



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Department of Cellular & Physiological Sciences

Faculty of Medicine

REDI (Respect, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) Meeting

Friday March 22, 2024

1:00PM- 2:00PM, via Zoom

Present: Dr. Kurt Haas, Dr. Shernaz Bamji, Dr. Majid Alimohammadi, Dr. Manouchehr Madani, Dr. Kenneth Liu, Shalini Iyer, Rita Jin

Regrets: Dr. Elizabeth Rideout, Dr. Claudia Krebs

This meeting was called for:

1. Approval of agenda
2. Approval of minutes from February 23rd
3. Welcome Dr. Shernaz Bamji as our new co-chair
4. Discussion on “where we go from here” with perspectives of new heads, and committee
5. Discussion on potential support for proposed EDI events from Graduate and Undergraduate students
6. Continue to work through Survey Action Plans

1. Approval of agenda

The agenda was approved.

2. Approval of minutes from last meeting (February 23rd)

The minutes were approved.

3. Welcome Shernaz Bamji as new Co-chair

Dr. Haas introduced Dr. Shernaz Bamji to the REDI Committee as a new co-chair.

4. Discussion on ‘where we go from here’ with perspectives of new heads, and committee

Drs. Haas and Bamji shared that they reached out to various departmental groups aiming to better understand the EDI barriers that the groups faced and identify actionable items. Niki Shahraki, CAPS Undergraduate Representative, shared several suggestions, including making EDI talks in the 3rd year labs more appropriate to undergraduate population, connecting with various EDI groups via Instagram, increasing international undergraduate population by diversifying CAPS program advertisements, improving outreach, hosting alumni diversity seminars featuring underrepresented groups sharing their success stories, and establishing diversity mentorship programs. Regarding graduate representation, Alex Garner, head of CPhyGS, suggested making events more inclusive by shifting the focus away from alcohol presence and offering a variety of meals for those with dietary

restrictions. Alex also raised concern about PI behaviour, which could be addressed. Larissa Kraus, a postdoctoral representative, highlighted one of the challenges faced by international postdocs, which is the duration of work permit validity. Larissa also suggested including a postdoc representative on a CPS REDI Committee.

Dr. Liu inquired whether CPS has a graduate student advisor. Dr. Haas replied that the CPS graduate students are spread out in labs across different graduate programs and were encouraged to share EDI barriers to the graduate advisors, the department chair, and other UBC sites. Dr. Haas emphasized the importance of assessing the intensity of the issues to figure out the points of support for reporting. Dr. Haas also highlighted the need for an assessment of undergraduate and graduate populations. If diversity indicators are low, improvement in advertising and discussion with CAPS undergraduate student advisors, Dr. Christina Hull and Dr. Barry Mason, would be necessary. Dr. Liu also noted that the expansion of CAPS with the Major program may potentially lead to an increase in diversity.

Dr. Haas inquired whether the REDI committee should include a postdoctoral representative. Shalini recalled a previous postdoc member and expressed support for the idea. Dr. Haas will contact Larissa Kraus to obtain contact information for the potential postdoctoral representative for the REDI committee.

Dr. Haas informed that faculty and staff were also surveyed regarding their experiences with EDI barriers. Given the responses, he raised a question of how to address these issues. Two strategies were proposed: compiling a document listing inappropriate behavior for collective reflection or conducting one-on-one discussions. Additionally, Dr. Haas also suggested posting a survey with more direct questions, albeit without specifics. Dr. Bamji supported this idea and recommended including a comment box for actionable items. Shalini highlighted Faculty of Medicine policies limiting data collection to a certain extent due to privacy restrictions, preventing the description of specific event. Dr. Liu proposed including a link with EDI resources in the survey. Dr. Haas suggested creating an action plan before collecting data and raising awareness about the impact of certain comments on individuals' well-being to initiate behavioural change. Dr. Bamji also suggested raising awareness through initiating dialogs and discussions about EDI issues.

Dr. Haas proposed organizing discussion groups for faculty and staff to talk about EDI issues. Dr. Haas also suggested organizing journal clubs to review and discuss EDI papers and their relevance to CPS policies. In order to increase effectiveness of the abovementioned events, he mentioned an option of having an outside mediator to ensure smooth facilitation. Dr. Bamji highlighted the point of reviewing the hiring policies and suggested a possibility of including the CVs to anonymized one-page summaries to address potential disparities in self-promotion among underrepresented minorities. Dr. Haas presented a question to the committee members regarding necessity of formal discussions on EDI topics related to hiring policies, utilizing primary literature and generating new ideas. The committee voted in favor, and plans were made to establish the structure and ground rules for these discussions.

Dr. Haas introduced an EDI tool that he developed to assess the EDI items. The tool is designed break down issues to identify the most suitable solution. Dr. Alimohammadi proposed that the REDI committee members review EDI literature and generate final ideas for presentation at faculty meetings. Dr. Bamji suggested integrating Dr. Haas's EDI tool into discussions following the EDI journal club meetings, as well as expanding participation in the journal clubs to the entire CPS community. Dr. Haas mentioned seeking guidance by UBC REDI office on facilitating REDI events, intending to invite CPS REDI members to participate in discussions with the UBC REDI office once a response is received.

5. Discussion on potential support for proposed EDI events from Graduate and Undergraduate students

Dr. Haas shared that CPS graduate students had inquired about REDI events sponsorship. Dr. Haas suggested voting via email. Dr. Bamji added that the committee should evaluate the proposed events before granting sponsorship. Dr. Alimohammadi noted that if CPS community needs support in running REDI events, whether it is financially or by advertising, the committee should support it.

Meeting adjourned at 2:00 pm.
