

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Report

2023



Whitehead
Institute

“Enhancing diversity, ensuring equity and fostering a safe and welcoming culture are fundamental to the Institute’s mission of creating new knowledge and preparing scientific leaders.”

RUTH LEHMANN

President and Director, Whitehead Institute



Ruth Lehmann
President and Director
Whitehead Institute

Letter from the Director

Whitehead Institute’s ability to continue as a leader in biological research and training depends on our being a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community—a place where each person can thrive both individually and as part of a cohesive, highly effective organization.

Our multifaceted Strategic Plan for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) is the roadmap for pursuing that overarching objective. The Plan’s core commitments include:

- Improving the hiring, retaining, and promoting of diverse talent
- Creating and maintaining an inclusive culture that promotes physical and mental well-being and respect for all Whitehead Institute community members
- Developing partnerships to increase engagement and outreach with local communities to improve accessibility particularly for individuals from groups underrepresented in biomedical sciences
- Encouraging open dialogue and facilitating learning opportunities to address DE&I topics, and making them available to the entire Whitehead Institute community.

This document—the second Whitehead Institute DE&I Annual Report—details our progress in implementing the DE&I Strategic Plan and acting on our core commitments.

Among our most important DE&I-focused achievements over this past year are:

- We refreshed the membership of the Institute’s DE&I Council, now in its second year. The Council comprises representatives of faculty and administrative and research staff, who are responsible for supporting the Institute’s DEI commitments. They also serve as ambassadors for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion throughout the Whitehead community.
- We celebrated the first anniversary of the establishment of the Institute’s DE&I Inclusion Networks, which are designed to create programming and events and to build connections across the organization. There are now nine Networks: Accessible Whitehead Alliance, Asian American and Pacific Islander, Black and African Diaspora, DEI Allies, First Generation College Graduate, LGBTQIA+, Parents, Whitehead Unidos, and Women@WIBR.

- We relaunched the Science for the Non-Scientist Series, in which Institute trainees present their research in easily understandable ways to members of our community who are not scientists.
- Our new High School Internship Program enabled six students from historically underrepresented groups to work directly with our Members, postdocs and staff scientists, exploring biomedical science and gaining experience with hands-on research. Also, during Massachusetts STEM Week, we welcomed students from Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School for a lab tour and conversations with our postdocs.
- We continued expanding our trainee mentoring initiatives, and the Postdoc Second Mentoring Program and the Graduate Student/Postdoc Mentoring Program sponsored sessions at the Institute's Scientific Retreat that enable trainees to continue building connections with faculty and between labs.
- We expanded our engagement in the MIT Summer Research Program (MSRP), which aims to help increase the number of underrepresented and underserved students in research. This past year, 11 Whitehead labs hosted a total of 14 MSRP students.
- Our DE&I staff team continue to bring focused energy to the goal of sustaining an inclusive, welcoming environment for everyone in the Whitehead Institute community.

I encourage you to review the Report in its entirety, and to reach out to Dilly Wilson, Director of HR and Institute DE&I Officer or Sharon Bright, DEI Manager about any element of our DE&I efforts.

Best regards,



Ruth Lehmann
President and Director
Whitehead Institute



Whitehead Institute Member Iain Cheeseman and Graduate Students Yi Fei Tao and Elena Radul

PHOTO: GRETCHEN ERTL/WHITEHEAD INSTITUTE

Our DE&I Value Statement

Whitehead Institute believes diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) are integral to its values and mission. As a research institute dedicated to improving human health through biomedical science, we believe that diverse thought invokes creative inquiry, drives innovation and fuels scientific breakthrough. We welcome individuals of all backgrounds including race, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, age, veteran status, national origin, disability, marital status, parental status and socioeconomic status and/or origin.



Our DE&I Five Year Strategic Plan: Commitments for Enhancing Our Community

Fostering a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive community takes a strong commitment to real, meaningful action. In 2020, with feedback from stakeholders across the Institute including the Whitehead Institute Board of Directors and faculty, Whitehead Institute developed the following Commitments, which outline our action-oriented approach to establishing a culture that values diversity of perspectives and is supportive of researchers and staff from a variety of lived experiences, perspectives, and backgrounds.

