AfterHours Conversation - Scientific Workforce Diversity in Extramural Research

>> Dr. Ericka Boone:Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for joining us for today's after hours panel session on scientific workforce diversity and extramural research. This session is live, just wanted to let you all know that. For your convenience, I've included the link to the slides in the chat box. So you can access the slides as you follow along with us during our conversation. Please be advised that if attendees want to chat amongst themselves, please submit your chats within the chat box. However, if attendees would like to have a question answered by the panelists, there's a Q and A box available during the session. Please feel free to submit your questions in the Q and A section. However, due to the number of individuals participating today, we may not get to all of your questions, but we'll do our best, okay? I will put in the link for the slides one more time because I saw that come up. Alrighty. I hope that you're ready to take notes because today's panel discussion will be chock-full of nuggets of information. As you know, today's discussion is on scientific workforce diversity and extramural research. We all know that diversity matters in every aspect of live, including scientific research and discovery. We won't spend time today really talking about the problem and the impact on the lack of diversity within extramural community, however, we will be spending time focused on NIH's approach to overcoming the issue. Specifically, we're going to spend time talking about how you can navigate your careers and capitalize on funding opportunities that can help individuals that are traditionally underrepresented in STEM careers actively engaged in and progressing their careers. Today's discussion will be a big of a mixed methods approach as we'll have a very brief presentation of our outlook topics, and then we'll have a discussion at the end of Q and A. We're going to touch on why diversity matter to NIH, how and where do we start as early stage investigators, how do you transition through different stages of your career, as well we'll touch upon mentoring for all career stages. I want for you to take a moment and look at the slide here. It shows us all of the panelists. My name is Ericka Boone, and I'm going to serve as your moderator. I'm the Director for the Division of Loan Repayment and the Office of Extramural Research. We're going to be accompanied as panelists and discussants by Dr. Michelle Jones-London. She's the Chief of the Office of Programs to Enhance Neuroscience Workforce Diversity, or OPEN, within the National Institute of Neurological Diseases and Stroke. We'll also be accompanied by a Dr. Rob Rivers, the Program Officer at the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, Dr. Kenneth Gibbs, Director for the Postdoctoral Research Associate Training, or PRAT, program at the National Institute of General Medical Sciences, and also by Dr. Charlene La Feuve, Senior Advisor to the Chief Officer forScientific Workforce Diversity. We're going to start our conversation with Dr. La Feuve, and she's going to talk more about why diversity matters to NIH.

