

Race and Gender Equity Workgroup

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In response to the 2020 killing of George Floyd—one more in a long line of people of color who faced death by police—PIRE issued a public statement of outrage and support for nationwide protests. The statement included:

To respond effectively, we must further recognize it is more than individual racism, but bias within and across key systems of policing, criminal justice, education, employment, and finance that disproportionately impact Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color.

With this in mind, PIRE looked inward and developed the Race and Gender Equity Workgroup (RGEW.) It was a process. It began with informal email exchanges and was embraced and supported by PIRE Executive Management. Recognizing the need to have broad and inclusive representation to have an impact, the RGEW consists of PIRE Executive Management (including the CEO), all Center Directors, at least one additional representative from each Center, and the Central Business Office (CBO.)

RGEW does not have a formal vision or mission statement but we do have an aspirational goal: *Create and maintain the PIRE we want to be—diverse, equitable, and inclusive.* We identified three focus areas: Career Pathways, Training/ Education, and Subs/Vendors. We formed temporary subcommittees to address each area and developed nine recommendations. (See page 2.)

CAREER PATHWAYS

The purpose of the Career Pathways subcommittee was to consider potential impediments to (and facilitators of) racial and gender equity and diversity in PIRE's practices and policies regarding recruitment, hiring, training, performance reviews, compensation, promotion, and career advancement. The subcommittee met six times between October and December 2020 to identify key factors affecting career pathways and produce actionable recommendations that will advance race and gender equity across PIRE.

Members:
Melissa Abadi, Carol Cunradi, Liz Lilliott, Kirsten Thompson, Martha Waller, Bill Wieczorek, and Catie Willging.

TRAINING/EDUCATION

PIRE currently offers educational and training opportunities on a variety of topics, such as management skills, communication skills, harassment, and human subjects protections. In doing so, we hope to support the development of well-rounded, capable, and responsible staff members. The training and education goals of the RGEW are more specific. The Workgroup's Training and Education subcommittee was tasked with reviewing PIRE's current training and education options and developing recommendations to support a culture that fosters diversity, equity, and inclusion. Through virtual meetings and emails, the Training and Education subcommittee reviewed PIRE's training options, held discussions on the recommendations with the RGEW, and identified potential training and educational opportunities that may be further developed or identified through work completed by the other two subcommittees.

Members:
David Currey, Mark Johnson, Mary Gordon, Nicole Hollingsworth, and Roland Moore.

SUBS/VENDORS

Racial and gender equity at PIRE extends to whom we choose to do business with—that is, our subrecipients, subcontractors, consultants, and vendors. To that end, the Subcontracts/Vendors subcommittee met several times to discuss mechanisms for better documenting the status of our current subs and vendors and for identifying a diverse and inclusive group of additional subrecipients and vendors with whom we can partner in the future.

Members:
Gary Klig, Diane McKnight, Al Stein-Seroussi

TAKE OUR SURVEY!

The RGEW would like to receive input from all PIRE employees concerning their personal experiences and perceptions around career pathways and training/education issues. The Career Pathways and Training/Education subcommittees devoted considerable effort into developing a PIRE-wide survey to gather data from all staff. We encourage all staff to take this anonymous survey.

https://www.research.net/r/RGEW_allstaff

COMMITTEE	RECOMMENDATIONS
CAREER PATHWAYS	<p>Establish consistent policies within and across centers for hiring, raises, and promotions. Rescind PIRE pay supplement to those at the top of the NIH pay scale. Consider revising salary ranges to optimize equity.</p>
	<p>In collaboration with the Training/Education subcommittee, create opportunities for formal and informal mentoring that promotes diversity and equity (e.g., Create PIRE-wide manuscript writing support group.)</p>
	<p>With Training/Education, provide diversity training, expectations, and support to supervisors, staff, and new hires. Provide supervisor training with explicit attention to equity in performance evaluations, raises, and promotions.</p>
TRAINING/ EDUCATION	<p>Development of a Mentoring program model. This recommendation supports a manageable model for a program that supports mentors with skills and resources and mentees with the skills the mentors gain from this program and their work and life experience, specifically, scientists of color and women. This mentoring program will assist junior/mid-level staff with relevant trainings and career development.</p>
	<p>Leadership and General Staff Development. Through this recommendation the committee will suggest guidance on leadership development for positions such as CDs, but also provide leadership development for diverse staff (i.e. women and staff of color) where there may be inconsistent opportunities in leadership roles and/or positions. The committee will also suggest: 1) supervisor training with attention to equity in performance evaluations, raises and promotions; and 2) diversity training, expectations, and support for all staff.</p>
	<p>Development of a New Hire Orientation program. In discussions, we realized that there is no “PIRE Orientation” for new employees/hires. The PIRE Board of Directors has an orientation available to new members. The orientation includes the history of PIRE, organizational structure, and information on each Center. This type of Orientation would benefit new PIRE hires offering more of a connection with PIRE as well as opportunities to engage in cross-Center collaborations. The orientation for staff should include information about diversity expectations and support.</p>
SUBS/ VENDORS	<p>Educate CDs, Site Administrators, and PIs about two related topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The difference between Subrecipients, and Independent Contractors/Vendors, and the policies/procedures for engagement of these entities. • <i>Small Business Dynamic Search</i> within SAMS.gov, providing a mechanism for staff to search for minority, women, and veteran other owned small businesses, thereby expanding our pool of potential partners or vendors.
	<p>PIRE staff should make a concerted effort to obtain self-certification data from all new subs and vendors. Those data will be entered into CostPoint (CP). CP would then become a real-time database of current and recent subs and vendors that can be accessed by Center Directors (CDs) and Site Administrators (SAs) when they or PIs are looking for diverse and inclusive partners. We would need to educate CDs, SAs, and PIs about how to use CP for searching for partners. <i>This is currently mandatory for federal procurements that require small business subcontracting plans (e.g., the VA project). We would want to encourage this for all new subs and vendors.</i></p>
	<p>Create/maintain a list of minority and women-owned businesses (drawn from CP) that can be accessed by all PIRE staff. The current list that was begun by the RGEW is a starting point. To fill in gaps, we recommend sending a survey to all entities on the list, asking them to self-certify if they identify as a minority or women-owned business.</p>