



UNITE PROGRESS REPORT for Fiscal Years 2023-2024

UNITE Transition: Passing the Baton



Letters from FY 23/24 Cochairs and
Incoming Cochairs



Thank you!



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Welcome UNITE Cochairs!



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Marie A. Bernard, M.D.
NIH Chief Officer for Scientific
Workforce Diversity

UNITE Progress Report

2023–2024



UNITE
PROGRESS REPORT

 National Institutes of Health
Office of the Director
Chief Officer for Scientific Workforce Diversity

Purpose:

- Describes NIH's actions to identify and address structural racism that may exist within NIH and in the biomedical and behavioral research enterprise.
- Reports progress made to address health disparities and minority health research, the internal NIH workforce, and the external research workforce—using a people-focused and data-driven approach.

UNITE's Conceptual Framework

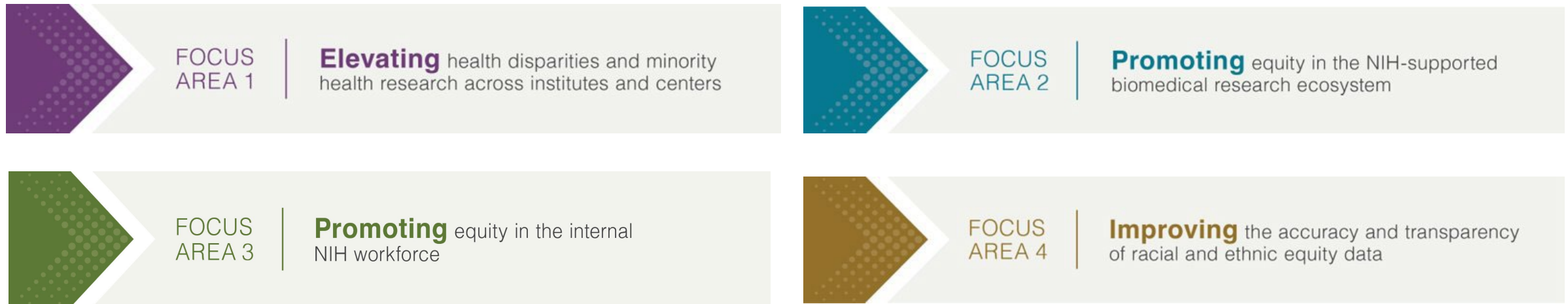


Modified from: Bernard, MA Johnson AC, Hopkins-Laboy T, Tabak LA. Nature Medicine. [DOI: 10.1038/s41591-021-01532-1](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41591-021-01532-1) (2021)

Four Focus Areas of UNITE



The progress report highlights UNITE's FY23–FY24 milestones across its four focus areas.





Focus Area 1: Elevating Health Disparities and Minority Health Research Across Institutes and Centers

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- **Focus Area 1.** Dedicated to ensuring that NIH Institutes and Centers (ICs) prioritize health disparities and minority health research within clinical trials and human subject research.
- **Example of Progress.** UNITE helped foster [the design of the FY23 Community Partnerships to Advance Science for Society \(ComPASS\)](#) initiative via the NIH Common Fund.
- **Example of Progress.** New RCDC Minority Health and Health Disparities automated categories

ComPASS Initiative Structure



Focus Area 1: Elevating Health Disparities and Minority Health Research Across Institutes and Centers



- Example of Change. By the end of FY23, 25 communities received awards to address problems they had identified. NIH committed \$140 million to advance changes within their settings.

ComPASS Initiative Structure



Additional Activities



- Resource portal for advancing health equity in research
- Facilitate equitable support for health disparities and minority health research
- Interdisciplinary Collaborative Workshops on Innovative Research Approaches to End Structural Racism
- Ensuring NIH-wide transparency, accountability, and sustainability of health disparities and minority health research
- Facilitating analyses of grant applications and award data

Focus Area 1: Progress Snapshot



UNITE worked to enhance HD/MH research as part of Focus Area 1 and encouraged ICs to prioritize this type of research across clinical trials and human subject research.

