

Charter Statement

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee
Department of Human Genetics, University of Chicago

Purpose

The purpose of the Committee is to initiate, execute, coordinate, and promote efforts to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in our department, our university, and the scientific community. Through actions and advocacy, the Committee seeks to make our department a vibrant scientific community in which research, education, training, and outreach are strengthened by the expression of diverse perspectives and approaches. We will also contribute to advancing justice and equity at the University of Chicago, in the scientific fields of genetics and genomics, and in society.

We will continually work to:

- Increase the diversity of identities and backgrounds at all levels of our department by recognizing and counteracting biases that affect outreach, recruitment, retention, mentorship, education, and research.
- Foster an inclusive environment in our department that celebrates scientists, trainees, and staff of every identity and background, and that supports the expression of this diversity.
- Empower all members of our department to work together to build a diverse, equitable, and inclusive scientific community.

The community that the Committee serves includes anyone who is officially affiliated with the Human Genetics Department, anyone who is enrolled as a graduate student in the Human Genetics Program, and anyone who is a member of a lab that is affiliated with the Human Genetics Department, which includes graduate students who are in programs outside of Human Genetics, postdocs with affiliations outside of Human Genetics, and research staff with affiliations outside of Human Genetics.

Scope

A vast number of people have been excluded from science – or their development and advancement within science has been hindered – because they are members of systematically marginalized groups based on race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, country of origin, socioeconomic class, and disability. The Committee's mission is to improve diversity and equity in our department and to create an inclusive environment along all these dimensions of human identity, culture, and experience.

Membership

The Committee is composed of faculty, postdocs, graduate students, and staff associated with the Department of Human Genetics at the University of Chicago. Faculty must be officially affiliated with the Human Genetics Department. Postdocs can either be officially affiliated with the Human Genetics Department or members of labs affiliated with the Human Genetics Department. Graduate students can either be officially affiliated with the Human Genetics Department or members of labs affiliated with the Human Genetics Department. Staff can either be officially affiliated with the Human Genetics Department or members of labs affiliated with the Human Genetics Department.

Each group may select up to 3 members to serve at any time. Each year, the Committee will inform all department members of the opportunity to serve on the Committee. The selection process will be determined by each group but must include all members of the group, and the selection processes and outcomes will be reported to all members of the Department annually. Term lengths will vary by group: 3-year term for faculty, 1-year term for postdocs, 1.5-year term for graduate students, and 1-year term for staff. Each faculty member of the Committee will take a turn serving as Committee Chair during the second year of their term.

Operation

All members will abide by the Committee's Code of Conduct. Meetings will be held on a monthly basis during the academic year, or more frequently if necessary. Non-members affiliated with the Department are welcome to attend, provided they request permission from a Committee member in advance of the meeting and abide by the Code of Conduct during the meeting. The Committee will hold at least two meetings per year to address the state of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the Department, in which all department members are invited to review the Committee's activities and discuss ideas for future work. The Committee will keep minutes of its meetings, which will be available to all department members via the Committee's website or upon request.

The Committee will make decisions by consensus. The responsibility to act as secretary will rotate among Committee members from one meeting to the next. It will be the responsibility of the Committee Chair to ensure that the responsibility of acting as secretary is distributed among the Committee members over time.

The Committee will maintain an active website to update the department on Committee activities, provide members of the department with access to relevant resources and information, and celebrate and promote diversity in science.