



# Psychology Department

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO  
COLORADO SPRINGS

## Diversity Committee E-Blast

November 2023

By: Paige Klein, Megan Wendling, & Kelly Dixon

### This Month's Newsletter At a Glance

1. Israel-Hamas War Statement of Acknowledgement
2. **Upcoming Events**
3. **Feature:** Student and Faculty Spotlight
4. **Editorial:** Racial Equity in Scholarship
5. **Learn:** ISTSS, APA, APS EDI Resources

### Committee Members

- Chair:** Dr. Leilani Feliciano
- Faculty:** Dr. Diana Selmecky, Dr. Steven Bistricky, Dr. Rachel Weiskittle
- Staff:** Dr. Magdalene Lim
- Graduate Student Members:** Kelly Dixon, Marcus Chur, Tiana Broen
- Communications Subcommittee:** Kelly Dixon, Paige Klein, Megan Wendling
- Education Subcommittee:** Marcus Chur, Christine Mason

If you are interested in contributing to this newsletter or having your work featured, please email us at [psychdiv@uccs.edu](mailto:psychdiv@uccs.edu)



## **Statement from the CU President Regarding the Hamas Attacks on Israel**

We at the University of Colorado are horrified and saddened by the Hamas terrorist attacks on Israel that have sparked a war with the full breadth of consequences not yet known. Our hearts weigh heavy for all those who have been impacted by the conflict and the killing and wounding of so many. We have students, faculty and staff on our campuses who are intimately connected to many experiencing these horrors.

We share our heartbreak with you.

Looking out for each other's well-being is paramount, so please check on your friends and neighbors who may be impacted. If individuals in our community are struggling with how to process these events, we encourage you to seek help from our campus resources.

- UCCS: [communique.uccs.edu/?p=151483](https://communique.uccs.edu/?p=151483)

Our hearts are with all those in the CU community and beyond whose lives will be forever altered. We hope for a path to a lasting and just peace.

Todd Saliman, President  
University of Colorado

Jennifer Sobanet, Interim Chancellor  
University of Colorado Colorado Springs

### **Hamas Terrorist Attack:**

#### **Diversity Communication Sub-Committee Statement of Acknowledgement**

Dear Mountain Lions,

These past few weeks have been incredibly difficult for faculty and students in the wake of the Hamas terrorist attack and the events that have followed. Since October 7th, thousands of innocent Israeli and Palestinian civilians have been devastated by

the ongoing war between Israel and Hamas.

While this newsletter is meant to champion the inspiring diversity initiatives happening in our Psychology Graduate department, it is also meant to acknowledge and shed light on world events with particular DEI considerations that impact our student body and the communities we serve. In this case, that likely includes not only innocent civilians impacted abroad, but Israeli, Jewish and Palestinian citizens living in the US, or those connected to these regions/populations.

We are **all** experiencing heartache, outrage, and anxiety. The future seems uncertain; but reminders of our shared humanity, a bond that transcends our differences and divisions, can provide solace in these painful and isolating times. It is especially important to remember the impact that supporting each other and committing to shared empathy, regardless of cultural and religious backgrounds, can have.

Sincerely,

Paige Klein, Diversity Communications Sub-Committee Member

## Upcoming Events



Ongoing: [Palestinian-Israeli Vigils and Rallies](#)

Local Colorado organizations have mobilized to hold vigils and rallies in the days since the conflict began, with more events planned over the coming days. Colorado Public Radio has compiled a list of events and ways to help, which they keep updated on a weekly basis to reflect new and emerging developments.

Nov 17-18: [MOSAIC 20th Anniversary Celebrations](#)

For 20 years the Multicultural Office for Student Access, Inclusiveness, and

Community (MOSAIC) has worked with students to strive for a more equitable, enriching college experience for students across diverse backgrounds. 2023 marks a milestone in our journey and we are preparing to celebrate in style! Over the course of two days we will have tour, cultural performances, community connections, and a look into our past, present, and future. Oh, and lets not forget there will be plenty of good food and fun with old and new friends.

Nov 19: [Club Q One-Year Anniversary Remembrance \(MOSAIC\)](#)

One year ago, a gunman stormed the locally renowned Club Q in Colorado Springs. The tragedy took the lives of 5 individuals and injured over 40 people. The MOSAIC and LGBTQ+ Resource is hosting a gathering to be in community and in remembrance.

Nov 19: [Club Q One-Year Anniversary Remembrance \(Club-Q\)](#)

Club Q is hosting an event open to the public to remember the lives of those lost in the 2022 shooting. Hot beverages, a large tent and limited seating will be available on site, at 3430 N. Academy Blvd.

