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Fostering Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Neuroscience Training: Proceedings of a Workshop in Brief (2021)

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Proceedings of a Workshop

IN BRIEF

April 2021

Fostering Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Neuroscience Training

Proceedings of a Workshop—in Brief

The advancement of science and the future of the field of neuroscience require a diverse workforce as well as an environment where people feel comfortable and are able to work to the best of their abilities, said Shane Liddelow, assistant professor of neuroscience, physiology, and ophthalmology at the New York University Grossman School of Medicine. Liddelow made this comment as he opened the third workshop in a series hosted by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine’s Forum on Neuroscience and Nervous System Disorders, which was informed by the work of the forum’s Action Collaborative on Neuroscience Training: Developing a Nimble and Versatile Workforce.

This virtual workshop, held on January 25, 2021, convened a diverse range of stakeholders from across the neuroscience community and at different career stages to expand on themes from the first workshop in the series centered on racial equity (NASEM, 2020). Workshop speakers also addressed questions regarding how to support a global workforce; how to support institutional, geographic, and gender diversity; and how the goals of inclusion intersect with the changing culture of science.

PERSONAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE NEED FOR BROADER DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN NEUROSCIENCE TRAINING

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) cut across many different aspects of identity, ranging from highly visible to less visible, said Liddelow. Different minoritized groups face different challenges and will require diverse solutions, he added. The multicultural perspectives presented at this workshop highlighted these challenges and showcased strategies that have been implemented to address these problems. Although no workshop can cover the range of issues comprehensively, the goal of this workshop was to open up dialogue, inspire discussion and rethinking, and most importantly, inspire action, said Liddelow.

Globalizing Science Equitably

Many initiatives have been taken to expand science globally, but most have been restricted to big institutions or laboratories, said Mahmoud Bukar Maina, research fellow in Sussex Neuroscience at the University of Sussex, United Kingdom. To truly globalize science, he said, efforts must be extended to resource-limited places as well to limit “brain drain.” Maina said he left Nigeria 10 years ago with the intention of returning; however, the lack of resources there makes returning a challenge.

Maina suggested that funding could be used in multiple ways to expand science in low-resource countries. Young scientists could receive funding to initiate research in their home country, followed by funding to continue their research and gain experience at an institution in a resource-rich country, and finally, funding to set up research in their home country. To enable research to be conducted in one’s home country, he said, funding is needed for both infrastructure and training.

However, funding alone will not be able to address all of the challenges present in low-resource countries, and training people in research-rich countries can backfire if they return to their home country and cannot access the resources they need, said Maina. This can stop them from pursuing their passion.

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To mitigate this eventuality, he works as an outreach coordinator for Teaching and Research in Natural Sciences for Development (TReND) in Africa, a nongovernmental organization focused on higher education.¹ For the past 10 years, TReND in Africa has been working to train scientists in the use of model systems such as *Drosophila* and *C. elegans*. “We train people using the available resources there, with the power outages and everything, and try to get people to do it in their own niche so that they will be able to problem solve even if something happens while they are doing their research,” he said.

Maina also noted the rich genetic diversity in Africa and opportunities for the global neuroscience community to collaborate with African researchers—allowing them to take the leading role—to build and expand the research base in the brain sciences.

Globalizing science also requires addressing the challenges that international students face when trying to access educational opportunities in high-resource countries, said Maina. Language barriers, for example, can make international students question their competence or feel that they do not belong, and they may thus appear less competent to interviewers, he said. The lack of role models and research experience may exacerbate these feelings. Even within colonized countries such as Africa, foreigners may be seen as more qualified than an Indigenous person to fill a position, said Maina.

Making Connections and Getting Exposure to Advance a Career

Carolyn Rodriguez, psychiatrist and associate dean for academic affairs and associate chair for inclusion and diversity in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the Stanford University School of Medicine, said it can be hard for underrepresented students to make the connections that will advance their careers. For example, as a computer science major in college, the term “underrepresented in STEM [science, technology, engineering, and mathematics]” resonated with how alone she felt, and organizing a group of other minoritized people who were feeling isolated was a positive step in her career, she said. She added that organizing events for underrepresented students to visit her and other minority scientists on campus to see them at work helped sustain that connection.

To make herself feel she was part of the community, Rodriguez also had to make connections with others even when she felt uncomfortable. She relayed a story of meeting a leader in her field multiple times, introducing herself each time and expressing her interest in his work. After several of these introductions, he told her, “Carolyn, I’m not senile. I know who you are,” and he later went on to help her in her career.

