



American Association  
for Dental Research

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Re: Request for Information (RFI): Institutional Accountability to Promote Inclusive Excellence (NOT-RM-19-001)

via: [InclusiveExcellenceRFI@nih.gov](mailto:InclusiveExcellenceRFI@nih.gov)

Dear Drs. Labosky and Le Fauve:

On behalf of the 3,350 individual and 107 institutional members of the American Association for Dental Research (AADR), thank you for the opportunity to submit comments in response to the request for information, Institutional Accountability to Promote Inclusive Excellence (NOT-RM-19-001). AADR has made substantial efforts to increase the representation and inclusion of women and underrepresented racial/ethnic groups within the Association and in the broader dental, oral and craniofacial research community. Many of these activities are mediated through the Women in Science Network (WISN), which is a function of AADR's parent organization, International Association for Dental Research (IADR), and the AADR Committee on Diversity and Inclusion (CDI). WISN promotes the interests of women, communication, research collaboration and career mentoring among female members. WISN examines and highlights issues related to women professionals such as evidence on policies and benefits such as childcare, tenure clock with child birth/adoption, recruitment, salary etc. and leadership skill building for women. The CDI evolved from an earlier task force and is charged with developing programs for promoting diversity and inclusion within AADR and the dental, oral and craniofacial workforce. The responses to the requested information describe activities by these two groups as well as AADR volunteer leadership and staff to illustrate the role professional societies play in promoting inclusive excellence.

**Institutional programs and approaches that have been successful in reducing isolation, increasing community building, and fostering career advancement for early-career faculty, including those from diverse backgrounds, such as groups underrepresented in biomedical research.**

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Recent and upcoming WISN activities address sexual harassment in science. At the 2019 AADR annual meeting, WISN will host a symposium entitled, “Harassment in Science: Steps to No-Tolerance,” wherein speakers will systematically examine the prevalence of sexual harassment in higher education as well as practices and policies related to harassment in oral health and craniofacial institutions. The goal of the symposium is to prevent harassment and create a culture shift towards no tolerance. In addition to creating work environments conducive to research success for all scientists, the WISN has also spearheaded a special issue of *Advances in Dental Research* that highlights the contributions of women dental, oral and craniofacial researchers; the increasing diversity of the research workforce; and challenges and opportunities ahead to increase visibility of women.

AAADR has also been proactive about confronting the issue of sexual harassment in science among its membership. AADR invited Dr. Sherry Marts, a workplace consultant, to educate its staff about sexual harassment, how to identify it and how to intervene. Then in 2018, AADR instituted a professional conduct at meetings policy (<http://www.iadr.org/AAADR/About-Us/Policy-Statements/Meeting-Professional-Conduct-Policy>) in order to make its meetings “inclusive to the largest number of contributors, with the most varied and diverse backgrounds possible” and “to provide a friendly, safe and welcoming environment for all, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, ability, ethnicity, socioeconomic status or religion”. Finally, AADR conducted its own survey on the experience of members with harassment to identify the magnitude of the problem within the association and devise solutions where needed. The results will be presented in an abstract at the upcoming IADR/AAADR meeting with plans for publication of a paper.

In February 2019, AADR became a founding member of the Societies Consortium on Sexual Harassment in STEM along with 52 other organizations. The consortium will be a good resource for AADR and other professional societies going forward, as the scientific community continues to develop policies and procedures to both prevent and end sexual harassment in science.

The CDI has also cosponsored workshops with the WISN and the National Student Research Group, an organization run by AADR student members, on diversity and inclusion. The first was entitled, “Overcoming Implicit Bias in the Dental Research Workforce,” which featured Dr. Janetta Lun, Senior Behavioral Scientist in the Office of Scientific Workforce Diversity at the National Institutes of Health. Dr. Lun taught strategies on recognizing and overcoming implicit bias. The second CDI workshop that will be offered at the upcoming meeting is entitled, “Taking the Temperature: Climate Studies for Diversity and Inclusion,” wherein attendees will learn different strategies for conducting a climate study and how to use the results of the study to promote diversity and inclusion.

