

2020-2021 Annual Report

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND ANTI-RACISM
(DEAR) COUNCIL AT TUFTS UNIVERSITY
PHCM DEPARTMENT

Ndidiamaka Amutah-Onukagha, Janice Gilkes & Melissa Wu

2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT
Diversity, Equity, and Anti-Racism (DEAR) Council

OVERVIEW

The council was rebranded from the previously titled Diversity Committee to be called the Diversity, Equity, and Anti-Racism (DEAR) council to be more inclusive. The Public Health and Professional Degree Programs (PHPD) and Department of Public Health and Community Medicine (PHCM) DEAR Council continues to provide oversight of the detailed plan to ensure compositional diversity in students, faculty and staff, provide a climate of inclusion to all, and educate cultural competency and understanding of social determinants of health and health inequities in the curriculum.

MEETING DATES

Leadership	November 10 th , 2020 , December 9 th 2020, February 10 th , 2021, March 10 th , 2021, April 14 th , 2021, May 12 th , 2021
Committee	August 5 th , 2020, September 29 th , 2020, October 20 th , 2020, November 17 th , 2020, December 5 th , 2020, February 16 th 2021, March 16 th , 2021, April 20 th 2021, May 18 th 2021

MEMBER ROSTER

Prior to the academic year, leadership recruited additional student members across various programs under PHPD (MPH, MD/MPH, PA, MBS, HIA, and DPT). We saw an approximate 60% increase in membership from the 2019-2020 roster of 18 members.

Returning	Dr. Ndidiamaka Amutah-Onukagha (Chair), Janice Gilkes (Co-Chair), Melissa Wu (Student Intern), Dr. Linda Hudson, Dr. John Castellot, Helena Tatgenhorst, Adriana Black, Dr. Kim Dong, Dr. Fernando Ona, Dr. Beth Buyea, Dr. Beth Rosenberg, Mercedes Colangelo, Yakeisha Gray, Rachael Littlehale
New	Jennifer Parent-Nichols, Nana Ampomah (MPH), Olivia Dupree (HIA), Anna Kheyfets (MD/MPH), Allison Moky (MPH), Maya Younker (MBS), Pamela Chan (MBS), Bryan Currie (DPT), Ariana Harlan (DPT), Juan Hernandez (PA), Christine David (PA), Brianna Padron (PA), Guilherme Guerra (PA), Allison Yantz, Madison Thorpe

MAIN AREAS OF FOCUS

Organization of Subcommittees

There are two subcommittees currently in operation. In light of the virtual nature of our subcommittee as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and to ensure efficient coverage of responsibilities, we merged the previously separate faculty/staff with the professional development subcommittees.

1. Faculty/Staff Subcommittee

- Co-chairs: Ndidiamaka Amutah-Onukagha, Linda Hudson
- Members: Beth Buyea, Kimberly Dong, Fernando Ona, John Castellot, Beth Rosenberg, Sabrina Kurt-Rossi, Mercedes Colangelo
- Mission: Create and institutionalize an environment and pedagogy designed to build capacity for faculty and staff and all members of the PHPD community to be explicit in identifying critical issues influencing equitable health outcomes including racism, genderism, homophobia, political, economic and social determinants of health, in all teaching and learning environments. We intend to assure all members of the faculty and staff community will have the skills, knowledge and competencies to create teaching and learning environments reflecting our shared core values of equity, justice, transparency and anti-racism. We intend to assure the centering of the student perspective in all our work, as part of their academic experience, as we prepare them to be professionals in the public health and professional degree workforce.
- Vision: A sustainable, open and reflective environment where faculty and staff are prepared to lead by example, confident in their ability to be transparent, fully engaged in the challenging process of addressing inequities brought about by historical legacy of oppression and marginalization across several domains including race/ethnicity, gender, and physical abilities; (students well prepared and equipped to interact and collaborate with a diversity of populations).
- Responsibilities/Goals:
 - 1) Gathering data (e.g. qualitative and quantitative) from constituent PHPD groups designed to identify specific areas for professional development; build upon prior data gathered from the faculty self-assessment (FY 2018) on preparation to teach and interact with students on issues of critical importance (e.g. micro-aggressions, inclusive teaching practices) and available student data e.g. exit interviews. We will be intentional about including adjunct faculty within both online and on-campus environments.
 - 2) Annual review of issues emerging from course evaluations
 - 3) Explore issues/concerns from Student Senate, Office of Student services, Faculty reviews
 - 4) Collaborate with alumni association leadership to ascertain their perceived level of preparedness, post academics, to be effective public health leaders around these critical issues.
 - 5) Explore expertise and resources both within (e.g. CELT, TUSM Associate Director for EDI, Other Affinity leadership groups) and outside of the university (e.g. Essential Partners)
 - 6) Tailor training, specific content, and methodology in alignment with identified needs, including, but not limited to, the use of:

