues, and we need to take the lead when it comes to difficult conversations about anti-Asian and anti-Black bias. We must educate ourselves and those in our campus communities, including leaning in and raising awareness of the history of AAPI discrimination.

We need to confront our own biases as well. We need to be bold enough, empathetic enough, and courageous enough to have these conversations with our Black colleagues and Asian colleagues. We cannot expect to invite folks with AAPI heritage to our campuses if we do not take the time to recognize and respect the long history of anti-Asian discrimination in the U.S.

• Lead by example: Provide adequate resources to build coalitions with colleagues and students and to raise awareness of racial violence, including anti-Asian violence. Begin by learning about the AAPI community on your campus and your department's role in eliminating obstacles to their success.

• Show vulnerability: We must show our scholars and colleagues that we are willing to lean into discomfort and discuss the painful history between the Asian and Black communities and other marginalized groups by designing and facilitating opportunities for greater support for one another.

• Recognize your own biases: Regardless of your background, explore any potential biases you may have regarding other ethnic and racial groups and work towards eliminating those biases by learning more accurate information and taking a more empathetic disposition.

• Facilitate community connectedness: Find new and different ways to provide opportunities for colleagues from historically marginalized backgrounds to feel a stronger connection to your department, institution, or community.

We must recognize that anti-Asian rhetoric in the U.S. has been around for centuries, as is evidenced by the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and Japanese internment camps. As we've seen in countless examples over the course of the past year, the COVID-19 pandemic has only shined a brighter light on this social justice issue.
• Use proactive, strategic management: Work with your campus bias response team, Title IX coordinators, and chief diversity officers to create tabletop exercises and other resources that will prepare your campus to effectively respond to xenophobic incidents.

• Collaborate and build campus coalitions: Work with affinity groups, ethnic studies departments, and other stakeholders such as International Student and Scholars Services to ensure programs are inclusive of the populations they serve.

• Implement specific campus climate assessments: Identify ways to assess the experiences of AAPI members of campus and with Asian colleagues. This will help you to identify their experiences as well as potential fears and challenges.

We must recognize that anti-Asian rhetoric in the U.S. has been around for centuries, as is evidenced by the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and Japanese internment camps. As we’ve seen in countless examples over the course of the past year, the COVID-19 pandemic has only shined a brighter light on this social justice issue, especially as more social media and major news outlets have started identifying AAPI hate crimes as legitimate stories. In many ways this has been spurred by Asian entertainers like Daniel Dae Kim and Daniel Wu, who began using their platforms to condemn anti-Asian racism and bring light to the cowardly attacks against Asian American elders that left at least one person dead. As DEI practitioners and leaders, let us begin to reaffirm our commitment to coalition building, advocacy, allyship, and universal social justice as the catalysts that are central to our success.

Christa Grant is the assistant dean of Intercultural Affairs and the Chief Diversity Officer for Student Affairs at Union College in New York. Born and raised in Hong Kong, Grant is a first generation Asian American college graduate and has worked as a DEI scholar-practitioner for more than 10 years. She is currently working on her EdD at Northeastern University.

Gretchel L. Hathaway, PhD, is the vice president for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Franklin and Marshall College. She is a first generation African American college graduate and has worked as a DEI educator for more than 25 years. She is a member of the INSIGHT Into Diversity Editorial Board.

D. Ekow King is the assistant to the vice president for Student Affairs for Intercultural Engagement, Equity, and Inclusion at The State University of New York at Albany. King is a first generation African American college graduate and has worked as a DEI practitioner for more than 30 years.

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The INSIGHT Into Diversity Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award, open to all colleges and universities across the U.S. and Canada, measures an institution’s level of achievement and intensity of commitment in regard to broadening diversity and inclusion on campus through initiatives, programs, and outreach; student recruitment, retention, and completion; and hiring practices for faculty and staff. There is no fee to apply.

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As the COVID-19 vaccine rollout continues, many college students are hoping for a return to normalcy in the coming academic year. Higher education leaders have promised to do what they can to promote such a return but assert that priority must be given to safety and vulnerable student support.

Lynn C. Pasquerella, PhD, president of the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AACU), says that the greatest concern for campus leaders right now is ensuring that students and employees are safe going into the fall semester. “This is at the forefront of their minds, how to open in the fall, whether it should be face-to-face or hybrid or virtual and, of course, whether to mandate the vaccine,” she says.

The AACU, which has a membership of more than 1,200 higher education institutions, facilitates ongoing conversations around this issue through forums, webinars, institutes, and conferences. Pasquerella says that fear of a possible resurgence in COVID-19 or one of its variants should campuses be too swift in reopening is a topic that comes up every day.

Though a small but growing number of universities have already pledged to require students, and in some cases employees, to be vaccinated by the fall, it is unlikely that public institutions in Republican-controlled states will be able to institute such a mandate, according to Pasquerella. Governors in Florida, Missouri, and other conservative states have already outright banned colleges and businesses from requiring COVID-19 vaccinations or have indicated that they plan to do so in the near future.

Some higher education institutions are considering using disincentives, such as prohibiting the use of campus shuttles or attendance at athletic events, for students who do not get the vaccine, but actually enforcing these rules could be a “logistical nightmare,” Pasquerella says.

For many low-income and underrepresented students, reopening safely is an issue of equity. The same students who most need access to on-campus resources, such as academic support services or housing, are also the ones who will be disproportionately affected if they have to worry about possibly contracting COVID-19 on campus and inadvertently spreading it to others, even if they themselves are vaccinated.

“You can’t focus on your studies if you’re worried about where your next meal is going to come from or if you’re living in your car or are worried about anti-Black sentiment at campus orientation and now having to worry about getting infected or infecting loved ones,” Pasquerella explains.

“So the plans to have a safe learning environment that might involve mandating a vaccine are directly related to student success and the capacity to learn in an environment where you don’t have to worry if the person next to you might not be vaccinated or is not wearing a mask or has not been social distancing.”

Ensuring that campuses are taking as many precautions as possible may be one way to entice students who dropped out during the pandemic to reenroll. In fall 2020 alone, anywhere from 7.7 million to 10 million students cancelled plans to attend college, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Underrepresented students have been significantly more likely to cancel enrollment or to drop out of degree programs throughout the course of the pandemic. Freshmen from low-income backgrounds have seen some of the greatest drops, and experts are worried that this trend could continue into the 2021-2022 academic year.

Research has long shown that people who defer plans for higher education rarely return after they enter the workforce, leading experts like Pasquerella to worry that these people could become “a lost generation,” she says.

Despite the dire outlook, advocates say that the current moment stands as a prime opportunity to reform the culture of higher education toward one that is more focused on supporting vulnerable students and overall student well-being. The AACU and other education groups are pushing for the federal government to ease the path to degree attainment for disadvantaged students by instituting education loan forgiveness and doubling Pell Grant funding as well as expanding internship and work-study opportunities.

They are also advocating for colleges and lawmakers to recognize mental health support as a necessary component of success. Multiple sources of research show that young people have experienced greater rates of anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation during the pandemic. Furthermore, experts predict that
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Many people could experience social anxiety and other negative effects as safety measures are lifted. These factors will compound the mental health crisis that already existed among college students prior to the pandemic.

One of the most fundamental changes that colleges can make going into the fall semester is promoting the belief that the entire campus community is responsible for student mental health and overall well-being, says David Arnold, assistant vice president for Health, Safety, and Well-being Initiatives at NASPA - Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education.

“Student mental health and student safety [are] something that we all play a role in and have some responsibility for,” Arnold says. “One of the growing concerns before COVID and one that will continue during reopening is the isolation in which mental health services are offered and a belief that faculty, for example, can’t provide any sort of intervention, but it’s part of their job to form relationships with students, offer office hours, and make connections.”

Faculty and staff oftentimes think they are unqualified or that it is not in their purview to get involved with student mental health, but there are plenty of ways to promote student well-being that do not require clinical expertise, Arnold explains. Raising awareness of resources or knowing how to support those who are distressed are simple factors that help to create a community of care, which is especially important for students of color going into the fall 2021 semester.