In 2019, AADR launched a diversity and inclusion website (<http://www.iadr.org/AAADR/About-Us/AAADR-Diversity-and-Inclusion>) to provide members with research, resources, grant opportunities, effective methods for increasing diversity in research, etc. The website includes a project called “Faces of Dental Research.” These interviews highlight the scientific contributions of and bring visibility to AADR members from historically underrepresented racial/ethnic groups.

**Institutional mentoring programs that support faculty development, retention, and career success**

AADR hosts a faculty development workshop in conjunction with its annual meetings as a tool for academic retention and advancement. In 2018, the workshop's theme was "Mentoring Mentors and Mentees" and included sessions on work/life balance and strategies to increase diversity in academia.

AADR also hosts a Mentoring and Networking Lunch at the annual meeting during which predoctoral and postdoctoral students interact with dental, oral and craniofacial researchers as well as leadership from the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research. The goal of this lunch is for students to obtain guidance on their research program and research career trajectory, and to expand their network of mentors and peers to support and facilitate their research career success.

### **Capacity for institutional support of early-career scientists, including start-up packages, research, lab space/equipment, and salary**

AADR members are eligible for a number of awards from IADR or AADR to support early career scientists. AADR offers the Anne D. Haffajee Fellowship (<http://www.iadr.org/AADR/Awards/Fellowships/Haffajee>) to increase the representation of women at the higher ranks in science and academia in the field of oral biology.

Both IADR and AADR offer several travel awards to assist students, trainees and early career scientists to offset the cost of attending IADR and AADR meetings, which are important for sharing data, networking, and collaboration. These awards are made possible through public and private partnerships.

### **Data-driven strategies to assess and manage institutional equity and diversity**

One of the charges of the task force that preceded the CDI was to conduct an audit of the demographics of the AADR membership regarding gender, race/ethnicity and disability status in order to assist leadership and staff with identifying areas to focus diversity and inclusion efforts. By monitoring the demographics of the association, AADR can work to increase diversity in a data-driven way.

### **Role of partnerships between institutions toward reducing isolation, increasing community building, and fostering career advancement for early faculty**

Finally, AADR has engaged various partners in its diversity and inclusion efforts. Through a partnership with Procter & Gamble, AADR is able to offer the AADR / Procter & Gamble Underrepresented Faculty Research Fellowship (<https://www.iadr.org/AADR/Awards/Fellowships/ProcterAndGambleUnderrepresentedFacultyResearchFellowship>) . The goal of this \$10,000 fellowship is to support researchers from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups at the early stages of their scientific careers and to increase representation of these underrepresented groups at the faculty level in science and academia. The first fellow will be awarded in June 2019.

To reach out to underrepresented groups about research opportunities, AADR has formed close relationships with minority-serving associations such as the Hispanic Dental Association and the National Dental Association, which represent Hispanic and African-American dentists, respectively. For the past several years, AADR staff members have attended and exhibited at their meetings to raise awareness of and connect members of these associations to opportunities in dental, oral and craniofacial research. AADR also engages in both formal and informal meetings with association volunteer leadership and staff to continue to find ways of working together to increase diversity in dental, oral and craniofacial research.

AADR also works closely with the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR) to share information and opportunities for increasing diversity within the dental, oral and craniofacial research community. These have included NIDCR staff attending CDI conference calls; providing input on NIDCR diversity and inclusion initiatives; and informing AADR members about NIDCR research opportunities aimed at increasing diversity and inclusion, such as the NIDCR Director's Postdoctoral Fellowship to Enhance Diversity in Dental, Oral, & Craniofacial Research.

Finally, AADR is aware that one of its Institutional Section members – University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston School of Dentistry (UTSD) – has made significant strides to promote inclusive excellence among its students, faculty and staff. AADR has encouraged UTSD to submit a response to the request.

Once again, AADR is grateful for the opportunity to provide comments on this important NIH initiative to increase excellence through diversity and inclusion. AADR stands ready to assist NIH as this initiative moves from the planning to the programmatic stage. Please do not hesitate to reach out to Dr. Seun Ajiboye, Director of Science Policy and Government Affairs, at [sajiboye@iadr.org](mailto:sajiboye@iadr.org) if you need any additional information.

Sincerely,



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