

EMBRACING Authenticity:



Celebrating 25 Years of Diversity & Inclusion

As the Endocrine Society's Committee on Diversity and Inclusion (CoDI) anticipates its 25th anniversary celebration during **ENDO 2020**, past and current members are reflecting on the committee's impact on the diversification of the specialty.

Endocrine News caught up with past chair Rocio Pereira, MD, of Denver Health, and current members: Carlos Arguello, MD, of the University of Alabama at Birmingham; Bryan Wilson, PhD, of Merck Research Laboratories; and Marina Fernandez, PhD, of the National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET) in Argentina, to discuss how CoDI has changed the minds and lives of many across the globe.

Endocrine News: In what ways do you think diversity and inclusion are important to the Society's future and the future of endocrinology?

Rocio Pereira: To continue advancing its mission to improve health worldwide and serving its global membership, the Society will need to maintain its focus on diversity and inclusion efforts, encourage increased representation of under-represented minorities

ENDO 2020 in San Francisco marks a quarter century of the Endocrine Society's diversity initiatives. To mark this momentous occasion, *Endocrine News* spoke with members whose careers have been enhanced by their involvement in the Society's diversity program.

BY GLENDA FAUNTLEROY SHAW

in leadership, and continue work addressing health disparities. Diversity and inclusion require representation of individuals from different backgrounds and with different viewpoints in all aspects of the Society's work.

Carlos Arguello: I believe the strength of an organization such as the Endocrine Society resides in the active involvement of its members. The constituency of the Society is quite diverse, and each of us has something to offer, to contribute. The practice of medicine has evolved over time, and our specialty is not exempt from these changes. Many challenges lie ahead. The Society is positioned to lead the path to shape the future of our discipline. As an organization, the Society's future will continue to be bright as long as it continues to engage its diverse constituency and make them feel how valuable they are for the life of our organization.

EN: What has been the impact of the Society's diversity and inclusion efforts on your professional and personal life?

RP: Participating in the Society's diversity and inclusion efforts has given me the opportunity to develop as a leader, set up collaborations, and form friendships.

CA: Our life is enriched by any new experience from which we all should learn and grow. To collaborate with incredible people, to feel their passion and commitment, to make our organization more inclusive was invigorating and refreshing. I will continue to carry on the efforts, to foster diversity and inclusion in any opportunity I encounter.

BW: The Society's diversity and inclusion efforts created a culture that celebrated my uniqueness as a scientist and



Bryan Wilson: Diversity and inclusion within the Society establishes a safe space for mutual understanding and getting to know others. Everyone has unique experiences and plays a role in cultivating success on an individual and society level. Diversity and inclusion widen the lens through which we view ourselves and others, allowing us to develop in new ways.

Marina Fernandez: As a member of the international community, a basic scientist and a Latin American, I think it is crucial to bring all the different voices and perspectives to the table when we talk about the Endocrine Society, endocrinology, and science in general. It is important to teach others about how diverse teams bring different perspectives and how to interact respecting these differences.

professional. Given my very unique career path, it provided the support I needed to fully blossom, while embracing my authenticity.

MF: My first encounter with the Endocrine Society was in 2008, when I was selected as a participant of the International Endocrine Scholars Program. This program helped me get my postdoctoral position with Dr. Nicholas Webster at University of California San Diego, and I've been a part of the Society ever since. Another activity sponsored by the Society that I like a lot is the Mentoring and Poster Reception [at ENDO] where trainees can talk with mentors about different topics like working abroad, work-life balance, opportunities after graduation, and many others. I was able to participate



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— ROCIO PEREIRA, MD, DENVER HEALTH, DENVER, COLO.

in this activity as a mentor and poster judge, giving me the opportunity to interact with many other scientists from the U.S. and around the world. Also, a very exciting event held at **ENDO 2019** was the LGBTQ+ and allies’ reception that was very popular, and I hope it will become a regular activity at future **ENDO** conferences.

EN: Has your view of diversity and inclusion changed over time as a result of your involvement in the D&I committee and programs?

RP: When I joined the Minority Affairs Committee (MAC) in 2005, the focus was on increasing ethnic/racial diversity in endocrinology and within the Society by implementing programs for groups that were underrepresented in medicine in the U.S. (black, Hispanic/Latino, and Native American). During my tenure as chair of the MAC, and under the leadership of former Society President Janet Hall, the committee launched an effort to increase awareness of endocrine disparities. At the end of my time as chair, the committee transitioned to the Committee on Diversity and Inclusion, broadening its scope to

include support for LGBTQ members and research to address health disparities related to sexual orientation or gender. While we have come a long way from where we started when MAC was formed 25 years ago, we still have a long way to go to get to where the make-up of the clinical endocrine workforce is reflective of that of patients with endocrine disease, or to making true progress to eliminating health disparities.

CA: To me, diversity is a cultural notion not limited to race, ethnicity, or gender. Given my background, my view of diversity and inclusion has not really changed. My involvement in the committee has reaffirmed my belief that diversity makes us strong and inclusion gives us power.

EN: How does working with leadership from diverse backgrounds bring value to the Society?

RP: Working with leadership from diverse backgrounds makes the Endocrine Society stronger and enables it to address the needs of its diverse membership.



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— CARLOS ARGUELLO, MD, UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM, BIRMINGHAM, ALA.



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— BRYAN WILSON, PH.D., MBA, REGIONAL MEDICAL SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR FOR CARDIOVASCULAR SCIENCES, MERCK RESEARCH LABORATORIES, NEW ORLEANS, LA.

CA: Although each of us have our own “thoughts and beliefs,” it has been invaluable to experience how working together despite our perceived “differences” and biases we can amalgamate ways and craft ideas toward common goals to strengthen the value of our organization.

