Welcome to The Friedman Brain Institute

TOWN HALL Meeting

“Diversity Issues in Neuroscience”

#DiverseBrains
What Prompted This Effort?

While we have made important strides in recruiting women into neuroscience:

• The number of senior women faculty continues to lag.

• We have largely failed in recruiting under-represented minorities into neuroscience.

• I have been struck that highly successful senior women and minority faculty experience unique challenges.

• I have been struck that our more junior women and minority colleagues—students, postdocs, assistant professors—experience such challenges to a greater extent, causing them to doubt their futures in academia.
What Are Our Goals?

Launch a year-long discussion:

• To make everyone aware of the barriers to recruitment and retention of women and minorities in neuroscience.

• To identify tangible steps to reduce such barriers.

• To improve everyone’s appreciation of implicit biases and subconscious behaviors that limit success.

• Short-term: to improve everyone’s sense of productivity and satisfaction within the FBI at Mount Sinai.
  – Serve as a template for other departments/institutes.

• Long-term: to increase the recruitment and retention (promotion) of women and minorities in neuroscience.
Gender Distribution by Department

Mount Sinai data*:

Clinical
- 42% men
- 58% women

Basic Science
- 34% men
- 66% women

21 Departments; 1315 Faculty
AAMC: 39% women

7 Departments; 216 Faculty
AAMC: 33% women

*From Diversity Council; very similar data at comparable institutions
Gender Distribution by Rank

Mount Sinai data*:

- **MSSM Women Faculty**
  - 12% of leadership
  - 25% of professors
  - 35% of associate profs
  - 47% of assistant profs
  - 57% of instructors

- **AAMC Women Faculty**
  - 15% of leadership
  - 28% of professors
  - 37% of associate profs
  - 39% of assistant profs
  - 51% of instructors

*From Diversity Council; very similar data at comparable institutions*
Women are Significantly Under-Represented at Senior Faculty Ranks

Mount Sinai data*:

*From Diversity Council; very similar data at comparable institutions

*p value = 0.006 by Chi Square
Race/Ethnicity by Department

Mount Sinai data*:

Clinical

- 321 White
- 58 Asian
- 29 Black
- 42 Hispanic
- 4 2+

Total: 833 Faculty

- 22 Departments

Basic Science

- 75 White
- 7 Asian
- 2 Black
- 4 Hispanic
- 2 2+

Total: 173 Faculty

- 8 Departments

(Total numbers of each race are indicated)

*From Diversity Council; very similar data at comparable institutions
Race/Ethnicity by Rank

Mount Sinai data*:

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Implicit Bias

• A very large percentage of our decision making is implicit (i.e., subconscious).
  – This can be demonstrated and studied with a large number of “implicit association tests.”

• For example, studies that evaluate responses to resumes for employment or scientific grants:
  – Same resumes/grants with male vs. female names or white vs. black/Hispanic names.
  – Large bias for males/whites.

• We all need to be aware of our inevitable biases.
  – This will increase respect and consideration of others.
Implicit Bias

These “John-Jennifer” differences were equivalent:

• Between male and female faculty.

• Across faculty of all ranks (e.g., junior vs. senior).

Moss-Racusin et al., PNAS (2012)
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• We all need to be aware of our inevitable biases.
  – This will increase respect and consideration of others.
Empirical research has found that:

• Not surprisingly, a good climate is in the eye of the beholder.

• Women and minorities have added burdens when working and competing in the workplace.
  – Women/minority leaders held to higher standards?
  – Tightrope: femininity vs. competence?
  – Social isolation?

• Importance of role models.

• Child-care and work-life balance are important for everyone.
  – Some studies show that men and women report equal challenges; others that women bear more family obligations.
Different Perceptions of Equity

From 2005 Virginia Tech Survey†:

- Campus free of intimidation, harassment, discrimination
- Read/heard/seen offensive comments in workplace
- Faculty treated fairly regardless of gender
- Faculty treated fairly regardless of sexual orientation
- There is accountability for sexist behavior
- Dept head unlikely to intervene over sexist behavior

†Similar data obtained at Mount Sinai in survey several years ago

Diana Bilimoria, IWiN (9/23/10); Courtesy of Sandy Masur
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Examples of the extra burden for women:

“If women are assertive, it can be seen as aggressive.