Liddelow said he was also introverted as a trainee and had to find the courage to insert himself into conversations. As his career progressed, he found it helpful to actively attempt to bring people on the periphery into a conversation; for example, by making sure he reads questions from trainees and following up with them. While this can be difficult in virtual meetings, Rodriguez noted that even virtual connections can have a great impact.

Tapping into the Hidden Diversity Pools of Experts

Lucas Cheadle, assistant professor of neuroscience at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, has been navigating the scientific world as someone whose looks may hide the unique perspectives he brings to his work. Originally from the Chickasaw Nation, he is both biracial and transgender.

To honor and support diversity and inclusion in science, diversity must be valued, he said, yet some classes of diversity are not only invisible, but also undervalued. For example, transgender is not a valued demographic even at the National Institutes of Health, where it is not considered an underrepresented minority. What that means, he said, is that there is no mechanism for young trans people to receive help confronting the challenges they face. Worse, he said, is the message sent that trans people are not valued in science. “When you combine that message with all the inherent challenges that come with being a young trans person, realizing that you are trans and you’re about to go through this massive string of medical things and social issues.... I think this is really a breaking point where we lose a lot of really talented scientists,” said Cheadle.

Liddelow reiterated the importance of a mentor to guide one through the complex barriers that are put up for everyone, but especially for people from underrepresented groups, including trans people. Liddelow was a postdoc in the lab of the late Ben Barres, author of *The Autobiography of a Transgender Scientist* (Barres, 2018),² in which he describes his life first as a woman in neuroscience and then as a trans man in the scientific world. Liddelow read a quote from Barres’s book, which said, “Growing up transgender in a time of universal ignorance and hate has been difficult and emotionally painful. And I believe that all of this pain is preventable in a future where people are less ignorant, more supportive and more understanding.”

¹ To learn more about TReND in Africa, see <https://trendinafrica.org> (accessed February 5, 2021).

² A copy of this book is available for free download at https://www.sfn.org/-/media/SfN/Documents/About/History-of-Neuroscience/Volume-10/HON-V10_Ben_A_Barres.ashx?la=en&hash=45C37491955AB98CE769DAD8C3FB2D56094518AF (accessed March 19, 2021).

Navigating the Scientific World as a Person with Multiple Overlapping Social Identities

Like Cheadle, Bianca Jones Marlin, assistant professor of psychology and neuroscience at the Columbia University Zuckerman Institute, confronts issues of equity and inclusion from an intersectional point of view. Her story reflects the intersection of being both Black and female, two population groups historically excluded from scientific communities, as well as other social identities that create challenges as she navigates her way through the scientific world. She is the mother of two children born during her postdoctoral training, a first-generation American on one side, a first-generation college student, and a person from a low socioeconomic group who self-financed her way through college.

Marlin said she shares these personal characteristics not because she is looking for pity, but to enable trainees who identify with those facets of her life to see that she deals with those issues on a daily basis in her position as an assistant professor. She added that she cannot do this alone. Everyone, including trainees, even those who are not a part of these historically excluded communities, needs to step up to create support systems to change this facet of science, said Marlin.

Liddelw agreed, while also pointing out the difficulties faced by members of underrepresented groups when they are forced to do double duty—being advocates while also trying to do their own scientific work. This makes the workload far greater and more complex, he said, particularly for people who fit into multiple groups.

The challenge of doing double duty was reinforced by Rodriguez, who described work she has done with DEI leaders in 7 of the top 10 psychiatry departments examining psychiatry diversity leadership in academic medicine (Jordan et al., 2021). Among these DEI leaders, all are women, 77 percent are mothers, 44 percent are informal caregivers of seriously ill relatives or friends, and more than half are primary breadwinners and/or financially support extended family, she said. They had a range of titles within their organizations, yet their compensation ranged from none to having a paid position, such as an endowed chair, for this type of work, said Rodriguez. Regardless of the level of compensation, she said, DEI leaders typically spend a lot of effort and time on this work, creating a gap in their career trajectory.

Jordan et al. (2021) recommended two things: structural change and financial support, she said. Embedding DEI leaders into the leadership of departments and the dean's office would provide representation and recognize the challenging nature of the work and the need for support. In terms of financial support, Jordan et al. (2021) recommend at least 25 percent to 100 percent full-time equivalent support for DEI leaders as well as infrastructure support.