>> Dr. Charlene La Feuve:Thank you very much, Ericka, for that wonderful introduction, and I want to thank you also for organizing this panel and coordinating it and thank my colleagues as well. I just want to mention that ... Next slide. Fundamentally, we know that NIH has an emphasis and an institutional approach to make sure that design and enhance diversity using inclusive excellence. And by that we define it as creating those environments in which everybody can thrive and be successful scientists, researchers or clinicians. And I want to start by painting a picture of why diversity and inclusion is important. Every facet of the United States scientific research enterprise requires superior intellect, creativity and a wide range of skill sets and viewpoints, and our ability at NIH to help ensure that the nation remains a global leader is dependent upon a pool of highly talented scientists from diverse backgrounds. And research shows that diverse teams outperform homogeneous teams. So we are more creative, we are more innovative. We also know that diversity results in broadening the scope of inquiry, and it allows us to address a greater range of scientific topics as they pertain to different groups. And then we know that the changing demographics of the United States is very, very diverse in the context of the majority populations, the minority populations, and by 2050, we expect that the entire United States will be a majority of people from underrepresented groups. And since the changing demographics are very important, we want to make sure that we want to meet the goal of recruiting and creating the most talented into the biomedical sciences, so that we can address the complex conditions and the nuances of the various demographic populations in the United States as we seek to find medical cures to conditions and illnesses. So all of these contribute to the global research preeminence of NIH over time. Next slide. I will say, as we transition to the next slide, that when you look across the career pathway, given what I've just said to everyone, when you look at training positions all the way through faculty positions, and then into leadership positions across the career trajectory, there is actually diminishing representation of women and underrepresented groups in the scientific arena, and it's palatable, it's been published extensively in the literature and discussed by Dr. Kenny Gibbs who is on this panel and others, and so we need to be very conscientious about how to address this. At NIH, the Scientific Workforce Diversity Office and the Chief Officer for Scientific Workforce Diversity established a strategic plan to do a full court press and address these issues and challenges, which is on the left side of the screen. And then we also have a strategy where we examine the science of diversity, as I mentioned, with published, peer-reviewed articles. And then building evidence using data to determine our priorities, to measure our change over time and to also take into account sociocultural factors which have to do with context - socioeconomic, contextual and all of the factors that shape the environment in which biomedical researchers would thrive and commit to a career. And then we also look at sustaining diversity over time. Once we make changes in the workforce at any point in time across the career trajectory or at a local or national level, we want our efforts to be sustained over time. Next slide. You're going to hear quite a bit more about the programs at NIH with some of my colleagues on the panel. I just want to flag that we have a distinguished scholars program. That is one of the initiatives that's been particularly effective in driving inclusive excellence. It supports our intramural research program where a cohort of scholars who are junior faculty are recruited bringing together about 15 junior faculty per year in a program that eventually allows for mentoring, sponsorship, and creates a culture of inclusivity and ensures career success within NIH. That program is now being transported in a model that is called the first initiative, which you will hear more from Dr. Jones-London about. And then we make sure we implement education of search committees, and we have an NIH equity committee that looks at transparency and accountability in terms of the workforce of scientific experts within NIH, and you're going to hear more about the national research mentoring network, and we also have an interactive tool kit, which is featured on the next slide a bit. Oh, it was was on the previous slide, and it is a resource. The website is on the bottom of that slide in the corner, swdtoolkit@nih.gov which describes a little bit more about the kinds of steps you can take to reduce bias, to incorporate recruitment efforts, and so ensure that people are aware of the broad pool of candidates that are avail for scientific positions. I'm going to now turn it over to my colleague Dr. Kenny Gibbons, who is going to talk to you about how to get started, where do you begin and training opportunities.

