

Inclusion Initiatives

Inclusion without Borders

By Laneika K. Musalini

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, “An individual has not started living until he (she) can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity” (Ni, 2014). Research allows for researchers, scientists and faculty members to be concerned with something that is much greater than self. From artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, ecology, hematology and oncology to literacy, teaching and learning, research opens the door to unlimited possibilities leading to broad impact for the greater good of society.

The National Science Foundation (NSF) and National Institutes of Health (NIH) support fundamental research in the sciences, medicine and engineering. These organizations are two of the largest research sponsors in America. NSF’s mission calls for the broadening of opportunities and expanding participation of groups, organizations, and geographic regions that are under-represented in STEM disciplines, which is essential to the health and vitality of science and engineering (Proposal and Award Policies, 2017). NIH’s specific aims for expanding diversity include fostering scientific innovation and discovery, improving the quality of the research, increasing the likelihood that research outcomes will benefit individuals from underserved or health disparity populations, increasing participation of underserved or health disparity populations in clinical studies, and expanding public trust (NIH-Wide Strategic Plan, n.d.). Further, the NIH Policy and Guidelines on the Inclusion of Women and Minorities as Subjects in Clinical Research states, “It is the policy of NIH that women and

members of minority groups and their sub-populations must be included in all NIH-funded clinical research...” (NIH Policy, 2001).

It matters naught the funding source. What matters is the inclusion utilized in research to influence the most robust outcomes and innovations for the advancement of science. Researchers should think globally when developing hypotheses and methodology, especially when human subjects are involved. Consider the following. Dr. Freeman Hrabowski (2019), AM61 keynote speaker, President of University of Maryland - Baltimore County, posed the question, “What can we do to build diversity in research?” during his speech. As leaders and difference-makers in your institution, you can start by diversifying the demographics of research administrators.

The poster session entitled, *Diversity and Inclusion: Beyond Perception*, was presented at AM61 in August by the Presidential Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion. The content of *Diversity and Inclusion: Beyond Perception* (Musalini et al., 2019) describes the demographics of the NCURA membership, as referenced in Figure 1, as well as describes the activities in which NCURA is implementing in an attempt to make the organization more diverse and inclusive. In reference to the demographic makeup, females outnumber males 3.5 to 1. For every three white members, there is one minority member. The generational divide is decreasing though gaps persist as millennials account for 27% of the membership. In addition, 84% of the membership have a bachelor’s degree or higher. Hence, there is a pressing need to continue scrutinizing the extent to which the rhetoric for diversity and inclusion meets reality and to identify

FIGURE 1: Diversity & Inclusion: Beyond Perception



Diversity & Inclusion Presidential Task Force: Laneika K. Musalini, chair; Tolise Dailey; Rashonda Harris; Derick Jones; Mario Medina, PhD.; Denise Moody; Jaime Petrask; Deborah Price; Ben Prince; Samantha Westcott; Natasha Williams; and Alexandra Zingg, PhD.

NCURA's Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

The National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA) recognizes, values, and celebrates diversity of persons, skills, and experiences in its mission to advance the profession of research administration. Thus, NCURA is committed to building and maintaining a diverse membership and a culture of inclusion.

Every member of NCURA has a right, without regard to gender, race, ethnicity, age, religion, social class, sexual orientation, ability, personality, functional experience, or background, to fair and respectful treatment, equal access to resources to support professional growth, and equitable opportunities to contribute to NCURA's success.

Background

NCURA's Diversity and Inclusion Task Force was established in 2017 to evaluate NCURA's ability to promote and adopt diversity and inclusion strategies at both the national and regional levels of NCURA. In 2018, the Task Force was charged with developing an implementation plan that included recommended guidelines for national and regional adoption in all aspects of NCURA. In 2019, the Task Force is charged with implementing this plan.

2017	2018	2019	2020 FORWARD
Diversity & Inclusion Task Force Realized	Diversity & Inclusion Statement Approved	NCURA Volunteer Matrix, Profile Data, Regional Adoption of Statement	Diversity & Inclusion Training

Objectives

NCURA desires to know and understand who the organization is serving so that NCURA is better equipped to respond to the needs of its members. Data is collected on a continuous basis to meet the following objectives.

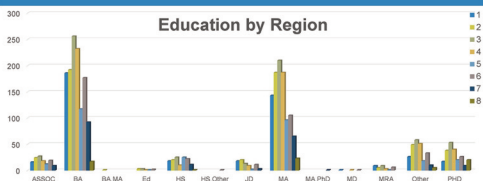
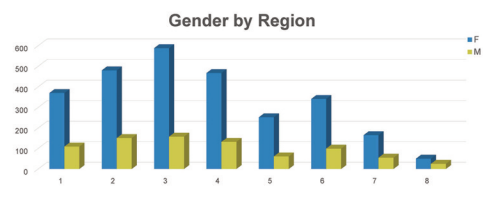
- NCURA will collect data to inform who the organization's target population is.
- From this data, NCURA will recognize who the organization is training.
- From this data, NCURA will identify the best training methods for the organization's target population.
- From this data, NCURA will be able to create messaging to promote and increase diversity at all levels of the organization.
- NCURA will provide an inclusive environment throughout the organization.

