



Tomorrow's Doctors, Tomorrow's Cures

# Strategies for Advancing the Careers of Women of Color in Academic Medicine Part 1 - Institutional Strategies

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Learn

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Serve

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Lead

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Association of  
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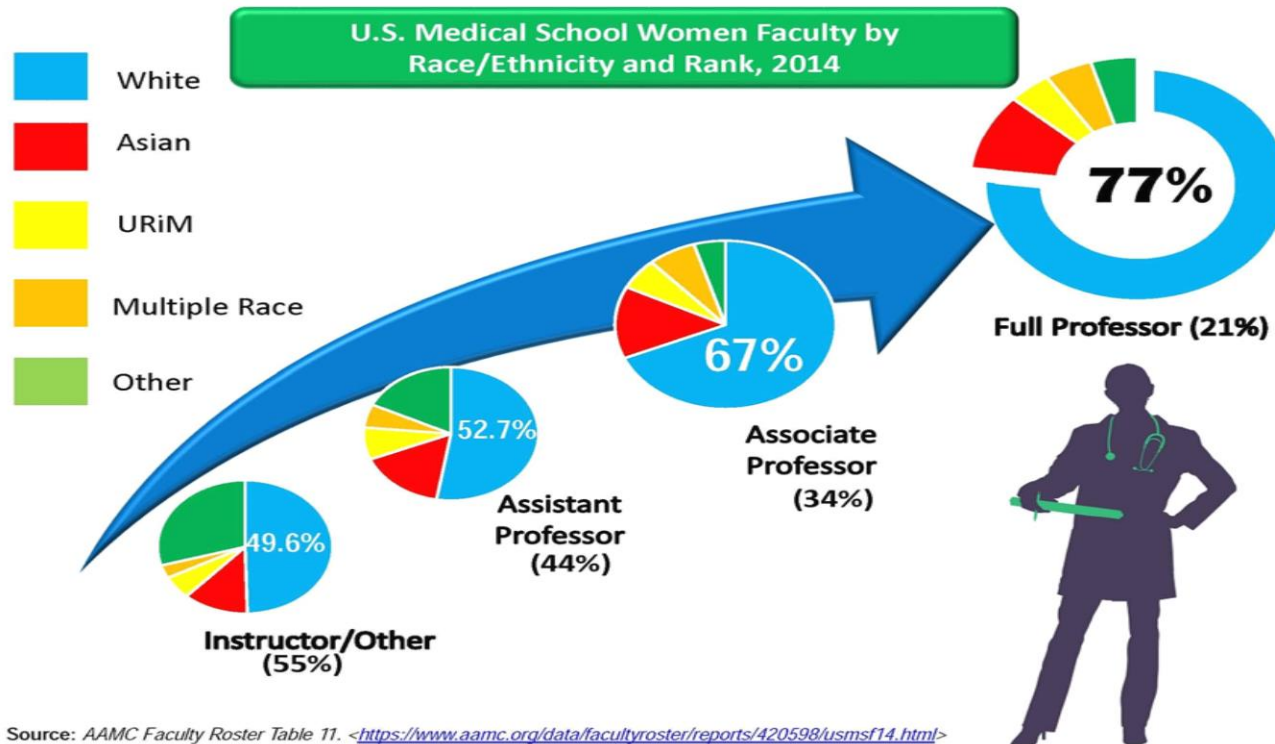
# Background

- Women of color (WOC) continue to be underrepresented at higher ranks and leadership in academic medicine
- Barriers to career advancement due to gender and race interrelated- Important to understand the relationship among the multiple identities an individual holds
- Limited attention directed towards the specific issues facing WOC and the double jeopardy they face as both women and minorities
- WOC are not monolithic – their challenges and needs may differ and must be recognized and addressed
- What got us here?
  - Decades of “benign neglect”, both conscious and unconscious bias, lack of role models, sponsorship and mentorship, etc.
- What will change things?
  - Concerted action from both institutions and individuals, based on a strategic plan designed to remedy the current situation.

# Distinction between Women of Color and Underrepresented in Medicine

- *Women of Color* - term used to reflect a sense of solidarity among women with multiple, layered identities that intersect with each other, derived from shared experiences, history, social relations, and structures of power (unearned privilege conferred systematically).
- *Intersectionality* - an analytical approach for understanding the ways multiple identities that individuals embody (i.e., gender, class, race, immigration status, ethnicity) overlap and combine with one another to contribute to unique experiences of disadvantaged and privileged.
- *Underrepresented in Medicine* - refers to racial and ethnic populations that are underrepresented in the medical profession relative to their numbers in the general population.

