

## COLORADO NORC - PLAN FOR ENHANCING DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES

**The importance of diversity.** The Colorado NORC is firmly dedicated to the belief that diversity fuels creativity and innovation, enhancing both productivity and the quality of research. Moreover, increasing access to healthcare and research participation for underrepresented populations, who are disproportionately affected by malnutrition and obesity, requires a diverse workforce. The success of trainees from minoritized communities is also strengthened when they have underrepresented faculty to serve as role models and mentors. Consequently, we are committed to recruiting and fostering the career development of talented underrepresented faculty specializing in nutrition and obesity research at CU-AMC. Additionally, fostering an inclusive and intentionally supportive work environment is seminal to career happiness and productivity. Successfully addressing these issues will enhance retention and recruitment of outstanding faculty and trainees from underrepresented communities.

**Institutional investment in advancing inclusivity in research.** CU-AMC has substantially invested in diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) across campus with training offered by the Dean's office, Departments of Medicine and Pediatrics, CCTSI and the graduate school. A variety of programming opportunities are available across campus for both faculty and trainees. A couple of notable examples are: The Central Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement offers *The BOND Mentoring Program*, which exists to increase the sense of belonging for staff and faculty by pairing mentors and mentees, particularly those from marginalized backgrounds, and *The Department of Medicine's Bias Reduction in Medicine* program with several locally trained facilitators. Lastly, CU-AMC's efforts in diversity and inclusion are underscored by the fact that we are a recognized *Hispanic-Serving Institution*, the first research university in Colorado to receive this designation from the U.S. Department of Education.

### Colorado NORC Action Plan:

- *NORC Leadership commitment to DEI:* We have also invested in diversity at the leadership level with inclusion of junior faculty members and minoritized individuals to our NORC Executive Committee. In the next funding cycle, we will ensure that all administrative and Core leadership will undergo training addressing topics including but not limited to: Inclusive Language, Implicit Bias, Microaggressions, Allyship, and Upstanding, Diversity (benefits and challenges of diversity in the workplace), Equity in Action, and Professionalism.
- *CIMER (Center for the Improvement of the Mentoring Experience in Research):* This fall, 27 of our members, including 4 members of our executive leadership team, attended a NORC sponsored CIMER Training program and two of our members will undergo the facilitator training in December 2024. This will allow us to offer annual CIMER training events for our as well as regular interactions and follow-up training opportunities on mentoring for cultural diversity for each of these cohorts.
- *National efforts to support DEI:* Our center director and one of our junior executive committee members (MacLean, Bethea) are members of the national NORC DEI Steering Committee and contributed to a publication.
- *Enrichment:* To both enhance diversity and uplift the careers of underrepresented individuals, we will include a "Rising Star" talk at the annual NORC retreat. This rising star will be a junior investigator from a minoritized background.
- *Health Equity:* CU-AMC is a national leader in women's health research. 41% of NORC Members have studies focused on women's health and the consideration of sex as a biological variable. We have a Special Center of Research Excellence (SCORE; U54 AG062319) team science grant led by Dr. Wendy Kohrt that engages a broad range of NORC Members. Lastly, a major aim of our NEP is our partnership with AHCW to disseminate new knowledge to the community.
- *Research support for minoritized individuals:* Over the past 5 years with the help of an \$150,000 NIH supplement, we increased the proportion of minoritized pilot awardees from 13% (2013-2018) to 36% (2019-2024). We have also partnered with the CU-DRC to sponsor a P&F grant for a trainee that is a minoritized individual. These types of partnerships and efforts will continue to be a major emphasis of our cores and programs, as we seek to provide research opportunities for minoritized individuals in the Colorado NORC community.