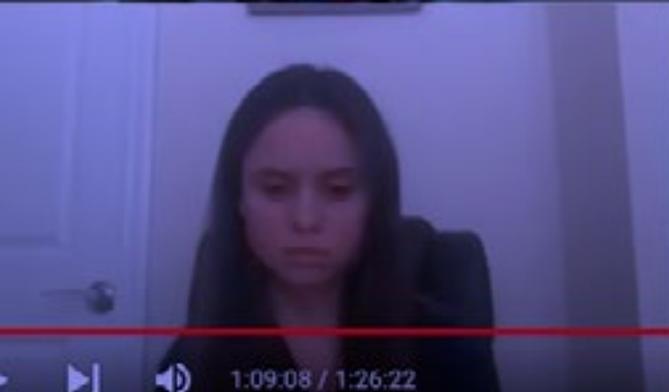




University of  
Pittsburgh

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion  
Health Sciences



**2020-21**

Health Sciences

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion  
Annual Report

1:09:08 / 1:26:22

“ Promoting diversity, equity, inclusion and health justice is a top priority for the future of our health sciences schools. To lead our initiatives in these areas, I am delighted to announce Paula Davis will serve in the newly created position of associate vice chancellor for diversity, equity and inclusion.”

—Anantha Shekhar, MD, PhD



## Message from the Senior Vice Chancellor for the Health Sciences

At the University of Pittsburgh, we value the academic and social benefits that arise from a diverse campus and strive to create a community that represents and supports everyone. The Office of Health Sciences Diversity, Equity and Inclusion has worked tirelessly to recruit an outstanding cohort of underrepresented faculty and to promote discussion about creating a just community and delivering quality health care to everyone. The health sciences reaffirms its commitment to building diversity and equity in an inclusive environment, where all feel welcomed, valued and have access to all the resources necessary for success in education, research, teaching and clinical care.

Anantha Shekhar, MD, PhD  
*Senior Vice Chancellor  
for the Health Sciences, and  
John and Gertrude Petersen  
Dean, School of Medicine*



## Message from the Associate Vice Chancellor



Dear Friends,

Well, we made it through 2020-21, which was a formidable adversary. Collectively, we wrestled with the continued impact of COVID-19, the fallout of racial reckoning following George Floyd's murder and the overlap of these two cataclysmic events. Through it all, the Office of Health Sciences Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (note the addition of "equity" in our name by Senior Vice Chancellor Anantha Shekhar, who joined us in July 2020) made space for critical conversations, helped our health sciences community to understand its role in breaking down systems impeding the success of everyone in our schools and partnered with the University of Pittsburgh Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion to extend its reach across campus. It was a heavy lift, but we supported each other and made it work.

You will find within this report an overview of our efforts in 2020-21. You will find that our staff has changed and grown, has been productive and has generated benefits for our many constituents, particularly Pitt's six schools of the health sciences. Even given virtual engagement, we presented diversity awareness workshops, gave talks on implicit bias and cultural competence and facilitated dialogue on power, privilege and systemic racism. We also hosted or cohosted talks by impactful speakers, partnered to advance campus and community initiatives and recruited where possible (given virtual engagement). With the Office of the Provost, we kicked off the University's cluster hire initiative with impressive results.

Areas where inequity resides continue to be recognized--in our community, housing, environment and vaccine equity, to name a few. In educational spaces, we continue to examine admission, promotion and other policies and processes to create the just and equitable environment to which we aspire.

Overall, we hope that we have provided added value to the students and trainees we serve, the faculty we support and the communities we inhabit. Thank you in advance for your time and attention, and we look forward to your feedback and future partnership.

Paula K. Davis, MA  
Associate Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Health Sciences



Paula Davis with Mario Browne, MPH, former director of health sciences diversity programs and now associate dean for equity, engagement and justice and associate professor of pharmacy and therapeutics, School of Pharmacy