Nov 22: [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Lunch-and-Learn](#)

Join the Posner Center in Denver for informal conversation on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). No matter where you are in your DEI in your journey, others are navigating a similar path. Let's unpack and learn from each other and deepen our understanding as we look forward into the new year. This conversation will be led by Maria Putnam, the executive director of the [DEI Leadership Institute](#).

## Graduate Student and Faculty Diversity Research Initiatives

### Aja Zamundu, Clinical MA Student

Aja, a first year Master's student in Clinical Psychology – trauma track in Dr. Heather Littleton's lab, has been working on a variety of DEI research and initiatives. She recently applied for the NSF graduate research fellowship to continue her work on the extent to which DEI resources affect college students with racially diverse

backgrounds experiences on campus. This work seeks to evaluate if students embedded in campuses with fewer DEI resources experience more microaggressions and discrimination on campus. Additionally, she is currently evaluating if DEI resource availability moderates the impact of micro-aggressions/discrimination on negative outcomes among college students of color. This work builds off her undergraduate thesis which looked at students of color attending college in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic and Black Life Matters (BLM) protests. The results from this research project revealed that students who reported fewer DEI resources on their campus experienced more micro-aggressions and discriminations, which related to increased depression and hyper-vigilance on campus. Qualitative findings mirrored the quantitative findings such that students who reported that there were resources for them on campus (e.g., faculty of color, clubs/organizations for students of color) reported positive adjustment and ability to manage distress related to the social unrest due to the murder of George Floyd and the BLM protests, whereas students on campus with fewer resources reported multiple negative impacts of the murder of George Floyd and BLM protests.



### **Samantha Umland, Psychological Science MA Student**

Samantha is a first-year Master's student in the Psychological Science program at UCCS in Dr. Fred Coolidge's lab. She is currently conducting research with Dr. Coolidge examining the link between sexual predictors, sex, and gender among transgender populations. Previous literature on sexual predictors has discovered that gender identity discovery typically predates sexual orientation identity discovery. However, a person's sexual orientation, or what they are aroused by, may not reflect their sexual orientation identity. This relationship is intrinsic within transgender communities, as these populations may not function within typical gender binaries. Additionally, the relationship between gender and sexual predictors can change drastically throughout transgender people's pre-transition, transition, and post

transition. Their research is proposing an online study within local transgender communities to research sexual predictors of orientation identity, and how sex and gender can influence these outcomes.



shutterstock.com · 1861028209

### **Dr. Heather Littleton**

Dr. Littleton, an Associate Professor of Psychology at UCCS and Director of Research Operations at the Lyda Hill Institute for Human Resilience, has recently received a three-year \$650,000 grant award from the National Institute for Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism to support development and evaluation of a preventative online intervention program to prevent alcohol use and Interpersonal Violence (IPV) among the LGBTQ+ community. This program aims to support the LGBTQ+ community and their caregivers by addressing the unique challenges this community faces by increasing community connections, acceptance, and helping individuals to form a positive sense of identity. Substance use and violence disproportionately negatively affect the LGBTQ+ community, and with the development of this intervention, the hope is to create a safe, supportive online community to combat these issues.



# Editorial: Racial Equity in Health-Care and Scholarship

By: Paige Klein, B.A., & Megan Wendling, B.A.

A think tank held this year in Maryland gathered to brainstorm actions to be taken to promote equity and diversity in health-care and psychological research (Haynes, 2023). This event follows the 2021 formal apology from the American Psychological Association (APA) (2021) for their part in perpetuating historic racism. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has found that racial and ethnic minorities disproportionately experience poorer health outcomes and higher illness and death rates compared to white communities due to systemic racism in health-care (CDC, 2023).

Not only do these disparities exist in health equity, but they are also evident in research. Buchanan (2021) discuss how 90% of journal authors, reviewers, and editors are white, and that Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) scholar work is 12 times more likely to be rejected. Furthermore, according to Dzirasa (2020), BIPOC scholars receive half the rate of funding compared to their white counterparts. Additionally, white scholars are more likely to be published in higher-impact outlets than BIPOC scholars.

There is also the concern of racial discrimination occurring between the advisor-mentee relationships in labs. To further stress the disparities that exist in research for BIPOC, Aly et al. (2023) discuss systematic biases that exists in the peer-review process in psychology and neuropsychology fields as evidenced by disparities for BIPOC groups including attrition from doctoral programs at higher rates than white students and disparities in grant funding.

