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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.

SOM Staff D&I Committee is accepting new members! E-mail Ami Patel if interested.

To nominate someone for the Spotlight or Give Me 5, or to submit D&I news and events, please e-mail Amy Folkerts and Kelly Reeves.

To learn more about the University of Missouri School of Medicine’s diversity and inclusion efforts, click here.

In the Spotlight: Camila Manrique, MD

Camila Manrique, MD is a faculty member in the Department of Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolism.

What is your definition of diversity?
I understand diversity as the practice of including in the conversations people from different social, religious or ethnic backgrounds, and/or different genders and sexual orientations.

From your perspective, how do diversity and inclusion relate to one another?
They are closely related. I think that the ultimate goal of bringing to the table people of diverse backgrounds is to provide them with genuine opportunities of advancing their careers and becoming valued members of the organization.

How do you foster an environment that is inclusive and honors the uniqueness of each individual in your department and the School of Medicine?
On a daily basis, I strive to treat all individuals in a respectful and fair manner. In addition, I also try my best and within my means, to present opportunities for career and personal development to the members of our teams.

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the University of Missouri’s School of Medicine. Read on to learn about some historical moments in SOM history, then click the “history” link below to discover more.

*1900: Anna B. Searcy became the first woman to graduate from the University of Missouri with a degree in Medicine.

*1906: Caroline McGill, a 1905 medical school graduate, becomes the first woman to join the School of Medicine’s faculty. She was an instructor of anatomy.

*1953: Robert J. Smith became the first Black person to graduate from the SOM.

A history of the MU School of Medicine
Activity Highlights

Addressing Cultural Bias~ The School of Medicine sponsored a new course for faculty: “Addressing and Reducing Cultural Bias in Medicine.” Over six sessions, the course addressed topics including medical racism, cultural self-awareness, intersectionality, privilege, implicit bias, and microaggressions. Pre-lecture readings educated participants on important diversity, equity and inclusion concepts and the role bias plays in our healthcare system. For example, in a sociological study, Black women accessing services for Assisted Reproductive Technologies were found to experience dismissive and disrespectful comments from providers and manage an additional burden of seeking out culturally respectful care. The class provided specific strategies like XYZ: “I feel X when you say Y because Z” by which observers and recipients can productively respond to microaggressions. This valuable course will be offered again in the spring for those who were unable to attend the fall sessions.

Mid-Missouri PrideFest~ MU Health and SOM had a presence again this year at the MidMO PrideFest. The parade went from the North Arts district down Broadway and through campus. There were some impressive rainbow balloon creations and a lot of Mid-Missourians showing their CoMo Pride for themselves, family and friends.

Give Me 5!

Will Udo is a graduate student in the Department of Health Management and Informatics, and also a School of Medicine student diversity ambassador. To get to know Will better, we asked him these 5 questions:

1. If you could live anywhere or do anything, where or what would that be?
   If I could live anywhere, I would choose Switzerland. The landscape is breathtaking, and I feel the culture is highly unique. It’s no surprise that they are consistently reported as one of the happiest countries in the world. If I had the power to do anything, I would ensure that every human has access to nutritionally dense food, clean water, and secure housing. I wholeheartedly believe that if people have their basic needs met, it puts them in a better position to achieve their interpersonal goals.

2. What is your favorite food or restaurant?
   Grilled salmon, served with veggies and sweet potatoes. Sometimes I put honey on my salmon to add a little sweetness to the overall flavor.

3. What is your favorite cultural/family tradition you celebrate every year?
   Growing up, my favorite family tradition was gardening. The sense of reward that I got from watching a tiny seed transform and bloom into a plant was both fulfilling and instilled in me, the mantra, “you reap what you sow.”

4. Tell us an interesting or fun fact about yourself.
   I love to play the piano and find new music to listen to. It’s fascinating that we humans have been able to create meaning out of sound and share it with one another. One of my favorite artists is Anderson .Paak.

5. If you could make one change in the world what would it be?
   I would make it mandatory for every country to provide residents with free access to all of the land. I also firmly believe that assuring everyone has access to healthcare, regardless of socioeconomic status, would alleviate many health injustices. Additionally, it could encourage and promote more preventive health practices across the globe.

Thoughtful Thursdays~ The MU Health Care Pride Employee Resource Group (ERG) presented, “Let’s Flip the Script” via Zoom on October 27. The session began with a video by Janet Mock, Emmy-nominated author, director and transgender rights activist. Janet “flips the script” on a journalist with some intrusive questions that inspired a panel discussion on how one can be more respectful and supportive of the transgender community, specifically, in our interactions. Oftentimes, transgender individuals are asked questions that seem to dehumanize their experiences and feelings, making them feel like a “token” for one’s personal gain or understanding. While it is OK to be curious (reminder: Google is free!) we must stop and ask ourselves, “Would I want to be asked such a personal question?” The assumption of privilege or entitlement is never a reason to belittle or shame someone for simply being their authentic self. The panel also discussed the importance of supporting trans youth early on so they can grow to be confident adults with more positive health outcomes.
Brain Food

In October, we recognize both LGBTQ+ History Month and AIDS Awareness Month. In 1987, award-winning author and investigative reporter, Randy Shilts, released his second book, “And the Band Played On: Politics, People and the AIDS Epidemic.” Shilts was the first openly gay journalist for The San Francisco Chronicle. His book recounts the traumatic evolution of the 1980s AIDS epidemic in the United States. Shilts himself tested positive for HIV while writing the book and sadly lost his life due to AIDS complications in 1994 at the age of 42. Several heartbreaking stories are uncovered throughout the book from the perspectives of the individuals and communities affected by the virus and the response to it, to the politicians and medical communities competing for treatments, recognition and understanding of the mysterious new virus. The book has been hailed as “one of the most essential reads of our time” and the film by the same name released in 1993, “a public health must-see.” Around 35 million people have died worldwide from AIDS complications and close to that number still live with the virus today. Thankfully, we now have several treatment options and more in development that allow people with HIV to manage the virus and live more productive and healthy lives. However, there is still no cure. The book can be found at the Columbia Public Library and the film streamed on HBO Max.

Calendar of Events

Upcoming events on campus and in the Columbia community

*For Native American Heritage Month in November, the MU Student Center presents Indigenous Mural: Representing Native Lands in Missouri with artist Yatika Starr Fields November 8, 5-6:30pm. Click here for more details and to learn about additional NAHM events on campus.

*The MIZ-OUT Faculty and Staff Organization will have their monthly social November 18, 4:30-5:30pm at Top Ten Wines in downtown CoMo.

*The Food Bank for Central and Northeast Missouri is seeking volunteers for their annual Partnership Against Hunger Food and Fund Drive Tuesday, November 22 at select grocery stores in the area. Click here for more info and to register.

Stay tuned for more details on the following events:

*The Minority Women in Medicine will hold their monthly meeting November 8 from 6-7pm.

*Thoughtful Thursdays presented by the Employee Resource Groups (ERG) of MU Health Care are held via Zoom from 12-1pm on the fourth Thursday of each month (with the exception of Thanksgiving). Details to come in MU Health Today.

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 Nov. 11. Winner will be contacted the week of Nov. 14. Good luck!