>> Dr. Kenneth Gibbs:Thank you so much, Charlene. I hope you all can hear me. As Dr. La Feuve said, I'm going to be talking about starting in a career in biomedical research training. We expect that there are going to be a lot of early stage investigators, but also some trainees and institutional officials who might want to be helping trainees, like graduate students and postdocs, begin their careers in NIH funded research. And so I'll talk about that next. So the one stop shop is really researchtraining.nih.gov. This is a trans-NIH website which will have opportunities available at different stages as it relates to the individual fellowships, research training awards, or even understanding the opportunities that are available in the intramural training program. And so again, at NIH there is a robust research training program, but this presentation wiIl focus on research training opportunities available to NIH funded investigators and trainees in the extramural community. Next. The one piece of information that we want to make sure that you get away from this, if you don't already, is please contact program officers early when applying for NIH funding. Our job, we all come from the scientific community, we want to be of help to that community, and we can help you if you contact us early in the process. The day before the application is due does not count as early. But you should send a biosketch and a specific aims page. This helps us to access where your research fits and whether or not it will be responsive to the funding announcements at our institutes and centers, or if we should refer you to a colleague at another institute or center. We can also help in determining the eligibility for our various mechanisms. Some of our mechanisms have strict timelines on them. Mainly to ensure that we can facilitate transitions to independence as expeditiously as possible. You should also reach out after your summary statement is released to discuss the possibility of funding. And so you go, you submit your application, and once it goes through initial review group, you'll get a score. That's not really the best time to engage us because we don't know what the ... we don't have the full document for the summary of the official review. And so after the summary statement is released, we can discuss the possibility of funding as well as some next steps in the application and when you might expect to hear those results. Next slide. So a couple mechanisms to make sure you're aware of. One, are research supplements to promote diversity because that's the topic here, and so these are administrative supplements to existing NIH research grants. For example, research project grants, program project grants, or cooperative agreements that can support individuals from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds ranging from the high school to faculty level. The supplements can provide salary and fringe benefits as well as funding for supplies and travel, and they set up mentoring relationships with individual development plans. They typically range from one to three years, and that allows the supplementee to get some preliminary data, research experience, and that can make them competitive, for example, the next stage of NIH funding. They can also be feeder programs for our diversity focused F awards or K awards. Each of these mechanisms has it's own specific ... Sorry, each institute uses this mechanism in it's own specific manner, and so when you hyperlink, you can look out to the contacts that are there to understand where you are able ... how the diversity supplement might be useful for your NIH funded grant. Next slide. So there are also opportunities to pursue your own funding. At the predoctoral level, there are F31s for PhD students and F30s MD/PhD students. There are two different F31 announcements. One is called a parent announcement, and one is an announcement that is targeted at promoting diversity, and this is a great mechanism to support candidates from a wide variety of backgrounds, particularly those underrepresented, in entering NIH funded work. There are also fellowships available at the postdoctoral level, the F32 being an example of that, and those provide up to three years of support for mentored postdoctoral training. What you want to do is being encouraging, if you are a predoc or a postdoc, to apply, and if you have those students in your lab to ensure that they apply to get their own funding and help them on their own career path. In green, we have highlighted a number of different transition awards. So one is the F99/K00, which is available at a couple of ICs including NINDS, which supports the last one to two years of your predoc or PhD studies, and then supports the first few years of your postdoctoral research development. Similarly, there are well known K99/R00 awards. Those support up to two years of mentored postdoctoral research experience, and then three years independent research funding called an R00. A number of these mechanisms, again, have ... there are parent mechanisms as well as those with a goal of promoting diversity. And I will for the comment that I got ... I will make the point that the F30 is for a number of different doctoral degrees. So it can be MD/PhDs as an example, it could also be for vet PhDs. Next slide. We also want to think about how NIH supports it in addition to individual awards through our work with institutions. And so through the National Research Service Award, we support over 1,800 projects that enable over 200 institutions nationwide to recruit and support predoctoral and postdoctoral scientists from a wide variety of backgrounds and provide them structured training in various biomedical disciplines. Importantly, many of these awards have a recruitment plan to enhance diversity, which is an important part of the review criteria, and so that's one way that we want to enable and enable institutions to recruit a more diverse set of applicants than traditionally comes. It's through these T32 awards because this is structured training, it also provides a higher quality research experience which can promote the progression of scientists from underrepresented groups in the biomedical research workforce. We also have other awards like the K12 awards which are for Institutional Career Development Program Award ... Sorry ... for scientists that are postdoctoral and clinician scientists. And one example that is funded by NIGMS is called the IRACDA Program, and that allows postdocs to spend 75 percent of their time in the research lab, 25 percent of their time teaching, often at a minority serving institution, and that 70 percent of the program alumni go on to have academic careers from the community college level to the research intensive institution level. And so this is an example of some of the mechanisms that you can leverage to start your NIH funded career or to support your trainees as they begin their NIH funded careers. Now I'm going to turn it over to my colleague Dr. Michelle Jones-London who will tell us how we continue on in our NIH funded research careers.

