

Abstract: 2020 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Showcase

Increasing Diversity One Department at a Time

Speaker: Debra Murray

Diversity and inclusion efforts have significantly expanded within the Department of Molecular and Human Genetics (MHG) with multiple approaches. In 2019 the MHG, Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Equity, and the Department of Medicine hosted Dr. Hannah Valantine, NIH's first permanent Chief Officer for Scientific Workforce Diversity, to speak at the 2nd annual Women in Excellence Awards at BCM. To address the need to increase underrepresented minority trainees in medical genetics, the Medical Genetics Diversity Visiting Students Program was established and hopes to resume in 2021. A scientific session entitled "Can Genetic Variation improve human conditions/ diseases?" was moderated by Dr. Debra Murray with two panelists, including Dr. Neil Hanchard, assistant professor of MHG, at the 2019 Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students in Anaheim, California. The 2nd annual Lunch and Learn Summer Series for underrepresented high school and undergraduate students at BCM was converted to a successful webinar series, "Careers in Genetics and Genomics". Three webinars featured a medical geneticist, laboratory scientist, trainee, and genetic counselor describing their career path. After the death of George Floyd, Dr. Debra Murray immediately envisioned a series "Let's Learn about the African American Experience" for each level of faculty, trainees, and staff. The 6 seminars featured statistics, animated videos, and most powerfully, video or audiotapes from current/ former trainees and faculty about experiences with racism they have experienced. Subsequently, faculty have stepped forward to participate in efforts to increase diversity and inclusion.