

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

December 2024

Content compiled by Department of Psychiatry DEI Leaders: Drs. Cavazos and Navsaria and Kavya Singh

Message from Eric Lenze, MD, Head of the Department

Thanks to our DEI Leadership team, Dr. Patty Cavazos-Rehg, Dr. Neha Navsaria, and Kavya Singh, and your commitment to DEI, we have accomplished a lot in 2024. Here are a few examples of the many accomplishments. We...

- implemented the Understanding Systemic Racism curriculum for trainees, faculty, and staff
- distributed a department-wide well-being survey to learn about our climate and culture and shared results at a faculty meeting
- welcomed new Diversity Advisors and developed a dedicated [website](#) to ensure best practices in DEI are infused throughout the hiring process
- Initiated an ongoing speaker series dedicated to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI).
- created a cohort of faculty, staff, and trainees who are participating in a training that dives deeper into the concepts reviewed in the Understanding Systemic Racism curriculum
- showcased our work via poster presentations at the AAMG Group on Diversity & Inclusion conference and the Institute for Public Health Conference

We remain committed to elevating DEI principles; we have more work to do in 2025. We will:

- develop strategies to increase URiM faculty, staff, and trainees
- share findings of the department wide well-being survey with staff in January (more details below) and create action plans for improvement based on survey results, including: enhancing communication, offering professional development opportunities, and supporting mental health
- evaluate the impact of the DEI funding program that provided support to 4 departmental teams actively working to create positive change and address systemic barriers to equality and will offer more funding opportunities
- continue our ongoing DEI efforts focused on building a positive, diverse, and inclusive culture

DEI Speaker Sessions

Join us for the next DEI Speaker Session featuring Jennifer Holzhauer, MSW, LCSW, who will present the findings from the department-wide 2024 Climate and Culture Survey conducted from February to April. This session will take place on Tuesday, January 28, 2025, at 11:00 AM and will be offered in a hybrid format for staff only with the in-person session being hosted in FLTC 205. As part of this session, Dr. Lenze will be present. Register for the session [here](#). Find a flyer attached.

Funding Opportunity: Research on Health Disparities Among Underrepresented Women

Faculty interested in expanding their research can apply for administrative supplements through the ICTS to address health disparities among underrepresented, underserved, and underreported (U3) women in biomedical research. Contact ICTS Finance Director Jaimee Stagner by Friday, December 27, 2024, to apply. First submission deadline: January 22, 2025. [Learn More: Notice of Special Interest](#)

Unity in Wellness with Jennifer Holzhauer, MSW, LCSW

As we approach the end of the year, it's a perfect time to reflect on the importance of wellness and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) within our psychiatry community. December is a season for both rest and connection, and we encourage everyone to take a moment for self-care and mindfulness amidst the busy holiday season. This month let's celebrate the diversity of perspectives that each of us brings to the table. Whether it's honoring different cultural traditions or embracing varied backgrounds, DEI efforts help foster a more supportive and inclusive environment for our patients and ourselves. Together, we create a team where everyone feels valued, heard, and respected. We also emphasize the importance of mental health during the holidays. It's a time when some may experience increased stress, isolation, or sadness. Let's continue to offer empathy, resources, and understanding for one another, ensuring everyone has the support they need as we close out the year. Wishing you peace, health, and a joyful holiday season!

Building Mental Health Equity: Using a Trauma-informed lens

More often than not, the term “trauma-informed” brings up associations with trauma therapy modalities and case conceptualizations. Those are important aspects of trauma-informed work AND it has applications in multiple settings: at the level of programs, organizational cultures and systems. A trauma-informed organization or setting is a service system which recognizes and responds to the impact of traumatic stress on those who have contact with the system including children, caregivers, and service providers ([NCTSN](#)). Trauma awareness, knowledge, and skills are infused into organizational cultures, practices, and policies. Attention is given to the intersections of trauma with culture, history, race, gender, location, language, and the compounding impact of structural inequity (e.g. intergenerational trauma of racism-related stress). There are six guiding principles to a trauma-informed approach: 1) safety, 2) trustworthiness & transparency, 3) peer support, 4) collaboration & mutuality, 5) empowerment voice & choice and 6) cultural, historical & gender issues. You can learn more about this approach [here](#).

