

Unique Perspectives

Celebrating Diversity, Inclusion and Equity in the University of Missouri's School of Medicine | Volume 3, Issue 2

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Contributor's Notes:

Brought to you by the School of Medicine Faculty and Staff Diversity and Inclusion Committees. To be disseminated 5 times per year.

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To learn more about the University of Missouri School of Medicine's diversity and inclusion efforts, click [here](#).

In the Spotlight: Loren Bauerband, PhD, MA



Loren Bauerband is an assistant professor in the Department of Health Sciences in the School of Health Professions.

What is your definition of diversity and how do you feel like diversity and inclusion relate to one another?

Diversity is the existence and awareness of differences among individuals. Diversity encapsulates all differences including ability, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, beliefs, learning styles, and world views. Inclusion is the act of embracing differences and intentionally dismantling barriers for people who have historically been excluded due to their differences. Without inclusion, we are unable to fully connect with the diversity that surrounds us, because people who have differences in the margins of society are silenced or disregarded.

Tell us about the transgender health studies grant you recently received and how the project may help to close the gaps in health equity and improve the patient-physician relationship for transgender and gender nonconforming individuals.

I received a Health Equity Scholars for Action grant from the Robert Wood Johnson

Foundation. I will be investigating the process, or journey, transgender and nonbinary (TGNB) individuals take after realizing their TGNB identity. Societal awareness, gender norms, legal processes, and medical standards have changed drastically for TGNB individuals even within the last decade. The TGNB population is growing among younger generations, with more diversity in terms of gender identity, expression, and journeys towards gender congruence. We know access to TGNB-competent healthcare and legal protections reduces mental health risks for all TGNB individuals. However, we do not know how age, timing, and steps in a person's journey may impact TGNB health. I will be investigating these factors within the context of a person's birth cohort (Generations: Millennials, Generation X, and Baby Boomers). Further, my research team is also conducting interviews to investigate the perceptions of TGNB individuals in each birth cohort. This work will help us better understand the unique health risks and their relation to identity experience among TGNB individuals, especially anticipating how these needs may evolve as each cohort ages. Additionally, the research is utilizing novel analytical techniques that may help providers understand and accept the diverse combination of medical approaches TGNB individuals take on their journey to gender congruence. Hopefully, this will support providers' increased efficacy when TGNB patients pursue less traditional medical journeys. When providers approach patients with this openness, it can help TGNB patients feel safe to be honest about their identity and their health.

Describe how you help create an environment that is welcoming and inclusive as a faculty member in your department.

I acknowledge that being welcoming and inclusive requires continuous learning. I approach diversity-related topics with

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Activity Highlights

Culturally Aware Mentoring~ The University of Missouri was selected to participate in a research study on the benefits of [Culturally Aware Mentoring](#) (CAM). The workshop, sponsored by the National Research Mentoring Network (NRMN) which is funded by the National Institutes of Health, was offered to graduate faculty in the biomedical sciences in departments where at least 10% of graduate students identify as underrepresented. In three, 3-hour sessions held on March 2, 9 and 16, facilitators helped foster culturally responsive mentoring practices. Much of the focus was on the need for mentors to be aware of their own cultural lenses and to understand how the everyday experiences of minoritized students can affect success in research. The workshop encouraged mentors to directly address race and culture with students. The long-term goal of the study which includes over 30 US universities is, "to advance the science and practices of mentoring in order to increase access to high-quality mentoring relationships for underrepresented students that will advance their success."

WIMMS~ On April 8, the Women in Medicine and Medical Sciences (WIMMS) group presented a [speech](#) by philanthropist and former Miss World, Priyanka Chopra, following being awarded the "Power of Women Award." Honored for her longtime work with UNICEF, Ms. Chopra discussed her experiences growing up in India where many girls there are not given the same opportunities as boys. In many developing countries, girls are often pulled out of school when they hit puberty and are considered "ready for marriage." When it comes down to the cost of education, sons often take priority over the daughters so as not to "waste" money on the girl since they will "soon marry and have children." Ms. Chopra's parents were doctors in the Indian Army and strived to raise both Priyanka and her little brother as equals. As a passionate advocate for access to education and health care, Ms. Chopra also has her own foundation called the Priyanka Chopra Foundation for Health and Education where she helps to provide health care and education to youth in India.



Student National Medical Association Conference~

The Annual Medical Education Conference (AMEC) sponsored by the Student National Medical Association was held in Orlando, Florida this year from April 13- 17. AMEC is consistently the largest gathering of underrepresented minority students in the nation. The University of Missouri School of Medicine had a strong showing with over 25 attendees including faculty representing 9 departments, staff and medical students. Mizzou's presence at this year's conference generated a great deal of interest in the medical school, our Visiting Student Diversity Program and our residency programs.



Pictured at left: Lydiah Fridah Mpyisi and Uzoamaka Mbionwu. Pictured above: the SNMA conference attendees from MU.

Give Me 5!



