

Unique Perspectives

Celebrating Diversity, Inclusion and Equity in the University of Missouri's School of Medicine | Volume 1, Issue 3

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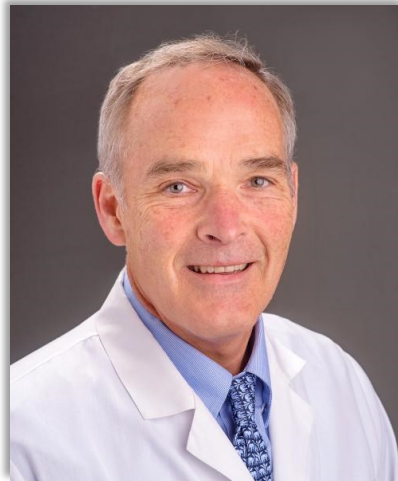
Brought to you by the School of Medicine Faculty and Staff Diversity and Inclusion Committees. To be disseminated 5 times per year.

-To submit diversity and inclusion news and events, please e-mail: folkerts@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: James P. Stannard, MD



Jim Stannard is an orthopaedic surgeon at the Missouri Orthopaedic Institute (MOI) as well as chair of the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery and chief medical officer for clinical strategic initiatives for MU Health Care.

What is your definition of diversity?

A great question. I think of diversity as working to have a broad representation of people. That includes race, but also socioeconomic differences, sex, even different ages, parts of the country, and paths in life.

What approaches/strategies did you employ to promote diversity and inclusion in the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery?

The biggest block to diversity in Orthopaedics is an overreliance on Step exam scores. So many in Ortho are in love with them - I am not. I have pushed hard for our group to look at the whole person and recognize that those tests are biased for a very specific background and skill set. We have established a research fellow position for someone who did not match in Ortho but is still willing to work to reach their goals. It has yielded two Black residents and one Hispanic resident

and currently, we have a female fellow. Women are another underrepresented minority in Ortho. We do not guarantee a residency spot, but coach them on test taking and have them take the in-training exam, as well as help them build their research portfolio. We have also very specifically targeted underrepresented minorities for interview positions. We have been represented at the NMA (National Medical Association) meeting two years ago (Covid knocked us out this year) and the Hispanic national group this year. I also review one non-orthopaedic book per year with the residents and interested faculty. Two of the books have been pertinent to this issue in the last three years (*Under Our Skin* [centered on Ferguson] and a book this year called *Seeing Patients* about race and health care disparities). The author ended up being our virtual graduation speaker and the residents all wrote a short paper on what the book meant to them with prizes for the top three. The most recent attempt is appointing a vice chair for Diversity and holding a virtual Zoom session with Meharry students. This has yielded two upcoming rotation students for this fall.

What have been your most successful accomplishments with respect to increasing diversity and inclusion in the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery?

The greatest success for the large group is probably the book review, but the best one for yielding underrepresented minority residents has been our research fellowship position.

What were your main obstacles to promoting diversity in your department and how did you overcome these obstacles?

(Spotlight continued on page 2)

Activity Highlights

Diversity Dialogue Series ~

Another unnecessary tragedy struck America on May 25th when George Floyd was killed in police custody in Minneapolis, MN. This triggered national outrage and the Black Lives Matter movement that quickly swept the nation, including several days of protests right here in Columbia. In response, four students in our School of Medicine: Abdoulie Njai, Grant Geiger, Patricia De Castro and Ramya Ramadas, proposed and created the Diversity Dialogue series, a platform where SOM faculty and staff can come together to engage in difficult but necessary conversations surrounding racism and the continuing injustices and inequalities in our country. The sessions were held via Zoom with the first on June 9th and the second, "Confronting Racism," on July 16th. The students set Community Guidelines to ensure an atmosphere of respect and inclusivity. The next session in the series is set for October. Details on when and how to participate will be announced soon.

WIMMS~ The August 7th Empower Lunch was held in conjunction with Women of MU Health Care ERG. The topic was, [How to Turn Off Work Thoughts During Your Friday Time: by Guy Winch](#). We discussed how to stop worrying about tomorrow's tasks or stewing over office tensions with three simple techniques aimed at helping you truly relax and recharge after work. This was the largest turn out yet with 43 people in attendance. Empower Lunches are open to everyone, the format is a video, such as a Ted Talk, followed by discussion

WC4BL~ On June 4th, SOM physicians and students came together on campus for a moment of silence for eight minutes and forty-five seconds, the amount of time a police officer had his knee on George Floyd's neck, to show their support in a national White Coats for Black Lives demonstration. Dr. Venkata Gupta helped organize the event that showed our SOM's solidarity on the matter. If anyone is interested in creating a WC4BL chapter here in the SOM, [click here](#) for more information and contact [Kate Wessler](#).

(Spotlight continued from Page 1)

Inertia and a number of people feeling we were doing OK. I overcame it by using my leadership position to just initiate some of these things. I have promoted people who care about this issue to leadership positions and they have come along side me to work on this issue.

Did you get any resistance from staff or others with respect to the programs you implemented, and how did you address those concerns?

I have really worked on developing the overall culture of our department and MOI. I believe that recruitment and improving the workplace culture are my two greatest jobs as chair. I strongly believe in servant leadership and putting the team first. Our people have come to trust that and buy off on the concept and be open to the importance of initiatives like diversity. I think gaining their trust has been the key to not only gaining their acceptance of diversity initiatives, but also to active participation.

For more information about the newly created research fellowship position in the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, contact Dr. [James L. Cook](#).