Our Commitments

1

Improving hiring, retention and promotion of diverse talent

- Enhance professional development of future leaders in science
- Enhance professional development opportunities for administrative and research staff
- Increase outreach and hiring of diverse scientists and administrative and research staff

2

Creating and maintaining an inclusive culture that promotes physical and mental well-being and respect for all Whitehead Institute community members

- Conduct training to promote a more diverse, equitable and inclusive culture
- Build an inclusive One-Whitehead Culture

3

Developing partnerships to increase engagement and outreach with local communities to improve accessibility particularly for individuals from groups underrepresented in biomedical sciences

- Enhance targeted actions to build a diverse pipeline of future scientists

4

Encouraging open dialogue and facilitating learning opportunities to address DE&I topics which are available to the entire Whitehead community.

- Develop Seminar Series focused on DE&I topics
- Adopt a DE&I statement and post on Institute and individual lab sites
- Enhance communication on DE&I progress and activities



Associate Director of Sponsored Programs Sheri Farnum, Grants Officer of Sponsored Programs
Ronald Rankin and Senior Grants Officer of Sponsored Programs Raysa Tapia

PHOTO: MADELEINE TURNER/WHITEHEAD INSTITUTE

Whitehead Institute DE&I Leadership

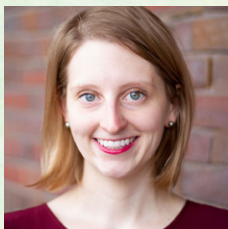
Whitehead Institute convened its second DE&I Council in 2023 with representation from across the Institute. The council is made up of 12 members, selected to maximize diversity of perspectives. The Council meets monthly and its members serve a one-year term with bi-annual appointments. To ensure continuity from year-to-year and provide a strong foundation, half of the inaugural members remain on the Council for six months.

The Council contributes thought leadership to innovative initiatives designed to enhance our community's inclusive culture. Since its inception, the Council has provided input on the DE&I Seminar Series, the Science for the Non-Scientist Seminar Series and the Postdoc Second Mentoring Program.

COUNCIL MEMBERS



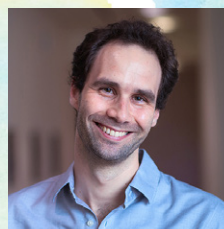
Wenjuan Du
Graduate Student
Corradin Lab



Michelle Frank
Postdoctoral Associate
Bartel Lab



Lisa Girard
Director of Strategic
Communications
*Communications &
Public Affairs*



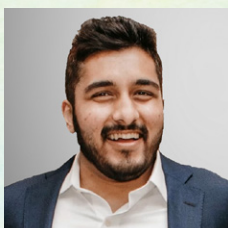
Sinisa Hrvatin
Whitehead Institute
Member
Hrvatin Lab



Nicholas Hutchins
Graduate Student
Li Lab



Stephen Mraz
Technical Assistant II
*Genome Technology
Core*



Fatir Qureshi
Data Scientist
Corradin Lab



Aditya Raguram
Whitehead Fellow
Raguram Lab

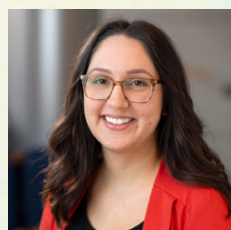


Ido Sagi
Postdoctoral Fellow
Young Lab



Reuben Saunders
Graduate Student
Weissman Lab

STAFF



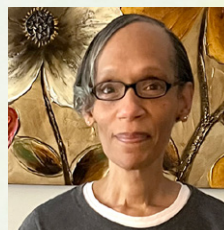
Alyssa Slicko
HMMI Research
Technician II
Yamashita Lab



Han Tran
Postdoctoral Fellow
Lehmann Lab



Dilly Wilson
Director of HR and
Institute DE&I Officer



Sharon Bright
DEI Manager

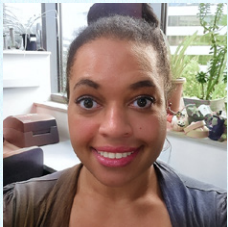


Caroline Romano
HR and DEI Specialist

Whitehead Institute Inclusion Networks

- Groups of people who are connected by a common identity, interest or purpose. They address shared concerns together, provide support, build camaraderie, and create a safe space where employees can be their whole selves.
- The Nine Institute's Networks focus on issues that impact historically underrepresented staff at Whitehead Institute and other diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives important to the Institute's DEI strategic plan.