Methods

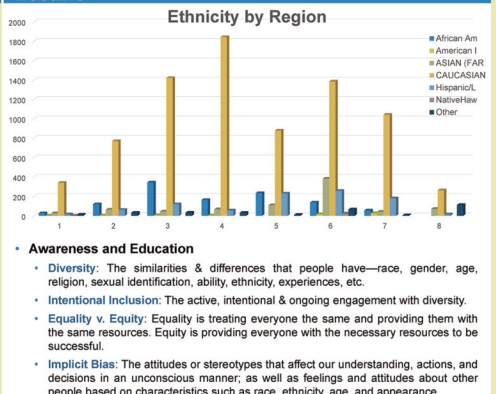
- Quantitative data collection was the method used to capture baseline data

Results

- Female members outnumber male members 3.5 : 1
- The generational divide is growing. Twenty-seven percent of members are considered Millennials (27%).
- Eighty-four percent of members have a bachelor's degree or higher (84%).
- For every 3 White members, there is 1 minority member



Results



Benefits of Diversity & Inclusion

- Provides a more transformative experience
- Allows for more impactful and significant research
- Enhances global competitiveness
- Fosters a more creative and innovative workforce
- Recruits the best talent pool that reflects all segments of society
- Increases service delivery and level of cultural competence
- Encourages diverse education, experiences and cultural competency
- Inclusive work environments make everyone feel welcomed

mechanisms that facilitate the expression of voice for silenced minorities in today's increasingly diverse organizations (Theodorakopoulos & Budwar, 2015).

NCURA has made efforts towards being a more inclusive organization. However, much work remains. For NCURA to be an organization known for inclusion, leadership must press beyond traditional boundaries. Inclusion without borders broadens opportunities for everyone. Efforts include encouraging a more diverse leadership and volunteer pool allowing members access to diversify their NCURA experience at varying levels, offering more robust training programs that account for different learning styles, thinking with a diversity lens during peer reviews, incorporating more diversity and inclusion themes throughout the regions, and facilitating healthy dialogue regarding contentious global issues.

As suggested by Dr. Hrabowski, people may be your biggest challenge. Take the limits off of people who are different from you. Expand your boundaries by eliminating bias and stereotypes. Diverse perspectives is a driver for innovation. You have the power to encourage researchers at your institution to expand their thinking. Having a diverse array of research administrators in your office can make a difference in the extended success of your faculty's research. You have the power to influence how human subjects are recruited. You have the power to influence how to more effectively manage data. You have the power to make the proposal development, budget development or proposal submission process more desirable for faculty. In the words of Dr. Hrabowski, "What you do matters! You matter!"

Regional Efforts

Diversity and inclusion play a major role in research and research administration. NCURA is dedicated to the charge of being a diverse and inclusive professional organization. NCURA has been working to create and promote diversity initiatives at every level of the organization. NCURA has eight regions, making the organization globally diverse. However, each region has a responsibility to its regional membership to practice diversity, equity and inclusion.

REGIONAL DIVERSITY & INCLUSION FEATURES

Region I (by Donna Smith, Region I chair)

Region I started 2019 with a call to the community for interest in participating on a committee. This allowed new representatives to join the reigns via leadership roles on Region I's ad hoc committees. As the annual regional meeting approached, leadership worked to get a special talent database into the eyes of the community and gain additional applications of interest in helping in any capacity in the region concentrating on self-disclosed ideas of what could be considered a special talent that someone has or likes to do in which the region can call on in the future. Region I is continuing to build the database and they are already using it for regional needs. Leadership continues to push the database each week

through e-blasts in hopes of recruiting additional members for positions.

Region I also held its Innovation Suite for the second year, which allowed for new presentations, posters and creative displays alike to be immersed into the region. This initiative has brought many new presenters in that region. In fact, a few presenters from last year were able to present in a larger format this year. The region continues to hold networking dinners and workshops at annual meetings for new professionals and emerging leaders. A reception was added to engage volunteers and encourage expansion of responsibilities within the region.

Further, Region I added a volunteer spotlight to the weekly e-blast that highlights a volunteer each month. The idea is to ensure visibility of the many ways members can volunteer on the regional and national levels of NCURA. Region I's mentor program is ongoing as well as the executive shadow program. The program allows two to three regional volunteers



Diversity and Inclusion Task Force with Dr. Hrabowski

to shadow the advisory board and be mentored by members of the committee throughout the year. This allows volunteers to learn more about the functions of the executive committee and see how meetings are conducted. The hope is to gain additional interest and prepare interested members for roles in the future on the board.