ISSUE	ACTIVITIES TO ADDRESS ISSUE	RESULTING CHANGE
Community-led structural interventions are likely to accelerate progress in addressing health disparities.	UNITE helped foster the design of the FY23 Community Partnerships to Advance Science for Society (ComPASS) initiative via the NIH Common Fund.	By the end of FY23, 25 communities received awards to address problems they had identified. NIH committed \$140 million to advance changes within their settings.
Need to enhance accuracy and better distinguish minority health and health disparities research funding from workforce development and capacity-building funding.	UNITE worked with National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) , the NIH Office of Budget and Research, Condition, and Disease Categorization (RCDC) to develop and implement the automated categories.	NIH converted the two manual categories of minority health and health disparities in its RCDC reporting system into five automated categories to offer increased rigor, accuracy, and transparency in reporting NIH investments in these critical areas.
Need for an interdisciplinary approach to understand the impact of structural racism in biomedical and behavioral research.	In FY23, UNITE allocated funding for pilot projects to advance the principles of UNITE across NIH. UNITE is hosting a two-day workshop in FY24 titled, "Interdisciplinary Approaches to Understanding and Addressing Structural Racism and Health."	UNITE's actions are helping to improve understanding of the deleterious effects of structural racism on health outcomes and society as a whole.



Focus Area 2: Promoting Equity in the NIH-supported Biomedical Research Ecosystem

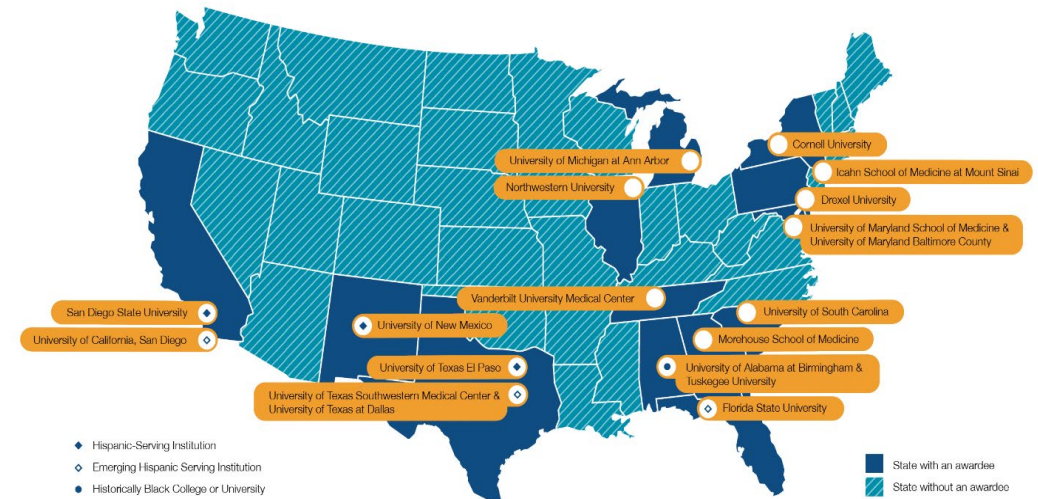
Focus Area 2: Promoting Equity in the NIH-Supported Biomedical Research Ecosystem



- **Focus Area 2.** Dedicated to advancing initiatives that foster a more inclusive and equitable biomedical and behavioral research enterprise and ensuring that diverse perspectives are integral components of it.

- **Example of Progress.** NIH executed the [Faculty Institutional Recruitment for Sustainable Transformation \(FIRST\) program](#).

FIRST Map



Focus Area 2: Promoting Equity in the NIH-Supported Biomedical Research Ecosystem



- **Example of Change.** NIH committed to 15 cohorts nationwide, with the third and final FIRST cohorts announced in July 2023.

FIRST Map



UNITE Funding Opportunities



Active NOFOs

- Science Education Partnership Awards (SEPA) (PAR-23-137) – 19 ICOs signed on
- Research With Activities Related to Diversity (ReWARD) (PAR-23-122) – 21 ICOs signed on
- Instrumentation Grant (S10) Program for Resource-Limited Institutions (PAR-23-138) - 16 ICOs signed on
- Strengthening Research Opportunities for NIH Grants (STRONG) (PAR-23-144) – 17 ICOs signed on
- Assessment of Climate at Institutions (ACT) Award (RC2, PAR-24-038) – 8 ICOs signed on

Focus Area 2: Progress Snapshot



Scientific innovation and progress are driven by a workforce that is diverse, inclusive, and equitable. The progress report highlights some of the extramural DEIA initiatives that NIH is engaged in.