“We have a dual pandemic to consider, and it’s not just COVID but also the significant amount of media attention that racial justice issues have played out in the media and in our lives,” says Arnold. “If a university says that it’s concerned with mental health but not concerned about being a racial justice [advocacy] institution, that’s a huge problem because the mental health outcomes for students of color are directly impacted by the way in which the university is trying to [address] racial justice with its students, faculty, staff, and community.”

Pasquerella agrees that colleges must train faculty and staff to recognize psychological distress in students and to understand appropriate interventions. Higher education has proven adaptable to this during the pandemic as many institutions found innovative ways to offer virtual mental health support. Being on campus will provide even more opportunities to promote overall student wellness, she says.

“In the spring many campuses were canceling their spring breaks, but they recognized the need for students to have a mental break from their stress, so they hosted wellness days with fun activities,” says Pasquerella. “I think we’ll see a lot more of that interspersed through the academic year as colleges recognize that the pandemic has taken a mental toll we didn’t anticipate.”

Mariah Bohanon is the senior editor of INSIGHT Into Diversity.
Diamond Guy is thankful.
In August, the 4th year biomedical sciences student at Rochester Institute of Technology will enter medical school for dermatology.

“All I can say is thank you God, all of my professors, mentors, and advisors at RIT, and thank you to my family and supporters”, she said.

One of those mentors is RIT Associate Professor and Director of the Biomedical Sciences Program, Dr. Robert Osgood. He is also a recipient of RIT’s Division of Diversity and Inclusion (DDI) Faculty Beacon Award.

Osgood and Guy spent the fall creating PCR primers for identifying three types of bacteria that are linked to cardiac disease, oral infections, and other issues. The goal is to create a multiplex test that dental offices can use to detect the presence and concentration of Streptococcus mutans serotypes c, e, and f in patients’ saliva. She was one of a record 15 RIT students participating in fall research projects thanks to support from the Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMP) and Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement programs. RIT recognizes the importance of being a part of the pipeline to medical schools. The McNair/LSAMP programs provide opportunities for students who otherwise wouldn’t have access to research. RIT’s biomedical sciences program prepares students for entry into medical or dental school or a career in a variety of health care fields.

And RIT values mentors like Osgood. “If they don’t know how to do something, it is on us to become that teacher who can show them how to do it, what’s important about it, so that when they’re doing it, they’re confident,” he said. RIT believes in building confidence.

And Guy is confident. “All of my hard work has finally paid off.”

To learn more about life as a faculty member at RIT, visit: rit.edu/diversity/ofdr or life as a student visit: rit.edu/rit-life.
Newest Stimulus Package Directs More Money to Students in Need

By Lisa O’Malley and Erik Cliburn

On March 10, the Biden administration passed the $1.9 trillion economic stimulus bill to provide the third round of relief needed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The bill, titled the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA), includes $40 billion for the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF).

The bill allows HEERF, which was first established last year under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security, or CARES Act, to be extended until September 2023. Tribal institutions, historically Black colleges and universities, and other Minority-Serving Institutions received $3 billion in new HEERF funding through the latest bill. Special emphasis was also given to higher education institutions that have endowments totaling less than $1 million.

ARPA includes guidelines for colleges and universities regarding the dispersal of the HEERF grants, such as stipulating that some funding must go toward the implementation of evidence-based practices to track and control the spread of COVID-19 on campuses. The legislation provides greater funding for direct student assistance than did previous stimulus packages, with institutions now required to allocate 50 percent of their HEERF relief to emergency financial aid. In addition, it temporarily expands the eligibility criteria for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), allowing more college students to receive government assistance for food. Normally, enrollment in college courses renders most people ineligible for SNAP.

“Many students have had their postsecondary careers turned upside down as they manage their schoolwork while also protecting themselves from this virus. On top of that, many college students have also had to deal with food insecurity.”

U.S. Education Secretary Miguel Cardona

The increased support is likely to be vital for low-income college students, many of whom struggled to make ends meet during the pandemic. More than 40 percent of undergraduates reported they lost wages from on- and off-campus jobs last year, according to a survey by the Student Experience in the Research University Consortium. Both undergraduate and graduate students said the shift to online classes resulted in unexpected expenses, and two-thirds of low-income students reported having a family member who lost employment due to the pandemic. Furthermore, racially and ethnically underrepresented students fared the worst financially and experienced higher rates of food and housing insecurity than their White classmates, the survey shows.

As of publication, many colleges and universities are still in the process of determining how to best distribute the latest round of HEERF funding. Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) is slated to receive $59.7 million from ARPA, with nearly $29.8 million earmarked...
The University of Louisville is home to a community of diverse perspectives and backgrounds. Working together, we address global challenges and drive needed change to build a better world here and beyond.

The eQuality program within the School of Medicine includes a dynamic curriculum focused on providing compassionate and inclusive care for the LBTQ community, gender non-confirming individuals and persons affected by the differences of sex development (DSD). It is the first medical school in the nation to fully integrate this training into coursework.

Providing dental care to underserved areas is critical to the mission of the School of Dentistry. With partnerships from the Red Bird Clinic in eastern Kentucky to the UofL Dental Clinic in western Kentucky and the Shawnee Clinic in Louisville in between, UofL's dental students are expanding access to deserving patients while learning to be leaders in the health field.

Using collaboration and innovation, UofL is a dynamic force in establishing a community of care inside and outside the university.

CREATING A COMMUNITY OF CARE
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for student assistance. By comparison, the institution’s students received $20 million from the previous two stimulus bills combined. IUPUI used the money from the earlier bills to automatically award grants ranging from $650 to $1,300 to students who had completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, received financial aid, and met low-income criteria, according to Marah Yankey, senior news and media specialist at Indiana University. Nearly 9,000 ended up meeting those qualifications.

Students who meet these criteria will still receive automatic grants under ARPA, but discussions are ongoing as to how IUPUI will distribute all of its dollars now that it will be receiving an amount far greater than in the past, Yankey says.

“Dispersing the federal emergency grants directly to students gives them the ability and flexibility to use the money in a way that helps them most,” Yankey says. “These funds will help defray costs that arise, such as childcare, food, housing, health care, or a number of other expenses we know students encounter while in school.”

Funds left over from the first two stimulus packages were used for various pandemic-related expenses, including refunds for campus housing, dining plans, and parking passes that were purchased before classes shifted online. IUPUI has spent its own money to financially assist students who do not qualify for the automatic HEERF grants and to pay for personal protective equipment, contact tracing, and COVID-19 testing, according to Yankey.

Although ARPA is a significant improvement over the previous stimulus packages, it still falls short as far as student housing, technology, and travel needs, according to American Council on Education President Ted Mitchell. In a March news release, Mitchell explained that the need for more federal support is critical because campuses have lost funds during the pandemic and are not able to offer enough aid to students. As a result, many will continue to face financial hardships and may drop out.

“We believe that additional broad-based funding measures will be forthcoming,” Mitchell stated, “and we will do everything possible to ensure that federal officials understand the full range of costly and complex challenges that students and their colleges and universities are facing.”

Lisa O’Malley is the assistant editor and Erik Cliburn is a senior staff writer for INSIGHT Into Diversity. Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis is a 2012-2020 recipient of the INSIGHT Into Diversity Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award.
The University of Louisville is home to a community of diverse perspectives and backgrounds. Working together, we address global challenges and drive needed change to build a better world here and beyond.

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The benefits of spending time in nature are well-documented and can be especially powerful for young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Exposure to nature positively affects physical and mental health and can be healing for youth who have experienced trauma, psychological distress, or low self-esteem.