- 7) Identify areas for institutionalization of our core values and expectations of faculty regarding professional development, including but not limited to: statements in syllabi, course evaluations, creation an active repository of reference materials-library

2. Student Climate Subcommittee

- Chair: Janice Gilkes
- Members: Helena Tatgenhorst, Adrianna Black, Melissa Wu (MPH), Juan Hernandez (PA), Christine David (PA), Nana Ampomah (MPH), Olivia Dupree (HIA), Anna Kheyfets (MD/MPH), Pamela Chan (MBS), Maya Younker (MBS), Allison Moky (MPH), Jennifer Parent-Nichols, Brian Currie (DPT), Madison Thorpe
- Mission: Promote a diverse and inclusive learning community where students are supported to explore issues of diversity personally and learn from other.
- Vision: A safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for every member of our community.
- Responsibilities/Goals:
 - 1) Develop partnerships with key stakeholders including the Associate Director for Diversity and Inclusion Education for the Tufts University Health Sciences Campuses as well as Student Senate leadership. Share survey data to assess campus climate and student experiences.
 - 2) If data on climate does not currently exist, generate an annual campus climate survey. In conjunction with the PHPD Diversity Committee, address issues that surface in the campus climate survey and participate in the development of action plans in response.
 - 3) Consider trainings that could be beneficial to the faculty, staff and students of the department to promote cultural competence. Training requests will be communicated to the Office of Diversity and Inclusion Justice & Equity in Practice utilizing the Inclusive Community Feedback and Meeting forms and working with the Associate Director for Diversity and Inclusion Education for the Tufts University Health Science Campuses.
 - 4) Make reports on committee progress to PHPD Dear Council.

Hosting Events and Programming

This was an educational and edifying year of events across Tufts University School of Medicine. With support from several departments (including PHPD, MBS, and the Office of DEI), DEAR Council was able to schedule and host five events for the virtual Race & Racism event series, inviting several speakers and creators to share their unique knowledge, perspectives, and crafts. Topics included: health equity, health disparities during the COVID-19 pandemic, abolition and health justice, grassroots efforts in Boston, and food sovereignty for indigenous peoples.

1. Race and Racism Event Series

Date	Speaker/Event	Title	Attendee Count
9/09	Derrick Young (Alumni)	“All Roads Lead to Racism: COVID-19 Impact on Black America”	55
10/14	Dr. Phillipe Copeland (Boston University)	“The Nation is Sick: Abolition and Health Justice”	65
2/17	A Reckoning in Boston Film	Film Educational Preview with Q&A	43
3/17	Dr. Uché Blackstock (Advancing Health Equity)	“Advancing Health Equity: Mobilizing for Health Equity”	139
4/21	GATHER Documentary	Film Screening and Panel	40

We invited participants to complete an anonymous feedback survey after our first event of the series. Of the 21 respondents, 20 (95%) indicated they were “Very satisfied” with the event. Many of the comments about what they liked about the event were connected to the speaker (e.g. speaker was wonderful/knowledgeable/Tufts grad). A few comments praised the accessibility of the virtual speaker series and appreciated both the candor and justice orientation of the event. Respondents were also asked to share topics they would like to see covered in future talks. These include starting and continuing difficult conversations, effective white allyship, race/racism and statistical modeling, white fragility, critical race theory and public health, and racism and healthcare/medicine.

MAJOR SUCCESSES: DEAR Council Academic Year 2020-2021

<p>Recommendations to improve PHPD student climate in an effort to support and retain a diverse student body</p>	<p>The student climate subcommittee designed a process to gain a better understanding of PHPD climate surrounding diversity, equity, and inclusion on campus. The objectives included defining what “climate” means to our students, what supports and/or resources for students should be considered, and what do students think it means for PHPD to be part of an antiracist institution. A total of five semi-structured focus group sessions were held, the first on November 29, 2020, two on December 5, 2020, and two on April 17, 2021. The first three sessions were held with 10 PHPD student volunteers. The two additional sessions in April 2021 were conducted with six of our own student climate subcommittee students.</p> <p>The <u>main recommendations</u> for future programming and events are outlined below.</p>
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Faculty review form
language added

Identifying
department-level
trainings to address
structural racism and
advance racial equity

1. Offer and advertise cross-program opportunities for students to interact with individuals with varying social identities and characteristics. Smaller class sizes, small group activities or breakout rooms on zooms with less individuals may be a preferred format to cultivate a sense of familiarity and provide an opportunity to engage students.
2. Training for administration and faculty - Reaching out to students after major, impactful events is a recurring request that directly impacts PHPD climate. As noted above, "Participants felt that reaching out with even a simple message/acknowledgement could bridge the gap between the institution and an anti-racism agenda."
3. Highlight and disseminate Tufts policies for reporting bias incidents. Students should have a clear understanding of the reporting process and the resolution process as it pertains to bias incidents in both the classroom and out of classroom settings.