Liddelw also suggested that funding could address some of the challenges faced by scientist-parents by either providing child care at scientific meetings and/or housing for their child care provider to accompany the scientist while traveling.

Eliminating Barriers to Admissions, Hiring, and Promotions

Admissions, hiring, and promotions committees are the gatekeepers of diversity at many institutions. Liddelw said the globalized nature of science means that admissions officers need to understand how people from different cultures may express themselves in different ways—not only the applicants themselves, but also people writing letters of support for those applicants. For example, Maina noted that “in the culture I come from, people don't really write long references.” Even someone who has been a wonderful mentor to an exceptional candidate may write only two paragraphs, he said. He suggested that admissions programs emphasize to mentors the importance of writing fully about the candidate.

When considering international students for admission, Maina suggested deemphasizing grades and publications, instead trying to assess their passion for science, goals, and imagination. He said the systems in place at some institutions make grades an unreliable indicator of the quality of students' work. In addition, students from poor families may face other barriers to good grades, such as having to work to support their families while going to school. Their research may never get published in well-regarded journals due to a lack of finances or bias, he said.

Liddelw noted that the same admissions barriers faced by international students may also be faced by students from disadvantaged backgrounds in the United States. “Someone can be scientifically literate and passionate about science, but has not been given the opportunity,” he said.

Some of the most prestigious universities such as Harvard and Yale select who they think are the best candidates based on the number of high-impact papers published, said Cheadle. “When you make that the parameter of who is great, what you're missing is that every single candidate started from a different position,” he said. Indeed, some programs have added a sort of “distance-traveled” measure for admissions decisions, said Rodriguez (Craig, 2017). She suggested that a perspective on how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted a candidate's life may also be useful.

Liddelw added that entrance to the scientific community does not have to be equal for all candidates, but it needs to be fair because people are coming from different backgrounds.

Maina suggested that personal statements and discussions with candidates may provide more useful information with which to evaluate candidates. He also suggested considering candidates from individual countries differently depending on the challenges specific to their countries. During interviews with candidates, he said he tries to learn about their individual challenges and how they addressed them. If the challenges are related to their academic pursuits, their responses may offer a perspective on what they could achieve if given the opportunity, he said.

However, Rodriguez noted that cultural norms may affect how a candidate presents themselves in the admissions interview. In some cultures, individuals are reprimanded if they talk too much about their accomplishments, and even with coaching, it is difficult to overcome such cultural expectations, she said. Interviewers should ask questions that allow people to speak openly about their accomplishments, she said, such as by asking questions about challenges they had to overcome or their proudest accomplishments.

Valuing diversity statements as part of the application is also important, particularly for candidates from less visible underrepresented communities, said Cheadle. The content in letters of reference—not just who wrote them—and the content of research publications—not just the journal in which they are published—may also be valuable, he said.

Once trainees are admitted into research programs, they face additional pressures and barriers, for example, when making decisions about whether to have a child. Marlin said the conversation with her mentor about this decision was nerve-racking. She wondered, “Is he going to be disappointed, is he going to think I will be less productive, is he going to think this is a bad idea?” In retrospect, she realized that if she had let those doubts change her decision to be a mother, she would have not been happy with the decision. Between giving birth to her two children, she also decided to foster a child with special needs, which led to an even more difficult conversation with her mentor. However, through those experiences she gained perspective, understanding that she can be a mother and still conduct excellent science. Now, she said, she shares that perspective with trainees facing similar decisions.

INSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON CHANGES NEEDED TO FOSTER DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION IN NEUROSCIENCE TRAINING

HIGHLIGHTS: INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES TO PROMOTE DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION IN NEUROSCIENCE TRAINING

- Cohort models, peer support models, and integration ambassador models can help students feel less isolated and more engaged in the scientific major they are pursuing (Crumpton-Young).
- Comprehensive financial packages are needed that allow students to pursue their academic and research endeavors without further compromising their mental and emotional bandwidth through alleviating a degree of worry about finances (Crumpton-Young).
- Senior faculty should address the different forms of bias that trainees experience and help trainees understand when it is appropriate and how best to speak up when they encounter bias (Schuman).
- Both government and philanthropic funders should prioritize support for quality child care to help slow the attrition of women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics due to parenthood (Schuman).
- Multifaceted, comprehensive, and holistic programs are needed that encompass academic training, research development, peer support, and mentoring, as well as personal and professional growth (Crumpton-Young).
- One way of supporting efforts to promote diversity is to evaluate and reward managers based not just on what they accomplish, but how, including what the manager has done to increase and advance the pool of women and minorities (Manji).
- Separating the role of mentor and sponsor for new hires and trainees can help mitigate concerns that trainees will become too dependent on their mentors and feel incapable of success on their own (Manji).
- Researchers need to work collaboratively with research partners in global communities to learn about their capacities and barriers, explore how research methods may be viewed in the community, and ensure that the research is meaningful (Chibnik).

