



Volume 1, Issue 2

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*“If tolerance, respect and equity permeate family life, they will translate into values that shape societies, nations and the world.”*

– Kofi Annan



*“Equality is the soul of liberty; there is, in fact, no liberty without it.”*

– Frances Wright

## Deconstructing Equity

Hello fellow NSU MD students, staff and faculty. It has been an eventful past few months. The word equity has emerged as a trending topic in many forums especially those highlighting racial inequities. In the coming months, achieving racial equity in the workplace will be one of the most important issues that higher education institutions will address. *When race no longer determines one's socioeconomic outcomes, then we have achieved racial equity.*

As a medical school we also consistently focus on the indicators of equity in higher education with the goal of transforming our organizational framework to fit all our people. This means that we are committed to ensuring that every student has what he/she needs to be successful through the intentional design of the medical school experience. We have support systems in place to ensure that every student has an equal chance for success. Implementing these support systems requires a clear understanding of the unique challenges faced by individual students in order to help them overcome any barriers.

Equity is anchored in the tenet of fairness and NSU MD has adopted equity policies that improve college affordability for low-income students, students of color, and other vulnerable populations. We are investing in innovation and evidence-based practices and policies to support completion, and most importantly we ensure that the safety and civil rights of our students are protected.

## Racial Dialogue

The racially charged events that have captured our nation brings to bear the need for uncomfortable conversations around race. It is good to have uncomfortable conversations, because we gain understanding about the issues that affect us. Dialogue around racial realities that minorities are facing have provided an opportunity to share emotions and experiences, and a forum for other ethnic groups to develop authentic awareness. Racial dialogue also provides an opportunity to tackle institutional racism. Institutional racism refers to discriminatory treatment, unfair policies and inequitable opportunities and impacts, based on race, produced and perpetuated by institutions. This is typically embedded in a historical structure where racial minorities chronically experience pervasive negative differences.

It is important that organizations take an active approach to dismantle racism by empowering the development of diverse formal and informal leadership at all levels and developing a strategic plan that increases accountability and demonstrates transparency.

Heidi Kiziah  
NSU MD Class of 2022



***An environment built on the foundation of equity using building blocks such as mentoring minority youths and empowering underrepresented voices, is a diverse one. An environment that identifies problems within itself and fixes them through improving cultural competencies in medical students and bettering the quality of healthcare offered to the LGBTQ+ community and other populations facing health disparities is an inclusive one. Diversity is going out of our way to ensure a community that is not only inclusive in its make up, but equitable in its opportunities.***

*I am happy to share that Seema Belani and I will be spearheading the launch of an open dialogue book club in the coming weeks, to facilitate dialogue in the NSU MD community around race, racism and other issues that relate to health disparities.*

## Thoughts from Qaas on Racial Equity



I'm doing whatever I can to make changes here that make it a better place for everyone, and I ask that you do the same.



Qaas Shoukat  
NSU MD Class of 2023

**Racial equity matters.** The recent murders of innocent black women and men are a testament to the racial inequity that many of us still face. It is painful and difficult to confront such realities, but on an individual level, we all must do our own part by not only acknowledging and working to eliminate our own prejudices and biases, but to assist others to do the same.

**While we must also fight for meaningful institutional change, our journey towards implementing and maintaining racial equity begins in our own communities.**

NSU MD is a community that we are all a part of - as a cutting-edge institution that prides itself on being innovative, NSU MD hails diversity as one of its Seven Core Values. It is a value that I believe every student, faculty and staff member should not only embrace, but actively promote.

I am whole-heartedly optimistic that real change will come and that we may be witnessing history before us; we should use this occasion to ensure that we start programs here that bridge the racial inequities present in society. It is time that we all ask ourselves what we can do to bridge the racial equity gap.

Dear NSU MD, in the midst of a global coronavirus pandemic we have united to bring scientific, clinical and community resources to bear. Let us recognize eight of our NSU-MD students- Shivani Kaushal, Jieun Lee, Amy Liu, Jackie Nguyen, Nick Patete, Samuel Raine, Jason Shao and Sydney Stillman who crowd sourced over \$1300.00 in two days to procure and assemble over 3,100 face shields. The shields were donated to the Broward County Medical Association, Holy Cross Hospital, Orlando Health, Nemours Hospital Orlando, and some Palm Beach area nursing homes. Continue the great work!!



Samuel Raine  
NSU MD Class of 2022



**Medical school is fast – there is only enough time in the classroom to plant the seed for LGBTQ healthcare.**

*To best support the 4.5% of the US population identifying as LGBTQ, future physicians need to foster the growth of that seed on our own. The opportunities to do so are endless and flexible regarding levels of engagement: sit down and stream “When We Rise”, lead a LGBTQ health research project, partner with local LGBTQ organizations to develop health screening events, join a weekend LGBTQ running group, volunteer for the Trevor Project, go to a Pride Festival.*

*Any opportunity allows us to sprout into more caring, understanding physicians in improving health outcomes for the LGBTQ community.*

*I am happy to be engaged in several research initiatives involving NSU MD faculty and the local LGBTQ community in this COVID-19 era. My hope is to continue to engage with our local community to improve the mental health outcomes of our local elderly LGBTQ population.*

## Diversity Responsive Medical Education

Achieving greater diversity and inclusion in academic medicine are not only important in equalization, but also to prepare medical students who are diverse in thoughts and cultural competencies. A diversified physician workforce will more effectively meet the needs of an increasingly diverse patient population, which is crucial to ultimately eliminating health disparities within health care.

