

Recommendations to Enhance Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Cancer Workforce

ENHANCE DIVERSITY IN RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PRACTICES.



To increase diversity in academia and industry, it will be important to develop environments where diverse candidates are hired and can advance at the same speed as nondiverse candidates. In academia, the opportunities for promotion must be equal across races and ethnicities; unconscious biases must be addressed systematically across an organization; and hiring committees should be of a diverse makeup, be able to develop a diverse pool of applicants, and utilize objective inputs for candidate selection. Industry should focus on diversity at the board of directors' level, build partnerships with academic institutions, and create or augment hiring policies/practices that are responsive to and accountable for diversity, including encouraging diversity in job candidates and deidentifying resumes in the review process.

INTERINSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS WITH MINORITY-SERVING INSTITUTIONS TO ENHANCE PIPELINE AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES.



Many institutions, especially minority-serving institutions (MSIs), lack access to the expertise and facilities necessary to provide training in industry-relevant biotechnology skills. This limits underrepresented minority researchers' participation in the pharmaceutical/biotechnology workforce, hinders minority-led translational research, and reduces opportunities for MSIs to monetize technologies and generate minority-led start-up companies. Facilities are also needed that provide opportunities to learn and implement industry-related skills, understand drug discovery and its role in benefiting society, obtain data for and mentor the writing of Small Business Innovation Research/Small Business Technology Transfer grants, and potentially develop spin-off companies. Additionally, there is a need for more inter-institution level partnership programs, such as the NCI CRCHD Partnerships to Advance Cancer Health Equity (PACHE) program. PACHE promotes the development of partnerships between institutions serving underserved health disparity populations and underrepresented students (ISUPS) and NCI-designated Cancer Centers (CCs). Such partnerships build and strengthen the research infrastructure at ISUPS while expanding cancer health disparities research capacity at CCs, and in the process train diverse students and scientists at both institutions.

PROMOTE CONTINUAL PROFESSIONAL AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT WITH ACCESS TO MENTORS AND CAREER GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES.



Academic institutions can offer more mentoring and leadership training and/or professional development to prepare students, faculty, and employers for a broad array of careers, including in industry, as some graduates have difficulty identifying opportunities, many are not pursuing tenure-track positions, and others seek a private sector position after an initial foray into academia. It will also be important to support more interprofessional centers of excellence, with shared responsibilities for minority leadership and involvement.

PROVIDE OPPORTUNITY, MENTORSHIP, AND PROTECTED TIME FOR ALL RESEARCHERS.



There is a critical need to attract, train, and retain scientists in the biomedical enterprise. Key training components include exposure to solving a scientific problem, mentorship, and role models. This can be achieved initially at the graduate training level through funding opportunities. Protected time after required postdoctoral training for all researchers, and for physicians after clinical training, is also important, as is continued mentorship on initial publications and how to apply for grants. Additionally, loan repayment programs remain a big need due to the cost of graduate and medical school and the high debt burden. To further support the development of underrepresented minority researchers and leaders, it is necessary to create programs aimed at minorities toward the end of their training that can provide support in terms of research funding and guidance.

SHOWCASE ROLE MODELS AND THE SUCCESS OF CURRENT RESEARCH.



Diverse members of the biomedical workforce need to be visible as potential role models for students and trainees. Additionally, cancer health disparities research can showcase how it positively changes the approach to health care and the success of interventions for individuals and groups.