NOTE: These points were made by the individual speakers identified above; they are not intended to reflect a consensus among workshop participants.

“It is clear that racism and many of the barriers to success that minoritized trainees experience have been perpetuated at the institutional level,” said Yasmin Hurd, director of the Addiction Institute of Mount Sinai at the Mount Sinai Department of Behavioral Health, the Ward-Coleman Chair of Translational Neuroscience, and professor of psychiatry and neuroscience and pharmacological sciences at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York. Therefore, she said, creating a more equitable research environment will require changes in institutional structures and increased accountability.

Hurd moderated the second panel, which focused on institutional perspectives regarding changes in training efforts that will foster DEI. Looking beyond strategies used in the past, the panel was tasked with identifying bold opportunities to bring forth sustainable solutions, she said.

Identifying Inhibitors to the Success of Minoritized Students and Envisioning Strategies to Address These Problems

Despite significant investments aimed at broadening the participation of women and minorities in STEM, progress has been slow, said Lesia Crumpton-Young, provost and senior vice president of Morgan State University. Among the most significant factors contributing to this is that curricula are often designed in a way that is not well aligned with the personal interests and professional aspirations of women and minority students; thus, they become disinterested and change their majors prematurely, she said. For example, an important goal for many minority students is to help others; however, the early components of STEM curricula often fail to afford them the opportunity to participate in initiatives that benefit the community, said Crumpton-Young. Engaging students early in ways that allow them to fulfill their dreams in pursuing their major is essential, she said.

Another critical factor is belongingness, said Crumpton-Young. To implement strategies at an institutional level that help students feel less isolated and more engaged in the scientific major they are pursuing, she suggested looking at cohort models, peer support models, and what she called an integration ambassador model, in which someone helps the student become integrated into the institutional environment. She added that getting to know both their peers and the faculty can help students feel as if they are part of a team that will enable them to complete their degree and fulfill their personal interests.

For many minoritized students, financial stress may also be a barrier to success, said Crumpton-Young. She advocated putting together comprehensive financial packages that allow students to pursue their academic and research endeavors without further compromising their already strained mental and emotional bandwidth through alleviating a degree of worry about finances.

Finally, Crumpton-Young cited low expectations of others regarding the capabilities of female and minority students as a critical factor that prevents many students from matriculating through their programs and achieving the success they are capable of achieving. She recalled that on the way to becoming the first African American female to earn a Ph.D. in engineering at her institution, “My advisors kept saying, ‘You don’t look like the typical engineer. I don’t think you can be successful. Why don’t you reconsider your major?’” When students hear messages like this, questioning their decision to pursue a STEM major, “before you know it they start to think, ‘Well, maybe this is not the right place for me’ and they change their majors or leave,” said Crumpton-Young.

A full set of biases also prevents underrepresented groups from achieving full inclusion, but that can be offset somewhat by seniority, said Erin Schuman, director of the Department of Synaptic Plasticity at the Max Planck Institute for Brain Research in Frankfurt, Germany. One example she cited was reviewer bias. “We know that the papers of young women and underrepresented groups are reviewed less favorably, that they have fewer opportunities for reviewing themselves, and that their papers are cited less,” said Schuman. Senior faculty should address this form of bias, she said, and more junior scientists should not be afraid to bring up the possibility of bias when talking to editors.

Invitation bias may also hold back women and other minoritized groups. BiasWatchNeuro³ is a website that searches databases to calculate the proportion of men and women in a given field and compares that with the proportion of men and women invited to speak at conferences, said Schuman. Again, she said, senior colleagues should address this type of bias with conference organizers, and junior scientists may also speak up if they believe there is unfair representation.

Although much harder to quantify, Schuman also mentioned the lack of inclusion in “boy’s clubs.” Information is currency, she said. “I used to hear at meetings that all the really interesting conversations happen in the men’s room or at the bar during meetings.” As a junior faculty member, she tried to infiltrate bar conversation until she realized she was “butting my head against the wall.” She suggested that one antidote to the boy’s club is a girl’s club, and she encouraged women in the audience to start and cultivate such groups.

