

Unique Perspectives

Celebrating Diversity, Inclusion and Equity in the University of Missouri's School of Medicine | Volume 1, 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.

-To submit diversity and inclusion news and events, please e-mail: folkertsa@health.missouri.edu and wesslerk@missouri.edu

-To find out more about what's going on in the University of Missouri School of Medicine's diversity and inclusion efforts, go to:

<https://medicine.missouri.edu/about/office-diversity-and-inclusion>

In the Spotlight: Andrea Simmons



Andrea Simmons is the Mizzou MedPrep Senior Program Manager in the School of Medicine's Medical Education Office under Student Programs. She has been in the department for almost five years.

What is your definition of diversity?

Diversity is a very broad term that carries various meanings for each individual. I believe each individual brings a diverse perspective based on their experiences and backgrounds. Some parts of diversity are easier to recognize such as race, gender, religion, and class, yet; it also includes personal values, assumptions, and beliefs. When it comes to diversity, I am passionate about equitable, social change ensuring there are multiple voices represented at the table, and the willingness to respect, learn and grow from others' diverse experiences.

How do you think diversity and inclusion relate to one another?

Diversity and inclusion go hand and hand. I took the MU Diversity 101 course several years ago and one of

the things that stood out to me is that diversity is like bringing people with differences and diverse perspectives to the table and inclusion is ensuring that everyone has a voice that is heard and welcomed at the table.

Tell us about the Mizzou MedPrep program. When was it implemented, who it is for and how does it help?

The MedPrep program was established in 2011 by the former Associate Dean for Student Programs and the MedPrep Faculty Director. We offer programs for high school to college, non-traditional students, to incoming first year students. The programs are designed to expose students to health care careers and assist with the medical school application process. We also provide primers for incoming students that will help prepare for the first block in medical school. The program is open to all, but developed for our value-added groups: underrepresented in medicine (URM), socioeconomically (SES) disadvantaged, those from rural areas and non-traditional students.

Describe how you create an environment that is welcoming and inclusive as manager for the MedPrep program?

Simply, I try to be welcoming and inclusive. I want the participants to have a great experience and I attempt to make the day memorable. Each participant receives a lapel pin at the end of the program that represents pursuing their journey. I also stay connected with many of the participants well after the program is over.

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What have been your most successful activities with respect to increasing diversity and inclusion in the MedPrep program?

In 2017, a new MedPrep Program called Diversity and Inclusion was launched. The goal of the program is to invite incoming first year medical school students to talk about diversity and inclusion. Each year, the planning committee grows because the students that participated join in planning and implementing the next year's program. The program includes a four-week online component and a one-day onsite component. The dean's, faculty, staff and students work extremely hard to build a community and a supportive network that provides the students with a sense of belonging, an outlet, allies and connection to Mizzou Med. We are always seeking diversity allies to join us.

How do you encourage others to honor the uniqueness of each individual?

My advice is to never miss an opportunity to learn something new about the people you are around. Create a safe environment for them to be their true authentic self. Embrace the differences. Sometimes being vulnerable around others will encourage them to open up more and share more about their individual differences.

For more info about Mizzou MedPrep, [click here](#)

Activity Highlights

WIMMS Event: The Power of Women

In celebration of International Women's Day and Women's History Month, Women in Medicine and Medical Sciences (WIMMS) teamed up with the Women of MU Health Care Employee Resource Group on March 6th to present an Empower Lunch featuring a video with Oprah Winfrey on the "Power of Women" and a discussion about what can be done to empower and support women. This was a well-attended event with 38 participants including hospital CEO Jonathan Curtright and CNO Mary Beck. The event was sponsored by Lakota Coffee Company and MUHC Dining and Nutrition who provided snacks and beverages.

Before the presentation, a slideshow of 10 women from the MU SOM and Hospital were featured for their contribution to enriching the lives of students and colleagues at MU. Advice and tips from these women were also featured, including Dr. Laura Schulz's quote, "Take in all the good advice about what to do, but don't let anyone tell you who to be."

This event highlights a growing partnership between WIMMS and the Women of MU Health Care which endeavors to build relationships between SOM faculty and hospital administrators and staff, with a shared goal of support for all women at our institution. The lunches occur on the 1st Friday of every month. Join us Friday, May 1st at 12pm via Zoom for the "Power of Vulnerability."

Give Me 5!



Sofia Girald Berlingeri is a second year medical student at the University of Missouri School of Medicine. She is finishing her last lecture-PBL based block and will be starting her clinical rotations in June. She is interested in pursuing a career as an OB/GYN. To get to know Sofia better, we asked her these 5 questions:

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

I would travel the world experiencing different cultures. I would love to learn different languages, try their food and drinks, enjoy their music and dances and understand their customs.

2. What is your favorite food or restaurant?

This is a hard question! I would say my favorite food is definitely a Puerto Rican dish. I love to eat rice and beans with cubed steak cooked in onion sauce and fried plantains. Being away from the island, I often crave 'comida criolla', as we call it.