Photo courtesy of Zephyrus Li

Give Me 5!



Debra Howenstine is an associate professor in Family and Community Medicine. To get to know Dr. Howenstine better, we asked her these 5 questions:

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

I am pretty content living in mid-Missouri. It feels like a place where one can make a difference. I look forward to someday rafting the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon, and working in Micronesia on the eradication of tuberculosis (planned trip to the island of Chuuk postponed because of COVID).

2. What is your favorite food or restaurant?

Pasta with clam sauce made by my husband, Bart. It was the first meal he made for me over 40 years ago and it always both pleases my stomach and warms my heart.

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

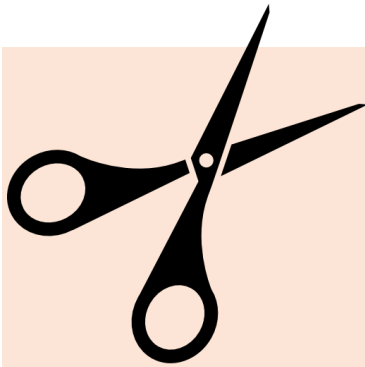
We have a family tradition of cleaning the chicken coop together twice a year. We are sometimes joined by friends. Once by my parents in their 80s. It is somewhat like a barn-raising, it takes all day and cultivates a sense of community.

4. FUN FACT!

I once won first place in a limbo contest.

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

Eliminate poverty (Read *The End of Poverty: How We Can Make It Happen In Our Lifetime*-inspiring), and protect our planet (Mother to all of us).

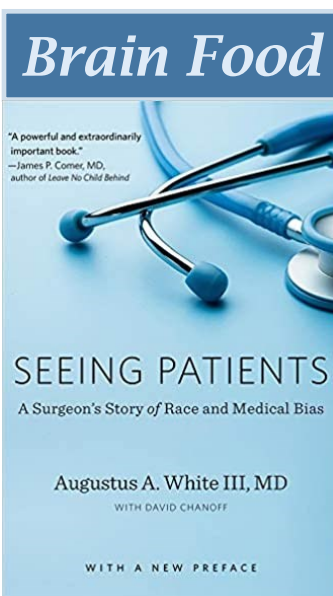


A Look Back...

In 1970, the university hospital medical director, Dr. Kenneth K. Keown, fired a male nursing technician because he had long hair – thus, setting off the great hair hassle of 1970. Soon after, two other hospital workers were terminated for the same reason and a fourth received a warning. In response to the firings, the second ranking administrator in the nursing service division resigned, stating that she did not agree with the firings. Newspapers in Columbia and across the state ran editorials debating the firings. Eventually, the issue was presented in court, where the hospital's medical director argued that the workers were fired because there was a "need for neatness among [hospital] employees," there were "several complaints from patients about the personal appearance of some of the hospital employees," and there was a concern related to sanitation.

While the judge did not ultimately grant the fired employees' request for an injunction and reinstatement of their employment, many in Columbia disapproved of the firings, including one hundred medical center employees who sent a letter to Dr. Keown requesting a "realistic approach to the question of how one wears one's hair." Additionally, twenty-five physicians signed a separate letter opposing the long hair policy.

Times have certainly changed, and now we enjoy the presence of both men and women hospital workers with long hair. However, challenges still lay ahead with eliminating hair discriminations for all people in our society as we've been fighting forms of hair discrimination for decades. In July 2019, a law passed in California called The CROWN Act (Create a Respectful and Open Workplace for Natural hair) that prohibits discrimination in the workplace and schools based on hair style and hair texture. Six other states (Colorado, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Virginia and Washington) have passed similar laws as our country works to move forward to end discrimination on all levels.



During M1 orientation week students had the opportunity to participate in a new activity, the Common Read. The book, *Seeing Patients: A Surgeon's Story of Race and Medical Bias*, by Augustus White III, MD, was chosen to encourage discussion about bias and the healthcare system. This was great timing for such dialogue as 128 new students embark on their medical career in the midst

of the current cultural climate and everchanging racial landscape of our nation. The book explores Dr. White's journey from a child growing up in Memphis, Tennessee to becoming an Orthopaedic surgeon during the height of racial segregation. As an African American physician, Dr. White reveals how he used his experiences and success to explore the vast and complex subjects of health care disparities and worked to show the importance of providing culturally competent care to patients. This book provides great context for the origins of inequities and bias in the healthcare system and explores tangible equalizing measures that can assist in moving the health system forward.

[Click here](#) for more information on the Common Read Program.

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, "How to speak up for yourself" by Adam Galinsky on **September 4th**, noon to 1pm via Zoom.

New to WIMMS? E-mail [Kate Wessler](mailto:kate.wessler@wimms.org) to RSVP.

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

*MU Office of Inclusion, Diversity and Equity's Learn, Engage, Apply, Promote (LEAP) series is back this fall offering NEW sessions via Zoom.

Join us on **September 2nd** from noon to 1pm for "What to do when someone comes out to you. Allyship Framing" and on **September 8th** from noon to 1:30pm for "The Anatomy of an Apology– When Good Intentions are not Enough."

There is one more LEAP session in the month of September and several more offered through December.

[Click here](#) to RSVP and to learn more about the 2020 Fall IDE LEAP Series sessions.

*The 24th annual Columbia Values Diversity celebration presented by the City of Columbia's Office of Cultural Affairs will be held on **January 14th, 2021** from 7 to 9am at the Holiday Inn Expo Center. Registration and sponsorship opportunities start in November, 2020.

[Click here](#) for more information about Columbia Values Diversity events.

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