Yet a growing body of research focuses on the fact that access to nature in the U.S. is far from equitable. Black and Brown youth in urban areas are often cut off from the myriad benefits of wild spaces due to what some experts call “the nature gap” or “the outdoor adventure gap.” As explained in a recent study by the Center for American Progress, “[n]ature is supposed to be a ‘great equalizer’ whose services are free, universal, and accessible to all humans without discrimination. In reality, however, American society distributes nature’s benefits — and the effects of its destruction and decline — unequally by race, income, and age.”

The nonprofit Outward Bound is on a mission to dispel that inequality by providing people of all backgrounds with the benefits that come from learning the skills to explore and survive in nature. The organization offers programs that range from one-day team-building exercises on urban ropes courses to weeklong canoeing trips to extended wilderness expeditions across the U.S. There are options for students in middle school through college as well as adult programs. Specialized offerings are designed to support veterans, grieving teenagers, and young people with behavioral issues. College-aged adults can enroll in semester and gap year expeditions.

“Each one of our [learning] opportunities provides a break from routine and allows you to push yourself to a new level so that you come back home with a completely different perspective of what your life has been and what you would like to do with it,” says Carrie Myers, director of development for the North Carolina Outward Bound School (NCOBS).

One of the organization’s ongoing challenges, however, is a lack of diversity among its instructional staff. Just as there are significant racial disparities in America’s teacher workforce, NCOBS has found that there are disparities in outdoor recreation and education careers.

“The one thing that we consistently realize is that our staff in our wilderness programs don’t really represent the students that we serve,” Myers says. This especially applies to NCOBS’s specialized programs in Atlanta and Charlotte, where the organization works with local community groups, nonprofits, and school districts to offer ropes courses and other unique learning experiences for urban youth. The experiences teach skills such as teamwork, leadership, and decision-making and can boost confidence by taking students out of their comfort zones and showing them how successful they can be in taking on new challenges, according to Myers.

Many of the K–12 students who participate in these programs are from Nonprofit education organization Outward Bound offers a multitude of nature-based learning experiences designed to teach leadership, resiliency, and teamwork.
The Outward Bound Educational Philosophy

Outward Bound's approach to teaching and learning is rooted in the classroom. It is a methodology that places equal emphasis on development of the character and the intellect.

Outward Bound expeditionary learning can occur nearly anywhere, with nearly anyone: in the classroom; on a grueling mountain ascent; in the post-course debrief, or in the days following a return from the wild. The positive outcomes our students experience - whether they are middle and high school age, college age or adults - manifest in the form of increased self-confidence, awareness and respect for the interdependence of individuals and a desire to make a positive difference in their own lives and in the lives of others. Strangers become life-long friends. Small accomplishments on a course become life-long habits. Through shared challenges, adversity, failure and success, students discover and develop new skills, confidence and passion.

The idea that "you are needed," no matter who you are, is a critical ingredient to the success of Outward Bound programs. And it is this element of inclusiveness and reliance on teamwork that sets an Outward Bound expedition apart from any other learning experience; expedition members are "crew, not passengers."

― OutwardBound.org

urban Black and Brown communities, and NCOBS recognizes that having instructors who match their racial identities and backgrounds can be a powerful factor. "By being more diverse in our structure, we believe that we can do a better job of serving our students," explains Myers.

The organization has begun working on strategies to diversify. NCOBS often recruits employees from colleges and universities that have outdoor recreation programs. It has recently begun reaching out to more institutions across Georgia and North Carolina about possibly starting campus clubs and study options to expand the number of students interested in outdoor education careers. NCOBS has already identified some historically Black colleges and universities that are interested in creating these types of programs, and it’s Myers’ hope that NCOBS could potentially partner with these institutions to recruit instructors.

Outward Bound provides ample training for its instructors, so working for the organization does not require any prior certification in teaching or in wilderness survival skills. The instructor workforce ranges from traditional college-aged adults through people in their forties and fifties, Myers says. Some are
Saying that racism exists is necessary but insufficient. We must then move to action and dismantle the mechanisms of racism in our structures, policies, practices, norms, and values.

Camara Jones, MD, MPH, Ph.D.
Senior Fellow at Satcher Health Leadership Institute and Adjunct Professor of Community Health and Preventive Medicine at Morehouse School of Medicine.

From “Racism is a Public Health Crisis: A Call to Action,” Health Equity Keynote Presentation at the NADOHE 2021 Virtual Conference Dismantling Structural Racism: Transforming Higher Education.
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- Daniel K. Podolsky, M.D., President, UT Southwestern Medical Center

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The COVID-19 pandemic is sure to have long-lasting effects on public regard for medical and health care workers. Admiration for those who work across the health care spectrum reached a new high as the world witnessed these professionals dedicate themselves to caring for the critically ill despite the threat of personal infection, sacrifice their personal lives, and log unheard of hours. In addition to physicians, veterinarians, and dentists, other health care practitioners pivoted to provide the essential care their patients needed.

In this special section, INSIGHT Into Diversity focuses on current issues in medical education for these professions. We explore ongoing challenges related to access, equity, and diversity as well as take a look at how degree programs are evolving through innovative solutions that look to change the future of medical and health education.
To encourage healthy habits for addressing conflict in the workplace, the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences’ (CVBMS) Office for Diversity & Inclusion (D&I), Center for Educational Technologies, and Communications have teamed up to create the Leadership & Communication in Action (LCA) video series to highlight a variety of conflict management skills.

Even in the healthiest work environments and relationships, employees can find themselves facing conflict from time to time. Rather than trying to avoid or ignore conflict, the CVMBS recognizes that “conflict simply is.”

To watch the LCA Project’s videos, visit tx.ag/LCAPlaylist

At the Texas A&M CVMBS, Leadership & Communication in Action is...

...being aware of Body Language, Active Listening, Perspective Taking, Avoiding the Drama Triangle, Using I statements, Managing Stress.
UW-Madison Launches Project to Advance Anti-racism in STEM and Medicine

The University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW-Madison) recently launched a multi-year project to advance anti-racism practices and pedagogy in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and medicine (STEMM). The Humanities Education for Anti-racism Literacy (HEAL) in the Sciences and Medicine project is funded through a $5 million grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

HEAL unites tribal partners, students, community members, and faculty from a variety of disciplines — including African American studies, environmental affairs, science history and more — to increase awareness regarding histories of racism in scientific disciplines and academia, as well as to improve diverse representation in these fields. Elizabeth Hennessy, the HEAL project lead and a UW-Madison professor of science history, says the 2020 resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement was a spark for her and her colleagues to address racial inequities in science and higher education.

HEAL will be implemented in different phases over the course of three years. Year one will focus on collecting information and oral histories about the lived experiences of Black and Native American students. In the second year of the project, the HEAL team will use the data collected in phase one to develop humanities-based, culturally appropriate curricula and courses on the histories of systemic racism for students and educators. Year three will see the implementation and dissemination of these curricula and other educational resources through teacher training, workshops, and more.

Paul Robbins, dean of the UW-Madison Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies, stated in a press release that the HEAL project represents “the culmination of a great deal of work and foment [sic] amongst scholars dedicated to and concerned about the critical problem and history of non-inclusive STEM scholarship and STEM academic communities.”

Funding for the project comes from the Mellon Foundation’s Just Futures initiative, which was established in August 2020 to support multidisciplinary efforts to promote racial justice and social equality.
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Research Sheds Light on Diversity and Bias in Veterinary School Admissions

A recent study on the demographics of veterinary school admissions reveals that “unintended bias still exists despite recent efforts to be more inclusive and adopt more holistic admissions practices,” according to the American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC).

The study, which was published by the AAVMC, was designed to determine if bias existed in the 2019 admissions decisions across U.S. veterinary colleges and schools. Federal statistics show that the veterinary workforce is the least diverse of all U.S. health care professions, with the vast majority of veterinary students being White women.

Data from the study reveals that nearly 87 percent of 2018 veterinary school applicants were women and approximately 76 percent were White. One in 10 applicants was Hispanic or Latinx and only 5 percent were Black.