>> Dr. Michelle Jones-London: Thank you, Dr. Gibbs. So if ... Next slide. If we look at NIH training and career development programs as a whole, what we see, or what we find, is that for diversity focused programs, most of the investment goes to early career stages with a dramatic drop-off in the postdoctoral and other ... as you go up the career ladder. NIH leadership has made a clear case for an increased focus on critical transition points along this pathway with a goal of creating seamless transitions for biomedical career advancement and progression. Next slide. There are several NIH programs that you'll see highlighted on this slide that in fact do provide resources for retaining and eliminating barriers for career transition. Dr. Gibbs already mentioned this, but one of the ones that I'd like to highlight is the predoc to postdoc F99/K00, especially the NIH Blueprint D-SPAN program which is an example of an F99/K00 that actually has enhancing diversity as part of the program goal. And then, as we move up the career ladder from the postdoc to junior faculty, we once again have mentioned the K99/R00, but given the focus of this particular session, I really would like to highlight the mosaic program at NIGMS that also has a focus on diversity for the K99/R00 and the BRAIN initiative diversity K99/R00 as important programs for diverse postdoc researchers looking for K awards to facilitate making that transition to a junior faculty position. People should also be aware that there are programs to support you once you are a junior faculty person, including diversity K01s that exist at several institutes including my own at the NIDS, but then also programs like the NIH Director's Innovator Award or what we call the DP2, there's a hyperlink in the slide. The Maximizing Investigator Research Award called MIRA, which an R35 award. NIGMS has been particularly effective at increasing diversity at the faculty level. And in the theme of making it a funding strategy to persist and thrive in research, I'll mention the Loan Repayment Program that is crucial for seeing a way forward in a research career when perhaps you are a person who's facing significant student loan debt. And so our moderator, Dr. Boone, is actually director for that program, and I'm sure he'd be happy to answer questions in the Q and A about that program. In light of the theme of talking about early stage investigator initiatives, I'd also like to talk a little bit about the policies that we have for ESIs. Next slide. So when it comes to fostering the creative discoveries, and also making sure that we're incorporating innovative research, we really need to make sure that the NIH is promoting the growth, the stability, and the diversity of the biomedical research workforce, which includes making a space for early stage investigators to make sure they're represented in the research portfolio. So ESIs we define as a PI, or principal investigator, who has completed their terminal research degree, or are at the end of a postgraduate clinical training within the past 10 years and who has not previously competed successfully as a PI for substantial NIH independent research award. Some of the things about having this ESI status is that you will receive special attention at review based on career stage when it comes to looking at what NIH calls the payline for scored R01s. There are points beyond the payline that can be a consideration when you are an ESI. So this is something that if you are at this career stage, it is extremely important that you look and make sure that your status is correct, and you also, if you've had life disruptions or other events such as childbirth, illness, that you request an extension. So really recommend looking at the website and the frequently asked question link because this is an important way that you can leverage for you career as an early investigator. Next Slide. Another program that I'd really like to highlight is something out of our Center for Scientific Review, and it's the Early Career Reviewer Program. The Early Career Reviewer Program aims to help early career scientists become more competitive as grant applicants through first-hand experience with peer review, and also, one of the goals is to enrich and diversify CSR's pool of training reviewers. You have to have at least two year's experience as a full-time faculty member or researcher in a similar role, and postdocs unfortunately are not eligible. You must also be an assistant professor, but this is a fantastic program, and as most research has shown, one of the best ways to build your grant writing skills is actually to participate as a reviewer. Next slide. Finally, in the category of programs for faculty or early career faculty, I also want to bring to your attention a new program that NIH is launching and is very excited about. The FOAs, or funding opportunity announcements, will soon be released, but there is a notice that we can put in the chat for you to look at. The NIH supported biomedical workforce is more likely to thrive in environments that support equity, diversity and social justice. The overall objective of this Faculty Institutional Recruitment for Sustainable Transformation, or FIRST, Program is to create cultures of inclusive excellence at NIH funded institutions by implementing a set of well integrated evidence based strategies, and then evaluating to see if their impact actually changes the institutional culture or inclusion. One of the components, as you can see on the slide, is that there will be a faculty cohort model, also professional development activities, and then a coordination and an evaluation center all centered around really creating a, you know, program that contributes to faculty development, retention, progression and eventual promotion to tenure. A key part of this initiative will be mentorship and also sponsorship, and I really think that is a perfect transition to Dr. Rivers who will close us out.