A direct product of our focus group findings was the creation and implementation of a process to report anonymous curriculum-related complaints. An anonymous survey was created and is now fully operational effective May 2021. Program Directors were encouraged to send out notices to students and include in syllabi. In addition, PHPD Student Services sent out an announcement via the e-weekly and the Student Services Canvas Site. The Registrar's Office will also include in e-mails to students at the beginning of each semester.

The faculty/staff subcommittee initiated an inclusion statement for faculty review on anti-racism work. Faculty were asked to respond to the following prompt in their end-of-year review form under the "Anti-Racism and Diversity Efforts" section: Please indicate any actions you have undertaken to support the TUSM commitments to becoming an anti-racist school and to ensuring an inclusive learning environment for all students (e.g., making changes to the curriculum; creating space during class time to talk about significant current events; attending webinars with anti-racism or diversity as a focus, etc.) We expect a summary statement to give us a sense of what faculty have learned or ideas for recommendations based on assessments.

DEAR Council has established a partnership with the Allies Working to Advance Anti-Racism and Equity (AWARE) group. Their purpose is to build on learning and reflection from the "unpacking whiteness" series, while also creating strategy and action to start changing some of what is happening in the department. DEAR Council will serve as a sounding board to ensure actions are reasonable and not duplicative of existing practices or strategies.

<p>Admissions reviews and anti-racism policies amongst different programs</p>	<p>A full and transparent review of the Biomedical Science, Public Health and Physician Assistant Program admission processes were completed in February 2021 to ensure alignment with our goal of becoming an anti-racist school. The review sought to identify ways in which racism manifested itself in our admission process, from recruitment to application view to enrollment, and then develop anti-racist practices for confronting it.</p> <p>A report of findings and recommendations was submitted in draft form to the DEAR Council for review and comment. Specifically, the draft report identified areas that needed improvement and offered actionable items to ensure that our processes are equitable and not biased, and not influenced by external or financial pressures while also being effective in matriculating a diverse group of qualified students we believe can succeed at Tufts. DEAR Council members successfully reviewed the draft reports and offered recommendations to assist the Admissions Committee to support the goal of becoming an anti-racist school.</p>
<p>Establishing our web presence</p>	<p>The council has gone live on the university website for campus resources. A one-pager summarizing our mission, vision, and responsibilities were also put up on Canvas under student resources.</p>
<p>Recommendations for hiring committee</p>	<p>Dr. Amutah-Onukagha will be lifting up this work in the FACE Committee</p>
<p>Other ongoing diversity initiatives across campus</p>	<p>Council chair, Dr. Amutah-Onukagha, began her new role as the Assistant Dean for Diversity and Inclusion for PHCM and PHPD Programs in April 2021</p> <p>Co-chair Janice Gilkes sits on the visual representation committee, whose purpose is to recommend a new way to present the visual identity of the school on the walls of its buildings that represents the diversity of the student body today and the inclusive vision our university strives for, alongside the history.</p> <p>Student member, Pamela Chan, spearheaded the MBS' Race & Gender Bias in Medicine Series for the 20-21 academic year.</p>
<p>Identification of funding for special activities</p>	<p>Funding for the Race & Racism events came from the following sources/groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridging Differences Grant • Tufts PHPD • CTSI • CTSI Center for Community Engagement • Dean's Office TUSM • Office of Multicultural Affairs • MBS program of TUSM

NEXT STEPS: Academic Year 2021-2022

- Race & Racism Series
We plan on resuming the series in September 2021. The DPT program will coordinate an Ableism series for the fall.
- Creating opportunities for small group meetings and discussions (i.e. book clubs, lunch & learn, staff/intern-led discussions) to build our community and expand our family.
- Faculty training across all programs to continue work on climate
Continue thinking about training activities that are DEAR council-approved or -supported for faculty and prioritizing the trainings.
- Supporting and retaining faculty of color
The PHCM department is onboarding several new faculty for both the in-person and virtual programs. This is an opportunity to support and retain faculty of color, building cohesion and community within the department and living out the values we care about. We aim to create a strategy for welcoming new faculty that comes onboard with PHPD. One goal is to develop a document/orientation/workbook that all faculty receive when they come onboard.