Researchers also found little socioeconomic diversity among the applicant pool. Approximately 3 in 10 were Pell Grant recipients and more than half reported having no education debt. Seven in 10 had at least one parent with a college degree. Also in keeping with ongoing trends, the majority of candidates were from suburban backgrounds and intended to practice in suburban settings.

Overall, nearly 77 percent of applicants received at least one offer of admission. The study determined, however, that disparities existed across racial and ethnic lines. White and Asian students had the highest probabilities of receiving an offer of admission and Hispanic or Latinx applicants had the lowest.

Disparities also existed across socioeconomic lines. Applicants who were not Pell Grant recipients, had little or no education debt, or reported feeling confident that they could come up with $2,000 if an unexpected need arose in the next month were all more likely to receive at least one offer of admission.

Historically Black Medical Schools Receive Donations for Vaccine Outreach

Bloomberg Philanthropies announced on April 13 that it plans to donate a total of $6 million to four historically Black medical schools in support of their efforts to promote COVID-19 vaccinations in underserved communities.

The four institutions receiving the funds are Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science in Los Angeles, Howard University College of Medicine in Washington, D.C., Meharry Medical College in Nashville, and Morehouse University School of Medicine in Atlanta. The money will be used for outreach efforts and to support mobile vaccination units in Black neighborhoods. Such units are crucial for increasing access to the vaccine because they allow medical personnel to reach people closer to where they live while keeping the sensitive doses refrigerated.

The study also found that first generation students and Black students applied to fewer veterinary colleges than their counterparts. Conversely, Hispanic and Latinx students were significantly more likely to apply to multiple schools.

Researchers reported no significant difference in admission offers based on gender identity, employment status, or the number of times a candidate had met with a pre-veterinary advisor.

The study’s authors concluded that the marked differences in admissions offers across racial and socioeconomic lines reveals consistent bias. The findings “signal a very real need to reexamine admissions processes. Schools and colleges of veterinary medicine should objectively and rigorously review their admissions processes and reevaluate those elements, such as the number of veterinary, animal, or total experience hours, that may be a source of inherent bias against particular groups of applicants.”

Access to the vaccine has been especially difficult for African American communities, the Associated Press reports. Historic distrust of the primarily White mainstream medical community has also been a barrier to vaccination efforts.

“Minority communities have historically suffered from medical mistreatment and lack of access to quality health care but are now expected to trust a system that has neglected them for decades,” James E.K. Hildreth, president of Meharry Medical College, said in a statement. He added that his school seeks to “break this cycle and establish trust throughout our communities.”

The funding comes as part of Bloomberg Philanthropies’ Greenwood Initiative. Former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg established the initiative, which seeks to promote economic growth for Black families, during his unsuccessful campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination in spring 2020.

“COVID-19 has been devastating to the health and economic wellbeing of many Black families – and right now, increasing equitable access to vaccines is one way we can serve the needs of those who need it most,” the former mayor said in an April 13 statement.

Each of the four medical schools selected to receive the $6 million donation were named in September as recipients of a collective $100 million donation from Bloomberg Philanthropies. Those funds are set to be distributed over the next four years to provide scholarships and reduce medical education debt.
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Texas A&M College of Dentistry Creates New Focus on Overlooked Patient Population

The Texas A&M University (TAMU) College of Dentistry, located in Dallas, recently announced plans to increase access to dental care for teens and adults in the metropolitan area who have intellectual disabilities. The expansion of services will include a specialty clinic that is set to open as soon as 2022. The college will also add a focus on educating students about caring for patients with special needs. The changes are part of a five-year, $3.3 million grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, according to a TAMU Dentistry news release.

In addition to supporting a new clinic, the grant enabled the college to hire Nina Ray, a clinical assistant professor of pediatric dentistry, to concentrate on special-needs instruction. Dan Burch, a clinical assistant professor in pediatric dentistry at the college, sought the funding after his research revealed that nearly 300,000 people with intellectual disabilities living in and around Dallas struggle to find dental care beyond childhood. Currently, Burch says he is one of only a few dentists in a 14-county area who see patients with mild to major intellectual disorders.

“After these patients turn 13, there aren’t many places they can go,” Burch stated in the news release. “There become fewer and fewer pediatric dentists they can see, and once they turn 18, the number of dentists they can go to for general dentistry is next to none.”

Patients with intellectual disabilities, especially as they get older, can be difficult for dentists to provide care for; they may become combative or resistant during appointments and often require sedation, Burch said. The grant money can help increase dental training and education for treating these patients. Burch plans to train fellows within the TAMU College of Dentistry’s pediatric residency program in this area and wants to ensure that dental students learn about this issue early in their education. He hopes that the college can create a flagship program that will serve as an example for other schools looking to become more inclusive of patients with disabilities.

Burch is also working with the Texas A&M Foundation to find donors to help fund and equip the new special-needs program, according to local news station KXXV.
The University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center is committed to promoting an inclusive and diverse educational and patient-centered environment. We believe in embracing everyone’s unique differences to create a learning environment that promotes access and excellence.

See our commitment to diversity in action at link.ou.edu/diversityinhealth.
a holistic approach, which Valachovic says will address the entire patient experience. Instead of merely attending to a singular issue, its dentists will examine how individuals’ oral health is connected to their overall well-being. This approach will be accomplished by taking into consideration the social determinants of health — such as income, education level, and access to nutritious food — that disproportionately affect racially and ethnically diverse populations. The effects of these determinants on dental health are well-documented; Black and Hispanic Americans, for example, are nearly twice as likely as White Americans to have untreated cavities, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Having inadequate access to oral health care can lead to problems beyond physical health. Children with dental pain are more likely to miss school and underperform academically, according to an article by Richard Valachovic, DMD, in the May 2018 issue of Academic Medicine. Furthermore, oral health issues are progressive, so that as children age, they will often experience difficulties with “academic performance, employability, and annual earnings,” according to Valachovic.
“I see digital tools as a way to close equity gaps.”

In 2020, Hightower and several colleagues developed a gender and race equity dashboard that uses data to define a targeted strategy to identify areas of inequity within University of Utah Health. This includes looking at pay and representation on leadership teams in the general workforce.

Hightower’s drive to underscore the value of diversity and inclusion is developing leadership opportunities for women and minorities throughout the health system.

Maia Hightower, MD, MPH, MBA
Chief Medical Information Officer

uofuhealth.utah.edu/inclusion
this holistic approach when examining the large amount of data that the college collects about patients at its multiple dental clinics across the city. The data — which does not include confidential, HIPAA-protected information — touches on specifics such as where patients come from, what family units look like, insurance access, and more. Because the city is composed of a large population of immigrants, the dental college also records information about patients’ countries of origin and the oral care they received there.

This data will become the framework for one of the center’s key projects, the Health Services Research Database. It is the university’s hope that this database will serve as a fundamental resource for researchers and policymakers to propose wide-ranging solutions for improving dental care, and thereby overall health, for some of the nation’s most underserved patient populations. One option that might be supported by the database’s findings could be extending Medicaid to cover oral health care in more states, says Valachovic.

On a more local level, the database will be used to improve the quality of care at NYU’s dental clinics by tracking feedback on how patients feel they were treated, both medically and socially, to ensure optimal service in and work at the new center. Just as with other forms of health care, ensuring that future dentists reflect the diversity of the patients they serve is critical, he says.

“We’re hoping that as we grow the center, participants at all levels — including students, faculty, staff, and patients — will reflect the diversity of the community that is New York City,” Valachovic states.

**Developing Future Leaders**

Another key mission for the center is the development of future leaders who can guide the industry in adopting its holistic approach to patient care and public health policy. In the fall, the center will launch its Student Leadership Institute, which Valachovic says is designed to educate approximately 35 students using a character-based approach to leadership. The goal is for participants to be prepared for careers at the helm of dental practice and policy. These could include deans and department chairs of dental schools, staff leaders at clinics and hospitals, or even decision makers in government, he says.