Buchanan et al. (2021) advocate for journals to prioritize BIPOC scholarship beyond a diversity mission statement but rather implementing their words into action. This article presents action and accountability steps for psychological researchers who hold positions as authors, peer-reviewers, editors and other positions of higher leadership to improve BIPOC equity and inclusiveness in psychological science. They provide recommendations for journals to implement. For example, Buchanan et al. (2021) recommend training and educating editorial staff to

understand the value of publishing BIPOC research projects and also selecting editors who hold BIPOC identities to serve on journal editorial teams. They also encourage journals to track rejection rates for manuscripts with predominantly BIPOC samples. This strategy not only provides transparency of acceptance rates, but also holds journals with potentially systemic biases accountable.

Considering these concerns regarding racism in research, members of the APA think tank and authors not affiliated with APA (Roberts et al., 2020) have compiled recommendations to address racial disparities in psychological science scholarship. This includes:

1. Establishing a rating system like the H-index that would measure the inclusion of diversity into papers.
2. Reviewing and revising curriculum and training to ensure that more science generated by scholars of color is incorporated.
3. Promoting psychological research careers to school children as young as kindergarten, helping them envision themselves as scientists.

Recommendations for Authors:

1. Detail the racial demographics of sample: Authors should report a thorough breakdown of their participants' racial identity/identities to allow for complete transparency of who is being included in samples and to allow for comparisons across studies.
2. Justify the racial demographics of samples: Researchers are encouraged to justify small samples sizes, therefore, researchers should also be encouraged to justify their sample demographics. This method may motivate researchers to move away from convenience samples (e.g., White college students) but rather strategize ways to recruit participants with diverse backgrounds.
3. Include Constraints on Generality Statements: Authors are recommended to discuss the generalizability of their findings based on their samples.
4. Include Positionality statements: Authors are recommended to disclose their identities in a standardized positionality statement in their manuscripts. This can help readers understand the significance of the Author's identities related to their research or the author's personal perspective. However, positionality statements should be voluntary and up to the author to decide what identities they would like to disclose.

## References



For more information, please visit <https://www.apa.org/news/apa/2023/racial-equity-think-tank>

Aly, M., Colunga, E., Crockett, M., Goldrick, M., Gomez, P., Kung, F., ... Diekman, A. (2022, December 15). Changing the Culture of Peer Review for a More Inclusive and Equitable Psychological Science. <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/435xz>

Buchanan, N. T., Perez, M., Prinstein, M. J., & Thurston, I. B. (2021). Upending racism in psychological science: Strategies to change how science is conducted, reported, reviewed, and disseminated. *American Psychologist*, 76(7), 1097–1112. <https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000905>

Dzirasa K. (2020). Revising the a Priori Hypothesis: Systemic Racism Has Penetrated Scientific Funding. *Cell*, 183(3), 576–579. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cell.2020.09.026>

Roberts, S. O., Bareket-Shavit, C., Dollins, F. A., Goldie, P. D., & Mortenson, E. (2020). Racial Inequality in Psychological Research: Trends of the Past and Recommendations for the Future. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 15(6), 1295-1309. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691620927709>

## **Learn: ISTSS, APA, APS EDI Resources**

In light of the ongoing and escalating Israel-Hamas war in the Middle East, the International Society of Traumatic Stress Studies (ISTSS) has added new resources to their [War and Disaster Resources page](#)—including a new [Special Issue of the Journal of Traumatic Stress on War and Terrorism](#). These resources are targeted not only to helping professionals (including psychologists), but also to individuals, parents, and caregivers. These resources are available in a variety of languages, and also provide links to material pertinent to the Russia-Ukraine war.

The Association for Psychological Science (APS) maintains a series of [research collections](#) pertinent to diversity, equity, and inclusion. These collections of articles provide a snapshot of psychological research on diversity, equity, and inclusion and the causes and harmful effects of racism, stereotypes, and inequities.

As the graduate admissions cycle approaches, APS Inclusivity Spotlight provides a [50-minute video presentation](#) led by three DEI social scientists in higher education who share research-based perspectives on and potential solutions to bias in the graduate admissions process. This insightful video provides insights into the ingrained nature of bias in academic systems, and how we can begin to address inequities in admissions.

This email was sent to [pklein2@uccs.edu](mailto:pklein2@uccs.edu)

[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)

University Colorado Colorado Springs · 6331 Village Ln · Colorado Springs, CO 80918-8347 · USA