>> Dr. Rob Rivers:Thank you, Dr. Jones-London, for the excellent segue. You know, there's a quote that comes to mind when we talk about mentorship. It's by someone who's actually outside of the sciences, Steven Spielberg. "The delicate balance in mentoring someone is not creating them in your own image, but giving them the opportunity to create themselves." Next slide, please. And really the focus on this portion of the talk is how to ensure those who are mentors are practicing inclusion in their mentorship. The data shows that mentorship requests from scientists from underrepresented groups, including women, are more likely to be ignored than those from white men. So it's important for the mentors on this phone to be there to say yes and to provide support for candidates. Also, scientists from underrepresented groups typically receive less mentoring than their well represented peers. And lastly, recommendation letters based on gender revealed different tendencies whether the letter writer is female or male. So without practicing inclusion in our mentorship, we're not helping our candidates and further scientists to push their career forward. Lack of or failed mentorship can promote career attrition or limit career advancement. Sponsors connect mentees to power through award nominations and membership in professional networks. So if you're a person seeking a mentor now, we have some advice. Next slide. There's going to be a whole after hours conversation on Thursday, October 29th, about mentoring at the NIH in the National Research Mentoring Network. It's key as you grow your career to have a good mentor, and for those mentors listening, it's key to have your ears and also your heart open to your mentees to ensure that your providing the support and structure for the advancement of their career, and also being the champions for their next steps. Next slide please. Please contact us. This is one of the most important things that I'm not only going to say it, but everyone here is going to say it. Program officers can provide insight into the entire NIH funding process. And every NIH institute and center uses basic funding mechanisms, but the way they use them can be different, and it's also relevant to their mission. So before you're going to spend all the effort in writing something out, first reach out to the program officers. The different missions and research and funding priorities, budgets, and way of deciding will impact what you submit. So knowing before you work on writing your grant is incredibly important, and there's so many opportunities. Just go for it. Now, I'm going to pass the mic back to Dr. Boone for the final keys of success. Actually, questions.

>> Dr. Ericka Boone:Thank you for that, Dr. Rivers. There's one more slide, and Dr. Jones-London mentioned the NIH Loan Repayment Program, and I think that this is really an important program not just for all early stage investigators to take note of and to see if they're eligible for, but especially those from underrepresented backgrounds. This is a congressionally mandated program whose ultimate goal is to help keep early stage investigators in active biomedical research careers by helping them to pay back some of their student loan debt, which is one of the greatest hurdles to beginning and sustaining a research career. At least that's what we hear. So the gist of the program is this, is that depending on your debt level, the NIH loan repayment program can repay up to $100,000 over a 2-year period in eligible educational loan debt. You may reapply for a Loan Repayment Program award. Initial awards are for 2 years, and then subsequent renewals could be for 1 or 2 years in length. Theoretically, a person may be able to apply for a Loan Repayment Program and receive a Loan Repayment Program award over and over again until all of their educational debt is paid off. So there's no limit to the number of LRP awards that one may be able to receive. One of the great benefits about the program as well is that we cover resulting federal taxes that result from you getting the award. It is considered to be taxable income, so we don't want you to experience a double-edged sword by getting the award and then having to pay taxes, so we pay federal taxes to the federal government on your behalf four times a year. The overall success rate for the Loan Repayment Program award is 50 percent across NIH. Deadline for this current application cycle is November the 20th. If you'd like to know more about the program, please log on and check us out at www.lrp.nih.gov. So now we wanted to talk to you, or end, with some keys to success for early stage investigators, and the first one is, don't let debt stop you. There are a number of individuals that I talk to on a daily basis that really say, "I don't know if I can maintain my career because I have so much educational debt that I really need to find other alternatives." Please don't let that stop you. Please investigate or research the Loan Repayment Program and see if you're eligible to apply. The deadline is in about 20, 21 days, so you still have time to apply. The next key to success is, don't forget to resubmit. Dr. Gibbs, would you like to comment further on this one?