ACCESSIBLE WHITEHEAD ALLIANCE

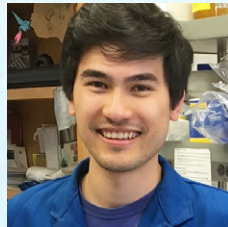


Amanda Chilaka

ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER

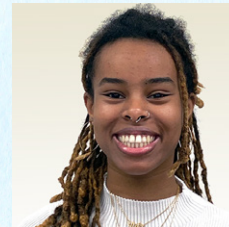


Han Tran



Ryan Muller

BLACK AND AFRICAN DIASPORA

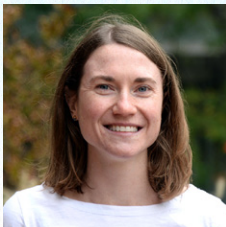


Yoki Miliard



Baboucarr Lowe

DEI ALLIES



Tessa Bertozzi

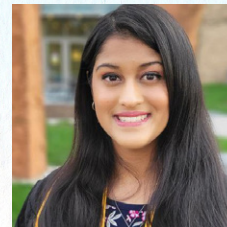


Ido Sagi

FIRST GENERATION COLLEGE GRADUATE

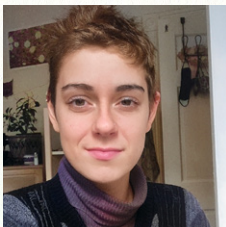


Tenzin Kunchok



Hannah Ramcharan

LGBTQIA+

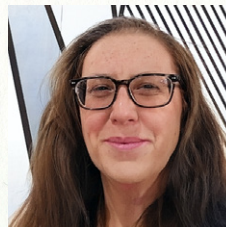


Hailey Erb



Megan Madden

PARENTS



Jennifer Love



Arjuna Rajakumar

WHITEHEAD UNIDOS



Luiza Saad



Anais Tsai

WOMEN@WIBR



Xochitl Luna



Alexandra Schnell

A Selection of Our 2023 Inclusion Networks Events



From left to right: DEI Seminar Series with speaker, Autumn Wilke: hosted by the Accessible Whitehead Alliance and DEI Allies Networks, Asian American and Pacific Islander Network café outing, Indigenous Food celebration with speaker, Chef Sherry Pocknett and Hispanic Heritage Month celebration with the Mariachi Veritas de Harvard

PHOTO: SHARON BRIGHT AND KEHUI XIANG /WHITEHEAD INSTITUTE

Inclusion Networks Events (continued)



From left to right: Black and African Diaspora Network bowling night, Diwali celebration, DEI Allies Network book club with author, Helen Elaine Lee and Juneteenth celebration with saxophonist, Benjamin Flenyol

PHOTO: SHARON BRIGHT, AMANDA CHILAKA AND MARLA THARP/WHITEHEAD INSTITUTE



Whitehead Institute Member Mary Gehring and Undergraduate Intern Luke Young-Xu

PHOTO: GRETCHEN ERTL/WHITEHEAD INSTITUTE

DE&I Seminar Series

Throughout the year, our community comes together to broaden our awareness of diverse perspectives through the DE&I Seminar Series. Whitehead Institute has welcomed six speakers since the program's launch in June 2022.



Dr. Menah Pratt

February 2023

“Black History: Civil Rights and Social Justice”

Dr. Menah Pratt, Vice President for Strategic Affairs and Diversity, and Professor of Education (with tenure) at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, focused on the history and experience of African Americans, race, gender and class in America.



