

BLACK LIVES MATTER.

Recent uprisings in America sparked the attention of the public to address overt systemic racism and continued injustices committed against members of disenfranchised communities, many of whom are Black, Latinx, Indigenous, poor, and/or working-class people. Proponents of the social justice movement are demanding that institutions divest away from frameworks and practices that perpetuate harm to racial minority groups and invest more in the safety and enhance opportunities of the most harmed. Scientific institutes are not absolved from being included in this narrative, and we would be remiss to not take this moment to actively reflect on the ways the scientific culture has reinforced systems of white privilege and contributed to systemic racism on the individual, community, and institutional level. Initial steps towards this reflection process include acknowledging the problem and cultivating an inclusive, diverse space that promotes honest dialogues around addressing these issues. The junior investigators within the Cancer Systems Biology Consortium (CSBC), Physical Sciences-Oncology Network (PS-ON), and Big Data Scientist Training Enhancement Program (BD-STEP) publicly advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion for all individuals in science. We vehemently condemn discrimination of all kinds, racism, white supremacy, and violence in all of its forms.

We believe that a diversity of backgrounds, identities and viewpoints makes our society and our science stronger. Therefore, we are committed to including all forms of diverse identities, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, (dis)ability, L.G.B.T.Q.I.A.+, national origin, religion, language and dialect, socioeconomic, neuroatypical, age, and appearance. We are committed to working harder towards the highest ideals of justice and equity in our scientific fields, in our communities, and in our society as a whole. We insist on a culture of respect at this meeting and will not tolerate bigotry in any forms. We remind our participants that all words and actions matter and urge them to maintain open-mindedness. We recognize the current status quo in scientific research, specifically biased systems established and continually reinforced by majority groups, privilege the work of scientists who are predominantly white men and exclude historically underprivileged groups across race, gender, sexuality, and other societal categories. We acknowledge that promising scientists belonging to these marginalized groups face significant barriers to access, opportunity, and success in STEM careers. We intend to eliminate the status quo and replace it with alternatives that incorporate the inclusion of diverse backgrounds, thoughts, and approaches within the CSBC, PS-ON, and BD-STEP community. Moreover, we understand that deconstructing our internalized biases is an arduous process and will require a lifelong commitment to acknowledging our privilege, educating ourselves, and using our platform to combat the disenfranchisement of underprivileged groups within the research community.

In addition to increasing representation in science, we are committed to fostering a sense of belonging and wantedness that is inclusive to all. With a concerted group effort, we aim to create sustainable change towards our goal of long-term equity which acknowledges existing privileges, dismantles biased systems, excludes bias or favoritism towards any, protects those who cannot defend themselves, and fosters a better, more just world for everyone.