>> Dr. Kenneth Gibbs:Sure, and I think the important component is to make sure that you have ... This ties with the idea of persistence, right? There are a number of studies, and Dr. La Feuve's office has done some of this, and so she's welcome to hop in as well, that scientists from historically underrepresented groups, particularly African-American scientists, are less likely to resubmit their grants than those from well-represented groups or white scientists, and so make sure, if at first you don't succeed, try, try again, right? It's not to be discouraging. It just often takes two or three times before you get that funding, but if you persist, and you resubmit by contacting your program officer after you get your summary statement, then you are better able to get the funding that you need to launch your independent ... sustain your independent research career.

>> Dr. Ericka Boone:And Dr. Gibbs brought up another important point, contacting your POs early. That way, you have a real good understanding of what the research priorities are for whatever mechanism that you're applying for. You want to make sure that you're not shooting in the dark. You want to make sure that you understand what the priorities are and how your research fits within those priorities. Don't contact a program officer the week before and think that you're going to be able to prepare an application that is really going to be meritorious. You want to give yourself time to really think your way through the mentoring and training plan. Think your way through the personal statement. Think your way through the research statement as well. Persistence is key. Try, try again. Because success rates, for some mechanisms, can be 20 percent or lower, success rates for the Loan Repayment Program are at about 50 percent, so that means that there's a chance that you might not get it. There's a chance that you may. But you want to be persistent in your pursual of your funding. Dr. Rivers, would you like to comment on mentorship, please?

>> Dr. Rob Rivers:Mentorship is so key. Without having a good mentor, you may not have the individual who can open doors and opportunities whether it's inviting you to give talks or actually helping give a second pair of eyes to that first research application. So it's important that you have someone who's in your corner who has your back and can provide opportunities for success. So make sure you have good mentors, mentors looking out for you.

>> Dr. Ericka Boone:Dr. Jones-London, would you like to comment about empowerment?

>> Dr. Michelle Jones-London: Yes. This is something I often say when I give talks is just to really empower yourself to own your career. Don't be passive about your journey. Prepare yourself for your next steps. You can't be expected to know everything. You don't know what you don't know. But really, be in control of realizing that this is your career. Have a plan, but be open to changing that plan, and I think especially sometimes being a part of an underrepresented group, it can feel like not everyone will believe in your talents or even that you belong in science. And what I say to that is to navigate around the naysayers and focus on the support. Really empower yourself to follow your passion.

>> Dr. Ericka Boone:Dr. Jones-London is absolutely correct. This is your career, and, really, your trajectory is research independence, so you should always be keeping that in mind just for yourself, because I think that the things that you think manifest in your life, they manifest in your writing. So if you're timid in your thought, you're going to be timid in your approach. And people are looking for you to really show how you're going to separate yourself from your mentors, how you're going to be independent in your thought and in your action, so you want to make sure that you're keeping self-empowerment in mind. We're going to take a moment or the next few minutes, and we're going to answer some questions that are in the Q and A, and these questions can be answered by any of the panelists, so, panelists, would you mind bringing your cameras up, please? Thank you so much. So the first question is, is it common, or is it advised for those who already applied to a parent FOA for an F to also apply for the diversity supplement as well? Should an individual apply to only the diversity supplement instead of the parent FOA if they're eligible? [Indistinct]

>> Dr. Kenneth Gibbs:Yeah. I would just add a comment that it's a diversity supplement [Indistinct] diversity as well, so there are two different options here. One, you should not apply ... If you apply to both the parent and the diversity-focused F31 at the same time, usually, our review officer colleagues will say, "Hey, these are overlapping applications. You can't have overlapping applications to NIH at the same time," and so they'll ask you to withdraw one of them. I think the best bet is to pick your mechanism early and then focus on writing one compelling application. Those who ... Many times, for many reasons, our extramural colleagues will try to put as many shots on goal as possible, but you may be diluting yourself, and if you focus and get as much attention as you can on getting one solid application in, that's probably your best bet. A number of candidates, as Dr. Jones-London might be able to speak about, go from the diversity supplements, for example, to an F31, either parent or diversity, or to F32 and things like that, so they're often used early to allow people to move on to other mechanisms.

