

AUGUST 2020

HEI'S ACTION TO PROMOTE INCLUSION

The Health Effects Institute (HEI) has been heartened by the renewed and widespread attention to the persistent racism that excludes certain people and groups — particularly African Americans and Hispanics — from the full opportunity to engage in endeavors of American society, including scientific education and research. We recognize that we too may have contributed, even if unconsciously, to the development and perpetuation of these exclusions. We also know that our ongoing work to investigate the potential disparate health effects of air pollution on diverse populations will be significantly enriched by taking concrete action to engage these excluded populations in every aspect of our work.

HEI is taking action to promote inclusion. We seek to focus on individuals from racial and ethnic groups that have been underrepresented for generations in environment and health research, i.e., African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, and other groups identified by the National Institutes of Health¹. With this statement, and importantly with immediate and sustained actions to follow, HEI will:

First, take every step to engage and provide a welcoming environment for underrepresented scientists in the scientific work of HEI. We will, at a minimum:

- Proactively seek out and provide — in every aspect of HEI's scientific endeavors — opportunities to elevate and advance the careers of scientists from underrepresented groups. We will actively identify these scientists and:
 - Invite them to serve as reviewers, committee and panel members, and speakers at HEI conferences/webinars.
 - Seek their participation in HEI's Rosenblith New Investigator and Annual Conference Travel Award programs.
 - Sponsor travel awards for professional meetings and scholarships to ongoing training and internship programs.
- Engage with scientists from underrepresented groups to significantly foster interest in HEI research funding, enhance their ability to apply for funding, and encourage and reward HEI-funded research teams with diverse members.
- Identify, recruit, and provide a welcoming environment for underrepresented scientists as members of HEI's Scientific Committees and Scientific Staff.

¹ NIH's definition of underrepresented populations includes individuals from racial and ethnic groups underrepresented in health-related sciences on a national basis, individuals with disabilities who are defined as those with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, and individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds, noting that women from all of these groups face particular challenges at the graduate level and beyond in scientific fields (Source: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-20-031.html>).

Second, provide a safe and welcoming environment for all at HEI, free from discrimination of all types, including race, gender, LGBTQ+, ethnicity, national origin, and disability. To ensure that HEI achieves this goal, we will:

- Scrutinize and revise as necessary all personnel and other policies.
- Significantly enhance efforts to actively recruit more diverse members to the HEI staff, leadership, and the Board of Directors.
- Take every opportunity to enhance the diversity of our procurement sources.

Third, take both immediate and sustained action. We will analyze our track record for engaging underrepresented scientists in our work, set goals for improving our performance, monitor progress, and report publicly and regularly on that progress — and identify steps still to be taken.

With these near-term and sustained actions, HEI aims to do its part in addressing the longstanding exclusions that challenge our society and to promote inclusion in all of its work.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Greenbaum', with a stylized, flowing script.

Dan Greenbaum, President
Health Effects Institute