ISSUE	ACTIVITIES TO ADDRESS ISSUE	RESULTING CHANGE
Need to ensure that diverse scientific talent is nurtured, recognized, and supported across all groups.	NIH executed the Faculty Institutional Recruitment for Sustainable Transformation (FIRST) program .	NIH committed to 15 cohorts across the country, with the third and final FIRST cohorts announced in July 2023.
Need for expanded programs to enhance diversity of perspectives in science.	In FY23, UNITE led the development of four funding opportunities to promote equity in the research ecosystem.	The impact of the funding opportunities will be seen with the publication of final FY24 funding numbers in RePORTER with the release of the President's FY25 budget.
Ensure that NIH staff engage with applicants and grantees in an inclusive, equitable, and respectful manner.	NIH developed the Program Officer/Scientific Review Officer Training for Inclusive and Equitable Interactions with Applicants and Grantees.	The new training will enhance the quality and integrity of the grant review and management processes.
Need to support students from diverse backgrounds, including from groups underrepresented in the biomedical and behavioral sciences as they may experience barriers to advancement leading to persistent underrepresentation of diverse perspectives in the scientific workforce.	NIH expanded the National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS)-led Science Education Partnership Awards (SEPA) , with a focus on K-12 STEM, to capture the interests of students from diverse backgrounds.	SEPA grew in FY23 with 19 Institutes, Centers, and Offices (ICOs) signed on to the funding opportunity.

Research-Active Institutions (see definition on page 12) may find it difficult to navigate available NIH funding opportunities.	In FY23, COSWD launched the Engagement and Access for Research-Active Institutions (EARA) initiative, targeting outreach to rural institutions in Institutional Development Awards states, historically Black colleges and universities, TCUs, and minority-serving institutions, in keeping with the CHIPS and Science Act.	An FY24 pilot project aims to build relationships between NIH and approximately 50 RAIs enhancing their ability to navigate and access NIH resources and funding opportunities.
Need to promote the integrity of the review process for grants, proposals, or research submissions within the NIH framework.	In FY23, NIH expanded the Center for Scientific Review initiated Review Integrity and Bias Awareness Training as a mandatory requirement for all NIH reviewers.	The training fosters evaluations that minimize potential biases and sustain the quality and credibility of the review process.
Institutions are not sufficiently incentivized to prioritize DEIA as a foundation of their operations.	NIH initiated the DEIA Prize Competition .	NIH awarded a total of \$1 million in prizes to 10 institutions in January 2024.
Need to enhance diversity within the academic biomedical and behavioral research workforce.	Maximizing Opportunities for Scientific and Academic Independent Careers (MOSAIC) , led by NIGMS, was developed to enhance diverse perspectives among faculty in biomedical and behavioral science.	MOSAIC awarded more than 130 K99/R00s between FY21 and FY23.



Focus Area 3: Promoting Equity in the Internal NIH Workforce

Focus Area 3: Promoting Equity in the Internal NIH Workforce



- **Focus Area 3.** Dedicated to fostering a work environment where all employees feel valued, respected, and supported.
- **Example of Progress.** NIH launched the [Medical Student Opportunities for Advanced Research \(M-SOAR\)](#) initiative in 2023 in partnership with the Office of Intramural Training and Education (OITE).
- **Example of Progress.** NIH initiated the [Emerging Talent Program](#) to provide additional training and facilitate upward mobility for GS 5 -11 NIH employees.

Focus Area 3: Progress Snapshot



NIH seeks to solve many of the world's health and well-being challenges. Advancing NIH's mission relies on the contributions of thousands of diverse staff and researchers.

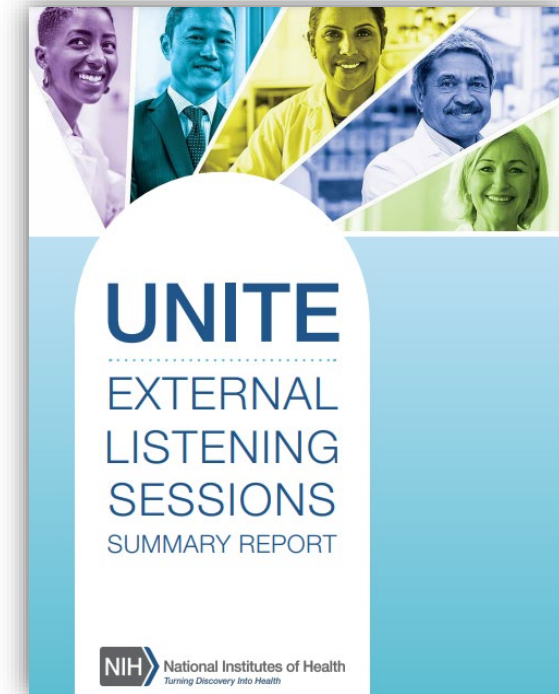
ISSUE	ACTIVITIES TO ADDRESS ISSUE	RESULTING CHANGE
Scarcity of opportunities for first-year medical students from diverse backgrounds and communities.	NIH launched the Medical Student Opportunities for Advanced Research (M-SOAR) initiative in 2023 in partnership with the Office of Intramural Training and Education (OITE).	NIH selected 23 medical students to join the program, with 16 participating. M-SOAR received financial support from OITE and the UNITE Pilot Project Fund during FY23.
Scarcity of applicants from underrepresented populations who apply for NIH job vacancies.	UNITE recommended sharing job opportunities on the listserv for federal affinity groups.	By reaching out to federal affinity groups for recruitment purposes, more diverse applicant pools are expected.
Need for training for staff at the GS-11 level and below to foster advancement.	NIH developed a career development opportunity for staff at the GS-11 and lower levels.	NIH launched the Emerging Talent Program in FY24 to advance career development opportunities and foster inclusivity within the agency.
Disparities in nominations for NIH Director's Awards by workforce category.	NIH established a task force to recommend changes to the NIH Director's Awards.	In FY23, NIH modified the NIH Director's Awards to promote inclusivity and broader opportunities for recognition of work contributing to the NIH mission.