The institute will include practical experiences designed to develop leadership competencies as well as a network of advisers to help direct curriculum and provide informal support for participants. To provide students with self-understanding, formal assessments will be used to determine data-driven strategies for personal change and improvement. Furthermore, the institute will highlight the importance of self-reflection and offer methods for cultivating a commitment to lifelong learning.

This willingness to consistently reflect and adapt is essential for confronting the challenges and uncertainties of the dental industry, or health care in general. While a pandemic is the most noteworthy example of a challenge for the profession in current times, Valachovic says leaders must also be prepared to handle changes in technology, health care financing, and the diversification of the U.S. population as a whole.

“[We’re] ensuring that these students, when they graduate, are ready for whatever long-term changes, short-term changes, or crises may occur during their careers.”

Lisa O’Malley is the assistant editor of **INSIGHT Into Diversity.**
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The majority of American households, or 68 percent, own at least one pet, according to a 2019-2020 survey by the American Pet Products Association. Having an animal companion has been shown to have a multitude of physical and mental benefits for humans, but pet ownership can also be prohibitively expensive, especially when it comes to veterinary care.

Nearly 28 percent of households reported having barriers to veterinary services in a survey by the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK) College of Social Work and the Access to Veterinary Care Coalition (AVCC), a committee of veterinary professionals who joined together in 2016 to highlight the importance of improving access to animal medical care.

“The veterinary industry has not done an adequate job of ensuring access to better care for all socioeconomic groups,” says Michael Blackwell, DVM, chair of the AVCC.

Blackwell has had an illustrious career in both veterinary medicine and public health, with such high-ranking roles as chief of staff for the U.S. Office of the Surgeon General and chief veterinary officer for the U.S. Public Health Service. He also served as the former dean of the UTK College of Veterinary Medicine (UTCVM).

It’s through these roles, Blackwell says, that he gained a unique perspective on how the delivery of veterinary care can be improved to benefit both humans and animals.

The Program for Pet Health Equity

Blackwell developed the Program for Pet Health Equity (PPHE) at UTK, an outgrowth of the AVCC that aims to supplement the current veterinary health system and promote public policies that improve access to care. In addition to animal rights advocates from a variety of backgrounds, the PPHE team consists of faculty and administrators from UTCVM and a range of other disciplines across the university, including business, public health, and social work. The program facilitates education, community service, and social and public health research, according to its website.

A key component of PPHE is changing the way that people, including some veterinarians, look at pets, Blackwell says. “[PPHE] is about the fact that we needed a paradigm shift so that first of all, within our profession, there is an understanding that we’re delivering health care to families by directing that care toward non-human family members,” he explains. “And when we say community or family, they’re not all White, middle-class social units.”

It is important to view pets as equally deserving of health care as any family member, Blackwell says. And like humans, all pets — even those from low-income families — deserve access to quality medical care. Because of the positive health effects that these animals have on humans, being able to afford having a pet can also be considered an issue of human health equity, he points out.

Beyond individual pet owners, improving access to veterinary medicine can help protect the health of the entire human population, too.

“It turns out that 65 percent of infectious diseases that you can get as a human are zoonotic, meaning they naturally occur in animals and can be passed on to you,” he says. By addressing viral illnesses such as rabies, the West Nile virus, or even COVID-19 in pets and livestock, veterinarians can help safeguard against the spread of disease.

Furthermore, Blackwell explains that the health of humans, animals, and the environment are all connected. This concept, called One Health, recognizes that achieving optimal health outcomes for humans requires an interdisciplinary approach that includes providing care and minimizing harm for animals and ecosystems. Although the basis for the One Health concept has been around since the 1800s, it has become more widely practiced in recent years.

AlignCare

Using the One Health paradigm, Blackwell and UTK launched AlignCare, a health care system that “aligns the current resources of social service agencies and veterinary service providers while utilizing community funding,” according to its website.

First started in 2019, AlignCare began with six veterinary practices in North Carolina, Tennessee, Arizona, and New York, and has since expanded to Nevada. The essential idea driving the program is that improving pet health and access to care starts with ensuring that pet owners have their own needs met when it comes to food, housing, and other necessary resources. The program assesses pet owners and families for potential need before connecting them with a veterinary service provider, which can include both for-profit and nonprofit clinics in the community. AlignCare pays for 80 percent of veterinary needs, such as prescription medicines, while the owner pays 20 percent.

Although still a pilot program, AlignCare has so far resulted in
fewer euthanasias and pet relinquishments to animal welfare organizations. It's currently collecting data on health outcomes for participating families, including assessing whether conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, depression, and anxiety in humans have been affected.

**Veterinary Social Work**

Some of the staff members at AlignCare clinics have received training through UTK’s veterinary social work program. Launched in 2002, the first-of-its-kind certificate program was developed through a partnership between UTCVM and the university’s school of social work to prepare professionals in a variety of animal-related fields with the knowledge of how to support human-pet relationships.

The program delivers training on wide-ranging issues, including providing emotional support and resources to animal-related professionals, using animals to assist humans in therapy and education, offering free counseling to owners experiencing grief over the loss of a pet, and addressing animal abuse as a means of preventing violence against humans. Graduate students, social workers, veterinarians, and veterinary technicians are among the people who seek certification in these areas.

Another aspect of veterinary social work is learning how to serve as health advocates for pets and their owners and as intermediaries for veterinary workers.

“It can be helpful to have a veterinary social worker in a practice to help with clear communication, positive human-to-human contact between the client and the veterinary team, and support of the emotional needs of both clients and the veterinary team,” explains Elizabeth Strand, PhD, founding director of the veterinary social work program and associate professor at UTK.

The positive effects veterinary social work has had on staff and clients has led to it expanding to more hospitals and colleges, including Michigan State University Veterinary Medical Center and the Virginia–Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine. The field is expected to continue growing, especially as research shows Americans are increasingly likely to view their pets as important members of the family unit.

Lisa O’Malley is the assistant editor of INSIGHT Into Diversity.
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Women of Color Continue to Be Shut Out of Leadership Positions in Medicine and Health Care – But One School Is Working to Change That

BY MARIAH STEWART
Despite gains in diversity across the health care and medical sectors, leadership positions — whether in public health, private practice, or academic medicine — continue to be disproportionately held by White men.

On a global scale, women account for only 25 percent of health care leadership roles despite constituting 70 percent of the sector’s workforce, according to the World Health Organization. Recent findings from the research firm Korn Ferry show that in the U.S., women lead just 20 percent of hospitals and a mere 4 percent of health care companies despite the fact that nearly eight in 10 American health care workers are women, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

For women of color, the statistics are even worse. These women account for nearly 20 percent of entry-level health care jobs in the U.S. but only 5 percent of C-suite positions, according to an August 2020 report from global management firm McKinsey & Company titled “Women in healthcare: Moving from the front lines to the top rung.” The report also finds a scant 7 percent of the sector’s vice president positions and 4 percent of its senior vice president positions are held by women of color. Additionally, a 2021 report by the Leverage Network shows that Black women sit on only 3 percent of health care boards.

The issue was brought to the forefront in March after Edward Livingston, the White former deputy editor of the Journal of the American Medical Association, denied during a podcast that structural racism exists in medicine. His remarks led to a fierce backlash that reignited conversations about the lack of women of color in leadership roles.

“In medicine, the people who know the least about structural racism have the most power to control how our field understands and addresses racism’s impact on health. These folks are hospital executives, NIH leaders, journal editors, and chairs. They are also mostly white (men),” pediatrician and scholar Dr. Rhea Boyd, MD, a woman of color, tweeted in response to the incident.

Some institutions are taking a proactive approach to remediating this longstanding problem. In March, the Mount Sinai Health System launched Black Women Leaders Connect, a network for African American women in health care leadership. It aims to increase the number of Black women in executive positions through mentorship, networking, research, and other efforts.

