

**STRATEGIC PLAN**  
**NEUROSCIENCE GRADUATE PROGRAM – DEI COMMITTEE**  
**SUMMER 2021, YEAR 2 OF THE VIRUS**

**INTRODUCTION**

Diversity. Inclusion. Equality. These are more than just words. They are the core values and principles that guide how the UW Neuroscience program trains the next generation of neuroscientists with cutting edge research excellence, innovation, and social responsibility.

Lack of diversity in our program as well as in academia and all STEM fields is a consequence of systemic racism present in our society and our academic institutions, including the University of Washington. Ending systemic racism and promoting a diverse climate where everybody can develop their full potential requires a comprehensive plan that involves our entire community in a transparent and accountable manner. Importantly, there must exist channels for everybody to participate and evaluate progress, give feedback, and contribute in a safe and collaborative manner.

This plan is an attempt to synthesize our priorities, goals, and actions, that seek to create an equitable and inclusive climate in the neuroscience program where all different backgrounds are welcomed, and all forms of individual differences have equal opportunity to succeed and have an impact. While there are some proposed activities that are already in place, others will be implemented in the short and medium term.

This plan is always open to amendment and improvement as we see the deconstruction of systemic racism as a dynamic fight that requires constant feedback and adjustments.

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **1. Broaden representation of speakers in the program seminar series. Importance of role models.**

- Given the importance of role models in building an equitable and diverse environment, the neuroscience program should have a minimum of 3 speakers from underrepresented groups every quarter as part of the regular seminar series of the program.
- Underrepresented speakers should be incorporated as part of the regular procedure to select speakers for the program's seminar series. It is strongly recommended that at least one speaker per year be selected from a pool of nominees from the BRAINS program.
- The DEI committee will work with the seminar committee to ensure this policy is followed.
- The DEI committee will provide resources (e.g. links) for the Seminar committee to find speakers from underrepresented groups

### **2. Develop a policy for the curriculum to include topics related to diversity and anti-racism.**

- The Curriculum committee in close collaboration with the DEI Committee should be responsible for adding courses to the curriculum and activities that help to train the next generation of neuroscientists in social responsibility.
- Develop an antiracism or similar course tailored to the specific needs of our students and other STEM students.
- We suggest including in the curriculum, either as elective or mandatory, GRDSCH 640, Seminar on Topics of Diversity and Justice. "This is an interdisciplinary course which engages students as co-creators of a learning environment. Through guest presentations, facilitated discussions, small group work, and other dynamic learning, students gain critical understanding of privilege that is based on intersecting identities and its use. Also, students will gain skills to work across differences to address oppression. Credit/no-credit only."
- Develop an antiracism reading group that could evolve into a course

### **3. Develop a policy for the curriculum to include a broader representation and scope of professional development activities relevant to the building of community and sense of belonging for all students, faculty, and staff.**

- 3.1. To grow networks for students nationally and internationally, the Neuroscience Program will encourage and support

- participation in the Neuroscience Scholars Program of SfN (<https://www.sfn.org/initiatives/diversity-initiatives/neuroscience-scholars-program>)
- participation in SPINES (Summer Program in Neuroscience, Excellence and Success, <https://www.mbl.edu/education/courses/spines/>)
- poster presentations at the Diversity poster session during the SfN's annual meeting
- participation in Society for Advancement of Chicano and Native American Scientists (SACNAS), Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students (ABRCMS), American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES).
- participation in Gordon Research Conferences.
- students' applications for fellowships, scholarships, and research grants from a variety of federal and private agencies. This includes providing a list at the beginning of each year of the opportunities (including links) and application deadlines.

### 3.2. Sponsor more community building events. Celebration of our diversity.

- Happy diverse hour sponsored by rotating labs.
- *Potlatch* at the Ethnic cultural center.
- Leaders in Diversity Snacks (Leads) Quarterly lunch with Faculty of Color from other programs or parts of campus to freely talk about experiences as underrepresented groups in academia.
- Movie watching and discussion as a part of the reading group

### 3.3. Together with the Graduate Training committee we shall develop a 360 evaluation that allows the students to provide feedback on mentors and give feedback about diversity issues.

### 3.4. Incorporate a faculty member to the committee to help with issues related to international student and serve as a liaison between international students and the office of International Scholars Operations (ISO).

#### **4. Develop a policy that outlines faculty mentor training**

- 4.1. All faculty mentors will be required to attend mentor training workshops. It should be included in the program governance document that faculty that will come into contact with students (rotations, committees, mentors) must take some training on DEI.
- 4.2. Graduate Program Administration and Graduate Training Committee are working with CIMER to train facilitators in order to develop our own training program for faculty that will be offered once a quarter.
- 4.3. Participate in training offered by SfN.
- 4.4. Work with the Center for Teaching and Learning to develop workshops for faculty and students to address issues of racism in academia. Theater for Change, a type of activity offered by CTL, is a good activity to incorporate in the program retreat or offered as complementary training for faculty.  
<https://www.washington.edu/teaching/programs/theater-for-change/>
- 4.5. The DEI Committee will track faculty training and we suggest that faculty that have taken the training requirements be indicated in the program's web page.

#### **5. Develop a policy that outlines student mentor training**

- All students will be required to undergo mentor training. Facilitators trained by CIMER will lead this mentor training

#### **6. Broaden representation on program committees (recruitment, admission, curriculum, DEI)**

- This committee supports student representation in all committees, including the Executive committee and Steering committee.
- The program leadership should work with students regarding how to organize student representation, as well as determine the appropriate representation formula for the different committees.

#### **7. Develop a policy to work with neuroscience-related departments to increase hiring and retention of BIPOC faculty**

- Establish formal relations with at least the 5 founding depts to discuss new hires when related to neurosciences fields.
- Request from potential Neuroscience Graduate Program faculty a diversity statement as part of the faculty hiring process (already in place in most departments).
- DEI committee should meet with candidates as part of the hiring/recruitment process.
- Coordination with BMR Task Force, SOM Basic Sciences Task Force, and other departmental DEI committees to avoid duplication of efforts and facilitate DEI activities and policies.

- Encourage and support new faculty participation in national programs such as BRAINS, MINDS (Mentoring Institute for Neuroscience Diversity Scholars <https://grantome.com/grant/NIH/R25-NS076414-07>), etc.

**8. Develop a policy of long-term mentoring of students, even after they leave the program, to ensure continued success and give feedback to our students**

- Build a list of alumni and current positions. Work with the Graduate Training Committee to follow up on all alumni. We will focus our efforts to support alumni from underrepresented backgrounds
- Create a network of supporters (including alumni) to help the program with advancement to support DEIC efforts (e.g., fellowships, assistance with DEIC events and initiatives).
- Create a network of alumni to share their experiences in the post graduate world with our current students.
- Focused contact for alumni from underrepresented groups at scientific meetings (e.g., SfN)