



June 2020

ABRF's Commitment to Inclusion, Diversity, and Social Justice

The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement's mission is to “eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes.” <https://blacklivesmatter.com/about/>. It should no longer be possible to ignore the message in their mission. The killing of George Floyd is horrific, but it is not new. It is only one of the more recent events of its kind. It is simply so public and so shameful that we can no longer divert our attention and turn our eyes away. We can no longer pretend that injustice and oppression do not exist.

The unjust and horrific death of George Floyd has reignited our national discussions around racism and highlighted the fact that such acts are not the only types of oppression. Violence and oppression are not confined to a single methodology. Nor are they confined to race. Our country is comprised of many who suffer from the variety of injustices of marginalization, prejudice, and racism. The undeniable truths facing us at this moment require us to evaluate our individual and collective position, and to take a stand. Late as it is, we must now unapologetically and proactively act towards diversity, inclusion, and most importantly, justice.

ABRF is evaluating its own role in our society and how we as a group will take responsibility for change. Words are important, but our words are nothing without action. Action must be the only true measure of our commitment. We must think systematically and actionably to promote the culture that we value, and act in concrete ways that make a difference.

In the days, weeks, months, years to come, ABRF will continue our programs with consideration for inequities in our society. We will prioritize and weave into the fabric of our organization the demands of inclusion, diversity, and justice. Because our history shows us that prejudice, racism, and injustice has and will continue to attempt to adapt and evolve, we too will continuously adapt and evolve to demand a rewarding, safe and just environment for all.

Many in our organization are already involved in social justice endeavors. They are ahead in this process. They helped us to begin this process. We are thankful for their leadership and encourage everyone to follow their lead. Please reach out to them and support their work. Please make a personal commitment to this yourself. To start, we ask that you review the list of action items we are compiling below. It is only a beginning, and it is incomplete. We in the ABRF leadership ask for your help to review, critique, and develop these action plans. Each of us may be in different stages in this process, but we need your input, and we need our collective energy as we navigate the challenging terrain ahead.

ABRF Actions:

- Review and update the ABRF mission statement, by-laws, and strategic plan to reflect our commitment to promote and demonstrate inclusion for underrepresented groups in our organization
- Develop criteria for inclusion of underrepresented groups in our selection of candidates for the EB, ABRF award, and Member of Year award
- Work with our partners to promote women and minority owned suppliers and require sponsor partners and organizations who participate in ABRF activities to adhere to equal opportunity practices
- Mentor and promote shared resource careers for groups currently underrepresented in STEM. Partner with Maximizing Access to Research Careers (MARC) Undergraduate Student Training in Academic Research and other organizations that provide support for students who are underrepresented in the biomedical sciences
- Create criteria/guidelines for increased diversity on panels and among meeting speakers
- Continuously review information, and develop a continuous improvement plan for diversity, inclusion, and justice

We look forward to hearing from you about how ABRF can contribute to this vital effort.

Thank you for being a part of the ABRF Community.

ABRF Executive Board