

# Unique Perspectives

Celebrating Diversity, Inclusion and Equity in the University of Missouri's School of Medicine | Volume 2, 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: [folkerts@health.missouri.edu](mailto:folkerts@health.missouri.edu) and [wessler@missouri.edu](mailto:wessler@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: Derek Su, MD***



*Derek Su is a resident physician in the Department of Psychiatry.*

### ***What is your definition of diversity and how do you think diversity and inclusion relate to one another?***

To me, diversity means a wide variety of both things that people are born with, like race/ethnicity and economic status, and things that people develop over their lifetimes, like culture and work experience. I believe diversity and inclusion are both necessary for a positive and productive group environment, but achieving both together requires commitment, a willingness to learn, and a safe environment for everyone to make mistakes in the process of learning. As a result, D&I needs to be actively prioritized to ensure that an environment moves beyond being either detrimentally exclusive or homogenous.

### ***As a resident and fellow in the Department of Psychiatry, how do you try to promote a culture of inclusion among your colleagues?***

I believe the culture of any group is most strongly influenced by its leaders. As a current co-chief resident and incoming D&I fellow, I strive to get to know each of my trainee colleagues individually, openly share my own story and lead and actively

participate in the Psychiatry department's D&I efforts. I also try to reach out beyond my department to collaborate with other teams and combine our best ideas. Lastly, when interviewing residency applicants this year, I made sure to think about D&I to hopefully avoid unintentional exclusion.

### ***What ideas do you have coming into your position as the Diversity Fellow for the Department of Psychiatry?***

My primary goal right now is to increase our reach and avoid "preaching to the choir." I'm working with Family and Community Medicine to create a collaborative D&I website featuring our existing and upcoming efforts. This will increase awareness of these efforts and make them easily accessible to anyone in either department. Hopefully we can make this website public and make our resources accessible to MU's broader community or perhaps the general public.

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

This is arguably built into medicine, and psychiatry in particular. Each of our patients has a unique story and ensuring that we know their history is essential to the high-quality care that we strive to deliver. It is, of course, also true that stereotyping and minimizing individual differences have been an ugly part of every field of medicine in the past, and still can happen because we are imperfect. I think working on D&I is the best way to address this. I also think that our focus on our patients' uniqueness carries over to our non-clinician time as well, so we are already starting at an advanced position. To encourage my trainee colleagues to learn about their peers' unique stories, I've tried to promote group events outside of work. That has been challenging with COVID—but I'm optimistic that the next academic year will have many more opportunities to resume group events.

## Activity Highlights

**Anti-Asian Dialogue**~ On March 24, the School of Medicine and MU Health Care attendees gathered for a dialogue concerning the recent surge of anti-Asian violence in the United States.

Although this type of targeted violence against the Asian community is not new, during the past year of the COVID-19 pandemic there has been an increase in targeted and violent behavior. Dr. Derek Su, a resident in the Department of Psychiatry, started the dialogue with an enlightening presentation on his Chinese/Taiwanese heritage and insight on the current anti-Asian violence. Faculty, staff and students shared their comments, stories and questions during the dialogue. Bystander Intervention Training opportunities were introduced as well as resources for support. To view the discussion, click [here](#).



**Thoughtful Thursdays**~ For Women's History Month in March, the Women of MU Health Care Employee Resource Group (ERG) presented, *Championing Gender Equality in the Workplace*, via Zoom on March 18 as part of the *Thoughtful Thursdays* series. The panel included six women from MU Health Care who discussed ways we can all contribute to an environment where women have equal opportunities and representation in the workplace. Everyone agreed that allyship is at the top of the list for having successful dialogue and forums that teach us to be accountable and supportive of one another. March also included Equal Pay Day on March 24, which brings awareness to equal pay for women and represents how far into the year women must work to equal what men made in the previous year. You can view the discussion [here](#).

**Hate, Fear and Violence**~ The University of Missouri's Michael A. Middleton Center for Race, Citizenship and Justice presented *Hate, Fear and Violence: The Targeting of the Asian Community* via Zoom on Wednesday, March 24. Dr. Michael Hosokawa, senior associate dean of Education and Faculty Development in the School of Medicine, and Dr. Lynn Itagaki, associate professor in the College of Arts and Science, were guest speakers for the event. Dr. Hosokawa discussed the detention camps that were established across the US during World War II as a result of the attack on Pearl Harbor, relocating almost 120,000 Japanese Americans to 10 facilities across the US, including one in Wyoming where he was born. He explained how the US has an unfortunate and ongoing pattern of bringing migrant workers here for cheap labor, only to expect them to return to their countries once the work is complete. This powerful and important panel discussion can be viewed [here](#).

**Film: Picture A Scientist**~ On March 20-22, the Women in Medicine and Medical Sciences (WIMMS) and the School of Medicine Office of Diversity and Inclusion hosted an online viewing of the documentary, *Picture a Scientist*, for Mizzou faculty, staff and students followed by a Q&A session led by Mizzou professors Katherine Osei-Boadi Anguah, Maike Krenz and Xiaoqin Zou. The film explores the challenges faced by women in science through the personal stories of three successful scientists. Nancy Hopkins showed that women scientists at MIT had received fewer resources for conducting research, which led to major institutional reforms. Raychelle Burks, a chemist, shared the extra burden that is faced by women of color seeking to be their authentic selves while also being professionally respected. Jane Willenbring courageously reported the harassment she faced from her mentor while doing Antarctic field research. The film debuted on PBS Nova on April 14, 2021 and can be viewed [here](#).