## Our Mission

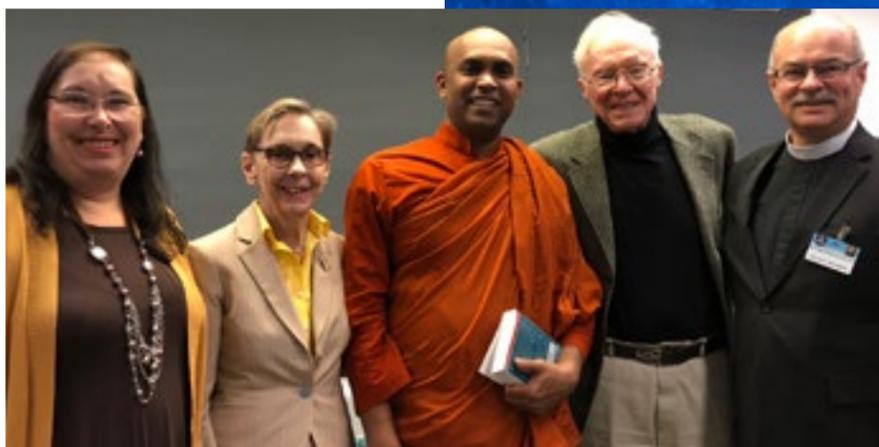
The Office of Health Sciences Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (HSDEI) exists to foster an inclusive environment for students, trainees and faculty within the health sciences.

Our mission also includes increasing the number of well-trained professionals who reflect different cultures, ethnicities, socioeconomic backgrounds, abilities, genders, religious affiliations, gender identities and expressions and

## Our Purpose

HSDEI was established in October 2007 to:

- assist departments within the health sciences to seek qualified, diverse candidates for academic opportunities;
- assess internal and external pathways to graduate and health professions education and build programming to bridge any existing gaps;
- connect individuals at all points of the pipeline to role models, mentors and opportunities;
- convene experts in the academy and community partnerships to foster environments and lend best practices for sustaining practices and processes of diversity, equity and inclusion, including student facing and professional development for staff, faculty and leadership;
- assist schools in securing campus and extramural funding for programs and initiatives advancing faculty and student diversity; and
- create and monitor systems of evaluation that measure success for diversity and inclusion, including overall faculty, resident, fellow and student success.



## Cluster Hire

Building upon the [Plan for Pitt](#), the University is committed to increasing the number of faculty to conduct research, educate students and engage in service designed to eliminate racial disparities and improve measures of equity and well-being in the Pittsburgh region, nationally and around the world. Furthering this commitment, the Race and Social Determinants of Equity, Health and Well-Being Cluster Hire and Retention Committee (Paula Davis, MA, and John Wallace, PhD, campus cochairs) was formed to conduct a cluster hire, an emerging practice in higher education in which faculty are hired in groups rather than individually to help boost the goals of the institution. The health sciences cluster hire (including Davis, MaCalus Hogan, MD, MBA, and Naudia Jonassaint, MD, MHS, as committee cochairs) has been extremely successful so far with half of a four-year hiring goal achieved in one year.

**“If we remain persistent in equitable hiring, it’ll change the fabric of the health sciences and Pitt overall for decades.”**

*—MaCalus Hogan, MD, MBA  
Associate Professor and Vice  
Chair of Orthopaedic Surgery,  
School of Medicine*

\*not pictured:  
Darlène Dubuisson, PhD

# Office of Health Sciences Diversity, Equity and Inclusion 2020-21 By the Numbers



53

Trainings and workshops offered



7,000

People reached in town halls, workshops or special events



50+

Number of University units and offices benefiting from our programs



\$23,375

Estimated cost savings and value of programs offered

**Examples of training topics:**

- Trauma-informed education
- Poverty simulation exercise
- Implicit bias and microaggressions
- Anti-Defamation League training
- Transformative intergroup dialogue
- Mental health and community well-being
- Workplace bullying



HSDEI brings influential speakers to campus and hosts numerous opportunities for students to present their research.



## Partnerships of Impact

Stemming from COVID-19 pandemic data revealing stark health disparities in Black and Brown communities, the **Black Equity Coalition (BEC)** formed to intentionally ensure access to accurate and reliable information about COVID-19. The coalition addresses securing better health and economic outcomes for all, including the Black community, during the pandemic. In 2020-21, Noble A-W Maseru, PhD, MPH, introduced and recruited health sciences faculty members to become part of the BEC Community Engagement Committee. Maseru's committee leadership led to his membership in the Pennsylvania Department of Health's COVID-19 Health Equity Response Team.

**The Community Vaccine Collaborative (CVC)** is an innovative community-academic partnership centered on mitigating the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on Black and Latinx communities, from increasing participation in vaccine trials to promoting vaccine uptake and improving the trustworthiness of research and health care among minoritized communities. CVC was codeveloped with four community organizations in Allegheny County (Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh, the Neighborhood Resilience Project, UrbanKind Institute and Casa San Jose) and researchers from the University of Pittsburgh.