Dr. Maeve McLaughlin

October 2023

“Transcription and Transitions”

Dr. Maeve McLaughlin, Postdoctoral Fellow at the Crosson Lab of Michigan State University, shared their perspective on phage biology and transitioning while in academia.



Dr. Robin Aguilar

June 2023

“Cultivating Community and Accessible Research Spaces for Queer and Trans Researchers”

Dr. Robin Aguilar, Teaching Developer at the University of Washington in the Department of Genome Sciences, explored their perspectives as a trans and gender nonconforming scientist regarding their personal experiences in STEM and how representation, visibility, and the burden of self-advocacy has impacted their career as a scientist.



Sherry Pocknett

November 2023

“An Exploration of Indigenous Cuisine”

Chef Sherry Pocknett, James Beard Award Winner, provided a variety of Indigenous foods from her restaurant, Sly Fox Den Too, and discussed Indigenous history and culture.



Dr. Autumn Wilke

November 2023

“Dis/ability Inclusion: Improving Climate and Addressing Access”

Dr. Autumn Wilke, Associate Chief Diversity Officer for Disability Resources at Grinnell College, communicated ways to foster climates of accessibility and dis/ability inclusion.





Whitehead Institute Fellow Tobiloba Oni, Technical Assistants, Xiaofei Liu and Salome Shubitidze and Undergraduate Student, Rebecca Lumia

PHOTO: GRETCHEN ERTL/WHITEHEAD INSTITUTE

Pipeline Partnerships

The success and longevity of a research institution depends on supporting the training and growth of future scientists. Whitehead Institute continues that fundamental aspect of our scientific leadership guided by our DE&I Commitments and a spirit of collaboration.

Whitehead Institute continued its partnership with three local organizations that support students from underrepresented backgrounds to establish high school student internship programs, with the second cohort of students participating over summer 2023.

BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB OF BOSTON

Whitehead Institute partnered with the Boys and Girls Club of Boston (BGCB) Ready to Work University: a program for high schoolers that supports skill building and job readiness, leading up to a paid internship at the Institute. Ready to Work provides a support network for young people from Boston and Chelsea interested in personal development through workforce readiness.

Whitehead Institute is proud to share that our Ready to Work intern, Kayla Collins, a Boston Latin Academy student, will be graduating this spring.

ENROOT

Whitehead Institute partnered with Enroot to provide a paid fall internship to a local high school student. Enroot, established in 1938 and originally named the Cambridge Community Federation, is a local organization dedicated to empowering low-income immigrant youth to achieve academic, career and personal success through inspiring out-of-school experience.

Enroot intern Dayana Robillard, a junior at Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School, is entering her second year in the Cheeseman lab.



Kayla Collins, Sebah Beshir and Dayana Robillard

PHOTO: SHARON BRIGHT/WHITEHEAD INSTITUTE

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Whitehead Institute partnered with the City of Cambridge Office of Workforce Development, which offers employment programs for both young people and adults to help them build skills, gain access to opportunities and work towards the careers they seek. Their programs for teens include the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program, internships at local organizations, a career-readiness program and a service-learning program.

Whitehead Institute is proud to share that our Workforce Development intern, Sebah Beshir, a Beaver Country Day School student, will be also graduating this spring.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

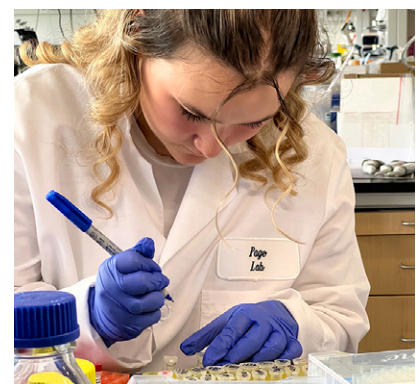
Whitehead Institute has made DE&I a core consideration throughout the selection, development and administration of the Institute's middle and high school programs. Importantly, scholarship access has been improved and enhanced, increasing opportunity for students from traditionally underrepresented background.