“"This program is an effort for senior Black women across the Mount Sinai health system to connect with each other and to try to start actively promoting programs and policies that can really change the face of leadership within Mount Sinai and beyond,” says Lynne Richardson, MD, professor and vice chair of emergency medicine at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai and co-director of the school’s Institute for Health Equity and Research. “This is because the two pieces to advancement really are having access to opportunities and then having the preparation to take advantage of those opportunities when they’re offered.”

Richardson says that a lack of awareness regarding such opportunities, imposter syndrome, and exclusionary or “word-of-mouth” hiring are some of the barriers that prevent women of color from rising through the ranks in medicine and public health. Common gender barriers such as implicit bias and sexual harassment are also exacerbated for women of color, and the “minority tax” is an additional limitation. This term refers to the extra burden of taking on diversity and inclusion responsibilities in the workplace, which can hold underrepresented employees back in their careers and contributes to burnout.

Research indicates that proactive efforts such as Black Women Leaders Connect are sorely lacking in medicine and health care. Korn Ferry’s research found that 75 percent of hospitals and health systems do not have sponsorship programs for women’s advancement. Nearly two-thirds of the 200 executives surveyed by the firm reported that their women’s development programs were
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“poor, fair, or non-existent.” The Association of American Medical Colleges’ Women of Color initiative calls for more schools to take deliberate steps such as offering support for underrepresented women. Their list of specific policies and actions includes the following:

- Provide mentorship and sponsorship to women of color.
- Engage in outreach efforts (ideally, prior to a vacancy) with, and create or access a database of, women of color in the field.
- Offer visiting professorships to women of color.
- Enrich candidate pools with women of color.
- Require unconscious bias training for employees involved in faculty and leadership recruitment, career development, and advancement.

Richardson says that while she is optimistic for the future, she is fully aware of how discrimination against women of color continues to affect her own career. In addition to her positions at the Icahn School of Medicine, she is an elected member of the National Academy of Medicine, has served on numerous advisory boards and committees, and conducts a sizable amount of unpaid professional and public service work. Yet she has never been contacted about being on the board of directors for a major institution or organization.

“When I speak to some of my male colleagues, especially people I’ve known a long time, they’re sort of amazed that I’ve never been approached about that,” Richardson says. “I understand a lot of things, I have a lot of skills and knowledge, but again, that is a very elite circle, which apparently is not looking for people like me.”

Programs such as Black Women Leaders Connect and the increasing social awareness of systemic racism and White privilege are, however, indications that the world of medicine and health care is becoming more equitable, she says. “Twenty years ago, when I would give a scientific talk about racism as one of the underlying causes of health disparities, there would be a gasp in the audience that I said [racism],” Richardson explains. “And now it’s rolling off the tongues of top Fortune 500 CEOs who talk about how they’re going to become an anti-racist organization, so that does give me optimism about the possibilities for change.”

Mariah Stewart is a senior staff writer for INSIGHT Into Diversity. The Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai is a 2016-2020 recipient of the INSIGHT Into Diversity Health Professions Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award.
Diversity and inclusion are key elements in learning patient-centered healthcare. As the population of the United States becomes increasingly diverse, the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM) seeks to create a student body that reflects this trend by recruiting medical students from rural and medically underserved populations, underrepresented minority communities, and those with a strong commitment to underserved care.

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The school’s Veterinarians as One Inclusive Community for Empowerment (VOICE) chapter received the VOICE National Chapter of the Year Award for 2020-21 — the group’s second time earning this honor in three years.

With faculty and staff support, students implemented the national This Is How We “Role” lesson plan with youth at the local Boys and Girls Club, aiming to inspire young people in diverse communities toward veterinary medicine.

Sources: nih.gov, nps.gov, pbs.org, smithsonianmag.com

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**Women of Color Pioneers in Medicine**

**Susan La Flesche Picotte (1865-1915)**
Picotte became the first Native American to earn a medical degree after she graduated from Woman’s Medical College of Pennsylvania in 1889. She went on to advocate for Indigenous rights, including raising awareness of public health crises such as the spread of tuberculosis that inordinately affected Native American communities. Her accomplishments included opening her own hospital on an Omaha reservation.

**Margaret Chung (1889-1959)**
Chung became the first American-born Chinese woman doctor when she graduated from medical school in 1916. She helped found the first hospital of Western medicine in San Francisco’s Chinatown, where she served as a surgeon and head of the OB/GYN and pediatrics unit. Chung also assisted in establishing the women’s branch of the U.S. Navy Reserves during World War II — an organization that is credited with helping to facilitate the integration of women into full military service.

**Virginia Alexander (1899-1949)**
The child of formerly enslaved parents, Alexander was a pioneering physician and public health expert whose research documented the racial disparities in health outcomes between Black and White patients. She was also an early advocate for a national health insurance system. Other achievements include the establishment of the Aspiranto Health Home, a primarily free hospital operated from inside her own house that Alexander described as “socialized medicine.”

**Helen Rodríguez-Trías (1929–2001)**
Dr. Rodríguez-Trías was a leading pediatrician, educator, and advocate for women’s rights. She was the first Latina president of the American Public Health Association (APHA), a founding member of the Women’s Caucus of the APHA, and a recipient of the Presidential Citizens Medal. She is credited for helping expand the range of global public health services for underrepresented women and children and low-income populations.

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The UW School of Veterinary Medicine is committed to building a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion — striving to foster a place where all feel invited, involved, successful, and prepared to respond to the varied and changing needs of society.
Medical Schools Work to Develop A More Diverse Physician Workforce as Applications Surge in the Wake of COVID-19

By Erik Cliburn and Mariah Bohanon
Over the course of the tumultuous events of the past year, when many Americans could find little to agree on and few sources of hope or inspiration, one thing remained consistent: the nation’s admiration and gratitude for its health care workers in the face of a devastating pandemic.

Evidence has already shown that the constant media coverage of medical professionals combating COVID-19 has inspired more students to pursue careers in this field. Experts have dubbed this increased interest the “Fauci Effect,” due to Dr. Anthony Fauci’s powerful influence, as well as simply the “Pandemic Effect.” Applications for nursing, public health, and other health degree programs are on the rise. At medical schools, applications have increased by 18 percent compared with pre-pandemic levels, according to the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC).

That increase includes a significant growth in diverse applicants. While demographic data is still being collected for the current application cycle, it is estimated that the number of underrepresented medical school applicants has increased by as much as 10 percent, says Norma Poll-Hunter, PhD, senior director of Workforce Diversity at AAMC. This can likely be attributed to the highlighting of significant health disparities among underserved communities during the pandemic as well as the national attention on racial injustice over the past year, she says.

“I think COVID-19 has increased people’s awareness of how this is impacting everyone, but more so communities living in poverty and those who are underrepresented,” Poll-Hunter says. The events of 2020, including the murder of George Floyd in May, served as a re-awakening regarding the relationship between racial injustice and health, she explains.

Increased diversity among medical school applicants could eventually lead to a reduction in health disparities, as research shows that physicians from disadvantaged areas are likely to return to their own communities to practice and that patients of color have better health outcomes when treated by a doctor of similar identity or background as themselves. Such physicians can also serve as a voice for communities that have consistently had little representation in medical research, public health policy, and other areas that affect a population’s overall well-being.

While this increased interest may seem like a blessing for a profession that suffers a severe lack of diversity and that is expected to have a shortage of 139,000 physicians by 2033, more medical school applicants does not necessarily equate to more doctors. Limited class sizes and a dearth of residency positions have been an ongoing problem for the profession. Solving these issues will take concerted efforts from medical degree programs, hospitals, and legislators and will ultimately come down to funding, experts say.

Now, while schools may have larger, more diverse candidate pools to choose from, the spike in interest means that a higher burden will be placed on admissions offices, and the application process will become even more competitive. Admissions staff have extended timelines and working hours to accommodate the rise, according to the AAMC. At Stanford University, medical school admissions staff have reported a 50 percent increase in their workload, NPR reported in December.