HSDEI participates in CVC's trustworthiness subcommittee and has introduced discussions about:

- the maldistribution, availability and access to COVID-19 vaccines in Allegheny County; and
- vaccine hesitancy, efficacy, outreach and dissemination of information specific to populations of concern.

HSDEI also addressed equity, disparity and racial exclusion in vaccine policy formulation.

- HSDEI helped present African American candidates for appointment to the University of Pittsburgh Institutional Review Board (IRB), which resulted in the formation of a committee charged with reviewing the appointment process and making recommendations.

- CVC discussed the University of Pittsburgh IRB appointment process in the context of trustworthiness and policy impact on equity in population health.



Top photo from left to right: Jerry McCombs from Dental Medicine, Mario Browne from Pharmacy, Noble A-W Maseru from HSDEI and Rhonda White from Medicine

Bottom: Medical students Cat Pressimone and Anjana Murali volunteer at a COVID-19 vaccination clinic.



“Our collaboration with HSDEI has enabled us to take a deeper look at the work that must be done and helped us design a path to reach our goals of incorporating diversity, equity and inclusion in the research ecosystem and the research workforce.”

—Denise Smalley  
Core Administrator,  
Clinical and Translational  
Science Institute (CTSI)





### HSDEI Outreach

HSDEI's mission includes preparing and educating a diverse health professions workforce. Hosting youth groups and mentoring undergraduates are just two ways of engaging with students on the pathway to health careers.



Photos to the left: Members of the Premedical Organization for Minority Students practice suturing. Members from HSDEI are advisors for the group.

## Making Pitt Work:

### Noble A-W Maseru, PhD, MPH

After Noble A-W Maseru retired from his position as health commissioner with the Cincinnati Health Department, he planned to return to Georgia, his home for almost three decades. But when he was contacted about serving as the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health (GSPH) associate dean for diversity and inclusion and directing the school's Center for Health Equity, he put that plan on hold.

The change in plan made sense. Maseru has decades of experience in promoting public health and health equity and shaping health policy, from directing school and public health systems to holding professorships at several academic institutions. In those positions, he has focused on making primary and preventive health care equitable and accessible to everyone—doing so in the context of socioeconomic development as it relates to social determinants of health (SDoH) and the public sector's role in achieving health equity in the health of populations. As such, Maseru worked on the recruitment and retention of faculty and increasing admissions and enrollment of students from historically underrepresented populations, thereby advancing health equity and social justice in both academic- and public health practice community-oriented initiatives throughout the region.

The arrival of Anantha Shekhar, MD, PhD, senior vice chancellor for the health sciences and John and Gertrude Petersen Dean, School of Medicine, brought Maseru yet another opportunity. One of Shekhar's core missions for the health sciences is, in addition to diversity, equity and inclusion, to advance transdisciplinary collaboration with an SDoH social justice orientation. Upon learning about Maseru's accomplishments at GSPH, Shekhar invited him to expand his work under the leadership of Paula Davis, MA, associate vice chancellor for diversity, equity and inclusion for the health sciences (HSDEI). Since August 2020, Maseru has served as professor of public health practice and director of social justice, racial equity and faculty engagement with

HSDEI, helping Davis to further transdisciplinary, collaborative racial and health equity work across the health sciences.

Maseru hit the ground running. With HSDEI colleagues and newly appointed associate deans for diversity, equity and inclusion in the health sciences, he facilitated engagement in new and existing public sector and community work—all in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Notably, when data revealed glaring health disparities in Black and Brown communities with respect to the pandemic, Maseru was a founding member of the Black Equity Coalition (BEC), created by predominantly Black stakeholders to ensure access to accurate information about COVID-19 and secure better health and economic outcomes for everyone (particularly vulnerable populations) during the pandemic. Many health sciences faculty members have become involved in projects through BEC. Maseru's decades of experience and BEC leadership led to his membership in the Pennsylvania Department of Health's COVID-19 Health Equity Response Team. According to Allegheny County Councilor Olivia Bennett, his impact was also "vital" in helping to declare racism as a public health crisis in the county, and he has helped make connections and build cohorts when working around incarceration, mental health and policy initiatives.