>> Dr. Michelle Jones-London: Yeah, and I think the question was more, how do you decide whether you choose the general F31 or the diversity F31? I think that really is a personal decision, and that's something that you and your mentor would decide together. Some of the differences are that the diversity F31, I believe you can apply for that earlier, perhaps even before you finalize what is going to be your dissertation. The other thing that can be different, and we recently had a webinar on this, is that in review panels, given the smaller number, sometimes all of the applications for the diversity F31 will be discussed versus for most grant application programs at NIH, there usually is a process where only 50 percent of the applications we received were actually discussed at the review panel. But that's something you would talk about and make an informed decision as Dr. Gibbs said in terms of reading both FOAs. You should not feel as though because you belong to a diverse group, you can only apply for diverse programs. All of the NIH programs, mechanisms and training awards are open to everyone.

>> Dr. Ericka Boone:With that in mind ... Oh, I'm sorry.

>> Dr. Kenneth Gibbs:Oh, no. I was just going to do a follow-up based on a couple of the questions that I saw: open to everyone who are eligible, right, and so for a number of programs that are ...

>> Dr. Michelle Jones-London: Yeah. No. I'm saying a diverse person shouldn't feel like they only have to ... Yeah. You're right.

>> Dr. Kenneth Gibbs:No. Yeah. Yeah. I was ...

>> Dr. Michelle Jones-London:... diversity awards.

>> Dr. Kenneth Gibbs:Yeah, yeah, because a number of the questions asked about scientists who are not citizens or permanent residents, and so most of the mechanisms that we discussed today, the F mechanisms, the NRSA mechanisms, K awards are only eligible to US citizens and permanent residents with the exception of the parent K99. The parent K99 is available for anybody independent of citizenship, but to Michelle's point, you can apply for whatever award you want to apply for. Think about your goals and what is the best option for you.

>> Dr. Ericka Boone:I did want to also follow up with that. What's considered to be underrepresented in the diversity category, and are there institutional definitions for underrepresented?

>> Dr. Michelle Jones-London:So you should go to ... We can put this in the chat. The NIH has a policy, a diversity policy in several categories ... talk about what illustrates diversity from the underrepresented categories, and just in broadly, there's a category for racial, ethnic underrepresentation versus with disabilities, a disadvantage category that has recently been detailed and expanded in terms of what it means when we say disadvantaged. And then at the senior faculty career stages, there are programs for women, but usually, the evidence, the compelling interest statement is based on data and making a compelling case for why the individual would fit the program goals in terms of enhancing diversity. And I don't know if my other colleagues want to add to that, but we can definitely put the policy language in the ...

>> Dr. Ericka Boone:Dr. Gibbs and Dr. Rivers inserted the link to the diversity interest statement in the chat box already. Thank you so much. Are there any funding options that are available for research programs for URM medical students?

>> Dr. Kenneth Gibbs:So NIH doesn't typically ... Just one piggyback off of Michelle's comments. The categories are examples, and so read them as examples, and if your institution ... Because one of the private questions about institutional data, if the institution has data to support another example, go for it. NIH funding is for biomedical researchers, and so as it relates to medical students, if you are doing research, particularly like an MD-PhD, I would encourage you to look at our MSTP funded programs, which are institutional, or the F30 awards. We don't typically have a lot of awards that are for MD students. There are clinician-focused K awards, and so there are a number of different K awards, I think particularly K08s that are focused at clinician scientists and some who have a doctoral and medical degree without also having a research doctoral degree, and so look at those different options. You would go to researchtraining.nih.gov to look at the various options that are available across the ICs.

>> Dr. Michelle Jones-London:And then you just said MSTP. For those who don't know, it's the Medical Scientist Training Program.