When women are successful, they're often called "bitchy" and seen as less likable.

Women are less likely to get credit in group projects.

Women are assumed to be less competent until they prove themselves.

When women show anger, they are often judged as too emotional.

Women are often interrupted or ignored in meetings.”
Different Perceptions of Equity

PERCENT OF U.S. WOMEN IN STEM WHO REPORT...

- having to provide more evidence of competence than others to prove themselves.
- that colleagues have suggested they should work fewer hours after having children.
- that at work, they find themselves pressured to play a stereotypically feminine role.*
- that women in their work environments support one another.
- they’ve been mistaken for either administrative or custodial staff.

*SUCH AS “OFFICE MOTHER” OR “DUTIFUL DAUGHTER.”

SOURCE JOAN C. WILLIAMS, KATHERINE W. PHILLIPS, AND ERIKA V. HALL

https://hbr.org/2015/03/the-5-biases-pushing-women-out-of-stem
Even though it’s 2015, we know that bad behavior persists.
For the second time in less than a year, the Yale School of Medicine is embroiled in charges of sexual harassment.

A sexual harassment case that has been unfolding without public notice for nearly five years within the Yale School of Medicine has roiled the institution and led to new allegations that the university is insensitive to instances of harassment against women.

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Different Allocations of Household Duties

More equal, but not equal

Minutes per day spent by American:

- **MOTHERS**
  - Paid work: 76 in 1965, 207 in 2012
  - Housework*: 254 in 1965, 131 in 2012
  - Child care: 90 in 1965, 117 in 2012

- **FATHERS**
  - Paid work: 400 in 1965, 361 in 2012
  - Housework*: 13 in 1965, 41 in 2012
  - Child care: 21 in 1965, 65 in 2012

*Housework includes cooking, cleaning, shopping, and maintenance.
Diversity Enhances Quality and Productivity

Empirical research has found that:

• Breakthroughs emerge by looking at complex problems from diverse perspectives.

• Inclusive enterprises with a diverse work force that recognize and value unique individual contributions tend to be more successful than more homogeneous ones – lessons from business.

• As the complexity of scientific problems increases, the need to build and to work within inter- and multi-disciplinary teams increases.

Recent Recommendations For Improvement

Seven steps from NYSCF article to promote gender equity:

1. Flexible family care spending
2. Extra hands
3. Balanced seminars and review committees
4. Incorporate implicit bias statements
5. Education (e.g., seminars, townhalls)
6. Create report card for equality
7. Expand database of women scientists

Smith et al., *Cell Stem Cell*, 2015
Tangible Steps For Improvement

*Initial determinations:*

- Increase transparency:
  - Resources, salaries, promotions, etc.

- Uniformity: leveling the playing field.

- Mentoring & sponsoring:
  - Junior faculty mentoring committees
  - Mentoring available to students and postdocs
  - Senior faculty mentoring for leadership

- “Affirmative Attention”
  - Think about inclusion/diversity for every symposium, panel, dinner guest list, speaker itinerary, search committee, other committees, awards & honors, etc.
This Year’s Planned Activities

Today’s Town Hall
Nestler, Goate, Brennand, Huntley

Implicit Bias Workshop, Thursday November 19

Panel Discussion, Thursday December 3
Hurd, Juarez, Heller, Krieger

Seminar speaker: Dr. Peg McCarthy
Male-Female Sex Differences in Brain Function
February 4

Seminar speaker: Dr. Liz Phelps
Implicit Race Bias and Brain Imaging
May 12

Individual group meetings with students, postdocs, and faculty

FBI Retreat, May 20
Our Goals

**Improving Diversity:**

- Increasing recruitment, retention, and satisfaction;
- Promoting respect, collegiality, inclusion, collaboration, and cooperation;
- Will increase faculty and student productivity and improve our science and patient care.

#DiverseBrains

http://neuroscience.mssm.edu/diversityinneuroscience