³ To learn more about BiasWatchNeuro, see <https://biaswatchneuro.com> (accessed February 7, 2021).

Finally, a big issue that contributes to gender imbalance in STEM is the attrition of women due to parenthood, said Schuman. A recent study showed that 43 percent of U.S. mothers who have a full-time STEM career leave after having a child (Cech and Blair-Loy, 2019). Young scientist–parents often face substantial financial burdens as well. She said the high cost of child care in the United States results in some families spending one parent’s entire salary on that single expense. “We need to prioritize this kind of support,” she said, either through government funding or philanthropy. She also suggested that when scientists get a job offer, they leverage their hiring for child care. She did just this when she moved from the United States to the Max Planck Society, which paid €1 million to put in an on-campus child care facility.

Hurd suggested that junior and senior faculty alike may be able to push their institutions to prioritize investments in programs that will benefit faculty, whether that means providing child care or paying for the time faculty spend on DEI initiatives mentioned by Rodriguez in the first panel.

Crumpton-Young added that institutions must also develop multifaceted, comprehensive, holistic programs that respond to the various needs of students. Such programs encompass not only academic support, resource development, and training, but also have a component that helps students develop personally and professionally. “We have to take the time to develop the programs and listen to the individuals, ask them what they need, and then put those things in place in a way that can be sustained,” she said.

Crumpton-Young added that Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) often lack the academic programs and laboratories needed to help motivated students pursue a STEM education. Fortunately, extramural programs called HBCU consortiums have been created as partnerships with non-HBCU institutions that have those facilities so that students can pursue their interests on another campus, she said. Other internship programs may also be available, and faculty members may also have joint appointments at majority institutions and HBCUs, said Crumpton-Young.

Enhancing DEI in the Pharmaceutical and Biotech Industries

“Paying attention to DEI is the right thing to do and is also strategically advantageous” in industry as well as academia, said Hussein Manji, global head of the Johnson & Johnson (J&J) Science for Minds. He described several steps J&J is taking to enhance diversity and inclusion globally, which the company defines as bringing a person’s best true self forward, where his or her ideas are valued, and where they are allowed to grow, flourish, and make a difference for humanity.

First, he said, the company prioritizes reaching out to people from different backgrounds for summer student programs, graduate schools, and postdoctoral fellowships. Similarly, in recruiting people for employment, the company emphasizes the importance of diverse talent, he said, and recognizes its responsibility to help people navigate the professional environment, which may be particularly challenging for minoritized people. This gets at the concept of equity, added Manji, where one considers the full circumstances people face and ensures that all qualified people have access to opportunities.

One important way J&J supports these efforts is how it evaluates and rewards its managers, said Manji. Their yearly performance evaluations are split equally between what was accomplished and how: The “how” emphasizes what the manager has done to lead a culture of DEI where everyone can perform and be appreciated to the best of their aspiration and ability. He said that this is particularly important when increasing and advancing the pool of women and minorities. “Last year almost 50 percent of our diverse talent was promoted, and 70 percent of our moves from senior director to vice president were diverse candidates,” said Manji. When recruiting new talent, managers must also put forward a plan to ensure diverse slates of candidates and reviewers, he said. In addition, 110,000 of the company’s 130,000 employees have been educated on ways to mitigate unconscious bias.

Within the neuroscience group, J&J has also launched a program called Unleashing Women to start to address the “boy’s club” factor, increase confidence, and release the untapped potential of women, said Manji. In addition, J&J has affinity groups called “employee resource groups,” which allow people of different backgrounds or interest to come together. For example, he said, there is an LGBTQ group called Open and Out, as well as a women’s leadership initiative group.

Promoting the Training of a Global Workforce

The common mantra “think globally, act locally” is a wonderful concept, but as Lori Chibnik, assistant professor of epidemiology at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, assistant professor of neurology at Harvard Medical School, and biostatistician in the Department of Neurology at Massachusetts General Hospital, said, “we also need to start thinking globally and acting globally.” Chibnik is the principal investigator of the Global Initiative for Neuropsychiatric Genetics Education in Research (GINGER), which in collaboration with the Broad Institute of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard and five institutions in East and South Africa aims to train the next generation of

global neuropsychiatric genetics researchers.⁴ GINGER is paired with a global research study on the genetics of psychosis. Together, these programs aim to promote not just diversity in genetic research data, but just as important, in the people who analyze the data itself, said Chibnik.

