

PAIR-UP: Partnering to Advance Imaging Research for URM scientists Program

Core Administration

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PAIR-UP (Partnering to Advance Imaging Research for URM scientists Program) is a new program designed to provide professional development workshops, hands-on training, tutorials and conferences to advance research projects of Black scientists reliant on advance imaging technology. PAIR-UP is for scientists at all levels including, faculty, core microscopy facility managers, postdoctoral fellows and graduate students.

PAIR-UP was developed in large part to address the fact that predominately White institutions (PWI) have thus far failed to achieve significant faculty diversity. Black faculty at PWIs are often the only one or one of a very small number of Black faculty in the STEM departments.

The failure to hire Black faculty at PWIs is not due to the lack of a pool of excellent candidates. Gibbs et al. (KD Gibbs Jr, J Basson, IM Xierali, DA Broniatowski. Decoupling of the minority PhD talent pool and assistant professor hiring in medical school basic science departments in the US, Elife, 2016) published a landmark study in which they compiled and analyzed data on the number of URM graduate students completing the PhD and the number of URM scientists hired as faculty members in departments in the biomedical sciences. They found that the number of PhDs awarded to URM students increased 9-fold over the 33-year period from 1980-2013 but the number hired in faculty positions remained flat over this period. They documented the fact that the supply of PhD scientists from URM backgrounds is decoupled from the hiring of URM scientists on faculties at major research universities and thereby discredited the myth that the supply of URM PhDs is the problem.

By providing access to state-of-the-art imaging equipment and training by experts in the field, the expected outcomes will be increased productivity, creativity, and innovation of participants in the program.