

@UlowaNeuro Notes

January 2021

Last week we launched a new Big Ten Neuroscience seminar series, together with our colleagues across the Big Ten. This series addresses two urgent needs: to provide an opportunity to connect during this time of physical distance and canceled conferences and to highlight the scientific work of trainees and early-career faculty from groups traditionally underrepresented in neuroscience.

I was delighted by my colleagues' enthusiasm when we proposed the series last fall, a clear demonstration of our collective commitment to advancing equity and diversity. INI members Aislinn Williams and Andy Frank spearheaded the planning, working with our admin team to create a schedule through 2021. The INI leadership team asked Calvin Carter, PhD, postdoc in the Sheffield Lab, and Rainbo Hultman, PhD, assistant professor of molecular physiology and biophysics, to be our first presenters.

They knocked it out of the park, with Calvin describing his research on the therapeutic potential for electromagnetic fields, and Rainbo outlining her award-winning work on the electome. More than 170 participants joined the webinar, with representatives from all 14 Big Ten institutions. We continued the conversation with a smaller group who stayed for a break-out/networking session on how to find your first postdoc or faculty job.

This week the INI takes another step toward ensuring that our community is focused on equity with the [announcement](#) of Dr. Hultman's appointment as Associate Director for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. As associate director, Dr. Hultman is an integral voice in all INI discussions and is ensuring that we apply an equity lens to our planning and decision making.

That equity lens is the core of our commitment. We do not take this lightly, nor do we consider this important work to be siloed under one associate director. As Interim Associate Vice President for DEI Liz Tovar reminded us this week, "the evolution of DEI on our campus has to be supported by everyone. Real change starts with each of us, individually...Striving for a diverse, equitable, and inclusive campus community is not a one-time initiative, but must be integrated into our daily lives. We also must realize that improving DEI on our campus is not a conversation only for our diverse and underrepresented groups."

I encourage us all to commit to keeping these goals top of mind as we move through our daily lives. How can your project, class, or team be infused with diverse perspectives from the outset? These are vital conversations that will lead to better science, stronger community, and a more just world.

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