

Improving Diversity in our BIRC Seminar Series

Why is it important to intentionally pursue diversity in guiding our selection of seminar speakers?

- Challenges social barriers that underrepresented groups face in attaining research opportunities like these
- Gives trainees representative role models for scientific success. “If you can see it, you can be it”.
- Provide platforms for scientists from under-represented groups with diverse research experiences and interests
- Generates new perspectives in imaging, potentially giving rise to new collaborations
- Aligns with BIRC Strategic Plan integrating diversity and inclusion as core values

What are some guidelines in selecting a diverse group of speakers?

- Establish a balanced, diverse, and informed committee
- Develop a speaker policy & make the policy visible
- Collect data and use it to inform future policy
- Commit to established representation quotas for each panel (e.g. 50% women, 20% Black, Indigenous, People of Colour (BIPOC))

Therefore, we need to:

- Identify individuals on the BIRC committee who can commit some time to read resources on increasing speaker diversity
- Charge the subcommittee with developing a plan for speaker selection
- Publish the policy on the BIRC website
- Use Twitter hashtags #WomenInStem, #BlackInStem, #IndigenousSTEM, #LGBTSTEM and Imaging society sites to advertise the policy and recruit speakers
- Be willing to make the investment into accommodations and fair compensation for underrepresented groups.

Suggested resources:

- The women’s or diversity committees of Imaging societies
- Speaker databases at @500WomenScientists <https://500womenscientists.org/resources>
- The cited papers (attached)
- <https://www.bhallalab.com/equity-reading-list>
- <https://hbr.org/2019/09/what-it-will-take-to-improve-diversity-at-conferences>
- <https://www.mtu.edu/diversity/council/pdfs/tips-for-diverse-panels-and-speakers.pdf>
- Martin JL 2014 PLoS Computational Biology 10:e1003903
- Nittrouer CL et al 2018 PNAS 115:104-8, www.pnas.org/cgi/doi/10.1073/pnas.1708414115
- Hagan et al 2020 J. Microbiol. Biol. Educ. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1128/jmbe.v21i1.2105>

Our student subcommittee informed themselves using these resources, and generated the following policy regarding selection of speakers for BIRC:

BIRC Speaker Policy:

BIRC wishes to recruit a diverse slate of seminar speakers who are talented scientists/clinicians in the fields of medical and molecular imaging. We wish to promote exciting advances in imaging research through a diversity and inclusion lens. Our committee has come up with the following points to consider when putting together our seminar series for 2020/2021:

1. Seek early-career investigators (within 5 years of their appointment). These people need visibility and collaborations, and will provide new perspectives in the field.
2. Intentionally seek out women and people of colour within your networks. You may need to go beyond your networks, and engage with the women's groups or diversity groups within your societies. Databases of self-nominated scientists who are members of marginalized or historically underserved groups (eg. <https://request500womenscientists.org/>) may serve as helpful starting points.
3. Ask speakers to engage with students by injecting more humanity into their talks. Encourage them to devote a few minutes to other, related topics, such as mentoring, their career trajectory, their work in diversity or anti-racism, community engagement, health policy, science communication, etc.
4. Experts don't necessarily have PhDs. We should engage with the local community or patient advocacy groups for their perspectives on inclusivity in imaging research.
5. Consider a nominal honorarium for early-career investigators, since they should be acknowledged for their efforts in putting together a talk and spending time with us while juggling multiple responsibilities at work and at home.
6. Involve trainees in the speaker selection process. Set aside seminar slots for trainee-invited speakers and request that BIRC trainees provide suggestions and/or invite speakers so that they can have a direct influence on the seminar series.

Out of a proposed slate of 8 speakers for the 2020/21 year, we propose adhering to the following guidelines for selecting speakers:

1. New recruits to the Department of Medical Imaging. They have protected time for research and are seeking collaborations from BIRC scientists.
2. Two speakers invited by the BIRC Student subcommittee.
3. 3 speakers who are ECIs or women/people of colour
4. Two speakers who are established scientists.