>> Dr. Kenneth Gibbs:Thank you.

>> Dr. Michelle Jones-London:Mm- hmm. [Indistinct]

>> Dr. Kenneth Gibbs:Thank you so much.

>> Dr. Ericka Boone:Here is a question about late bloomers. Are there programs you would recommend for diverse faculty who are late bloomers, no longer qualified for early researcher programs? As well, there's another question that's similar. It says, I'm no longer an investigator. I now support investigators in research and grant development. Are there any training available at NIH for those individuals to ensure that they're successful in DEI initiatives? So those are two different questions, but for people who have branched off and one who's come back and one who's branched off into a different area.

>> Dr. Michelle Jones-London: Maybe for the first question, you would be considered not an ESI, but if you've not received a grant yet, you would be considered a new investigator, and there, I would say what we've said before. I would contact the program officer, who's more than likely to hold your particular research area, and have a conversation because some institutes still do try to be very thoughtful about new investigators, even if you're not an ESI, but it's not going to be automatic. But I would have a conversation both with your NIH program officer and then at your institution. A lot of the sponsor grants research offices have supports or grant-writing workshops that could maybe be helpful, and even the NRMN, I believe, has faculty grant writing assistance, not necessarily just for ESI but also for new research investigators.

>> Dr. Ericka Boone:We had a question about mid-career opportunities. So we presented a lot of options for early-stage investigators. What about mid-career?

>> Dr. Kenneth Gibbs:I think that, again, the same advice holds. Again, each IC has its own funding priority, so if you look at NIGMS funding policy, for example, one of the issues that we take into consideration is the total amount of funds available to a lab, right. And so that's information you could make known to your program officer. It does weigh in funding decisions, all things being equal, to relatively meritorious grants. One person had a lot of money. One person is at middle career and is kind of at that inflection point, and kind of go or no go, that person tends to be prioritized as it relates to funding decisions. And so, again, I'd say reach out to your program officers, and I think as it relates to ... I think NIH broadly is thinking about how to support a wider number of investigators, but each IC implements that in a manner consistent with its own mission and policy priorities.

>> Dr. Ericka Boone:I have a question about , to find a good mentor. How do you find one?

>> Dr. Rob Rivers:I think everyone has a different take on this question, and it would take another whole session just on mentorship to really address it, but a key component is finding someone that's interested in your career, and there's a symbiotic overlap between what's good for the lab and what's good for you in that relationship. A mentor doesn't expect you to be exactly like them, but sees what skills you have and where you want to go. It helps you to get there providing their guidance, insight and network to get you there, and so that's what I would say is a good mentor. Finding that is asking around people who have been in that lab, people who've left that lab and see what the reality is versus perhaps the visit, which shows everything is great, but perhaps below the surface, it's not.

>> Dr. Kenneth Gibbs:We also encourage you to leverage the National Research Mentoring Network, which NIH has funded as part of the Diversity Program Consortium. It's really aiming to expand the availability of effective and evidence-informed mentoring practices across the biomedical sciences, so NRMN, the National Research Mentoring Network, as Rob mentioned, there's going to be a session about them later, but you would avail yourself there. And be sure to look for multiple mentors because no one individual can address all of your needs for your scientific career.

>> Dr. Ericka Boone:Well, we have lots of questions that still need to be answered, and I think that Ronnie is complaining because he wants to be walked. But with that, we're going to end the session. Thanks so much to all of our panelists. Thank you to all of our attendees. For those questions that we did not have an opportunity to answer due to time restraints, please make sure that you visit the booths. Because you can talk to program officers. You can talk to programs and get all of your questions answered over the next 3 days. Thank you all very much for your attendance. We appreciate it very much, and have a wonderful evening.

>> Dr. Kenneth Gibbs:Bye-bye. Great luck.

>> Dr. Ericka Boone:Thank you.

>> Dr. Charlene La Feuve: Goodbye. Good luck.

>> Dr. Ericka Boone:Bye, everybody.