Region III (by Emily Devereaux, Region III chair)

Region III leadership has implemented an official ad hoc Diversity and Inclusion Committee as part of the Chair's initiative, appointing Laneika Musalini as committee coordinator, to advise the region on diversity and inclusion opportunities and best practices. The committee membership is representative of gender, race, nationality, abilities, and institutional type in order to be inclusive of our 13-state regional membership. This new committee will also serve to advise in diversity and inclusion matters for the joint Region III and Region IV 2020 spring meeting that will be held at Tradewinds Resort, St. Pete Beach, Florida. The 2020 joint meeting will emphasize diversity and inclusion, built around the theme of *Expanding the Circle: One Profession, Multiple Perspectives*. They will be celebrating the diverse people, institution types, skill sets, and experiences that come together to advance research administration as a profession.

Each region has also invited a member who is an expert on diversity and inclusion to serve as a conference advisor and to help think through how to make sure both regions are inclusive throughout the planning and programming process, not just in theme or in program content. Regional communications regarding advancement in diversity and inclusion have been sent to membership through different media methods and have received positive response. Members and leadership of Region III look forward to a productive year in not only addressing diversity and inclusion matters within the region, but also in providing outreach and education to members to grow both the Region and our members' development in the field of research administration.

Region IV (Bonniejean Zitske, Region IV leadership)

Region IV has identified a Diversity Coordinator for the upcoming spring meeting with Region III and the conference theme focuses on diversity: *Expanding the Circle: One Profession, Diverse Perspectives*. The Diversity Coordinator will review of all presentation slides for inclusive content, as one example for how we will be mindful of the theme throughout meeting planning.

During the 2019 Region IV Spring Meeting leadership developed the following programming focused on inclusion:

- Lunchtime speaker: Mx. Lena Tenney, Coordinator of Public Engagement for the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at the Ohio State University. Her talk was titled, "Did They Really Just Say That?!" and focused on ways to interrupt oppressive behavior.
- Lunchtime speaker: Dr. Leon McDougle, Chief Diversity Officer for The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center. His discussion focused on identity development, diversity, and inclusion.
- NCURA IV Book Group: *Examining Tuskegee: The Infamous Syphilis Study and Its Legacy*. This book group discussed systemic barriers in the healthcare system and ways to create access. We also discussed our roles as research administrators when working with studies including vulnerable populations.

Region VI (by Amanda Snyder, Region VI chair)

Region VI's diversity and inclusion efforts include the LeadMe program. It began in 2009 as a Region VI leadership and mentorship program inspired by the national NCURA Leadership Development Institute (LDI) program. LeadMe is designed to cultivate new leaders within the region. The program first expanded to include the Region's close partners in Region VII. For the past few years, speakers and mentors have included NCURA members from other regions. Moreover, for the 2020 class, the region is excited to welcome a mentee from Region III. The LeadMe experience illustrates how Region VI partners across regions in ways that improve NCURA members' experiences.

The program itself leverages the diversity of its participants. Mentees, mentors, and mentors-in-training for the program come from different backgrounds and types of institutions. They all bring different experiences to the table. The activities of the program give them the opportunity to share their personal experiences and to learn from one another. Providing this opportunity shows a regional investment in identifying interested leadership talent and helping those individuals to grow into leadership roles, creating a diverse and prepared leadership pipeline for Region VI and other regions.

Region VII (by Diane Barrett, Region VII chair)

Region VII is pleased to be offering sessions on diversity at the upcoming Region VI/VII meeting in Seattle, including:

- Leveraging Diversity and Creating an Environment of Cultural Humility
- Equality and Diversity in Research and Research Administration
- Diversity and Inclusion: Driving Positive Cultural Change in Research

In addition, diversity and inclusion will be a focus of other discussions and focus groups. On another front, Region VII has been looking at the region's demographics and who tends to be in leadership roles. This is a region of Predominantly Undergraduate Institutions (PUI); yet, the regional leadership has been driven largely by the few larger institutions. To that end, the current leadership is working to develop interest from PUI colleagues in running for office. They are pleased to announce that their new chair-elect, Trisha Southergill from Montana Tech, represents a PUI.

The Region VII Professional Education and Development Committee has administered a survey to find out what kinds of training they can provide to all membership. The newsletter now has a PUI corner dedicated to learning more about their smaller institutions as well as a section devoted to particular problems facing PUIs. This effort is being led by a small group of PUI participants.

There is more work to do. Many of their PUI colleagues belong to NCURA but do not engage with the region or on a national level. Leadership in this region will do more to reach out to those institutions in the coming months. ■

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