Whitehead Institute High School Internship Program

This summer, we launched the Whitehead Institute High School Internship Program. The program is a six-week summer internship for high school students in grades 10, 11 and 12, who are interested in scientific research and are from a historically underrepresented group.

The goal of the summer program is to provide students with an opportunity to explore science and gain research experience. The program was created to address underrepresentation and increase the number of historically marginalized students in scientific research.

Six students participated in this year's program. It was a summer of exploring, learning, networking and fun.



Whitehead Institute 2023 High School Interns

Isabella Adarme, Newton Country Day School (Page Lab), **Izaan Ali**, Burlington High School (Page Lab), **Shira Arokiaraj**, Newton Country Day School (Young Lab), **Sebah Beshir**, Beaver Country Day School (Reddien Lab), **Kayla Collins**, Boston Latin Academy (Oni Lab), **Dayana Robillard**, Cambridge Rindge and Latin (Cheeseman Lab) PHOTOS: SHARON BRIGHT/WHITEHEAD INSTITUTE

MIT Summer Research Program in Biology

Whitehead Institute is a proud partner of the Bernard S. and Sophie G. Gould MIT Summer Research Program in Biology (MSRP). The program focuses on preparing and motivating students from underrepresented groups, first-generation college students, students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and students with disabilities to attend graduate school and pursue a career in basic research. Students complete the MSRP better prepared and motivated to go on to graduate education.

MSRP gives students who do not have access to cutting-edge research facilities at their own institutions the opportunity to conduct supervised research at MIT and its affiliates and in turn contributes to our efforts to deepen and diversify the pipeline of future scientists. This year, Whitehead Institute hosted 14 MSRP students conducting research in 11 labs.



Former MSRP students (left to right)

Top Row:

Sebastian Cruz-Romero (Corradin Lab)
Katherine Franzone (Cheeseman Lab),
Neiman Sneed (Young Lab)
Christian Castellanos (Lourido Lab)
Meram Mohammed (Oni Lab)
Cyrille Teforlack (Reddien Lab)
Adriana Camacho Badillo (Yamashita Lab)

Second Row:

Defne Ceyhan (Corradin Lab)
Nina Greeley (Backman Lab)
Caroline Vanegas (Yamashita Lab)
Thy Le (Bartel Lab)
Veronica Perez Taboada (Lehmann Lab)

Missing from photo:

Alina Chouloute (Jain Lab)
Ashby Trotter (Backman Lab)

PHOTO: SHARON BRIGHT/WHITEHEAD INSTITUTE

ANNOUNCEMENT: DISCOVERY LAB @ WHITEHEAD INSTITUTE

Through community outreach and partner collaborations, Discovery Lab engages high school students from historically underrepresented communities through lab tours and science discussions, offering a firsthand look at research facilities and the chance to converse with Institute scientists.



Whitehead Institute Lehmann Lab Postdoctoral Fellow Han Tran and Intern Zoe Evans