The research involves collecting genetic and psychiatric data from communities in Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda. “To make our research meaningful, we need to work within those communities,” said Chibnik. The challenge she faced was to bring in trainees from these communities with a broad range of cultural backgrounds. To do that, Chibnik and colleagues went to those sites and learned from research partners within the community not only about their capacities and barriers, but also how they diagnose neuropsychiatric diseases and how those diseases and diagnostic procedures are viewed in the community. For example, what does it mean for someone in the community to give a saliva sample for genetic testing?

Training is reciprocal, said Chibnik. “I am there to teach them how to navigate a little bit in the world of global research, and I have learned from them what it takes to be a successful researcher where they are,” she said. “So much of what we do is listening to our collaborators and figuring out how we can work together to build this next generation of researchers.”

A pillar of the program is to resist “brain drain,” she added. Thus, most of their trainings are done at the partner institutions. Initially, the GINGER team planned to start with a kickoff workshop in Boston. Typically, such a workshop would last for 1 month or 6 weeks, but when she asked her students about the feasibility of attending such a workshop, many of the women trainees said they could not leave their families for such a long period of time. Chibnik asked them what they could do, and together they created a schedule that worked for both trainees and trainers: a 2-week workshop in Boston and a second 2-week workshop in the home community. “We managed to balance it so that we can include women who already have families,” said Chibnik.

The cultural challenges encountered when trying to implement DEI initiatives globally are not unique to low-resourced countries. Schuman gave one example: Despite Germany being a technologically advanced nation, there is strong cultural pressure to not let others take care of your children, she said. As a result, only 14 percent of German mothers return to any full-time work after having a single child, and only 6 percent return to work after two children. “I think it’s a good example that not only do we need to provide child care, but we need to provide high-quality child care that would potentially alleviate any guilt the parent might have,” she said.

Chibnik added that when she first started setting up group projects across countries with diverse participants, she heard from female fellows that they were the ones tasked with setting up meetings, taking notes, controlling PowerPoint slides, etc. Her advice to the community is to start young. “Young people are more open minded to things needing to change, and it’s not going to change unless you change it,” she said.

Mentoring and Sponsoring Minoritized Students: Strategies to Enhance Confidence and Independence

Mentors, sponsors, and advocates can be a tremendous benefit to trainees, said Crumpton-Young, “but sometimes as women and individuals of color, we are led to believe we can’t be successful without those individuals.” Rather, she views them as supplements rather than determinants to one’s ability to be successful.

Hurd agreed, but added that people should understand that most decisions made about their careers are made when they themselves are not in the room, “and if someone doesn’t have your back, if they don’t know you, it’s tough for them to advocate for you.” She said Mount Sinai provides incoming junior faculty with a mentoring team. Schuman added that although many institutions have such programs, people also need to have the courage to ask someone with whom they feel an affinity to mentor them. Rarely do senior colleagues say no, she said.

Manji suggested that separating the role of mentor and sponsor is one way to mitigate the concern about a trainee becoming too dependent on the mentor. “The mentor is often someone who is in the same field, a subject area expert who can guide you in the mechanics. The sponsor is actually someone distinct, someone whose job it is to have your well-being at heart, often who knows the internal politics, and someone you can confide in,” he said. At J&J, diverse and top talents are often offered a sponsor to help them navigate the terrain and open doors. Moreover, “it doesn’t matter what level you are; you can be someone else’s champion as well,” said Chibnik.

Hurd closed the workshop by reiterating the reciprocal nature of training: “If people do not feel welcome, if the environment and the training are not structured for inclusion, it will be impossible to really show success.” She urged workshop participants to continue these important discussions at their institutions and with colleagues across the neuroscience community. Hurd emphasized: “Your involvement and the continued dialogue are the only way to ensure sustained and meaningful change. We really have to be vigilant.” ◆◆◆

⁴ To learn more about GINGER, see <https://ginger.sph.harvard.edu> (accessed February 8, 2021).

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REVIEWERS: To ensure that it meets institutional standards for quality and objectivity, this Proceedings of a Workshop—in Brief was reviewed by Lesia Crumpton-Young, Morgan State University, and Shane Liddelow, New York University Grossman School of Medicine. Leslie Sim, National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, served as the review coordinator.

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