Given such large and hyper-competitive applicant pools, medical schools must be more intentional than ever when it comes to assessing candidates from different backgrounds and socioeconomic identities in order to cultivate diversity. The Ohio State

Expanding Residencies To Meet Workforce Demand

In 2006, in response to concerns over potential physician shortages, the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) recommended a 30 percent increase in first-year enrollment at MD-graduating schools by 2015-2016. This goal, which used 2002-2003 enrollment numbers as a baseline, was not reached until 2018-2019. Despite expanding class sizes and the opening of 30 new medical schools since 2002, the AAMC still estimates a shortfall of nearly 139,000 physicians by 2033.

This shortage is partially due to the stunted growth of medical residency programs, also known as graduate medical education (GME), throughout the country. The AAMC recently found that 44 percent of MD-graduating schools had concerns about their own students finding a residency position of their choice after graduating. More than 60 percent were concerned about residency availability at the state level and 76 percent about residency on a national scale.

Experts agree that better funding for these positions is vital. In 2015, the federal government dedicated $16 billion toward GME, nearly 75 percent of which came directly from Medicare, according to the Congressional Research Service. That money helps pays for approximately 14,000 medical residents working at hospitals and clinics throughout the country, according to the health education group AMOpportunites.

In an effort to address the limited GME opportunities, the AAMC has been supporting bipartisan legislation that would gradually increase the number of Medicare-supported residency positions by 15,000 over five years.
University College of Medicine (OSUCOM), which has seen a 14 percent rise in applications this year, employs an admissions process that assesses candidates beyond academic standing. The college breaks down applications into three equal sections: traditional grades and testing metrics, research capabilities, and experiences — both personal and medical.

The program looks for students who display resilience and persistence, good communication, and leadership skills, explains Demicha D. Rankin, MD, the associate dean for admissions at OSUCOM. This approach is considered more equitable because it takes into account whether a student has been disadvantaged or has had access to the same level of education as more privileged students.

“We believe that there are some fundamentals that every student should have in terms of qualities and experiences as they decide to become a physician, and it extends to much more than just a perfect MCAT score or a perfect GPA,” Rankin says.

This approach to admissions, in addition to recruitment efforts, has led to a steady growth in diversity among OSUCOM students. Between the 2014-2015 to 2017-2018 academic years, underrepresented enrollment at the college increased from 11.1 percent to 16.4 percent, and enrollment among Black students jumped from 7.0 to 10.8 percent, according to AAMC data.

The University of California Davis School of Medicine (UCDSOM) has experienced one of the largest spikes in interest since the start of the pandemic, with an approximate 38 percent increase in candidates during the current application cycle — or 9,701 applicants for just 132 open spots.

UCDSOM is also exceptionally diverse; its class of 2024 is 43 percent first generation students and 72 percent are from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Diversity among 2021 applicants has also increased, with 19.4 percent of current candidates coming from underrepresented backgrounds compared with 15.5 percent in the previous year.

The bulk of medical school hopefuls, however, continue to come from White suburban backgrounds, according to Charlene Green, director of admissions and the Office of Student and Resident Diversity.

Ensuring that the school remains equitable in its application review process, especially in light of the surge in interest, requires what Green refers to as socially accountable admissions. In a recent paper written by Green, UCDSOM’s Dr. Mark C. Henderson, and George Washington University’s Dr. Candice Chen, this method is described as going beyond
holistic admissions to strategically use “socially-conscious criteria [that] may result in greater economic and racial-ethnic diversity among medical students.” At UCDSOM, this approach includes diversifying admissions personnel, conducting multiple mini interviews with candidates, adopting a socioeconomic disadvantage score “that attaches value to lived experiences of economic or educational disadvantage,” and more. The school’s admissions mission statement pledges to develop future physicians who will address diverse health care workforce needs.

“There are lots of people who went to this really prestigious school and they also have a 4.0 [GPA], but do they have the other stuff we’re looking for?” Green says. “Being a physician is more than just doing really well academically.”

Henderson, who serves as an associate professor as well as the associate dean for admissions, and Green both say that the application review process will undoubtedly be strained by the surge in candidates. While the college has worked to grow its class sizes over the course of the last decade — it offered just 96 spots in 2010 — the number of candidates continues to swell. Even before the pandemic, in its 2020 application cycle, UCDSOM had 7,023 applicants for just 127 spots.

“It’s hard when you have such a narrow funnel,” Henderson explains. “We do the best we can, but I do worry that we will not be able to spend as much time or as much effort on each individual application.”

Rankin, who notes that some of the increase in COVID-era applications is likely from students who had previously applied to and been rejected from medical school, agrees that the solution is much more challenging than simply lifting enrollment caps. Perhaps most importantly, the quality of physician education must not be sacrificed in the name of quantity, she says.

“I would like to see [enrollment] increase, but it has to be thoughtful,” says Rankin. “We have to be thoughtful in the cost, we have to be thoughtful in the student experience, and we have to be thoughtful in how we educate our students because that takes time, and it’s not something that can be rushed.”

Erik Cliburn is a senior staff writer and Mariah Bohanon is the senior editor of INSIGHT Into Diversity. The Ohio State University College of Medicine is a 2017-2020 recipient of the INSIGHT Into Diversity Health Professions Higher Education Excellent (HEED) in Diversity Award.
How Veterinary Schools and the Profession Can Become More Inclusive: A Q&A With Dr. Avenelle Turner

By Mariah Bohanon

Avenelle Turner, DVM, DACVIM, is a medical oncologist at Metropolitan Animal Specialty Hospital in Marina del Rey, California. Turner graduated from the Colorado State University College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences (CSU CVMBS) in Fort Collins in 2000 and completed her residency in medical oncology at Gulf Coast Veterinary Specialists in 2004. Her professional experience includes authoring numerous publications and manuscripts as well as serving as an advocate for veterinary professionals and pet owners.

Turner shared her thoughts on the state of the veterinary profession and how to eradicate barriers for students of color in a recent interview with INSIGHT Into Diversity. Answers have been edited for clarity and length.

**What inspired you to become a veterinarian?** I think I was born that way. I can't really remember a time in my life when I wanted to be anything but a veterinarian. It was very clear because I really loved animals and I knew that I did not want to be a physician. I think the majority of people in this profession also know from a very early age that this is what they want to do for a career.

**The field of veterinary medicine is very homogeneous. As a woman of color, what was it like for you entering veterinary school and the profession?** I was already used to being one of very few Black students in any classroom. I'm from Colorado Springs, which is a military town and a bit more diverse than the rest of Colorado, but the state itself is not diverse. On top of this, my veterinary school had to rewrite their admissions criteria the year that I was admitted, which resulted in them having one of the least diverse veterinary classes in years. I ended up being the only Black person out of a class of 135 people. There were perhaps 10 other students who were visually identifiable minorities, mostly Hispanic and Native American students.

Looking back now, it would seem odd [being the only Black student], but at the time it wasn't uncommon to be one of very few minorities.

I am fortunate because my mother never discouraged me from pursuing my dream of becoming a veterinarian. Growing up, I never felt discouraged about the fact that I wasn't White, even though I'd never seen a Black veterinarian and didn't have a role model. I assumed maybe I'd just be the first Black person in the field, because in Colorado you don't even really see that many Black physicians. However, I didn't fully realize how nondiverse the profession was until after I was in veterinary school and then [even more so] after I went on to do specialty medicine — once you go into a specialty, there is even less diversity because there are fewer people studying and working in that area.

**Something you hear a lot about in regard to the veterinary field is its mental health crisis. Why do you think the profession has this problem?** I've definitely seen an increase in the number of veterinarians who leave the field or even commit suicide. Three of my classmates have committed suicide since we graduated veterinary school. I'm a member of a national suicide prevention organization called Not One More Vet, and literally once or twice a month you hear about another veterinarian taking their own life. It's very hard to hear.