BW: Working with leadership from diverse backgrounds brings value because it highlights the importance of having unique perspectives. More importantly, it creates a heightened sense of responsibility to create a culture that celebrates these differences.

MF: It gives different perspectives, as our way of seeing the world is immersed in our mental models. Before, it was considered that science belonged to a particular group of people. Nowadays, it is becoming clearer that the more diverse the team, the more interesting the work the team can do.

EN: Are you excited about our 25-year celebration of diversity and inclusion at **ENDO 2020**?

RP: I feel incredibly privileged to have contributed to the Society’s diversity and inclusion efforts for the past 15 years and am very excited to celebrate our 25 years at **ENDO 2020**.

CA: This is a milestone that we all should celebrate and be proud of. It is a reaffirmation of the Society’s dedication and vision for equality. I encourage all members who will attend **ENDO 2020** to participate in the commemorative activities.

MF: Right now, the economy in Argentina is complicated as we don’t have much funding, especially for travel, but I am trying my best to get money to travel to San Francisco to share this celebration with all of you. **EN**



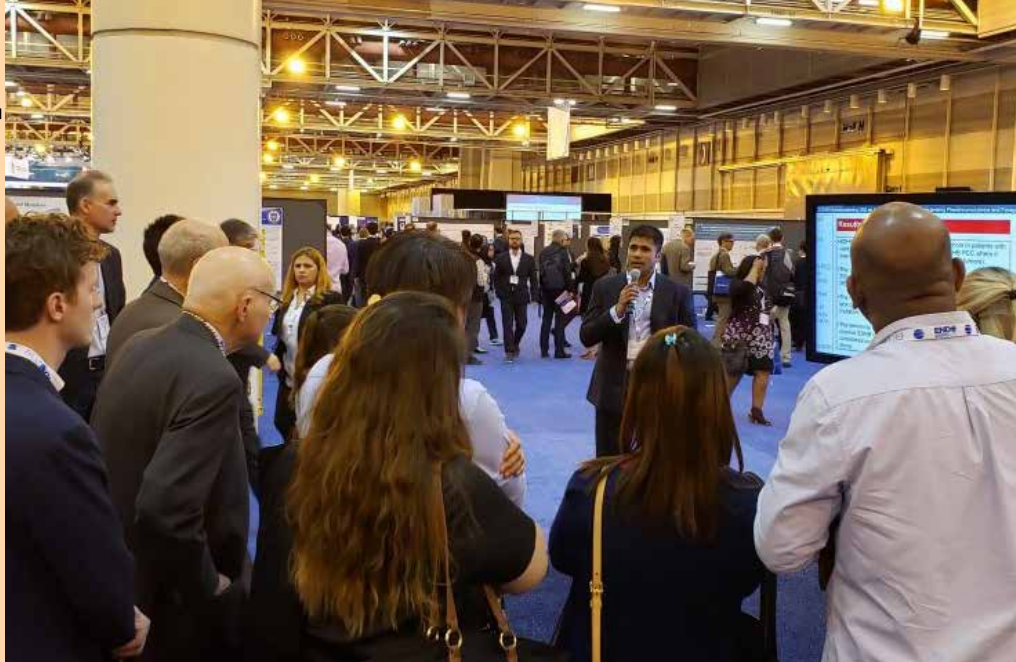
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— MARINA FERNANDEZ, PH.D., NATIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL (CONICET), BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA

ENDO2020

Celebrating 25 Years of Diversity

Join us as we commemorate 25 years of commitment to increasing diverse representation, promoting an inclusive global community, and addressing equity concerns within endocrinology.



Participate in these 25 Years of Diversity Celebration events at ENDO 2020:

Saturday, March 28, 2020

Health Disparities Poster Previews 11:30AM – 12:15PM

These short presentations will highlight the endocrine-related health disparities research of our early-career members. Five top-scored poster abstracts in this research area will be previewed in the Science Hub on the Expo Hall floor.

LGBTQ and Allies Reception 4:15PM

Anyone interested in connecting with endocrine professional and advocates in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community should attend this networking reception.

Sunday, March 29, 2020

Lessons Learned from the History of Identifying and Addressing Health Disparities in Endocrinology and Diabetes 8:00AM

Learn more about the emergence of research showing dramatic racial

and ethnic disparities in endocrine-related disorders such as diabetes at the Clark T. Sawin Memorial History of Endocrinology Lecture. This lecture will consider the biological basis and clinical risk factors of endocrine health disparities and factors that help improve health indicators and potentially close the gap between racial and ethnic groups.

Breaking Barriers to Care 1:45PM

This symposium is designed to explore health disparities in Glomerular filtration rate, unconscious bias in clinical care, and how to increase patient participation in clinical trials.

25 Years of Diversity Celebration and Reception 9:15AM

Join us at the 25 Years in Diversity main event open to all registered ENDO attendees. The celebration will follow a poster session that allows trainees of underrepresented groups to showcase their research. This will be an evening of networking, inspiration, and fun with our global community of endocrinologists.

Monday, March 30, 2020

How Do We Confront Disparities in Obesity Treatment? 9:15AM

This symposium will explore physiological, clinical, social, and behavioral aspects of disparities in obesity and obesity treatment, including the physiological and mechanistic factors that drive an increase in cardiometabolic comorbidities, limitations to lifestyle intervention to treat obesity, and the socioeconomic impact on obesity.

These sessions are just a tiny fraction of the dozens of options available to attendees that cover a vast range of topics in patient treatment outcomes, basic science, and clinical research.

— FAUNTLEROY SHAW IS A FREELANCE WRITER BASED IN CARMEL, IND. SHE IS A REGULAR CONTRIBUTOR TO ENDOCRINE NEWS.