Culturally Adapted Perioperative Mental Health Intervention for Older Black Surgical Patients

By [Joanna Abraham](#), [Krista E. Cooksey](#), [Katherine J. Holzer](#), [Divya Mehta](#), [Michael S. Avidan](#), [Eric J. Lenze](#)

The study A Culturally Adapted Perioperative Mental Health Intervention for Older Black Surgical Patients explores the unique challenges faced by older Black patients undergoing surgery, particularly regarding mental health and systemic barriers to care. Through focus groups and collaboration with community members, the researchers identified stressors like clinician biases, structural barriers to mental health services, and inadequate psychological support during the perioperative period. Patients highlighted coping mechanisms such as therapy, spirituality, and social support. The study proposes a culturally adapted, multi-component intervention addressing these issues, integrating psychological and pharmacological strategies to improve mental health outcomes. This intervention seeks to ensure patient-centered care tailored to the specific needs of this population. Read more [here](#).

Advancing the Equality of Women & Men

Monday, December 16, 2024 | 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

University City Public Library Room 208 (6701 Delmar Blvd)

Join an insightful discussion on Advancing the Equality of Women and Men, an event aimed at fostering dialogue and solutions for gender equality. This engaging session will explore strategies to promote equality in various sectors and highlight the roles of individuals and organizations in driving change.

Register [here](#).

Advancing Systems Research: Collaboration and Insights from RWJF Grantee Meeting

Trish Kohl, PhD (Professor in the department of Psychiatry); Devin Banks, PhD (Assistant Professor in the department of Psychiatry); and Sanaria Sulaiman (CEO of Vision for Children at Risk) recently traveled to the Colorado School of Public Health at the Colorado University Anschutz Medical Campus to attend a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Systems for Action grantee meeting focused on services and systems research. During the meeting, they shared insights about their work on social determinants of health, mental health equity, and engaging participants with lived experience in research. They also learned from other grantees across the country who are aligning systems to benefit children and families, integrating data and financing mechanisms across multi-sector collaborations, and addressing structural barriers to services. The two-day event included sessions on dissemination and implementation, engaging Native communities in research to improve health outcomes, and exploring the future research priorities of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The meeting provided a thought-provoking and enriching experience for all participants.

Afrocentric Norms and Substance Use Behaviors Among Black Young Adults

By [Husain Lateef](#), [Enoch K. Azasu](#), [Baffour B. Boahen-Boaten](#), [Hannah S. Szlyk](#), [Melody K. Frempong](#), [Patricia Cavazos-Rehg](#)

The study Afrocentric Norms and Substance Use Behaviors Among Black Young Adults explores the relationship between Afrocentric cultural norms and substance use behaviors among Black young adults. It emphasizes how cultural identity and values can serve as protective factors against substance use by promoting resilience and positive self-concepts. The researchers advocate for culturally tailored interventions and preventive measures that incorporate Afrocentric perspectives to address substance use within this demographic. This study contributes to understanding the intersection of culture, identity, and health behaviors in addressing public health challenges. Read more [here](#).

Thursday Nights at the Museum: Missouri Emancipation and the St. Louis African American Community

Thursday, January 9, 2025 | 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Missouri History Museum (5700 Lindell Blvd)

The Thursday Nights at the Museum event will focus on the emancipation of enslaved people in Missouri. The evening will include a presentation about Missouri's emancipation history and a conversation with representatives from local sites part of the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom. Learn more [here](#).

**Thursday Nights at the Museum: Documentary Screening:
Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin**

Thursday, January 16, 2025 | 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Missouri History Museum (5700 Lindell Blvd)

The Missouri History Museum will host a screening of *Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin* as part of the Thursday Nights at the Museum series. The documentary highlights Bayard Rustin's significant contributions to the civil rights movement, including his pivotal role in organizing the 1963 March on Washington. It explores his advocacy for nonviolence, his relationship with Martin Luther King Jr., and the challenges he faced due to his open homosexuality. The event is free and open to the public. Learn more [here](#).

Book Talk with Dr. Raven Maragh-Lloyd on *Black Networked Resistance*

Tuesday, January 21, 2025 | 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM (Doors open at 6:00 PM)

Umrath Lounge, Washington University in St. Louis (6475 Forsyth Blvd)

Join Dr. Raven Maragh-Lloyd for a book talk on her work, *Black Networked Resistance*. This event will delve into how Black activists utilize digital platforms to organize, resist, and promote social justice. Dr. Maragh-Lloyd will discuss the intersection of technology, race, and activism, highlighting the role of online networks in modern resistance movements. Learn more [here](#).

Thursday Nights at the Museum: Untold Stories: LGBTQIA+ Composers

Thursday, January 23, 2025 | 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Missouri History Museum (5700 Lindell Blvd)

Join the Thursday Nights at the Museum series on January 23, 2025, for *Untold Stories: LGBTQIA+ Composers*. This narrated performance by musicians from the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra will explore the lives and works of LGBTQIA+ composers over the last 1,000 years. The hour-long concert will highlight familiar music alongside hidden stories of composers whose lives were shaped by prejudice and legal challenges. The event will be held at the Missouri History Museum. Learn more [here](#).