# Leaky Pipeline for Women of Color in Academic Medicine



# Goals

- Raise awareness of the factors affecting the careers of WOC in academic medicine.
- Offer suggestions for what may assist WOC faculty in navigating their careers and gaining the support needed to advance.

# Objectives

- Identify the primary factors affecting the careers of WOC in academic medicine.
- Recommend strategies individuals can implement/enhance to change the status quo for WOC in academic medicine.

# Institutional Policies and Actions

Policies and actions that institutions can and should promote that will result in the advancement of the careers of WOC:

1. Require unconscious bias training for leaders, faculty members and staff involved in faculty and leadership recruitment, career development and advancement.
2. Offer visiting professorships to WOC.
3. Provide mentorship to WOC.
4. Provide sponsorship to WOC.
5. Enrich candidate pools with WOC.
6. Engage in outreach efforts to identify WOC (ideally, prior to a vacancy)
7. Create/Access a database of WOC.

## Institutional Policies and Actions (cont.)

8. Require all search committees to involve a designated “diversity ambassador” throughout the search process.
9. Offer specific career development and leadership opportunities to WOC.
10. Have “zero tolerance” for conscious bias and discrimination against WOC.
11. Define intersectionality, identity formation theory, distinction between WOC and URM, etc. (for more information on these terms, see the GWIMS Equity toolkit linked [here](#))
12. Develop Advisory Committee.
13. Add leadership roles on Organizational Chart.
14. Encourage allyship.



# Unconscious Bias Training

Should be required for all search committee members prior to the start of a search, either via online or in-person—conducted by the institution's Office of Diversity, Women in Science and Medicine or Faculty Affairs.

- **On-line:** [AAMC E-Learning Seminar: What You Don't Know: The Science of Unconscious Bias and What to Do About in in the Search and Recruitment Process](#)
- **In-person:** Please contact appropriate office to arrange an unconscious bias training session.

## Offer Visiting Professorships to Women of Color

- Establish a Visiting Professorship Program to invite prominent or emerging WOC scholar to the medical institution, involving a broad range of specialties.

# Provide Mentorship to Women of Color

- Mentoring helps to create a workplace desirable for WOC
- Provide a diverse pool of mentors for WOC
- Establish formal mentorship program for WOC with assigned mentors, at least initially. Reassign mentors as needed.
- Encourage WOC to seek out additional mentors
- Define roles and responsibilities of mentors and mentees
- Train mentors and mentees to raise awareness and understanding of mentorship issues specific to WOC
- Monitor outcomes of mentoring relationships

# Provide Sponsorship to Women Faculty of Color

Despite successful mentoring and coaching programs, WOC continue to be underrepresented at higher ranks and leadership in academic medicine

- Sponsorship has been effective in boosting the careers of women (including WOC) in corporate, governmental, non-profit and other agencies
- Sponsors have the position, power and duty to advocate publicly for the advancement of WOC in their organization by focusing on their nascent (often unrecognized or under-recognized) talents, skills and expertise
- Both titular and situational leaders of diverse affinities and backgrounds can serve as sponsors for WOC

# Enrich Candidate Pools with Women of Color

- Engage in proactive outreach, such as contacting diverse talented and qualified WOC to apply for faculty and leadership positions. Invite members of affinity groups and respective offices of faculty affairs, graduate medical education, diversity and inclusion, or women in science and medicine to meet candidates during the interview process.
- Create opportunities for WOC candidates to meet faculty with similar demographics across all academic ranks.
- Identify databases and professional societies with WOC members, such as the National Institutes of Health Women of Color Research Network.
- Advertise at venues that attract WOC scholars.
- Use proactive language in job announcements, e.g., “our institution is committed to building a culturally diverse faculty and strongly encourages applications from women of color and other underrepresented candidates.”

# Engage in Outreach Efforts to Identify and Promote Women of Color

- WOC often experience isolation and discrimination
- Faculty groups focused on WOC, but open to all, add to the awareness of the challenges that WOC face/serve as a support structure for WOC
- Sponsor events highlighting the value that WOC bring to the organization
- Seek out WOC to participate in faculty governance, for leadership roles and awards
- Leaders' performance evaluations should be tied (in part) to their effectiveness in engaging and promoting WOC

# Create/Access a Database of Women of Color

To our knowledge, a national database of academic medicine faculty WOC does not exist

Options for individuals and organizations to connect to WOC include:

- Individual institutional faculty roster
- National specialty organizations subcommittees or group caucuses
- NIH Women of Color Research Network
- Local minority professional networks
- Create a “Professional Women of Color in Medicine Network” to engage and build a community of scholars and women of color in academic medicine.