Gabrielle Quinn is a Research Specialist II in the Dept. of OB/GYN and Women's Health. To get to know Gabrielle better, we asked her these 5 questions:

1. If you could live anywhere or do anything, where or what would that be?

I would like to live within a community surrounded by trees and access to a body of water. Lake of the Ozarks is the closest comparison to this living environment.

2. What is your favorite food or restaurant?

My favorite restaurant is Lamberts for the "throwed rolls" but my favorite food is definitely French fries.

3. What is your favorite cultural/family tradition you celebrate every year?

Celebrating my Grandma's birthday each year. The whole family gets together, plays games, and has a great meal while updating each other on our lives.

4. Tell us an interesting or fun fact about yourself.

I am from a town with a population of only 5,000 people. There were 63 students in my graduating class, and I was the class president.

5. If you could make one change in the world what would it be?

To rid ourselves of forming biases when meeting people who are not similar to us.

A Look Back...

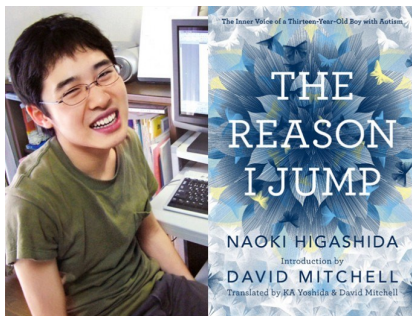
The month of May is Older Americans Month, an observance led by the Administration for Community Living (ACL). ACL was created around the idea that older adults should have the independence to choose where they live, who they live with, and to participate fully in their communities while aging. The theme for May 2022 is, "Age My Way," an opportunity to explore aging in place. In honor of this month, we are taking A Look Back at the University of Missouri's contribution to Aging in Place (AIP), specifically the TigerPlace senior living community.



The University of Missouri developed a unique multidisciplinary Aging in Place program in 1996 which included the School of Nursing, College of Electrical and Computer Engineering, School of Social Work, Department of Physical Therapy, Department of Management and Informatics, Biostatistics Group and the Department of Family and Community Medicine as well as outside consultants. As the number of older adults continues to increase in our nation, more and more are faced with serious decisions about how and where to live as they age. The Aging in Place model includes personalized health services, nursing care coordination, and continuous care management allowing individuals to have their needs met in one place as those needs change over time.

TigerPlace senior living community utilizes the Care Coordination model using nursing services and technology to promote early illness recognition and fall detection, two issues that often strip older adults of their daily activities of living and independence. A considerable amount of research demonstrates the effectiveness of this model in the TigerPlace senior living community and notes an increase in the length of stay of almost one year. Research also shows that the use of sensor technology, also developed at TigerPlace, increases the average length of stay by an additional 1.7 years. The Aging in Place program at the University of Missouri has been improving the lives of Missouri seniors for the past 25 years.

Brain Food



In April, we recognize both National Autism Awareness Month and on April 2, World Autism Awareness Day. Last year, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) reported that 1 in 44 children are diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in the US. California has the highest diagnosis

rate at 1 in 26 and New Jersey comes second. However, New Jersey has been praised for its public awareness and education efforts that include more accurate screenings by pediatricians. Missouri has the lowest diagnosis rate at 1 in 60. A unique memoir was released in Japan in 2007 by 13-year-old Naoki Higashida who was diagnosed with ASD when he was five years old. Skeptics expressed doubt about how such a young, nonverbal autistic person could write a book but with help from his mother, an alphabet grid, and a determination to communicate, *The Reason I Jump* became an instant success. Almost 45% of individuals with ASD have average or above-average intellectual ability. In 2013, the book was translated into English and would become a *New York Times* bestseller. The book is largely a series of questions to Naoki and his often-selfless responses to them, always engaging the reader and asking the parent or caregiver to "stick with them, be patient, and not give up." *The Reason I Jump* was adapted into a documentary film that debuted at the Sundance Film Festival in 2020. Both the book and film are available at the Columbia public library. The film can also be viewed on Netflix.

To help increase our internal capacity as we strive for Inclusive Excellence at the School of Medicine, the Diversity Ambassador



Initiative was launched in July 2021. Each SOM Department has 1-2 designated individuals with allocated time to address DEI within their department and help promote school-wide efforts. Eight Student Diversity Ambassadors were chosen through an application process based on interest, previous DEI experience and their determination to advance DEI in the SOM. The Student Diversity Ambassadors serve a one-year term, renewable for one additional year. To learn more and to see the list of faculty and student ambassadors, click [here](#).

Calendar of Events

Upcoming events on campus and in the Columbia community



*WIMMS next *First Friday Empower* lunch is, "[The surprising habits of original thinkers](#)," by Adam Grant on **May 6, 12-1pm**. [Click here to join the Zoom discussion](#).

*Columbia Parks and Recreation presents, *Family Fun Fests: Juneteenth Jamboree* on **June 15, 6-8pm** at Cosmo Park. [Click here](#) for more information.

Disclaimer: Event dates and times are subject to change. Thank you!

Are you GAME for some Diversity and Inclusion trivia? Be the first to scan the code and submit your answers to win some Diversity and Inclusion Staff Committee items. Contest closes May 13. Winner will be contacted the week of May 16. Good luck!