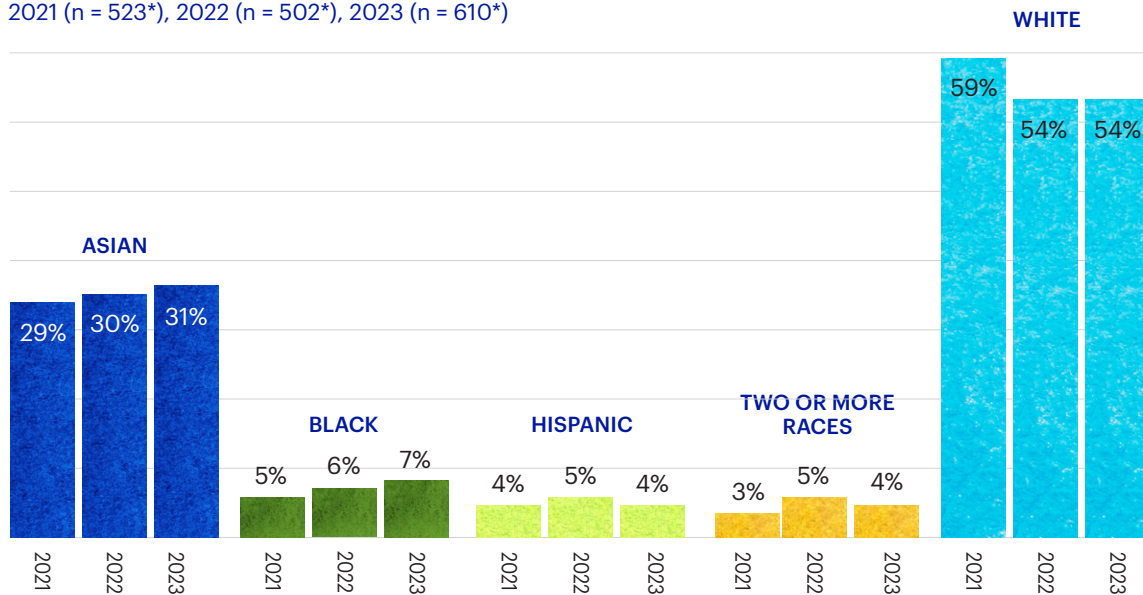
PHOTO: GRETCHEN ERTL/WHITEHEAD INSTITUTE

Ethnic Diversity at Whitehead Institute

Whitehead Institute has been enhancing its targeted recruiting strategies in order to increase the representation of diverse ethnic groups in its applicant pools. We are pleased to see increasing diversity community across both administrative and research sectors.

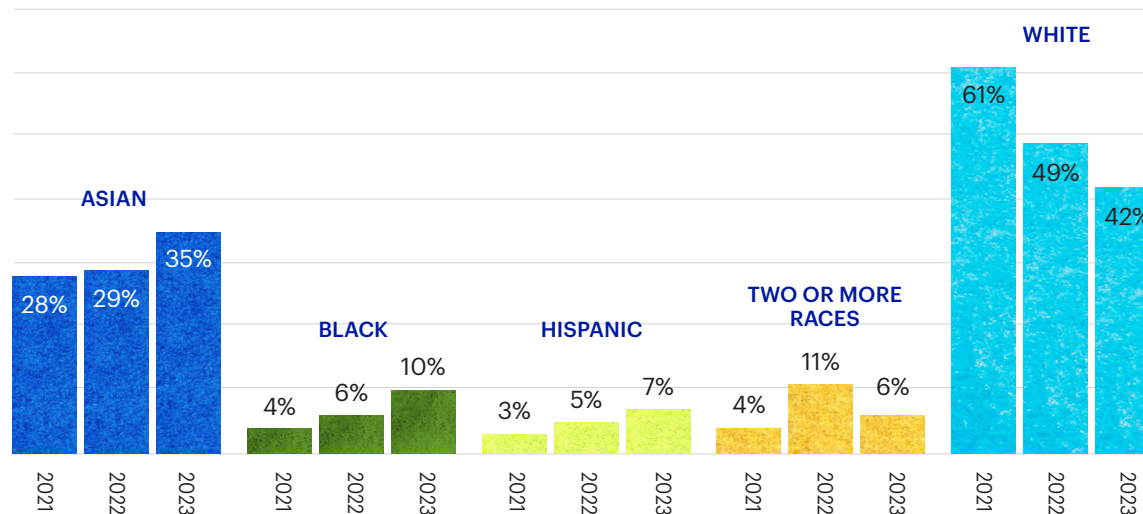
Whitehead Community* Demographics

2021 (n = 523*), 2022 (n = 502*), 2023 (n = 610*)



New Hire* Demographics

2021 (n = 160*), 2022 (n = 171*), 2023 (n = 181*)



* INCLUDES FACULTY, STAFF, POSTDOCS, STUDENTS AND VISITING SCIENTISTS.





WHITEHEAD INSTITUTE



Diversity



Equity



Inclusion



Whitehead
Institute

wi.mit.edu/diversity-inclusion