Physicians:

- Artemis Medical Society (Women Physicians of Color)
- Association of Black Women Physicians

# Designated Diversity Ambassador

Designated diversity ambassadors should serve on recruitment & promotion committees, to provide continuity and guidance during the entire search/promotion process to ensure (1) WOC candidates are in the pool; and (2) bias is at a minimal.

Designated diversity ambassadors can be any person regardless of protected class status (i.e., race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, etc).



# Career Development and Leadership Opportunities for Women of Color

- WOC are often overlooked when leadership opportunities arise
- Develop policies and procedures to identify suitable WOC for internal and external career development programs tailored to their needs e.g. the AAMC Mid-Career Minority Faculty Seminar
- Advocate for and develop a roster of suitable WOC nominees for such opportunities as well as awards
- Leaders' performance evaluations should be tied (in part) to their effectiveness in developing the careers of Women of Color

# Addressing Bias at the Institutional Level

1. Acknowledge that bias exists.
2. Dispel stereotypes.
3. Require mandatory unconscious bias training at all levels.
4. Empower everyone to call out bias.
5. Conduct internal research to identify areas of possible bias.
6. Identify key metrics for tracking the results of interventions.
7. Make changes on an ongoing basis that will curb the effects of subconscious prejudices.

# “Zero Tolerance” for Conscious Bias and Discrimination

Bias and discrimination are disruptive behaviors that limit productivity and performance.

Ensure diverse and inclusive environment by implementing a “zero tolerance” policy for conscious bias and discrimination.

- Coach and train leaders, faculty, staff and learners to reduce the incidence of bias.

# Unconscious Bias: Search Committees, New Hires, and Leadership Development

- Designate one member of the search committee to serve as a “diversity advocate” charged with ensuring the inclusiveness of the candidate pool and the procedures of the search process.
- The designee should be trained on their role, familiar with unconscious bias and its impact on the hiring and promotion of WOC applicants.

# Develop an Advisory Committee

Many different models, missions, descriptions

Develop one for your organization's needs

Questions to ask:

- Why do we need a committee?
- What is the purpose?
- What do we want it to do?
- What kind of representation, skills and expertise do you want on the committee?
- What is the focus and the purview of the committee?
- What is the process for identifying members of the committee?
- To whom is the committee providing advice or recommendations?
- Is this a standing committee or a time-limited committee?

# Develop an Advisory Committee

## Guiding Principles

- Include allies on the committee
- Have representation from groups that have privilege and power in the organization
- Develop clear mission for the committee
- Have an identified leader
- Priorities must be aligned with the strategic priorities of the institution
- Embedded and supported by the institutional infrastructure

# Add Leadership Roles on Organizational Chart

- Identify leadership roles on organizational chart
- Conduct a periodic review of the representation of WOC on this chart
- Discuss strategic initiatives to increase the number of WOC on this chart, with a timeline for achieving specific milestones
- Measure the outcomes of such initiatives and disseminate within the organization
- Critically evaluate the results and develop remediation measures to improve future metrics

# Institutions as Allies

“A person or group that gives help to another person or group.”

Merriam-Webster Dictionary

“Allies are people who recognize the unearned privilege they receive from society’s patterns of injustice and take responsibility for changing these patterns.”

Anne Bishop; [www.becominganally.ca](http://www.becominganally.ca)



# Institutions/Organizations as Allies

Institutions can be agents of social change

Provide opportunities for open and honest dialogue and feedback from non-dominant groups

Develop infrastructures to address the issues raised by non-dominant groups

Learn from the community and develop responses to the needs of that community

Develop and seek guidance from an advisory board or committee

Provide opportunities for individual groups (such as minority faculty groups and women faculty groups) to form allies through joint events

Resource: [Http://www.umkc.edu/lgbt/docs/becoming-an-ally.pdf](http://www.umkc.edu/lgbt/docs/becoming-an-ally.pdf)

# Summary

- WOC continue to be underrepresented at higher ranks and leadership in academic medicine
- The problem has multifactorial roots and needs recognition, acknowledgement and innovative actions to solve
- This toolkit outlines recommended institutional actions designed to improve the situation
- Accountability and metrics, with appropriate dissemination, discussion and plans for remediation are necessary to change the status quo

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