**Confronting Racism Series**~ The fourth Confronting Racism Dialogue took place on April 8 via Zoom. The series was created to encourage the challenging conversations needed to help move us forward as an inclusive community. The dialogue featured Dr. Melissa Lewis (SOM-Family Medicine), Dr. Debra Howenstine (SOM-Family Medicine) and Dr. Michael Williams (College of Education) who touched on the origins and definitions of race, social implications and the impact these have on health in minority and marginalized communities. The presentations were followed by small group discussions for deeper conversation about the content and to share thoughts, feelings and personal experiences. To view the dialogue click [here](#).



Weiwan "Wendy" Wang is a Manager II Business Admin. in the Dept. of Surgery. To get to know Wendy better, we asked her these 5 questions:

## Give Me 5!

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

I would like to live in my hometown in China to spend more time with my parents and friends there.

### 2. What is your favorite food or restaurant?

My favorite restaurant in Columbia is Barred Owl Butcher & Table. Their menu always has seasonal items and is very creative.

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

Chinese New Year is the biggest cultural event that I and my family celebrate every year. We make dumplings, hang up lanterns and do a lot of other fun things together.

### 4. FUN FACT!

Volleyball brought me to Columbia and Mizzou. I was recruited to play volleyball here and played for four years. It was a great experience with great memories.

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

I would like an easy way to fix nearsightedness (myopia). It affects over 2 billion people worldwide.

## A Look Back...



In honor of Women's History Month (March) we want to recognize a pioneer in medicine and science, Dr. Caroline McGill. Dr. McGill is a University of Missouri alumnus earning her doctorate in Anatomy and Physiology in 1908. It is thought her doctoral degree was the first awarded to a woman from the University (<https://buttearchives.org/dr-caroline-mcgill/>). After earning her doctorate, she accepted a position at the Murray Hospital in Butte, Montana becoming the first pathologist in the state. Dr. McGill soon left Montana to further pursue her education earning her medical degree from Johns Hopkins in 1912. She returned to Montana to work at the Murray Hospital and in 1919 bought the building across the street opening her own clinic and women's boarding house. Dr. McGill was known for her generosity, helping patients from all walks of life. Her kindness was also extended to other ambitious women of her time often providing financial support for their career pursuits.

During Dr. McGill's time as a practitioner many of her impoverished patients bartered for her services. She began collecting porcelain artifacts acquired from her patients. She then began asking friends for Montana antiques and artifacts to start a collection. She diligently worked on this collection but it wasn't until after her death in 1959 that an exhibit in the Museum of the Rockies in Bozeman, Montana was created in her honor.

ated in her honor.

Her name may sound familiar to many, as our very own Women in Medicine and Medical Sciences (WIMMS) has a society named in her honor. The Caroline McGill Society meets quarterly to discuss films, articles and books to promote fellowship, mentorship and support among the women faculty in the School of Medicine.

## Brain Food



May is Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage month. A five-part series that debuted on PBS in 2020 simply titled, *Asian Americans*, highlights the many stories of struggle and success these individuals have faced in our country. In 1862, the Pacific Railroad Act was signed by President Lincoln and would propose to expand an already thriving railroad system on the east coast all the way to the west coast.

With the abolishment of slavery near, America became desperate for cheap labor. Thousands of Chinese immigrants had settled in the west and were still arriving. Many were recruited to help complete the historic project. Thousands died in the dangerous working conditions only to have their efforts forgotten before the two tracks met in Promontory, Utah in 1869. In 2020, the National Museum of American History in Washington D.C. debuted an exhibit honoring the contribution of Chinese workers. Another story is that of Patsy Mink, a Japanese American from Hawaii who amongst many firsts, became the first Asian American woman to be elected to the US Congress in 1964. Always working against the odds and challenging every small mind in her path, Patsy's tenacious spirit would lead her for decades to fight for children, education, minorities, the environment and gender equality. The PBS docuseries, *Asian Americans*, can be viewed online through [June here](#).

## Calendar of Events~



### Upcoming events on campus and in the Columbia community

\*WIMMS next First Friday Empower Lunch is, *Choice, happiness and spaghetti sauce*, by Malcolm Gladwell on **May 7**, 12-1pm. The Zoom link to attend is [here](#). To view the 16-minute video, click [here](#).

\*The next Thoughtful Thursday will be held on **May 20**, 12-1pm. The session will be titled, *A Latino's Journey to the American Dream*, and is sponsored by the Bienvenidos Employee Resource Group (ERG). To join the Zoom discussion, click [here](#). This is a joint effort between MU Health Care and the School of Medicine. Join us every third Thursday of each month for a respectful conversation on difficult topics surrounding race and inequities that face our society and healthcare system.

\*Dr. Melissa Lewis, assistant professor in the Department of Family & Community Medicine, is partnering with the American Humanist Association's Center for Education and presenting, *Addressing Indigenous Health Disparities* on **May 20**, 6-7:30pm. The Zoom link to attend is [here](#).

\*WIMMS and the SOM Office of Diversity and Inclusion will be hosting a Caroline McGill Society event discussing the book, *White Fragility*, by Robin DiAngelo on **June 15** at 7pm. Books are available at the Health Sciences Library and the Daniel Boone Regional Library. Register [here](#) to join the discussion.

\*The Mid-Missouri PrideFest returns to Columbia for 2021, **August 28-29**, and will be held at Rose Music Hall. This event is free and open to the public. PrideFest has been a part of Columbia's LGBTQIA+ community for over 16 years and is organized by the Center Project. To volunteer or for more information, click [here](#).

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