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

Christmas "Parrandas" is my favorite cultural tradition from Puerto Rico. During Christmas, everyone's pantry needs to have extra food and drinks. A group of friends, armed with musical instruments, will show up unannounced at your house late at night, screaming "Parranda!" and play traditional songs. They won't leave until you feed them, so you let everyone in, sing Christmas songs and eat and drink deep into the night.

4. FUN FACT!

I was born missing a rib on my left side. I found out coincidentally after I fell from a tree while playing with my friends and my mom took me to the ER thinking I had broken a bone. Surprisingly, I was fine, but the doctor noticed my missing rib.

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

I think that the growing inequalities in our system are manifest in many aspects of our lives, but especially in healthcare. I would make it so that advances in healthcare are accessible to every individual, regardless of their socioeconomic status, race, religion, age, sex or sexual orientation. Coming from a diverse background, I can relate to the difficulties that underrepresented groups encounter when seeking medical help, mainly due to their financial and/or uninsured status. It should be easy for everyone to care for their health.



Diane Brukardt, M.D.

A Look Back...

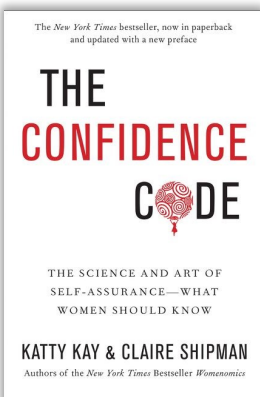
In honor of Women's History Month (March), we take a look back at Dr. Diane Brukardt, a graduate of the University of Missouri with a B.S. in Medicine and an A.B. in Biology, who was the first woman to take residency at the University of Missouri Medical School after receiving her M.D. from Harvard in 1954. After completing her residency at the University, she stayed on as faculty and was on the staff of the Student Health Service, where she served as director from 1978 to 1990.

Dr. Brukardt's illustrious career included serving as the second woman president of the Boone County Medical Society in 1991. She was also elected vice-president of the Missouri State Medical Association by her colleagues in 1993. Active in the American College of Physicians and the American Society of Internal Medicine, Dr. Brukardt served as president of the University's chapters of Phi Beta Kappa and the American Association of University Women and Mortar Board. In 1994, she was selected as "Doctor of the Year" by the Boone County Medical Society.

Other accomplishments include: becoming co-founder of the Visiting Nurses of Mid-Missouri; serving as a member of the advisory board of the Missouri State Committee on the Status of Women from 1982 to 1984; chairing the standing committee on health legislation of the Missouri Division of the American Association of University Women from 1982 to 1985 and serving on the governor's committee to review nursing home legislation from 1982 to 1983.

In 1989, Dr. Brukardt was awarded the Distinguished Alumni Award from the College of Arts and Sciences. She retired from the University as Director of the Student Health Service and Assistant Professor of Medicine in 1990. Dr. Brukardt passed away on Feb. 17, 2018, in Columbia. Though many women residents have followed, we salute Dr. Brukardt for her contributions to the profession and the University of Missouri School of Medicine.

Brain Food



Is confidence something we are born with or can we learn it? Some of the most successful women in the world including politicians, professional athletes and CEOs, are still constantly harassed by nagging self-doubt. Why? *The Confidence Code* by authors Katty Kay and Claire Shipman attempts to explain in thought-provoking detail how neuroscience, genetics and action could play pivotal roles in shaping a woman's perceived abilities to succeed. They interview psychologists, WNBA athletes, senators and even undergo their own genetic testing, to try and understand what it is that can hold some women back from pursuing their dreams and what drives others towards success, despite mental blocks they may face every day of their journey and beyond. This book is an inspiring and insightful look into the human brain and relays the message to women everywhere that with the right mindset and determination, confidence can be acquired and utilized to pave your own path to success.

Calendar of Events~

SAVE THE DATE

Upcoming Events on campus and in the Columbia community

*Women in Medicine and Medical Sciences (WIMMS) presents the next First Friday Empower Lunch on May 1st, noon-1pm via Zoom on "**The Power of Vulnerability.**" New to WIMMS? E-mail wesslerk@missouri.edu to RSVP.

The 6th Annual WIMMS Conference: Charting Your Course in Academic Medicine, has been postponed. Be sure to check their website for a new date soon.

[Click here](#) for more info about the WIMMS conference and Empower Lunches.

*Inclusive Impact Institute of Columbia presents the "**Cycle of Socialization**" May 13th, 3-5pm at the Columbia/Boone County Public Health & Human Services building on Worley. Learn how we are socialized into systems of oppression by friends, family, institutions, media and culture.

[Click here](#) to RSVP and stay up to date on changes to this educational series.

*MU School of Medicine's Inclusive Excellence Professional Development Series presents: **Pronoun Power and Gender Identity Solidarity**, May 19th, noon-1pm via Zoom.

[Click here](#) to RSVP and for more info about the Professional Development Series.

*MU Office of Inclusion Diversity and Equity (IDE) "LEAP" Core Concept series presents Summer Express sessions via Zoom. The first in the series is on **Imposter Syndrome and Belonging**, June 2nd, 2-3:30pm.

[Click here](#) to RSVP and to learn more about the LEAP Summer Series sessions.

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