Within the health sciences, Maseru helped form numerous strategic collaborations and worked to enact Davis's diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives through programming and, particularly, curriculum reshaping. He advised the design and implementation of social justice- and equity-themed courses for the Schools of Nursing and of Medicine; codeveloped the SDoH enrichment component of the School of Medicine Summer Research Program; developed with Loreta Matheo, MD—the Department of Pediatrics' vice chair of diversity, equity and inclusion and clinical associate professor of pediatrics—the School of Medicine's Department of Pediatrics social justice elective; and, with HSDEI

colleagues, established the Schools of the Health Sciences Social Justice Faculty Fellowship, a longitudinal program designed to engage faculty in learning and experiences that address structural inequity and racism.

In regards to advancing social justice and improving population health for Pittsburgh and Allegheny County, Maseru's work includes:

- collaboration with the Community Empowerment Association and Jeanine Buchanich, PhD, MEd, MPH, research assistant professor of biostatistics, to produce the Live Longer project's life expectancy computation of 63 Pittsburgh-area neighborhoods, where they determined a 22-year difference in life expectancy;
- the Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority Water Equity Task Force;
- collaborating with Jackie Smith, PhD, professor of sociology, on the the burgeoning Human Rights Working Group's reparations initiative; and
- partnering with Pitt's Office for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and Center for Civil Rights and Racial Justice to host An American Apartheid City? A Series on Racial Inequities and Injustices in Pittsburgh.

"The work has been terrific because of the different schools and organizations," says Maseru. "The appointment of health sciences associate deans and Paula's initiatives continue to have a ripple effect in building social justice, racial equity and faculty engagement. The collaboration between the health sciences schools and the community has proven to be a paradigm changer and will continue to enrich our institution and improve public health."



Noble A-W Maseru with Paula Davis

**“Over the past couple of years, our city and county have been reacting to the systemic impact of COVID-19 and its mutations. At Black Equity Coalition’s (BEC) inception, Dr. Maseru served as an initial brain-trust to help identify and convene content experts that could provide an immediate health assessment of COVID. His contributions aided on the original strategic action and creation of the BEC Hub and Spoke model. BEC gained tremendous insight, strategic collaborations, expanded network coordination and access to content expertise from around the country and world through Dr. Maseru’s network.”**

**—Black Equity Coalition**

## Town Halls and Lectures

Responding to current societal upheaval, HSDEI partnered with the University of Pittsburgh Office for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion to promote a series of town hall discussions focused on diverse facets of the lives of individuals and communities affected by COVID-19 and social injustice. Like so many programs in 2020-21, the town hall series [“This is Not Normal: Allyship and Advocacy in the Age of COVID-19”](#) was virtual.

HSDEI introduced its [YouTube video channel](#), a collection of recordings of programs focusing on the awareness of diverse populations and monthly celebrations. Highlighted programs include the History of Medicine in Africa, Pride Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, Asian Pacific American Heritage Month and Jewish Heritage Month.

“Thanks for running a great competition in a pandemic world.”

—Amy C. Raslevich,  
Graduate Student,  
Graduate School of Public Health

“HSDEI has been an integral partner in cocreating distinct and impactful programs like the ‘This Is Not Normal’ town hall series. Paula and her team are dynamic agents for change, and I’m thankful to have them as dedicated partners in the work!”

—Ron Idoko  
Diversity and Multicultural Program Manager,  
Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

## Health Disparities and Social Justice Poster Competition

HSDEI hosted its 11th annual Health Disparities and Social Justice Poster Competition, albeit virtually, in March 2021. Posters were received from graduate, doctoral, postdoctoral and first professional students in biomedical and behavioral sciences, including psychology and social work. Submitted posters represented research and community initiatives addressing differences in health status among various populations. The winners of this year’s event were:

Master’s—Taylor Robinson, Department of Epidemiology, Graduate School of Public Health, “Examining the Role of Environmental Pollution, Healthcare Access, and Social Vulnerability in Asthma Emergency Department Visits in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania”

Doctoral—Mary Schiff, Department of Epidemiology, Graduate School of Public Health, “The Differential Impact on Residential Segregation on Gestational Hypertension Development Among Minority Women”

First Professional—Allen Hu, Department of Pediatrics, School of Medicine, “Efficacy of a Social Needs Screening and Home Visiting Program”



In red: Sandra Murray, PhD, professor of cell biology, is an advocate for diversity in scientific research and has been recognized for her distinguished contributions to the advancement of cell biology. She also is the first tenured African American faculty member in the School of Medicine.



# Office of Health Sciences Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

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Consulting  
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Training/Education

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[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFcNzF8L\\_OoRCZI-PxOTzog](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFcNzF8L_OoRCZI-PxOTzog)



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Some photos in this publication were taken prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and may not reflect current health and safety guidelines.

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