Here in Florida, African Americans make up roughly 17% of the general population, yet our physician workforce diversity is lagging with only 5.5% of medical doctors being African American. Similarly, Hispanics constitute 26% of the general population, but only 17% of medical doctors in the state are Hispanic.

Sexual minority physicians are also needed to serve the unique needs of the growing LGBTQ community. The recent southern LGBTQ health survey highlighted the dire need for better healthcare and health outcomes for this population, and NSU MD has initiated several funded initiatives to increase the LGBTQ cultural competencies of our students. Read the full report of Southern LGBTQ health survey here:

[https://southernequality.org/wpcontent/uploads/2019/11/SouthernLGBTQH\\_ealthSurvey-ExecutiveSummary.pdf](https://southernequality.org/wpcontent/uploads/2019/11/SouthernLGBTQH_ealthSurvey-ExecutiveSummary.pdf)

NSU MD is prioritizing diversity in every aspect of our institutional culture as shown in figure 1 below, to ensure that we recruit and retain a diverse student, staff and faculty pool. Most recently we developed an elective course entitled the ‘Fundamentals of diversity and inclusion in medicine’ for our M3 class. Our goal is to create and maintain a culture of diversity and inclusion. Integral to the success of our diversity initiatives are our pipeline programs. Highlights from our pipeline programs are below!!!!



Figure 1. The interface of diversity and inclusion within medical education



## Highlights from our Pipeline Events

NSU MD launched the **Journey into Medicine Mentorship Program** on Thursday, June 25<sup>th</sup>. This collaboration between NSU MD and the Blanche Ely High School Medical Magnet Program engages students who are interested in careers in medicine through various mentorship activities. The overall goal of the program is to provide students from backgrounds underrepresented in medicine with an opportunity to develop skills that will increase their competitiveness for admission to schools of medicine. It was a great kick off. In this initial meeting students were paired with mentors and discussed:

1. Different facets of the medical profession
2. Strategies and skills to navigate the application process to medical school
3. Tips to build their portfolios

Through this program, we hope to create a pipeline of interested students into the medical field by developing meaningful mentoring relationships with the youth in our communities. Our faculty mentors Dr. Stephen Ely, Dr. Miriam Zylbergait Lisigurski, Dr. Nicholas Luffi, Dr. John Ogunlade (keynote speaker) and Dr. Vijay Rajput as well as our student mentors Muhammad Awan, Mitchell Bourne, Samantha Marazita, Jackie Nguyen, and Eric Young, all did an excellent job!!!



Students from the Blanche Ely High School Medical Magnet Program with Medical Science Magnet Coordinator Miss Amy DeCelle, Center

**The STEM Ready Program** is a program directed by the Urban League of Broward County (UBLIC). NSU MD recently partnered with the UBLIC to mentor their STEM ready Middle School Students at their end-of-the-school-year event last month. Students from the Silver Lakes Middle School engaged in dialogue with M3 student Eric Young and NSU MD faculty members Dr. Kate Carnevale, Dr. Joshua Costin, Dr. Arkene Levy, Dr. Samiksha Prasad & Dr. Michelle Zhao. Our faculty provided insights into different career trajectories in STEM, and tips on how to be perseverant, especially in the face of new adversities such as the COVID-19 pandemic. It was indeed heartening to interact with these motivated young minds, and we hope to continue to foster these mentoring relationships.



The 2019-20 Urban League STEM Ready Students of Silver Lakes MS in North Lauderdale, FL

## Faculty Development Opportunities

We invite everyone to explore the topics of race, racism and health, through the following resources.

- **The AAMC** has curated a collection of articles and resources on racism and health to assist member institutions, constituents, and the public in learning more about and exploring the complex issues and strategies to combat racism and make health care more diverse, equitable, and inclusive. The collection will be updated regularly. View the collection here and be sure to watch the short video: [https://www.aamc.org/news-insights/racism-and-health?utm\\_source=sfmc&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=cfasnews&utm\\_content=newsletter](https://www.aamc.org/news-insights/racism-and-health?utm_source=sfmc&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=cfasnews&utm_content=newsletter)

- **Dr. Jennifer Eberhard** is a social psychologist at Stanford University and a recipient of a 2014 MacArthur "genius" grant. She has been elected to the National Academy of Sciences, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and was named one of Foreign Policy's 100 Leading Global Thinkers. Dr. Eberhard studies biases and prejudices through neuroimaging and other experiments. She delivers a powerful lecture entitled 'Biased- Uncovering the Hidden Prejudice'. View the lecture here: <https://vimeo.com/366616322>



Dr. Jennifer Eberhard, Ph.D.  
Source: web.stanford.edu

- **Dr. Ibram X. Kendi** one of America's foremost historians, New York Times bestselling author, and the Founding Director of The Antiracist Research & Policy Center at American University in Washington DC, delivers a 2020 TED Talk entitled 'The difference between being 'not racist' and antiracist. View the talk here: [https://www.ted.com/talks/ibram\\_x\\_kendi\\_the\\_difference\\_between\\_being\\_not\\_racist\\_and\\_antiracist](https://www.ted.com/talks/ibram_x_kendi_the_difference_between_being_not_racist_and_antiracist)



Ibram X. Kendi, Ph.D.  
source: www.ibramxkendi.com

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