Focus Area 4: Improving the Accuracy and Transparency of Racial and Ethnic Equity Data

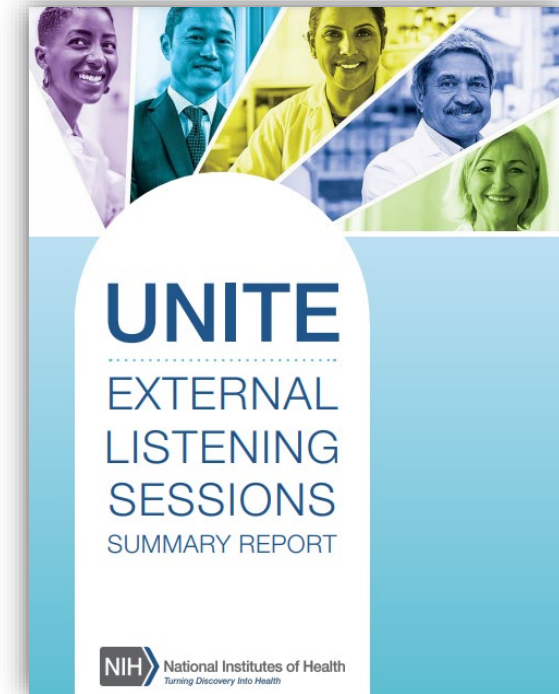
Focus Area 4: Improving Accuracy and Transparency of Racial and Ethnic Equity Data

- **Focus Area 4.** Dedicated to Improving accuracy and transparency of racial and ethnic equity in biomedical and behavioral research.
- **Example of Progress.** UNITE hosted [14 internal and external listening sessions](#) with over 1,300 participants to learn and gather information, which is being translated into action.



Focus Area 4: Improving Accuracy and Transparency of Racial and Ethnic Equity Data

- **Example of Change.** In FY23, UNITE released the [External Listening Sessions Report](#), which compiled input gathered from the 14 listening sessions.



Focus Area 4: Progress Snapshot



NIH aims to promote a more comprehensive and inclusive understanding of the impact of racial and ethnic factors in biomedical and behavioral research and the workforce, driving progress toward greater equity in science. Foundational to these efforts is strengthening the accuracy and transparency of data.

ISSUE	ACTIVITIES TO ADDRESS ISSUE	RESULTING CHANGE
Lack of robust, recent baseline data on scientists' needs and experiences pertaining to racial and ethnic equity.	UNITE conducted 14 listening sessions with the extramural community to understand needs and priorities; over 1,300 people attended.	In FY23, UNITE released the External Listening Sessions Report , which compiled input gathered from the 14 listening sessions.
Need to improve transparency and accountability in communicating UNITE progress to partners, stakeholders, and the public.	UNITE collaborated with the Office of Extramural Research (OER) to improve the transparency of the OER data dashboard and the UNITE website's data hub . UNITE committees analyzed and contributed to questions for the 2023 NIH Workplace Civility and Equity Survey findings to gain deeper insights into the perspectives of the NIH workforce.	UNITE's actions led to publicly available information on aggregated facts and figures regarding diversity-, equity-, and inclusion-related data and analyses from NIH.

What's Next for UNITE?



UNITE's commitment to being a driving force for transformation within NIH and the broader scientific community remains unwavering.

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Thank you!