Hub: Columbia University Health Services
Grant: KL2
Category: Other – Diversity & Inclusion
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KL2 Diversity & Inclusion

Recent and Upcoming Initiatives were planned in the Columbia KL2 program to increase diversity among our scholars and to improve long-term retention in research among our URP faculty. These include:

- A workshop on best KL2 application practices for all URP candidates
- One-on-one consultations with KL2 directors to review application proposals before submission for those URP candidates who were selected for Phase 2 review
- Partnership with our Office of Faculty Professional Development, Diversity and Inclusion to create a more well-rounded KL2 program that encourages scholars to attend workshops and lectures for diverse faculty, to participate in the Mentoring for Diverse Faculty training, and to participate in other career development programs for women and URP faculty.
- Expand peer mentoring program (which is now for women scholars) to have a group for URP scholars
- Update application review criteria with instructions to reviewers to consider if the research was either conducted by a URP PI and/or if the research focuses on health disparities or health of URP populations

While evaluating Common Metrics data in fall 2020, our training and education core, TRANSFORM, noted that we were performing well concerning women in our programs but our numbers of underrepresented persons (URP) were leveling off and would be decreasing over the next few years since we were not admitting new URP candidates. With this already in mind, 2020 brought renewed focus to diversity within our Institute, throughout Columbia, and the nation.

This year has been one of transition for the Irving Institute as we ended a five-year grant cycle and moved into a new one. As part of this process, we had the opportunity to identify new goals and begin working toward them as we wrote our renewal. As diversity and inclusion were obvious areas of potential growth for TRANSFORM, once it was identified as a priority area for the Irving Institute, we began working on ways to improve in this area. While these efforts will not be measurable in Common Metrics results immediately, we hope to see tangible long-term results.

To help improve the diversity of our training programs, we have implemented several strategies this year. The KL2 program began offering a workshop on application best practices to all URP candidates. Additionally, one-on-one time with program directors was offered to review application proposals and provide advice on how to strengthen final submissions to those who qualified for the stage two application. The review criteria for the KL2 was also adjusted this year with instructions to reviewers to
consider if the research was either conducted by a URP PI and/or if the research focuses on health disparities or health of URP populations as we want to prioritize this work.

To improve retention in research, TRANSFORM has also partnered with the Office of Faculty Professional Development, Diversity and Inclusion to create space in their KL2 training for scholars to attend workshops and lectures for diverse faculty, to participate in the Mentoring for Diverse Faculty training, and to participate in other career development programs for women and URP faculty.

Lastly, we will expand our peer mentoring program which is now open to women to include a peer mentoring group for our URP trainees to strengthen their career development and support network.

The success of these initiatives will be measured in future years by tracking change in the number of URP applicants received across our programs, the number of those who are accepted into the programs, those who go on to receive subsequent grant funding, and those who remain engaged in research.