The profession has changed a lot since I started my career, and I've seen a change in how people speak about and perceive veterinarians. We used to be very admired, but that has changed somewhat as our services have become more expensive over time. People want top quality care for their pets because they love them and treat them like family, but they also sometimes only see the bottom line. They don't understand why veterinary care is so expensive, even though we offer a level of medical treatment that is equivalent to what human patients receive, but for a fraction of the cost. The technology and equipment we use are often the same as what physicians use for humans, for example, but we don't receive subsidies or government funding to help cover the costs. People then blame their veterinarians for the expenses, but most of us would do this job for free if we could. It's even worse now that clients can leave reviews online and write anything that they want about us. Most veterinarians are very sensitive and naturally caring people, and all of that negativity — both in person and online — can really take a toll.

Another aspect of the profession that has changed significantly since I was a student is the cost of education. Getting a veterinary degree is now extremely expensive, and there aren't many resources to help cover the costs. My friends who are graduating [from veterinary school] now have student...
Loans that are $3,000 to $4,000 a month. They’re going to be paying that debt off for years. So in addition to the negative feedback that veterinarians receive from the public, there is significant financial stress.

Is there anything that veterinary schools could do to help students be better prepared to deal with some of these stressors? I definitely think that having some knowledge of social work is important for students entering this field. Veterinarians need to have the tools to recognize when a pet owner is in crisis and how to help. [CSU CVMBS] had introduced social work into the curriculum, so I was lucky enough to learn some of this as a student.

Helping clients when they’re suffering is such a big part of what veterinarians do, and it’s something that I wouldn’t have anticipated that I’d need to be good at. For one thing, social workers can help teach veterinarians how to support clients who are distressed and grieving the loss of a pet. This is very important, because some people are so close to their pets that they may even become suicidal.

Why do you think more Black and Brown students do not pursue veterinary medicine? There is a privilege that allows you to be a veterinarian, because we pay as much for school as physicians do, if not more, but we make a fraction of the salary. If you come from a disadvantaged background, which a lot of Black and Brown students do, your family may be pushing you to choose a career that is financially stable and you are likely to see that being a veterinarian really isn’t an option. Medicine has a lot more programs, more prestige, and many people will tell you that if you’re smart enough [to go to medical school], then you should be a doctor.

There just needs to be more money put behind getting students to veterinary school. Veterinary colleges can help by finding ways for Black and Brown students to pay for
school, because many of us come from families that cannot afford to assist with tuition.

Aside from high education costs and low earning potential, there is the fact that so few Black and Brown students are exposed to veterinary medicine as a possible career. Veterinary schools could be better about this by creating outreach programs for [underrepresented] students at the high school or even junior high level. They can introduce these young people to the field and show them that it is a career possibility, as well as all of the different things that veterinarians do. There so many different types of veterinary careers and a lot of ways that we support human health. We work at the USDA and make sure that the food chain is healthy. We work at the nation’s borders and make sure that animals that are imported into the U.S. don't bring diseases with them. We work at the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention] and study diseases that are transmittable from animals to humans.

What advice do you have for veterinary schools that want to help diversify their enrollment and support underrepresented students?

It is important for schools to recognize that students of color face stressors that they don't talk about. These can be related to our backgrounds, to racism, and to microaggressions. Having really good diversity training and raising awareness about these issues is helpful even if [underrepresented] students are silent about them.

Also, recognize that all students will need to know about diversity before entering the profession. In the real world, clients are going to be diverse, and students will need to know about different ethnicities and cultures. This doesn't just apply to race and color but also to gender, sexual identity, and so much more. There are so many [identity] factors that can make a person feel isolated that may not be readily apparent on the surface, so teaching students to be sensitive to these issues is important.

We need to remember that none of us are perfect. The work is hard and sometimes we make mistakes. When you're told that you've made a mistake, take it as a time for self-reflection. That is how we become better.

Mariah Bohanon is the senior editor of INSIGHT Into Diversity.
Inclusive Excellence

We take a comprehensive approach toward equity, diversity and inclusion. Come learn with us.

For more stories about advancements in medical education, community outreach and pipeline development, visit https://phoenixmed.arizona.edu/diversity.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
College of Medicine
Phoenix
The University of Virginia School of Medicine’s admissions process uses a holistic review in order to select a talented and diverse student body. As physicians and other health care providers, our commitment to goes beyond the walls of clinics and hospitals. We are hoping to narrow the gap between UVA and minority communities locally. Our goal is to enhance cultural competency among UVA students and faculty.

Office of Admissions

PO Box 800725
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For questions, email: SOMADM@virginia.edu

Be a Part of What’s Next

VIRGINIANS: 44%
OUT OF STATE: 56%
WOMEN: 45%
UNDER-REPRESENTED IN MEDICINE: 19%
TOTAL STUDENTS: 156

CLASS OF 2022

Be a Part of something
BIGGER THAN YOURSELF

Make a Difference

med.virginia.edu/diversity/

The School of Medicine is adopting a strategy of leveraging diversity and inclusion to drive the School’s mission of excellence in the delivery of quality patient care, the conduct of biomedical research, and the training of health professionals. The School of Medicine aspires to be a national leader in the creation and sharing of health knowledge within a culture that promotes equity, diversity, and inclusion.
In today’s campus environment, every voice matters.

Demonstrate your campus’s commitment to inclusion by making sure everyone’s voice is heard. Viewfinder® Campus Climate Surveys give you the tools to do so.

Now offering Spanish-language and Health Professions surveys as well as Custom Data Reports.

To purchase or learn more about Viewfinder® Campus Climate Surveys, visit viewfindersurveys.com or email Lenore Pearlstein at lpearlstein@viewfindersurveys.com.
Following the tragic March 16 shooting in Atlanta of eight people, six of whom were of Asian descent, advocates and student groups at institutions of higher education across the U.S. organized vigils to honor the memory of the victims and draw attention to the growing spread of anti-Asian hate crimes nationwide.

At Lee University, a Christian institution in Tennessee, the Asian Council student group held a vigil on campus where attendees expressed their feelings by praying and sharing the victims’ stories.

At the University of Michigan, the United Asian American Organizations, a coalition of more than 25 campus groups, also held a vigil to help students grieve and to inspire political action.

“Having this vigil shows that, first of all, these lives lost were not disposable, and they are important to a large group of people, but also [sends] the political message of that you need to pay attention to this intersection of identities because this terrible thing happened.” Anna Dang, president of the United Asian American Organizations, told the news outlet MLive.

The advocacy group Stop AAPI Hate received reports of nearly 3,800 incidents of anti-Asian racism in 2020, compared with 2,600 in 2019. The majority — at 68 percent — were against women.

In addition to campus vigils, rallies and protests have been held around the nation calling for an end to racism and violence against Asian Americans.
Creating an Inclusive Experience for the Lives We Touch

The MUSC College of Medicine is committed to creating an environment that fosters cultural understanding and competency and opportunities for all. Our program integrates basic and clinical sciences and supports concentrations in research, global health and more.

We are one of 25 proud participants of the Building Up study through the NIH Diversity Program Consortium’s National Research Mentoring Network. This study tests the effectiveness of a career development intervention for postdocs and junior faculty who are underrepresented in health-related sciences.

James B. Edwards College of Dental Medicine

The MUSC James B. Edwards College of Dental Medicine is committed to developing principled, skilled, compassionate and culturally sensitive practitioners.

Diversity and inclusion are incorporated into the curriculum starting in the first year and culminating in an annual seminar for fourth year students, staff and faculty. The college participates in outreach events throughout the year, including hosting “Dental Day” each fall to introduce candidates from all backgrounds to the field of dentistry and our school.
Dentistry is a healthcare field that lags behind in diversity, with less than 15 percent of dental students coming from underrepresented backgrounds.* At the Texas A&M College of Dentistry, we believe that we become a stronger academic institution by fostering a diverse student body and faculty. This commitment to diversity will ensure that future generations of Aggie dentists, instructors and researchers will stand ready to meet the complex health care challenges faced by our state, our nation and the world.

dentistry.tamu.edu

* Journal of Dental Education, January 2019