

## Background and Methods

In 2020, Dr. Eddie Morgan was appointed Vice-Chair for Academic Affairs, with responsibilities to include Mentoring and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI). A DEI committee was originally constituted and appointed by Dr. Morgan, with the aim of holding elections for positions as they become open.

The DEI committee is designed to be as inclusive as possible, with representatives from the faculty (at all levels), postdoctoral scholars, graduate students, research, and administrative staff. Each member serves for two years, with approximately half of the committee rotating off or standing for re-election each year. The Department Administrator is a permanent member of the committee, to promote continuity.

## The Committee

The 2022 committee is shown on the right: **Front Row:** Thota Ganesh PhD, Assoc. Prof., Paola Merino PhD, Postdoc. Fellow, Olga Rivera, Program Admin. Asst., Wenyi Wang, Res. Specialist Sr., Se-Yeong Oh PhD, Assoc. Scientist. **Back Row:** Matt Kroll, Dept. Administrator, Claudia Espinosa-Garcia PhD, Instructor, Asheebo Rojas PhD, Instructor, Edward Morgan PhD, Professor, Nicholas Varvel PhD Asst. Prof.. **Below:** Dacheng Fan PhD, Postdoc. Fellow, Harriet Moore, Communications Manager

The **charge** of the committee is to review all activities in the Department and ensure the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is integral to all of them. It meets monthly to discuss and implement initiatives to promote ongoing interactions and discussions in the community regarding DEI.

**Subcommittees.** Three subcommittees plan the major activities of the committee:

- Events: Luncheons, retreats, other social events
- Speakers: Identifies and invites seminar speakers
- DEI discussions: organizes Town Halls, Reading Clubs and discussion about current events

## Activities and Accomplishments

- Instituted and maintained DEI web pages on the Department's website, where the mission, vision, composition and activities of the committee are posted. This includes upcoming, and committee meeting notes (password protected).
- Dr. Morgan presented the activities of the committee at every faculty meeting
- Reviewed Departmental faculty recruiting practices and provided input to the Department for instituting DEI best practices in future searches
- Events held to promote awareness and a sense of community include a 3 Reading Club meetings, a Town Hall meeting on racism, and 3 seminars on the science behind DEI issues. See "Events" panel. Crucially, where possible these are all held in the regular Departmental seminar time slot.
- Designed and implemented a procedure to send messages to the Departmental community when events occur on campus, in the academic or local communities, or in the nation that may adversely impact
- Began work on a web page to highlight funding opportunities and resources for students and postdoc who are not eligible for US government grants



## Events

### Speakers:

- Jada Bussey-Jones MD, Emory Univ. *Racism and Bias in Academic Medicine*
- Jennifer Burris PhD Appalachian State Univ. *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion for STEM*
- Jennifer Kubota PhD, Univ. Delaware - *Neuroscience of Prejudice*

### Reading Clubs

- Disarming racial microaggressions
- Equity in Faculty hiring
- Summer book club – various options

### Town Hall meeting

- Anti-racism

## For the Future

- To increase participation in community discussions, future Town Halls and Reading clubs will focus on current events impacting our diverse community. The recently formed DEI Discussions subcommittee will be responsible for these events.
- Plan and implement social events to highlight and celebrate our diversity. Such events have until now been precluded by the pandemic. These include a Coffee & Donuts event, regular culturally-themed luncheons and an annual DEI retreat.
- Work on DEI in hiring and compensating staff and postdoctoral fellows

## Outcomes and Needs

To assess outcomes, the committee feels that it is essential to obtain Department-specific data such as climate surveys. While SOM-wide surveys like the Diversity Engagement Survey (DES) may be of some utility, they often include questions that seem targeted to clinical Departments and as such may deter people from completing the surveys. They also do not address some issues or scenarios that are specific to the basic science Departments. For instance, graduate students (a major part of the community) are not included. Support for Basic Science-targeted data collection is needed from the school.