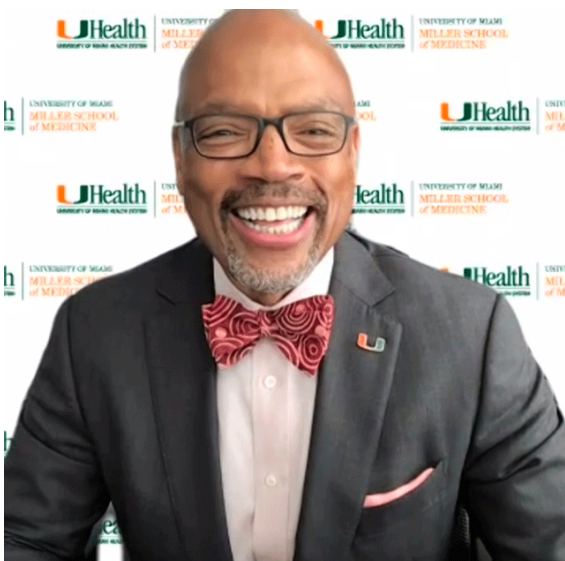


Women's Leadership Symposium Highlights Both Advances and Challenges

While the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine has made significant progress in supporting women in academic medicine, the struggle to achieve gender equality is far from over, according to Henri R. Ford, M.D., M.H.A., dean and chief academic officer.

“We are committed to creating more opportunities for women to lead in academic medicine, as well as ensuring that our women faculty, trainees and students can thrive in our school,” Dr. Ford said at the Women’s Leadership Symposium on March 31. “We will continue to be intentional in addressing this challenge and reframing our narrative to assure that women faculty are well positioned to attain the highest positions in academic medicine.”



Dean Henri Ford

More than 120 students and medical professionals attended the virtual symposium, sponsored by Women in Academic Medicine, the Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Community Engagement (ODICE), and the Office of Faculty Affairs, on the last day of the global Women's History Month.

Calling Dr. Ford “a chief ally” of women in the Miller School, Asha B. Pillai, M.D., associate professor of pediatrics and microbiology and immunology, welcomed attendees to the session, which included a keynote talk by Charlene E. Le Fauve, Ph.D., senior advisor to the National Institutes of Health chief officer for scientific workforce.

“Transparency, communication and accountability are the three foundations for improving gender, as well as racial and ethnic inequalities,” said Dr. Le Fauve.

Nanette Vega, Ed.D., assistant professor of medical education and assistant dean for diversity, inclusion and community engagement, and Duneia McManus, a Miller School graduate student in microbiology and immunology, moderated question-and-answer sessions with the speakers that focused on career development.

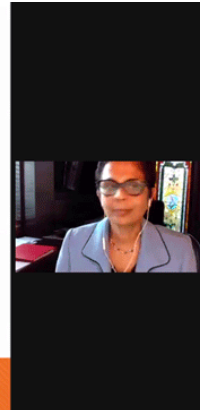
“Be strategic in thinking about your career,” said Dr. Ford. “Find an advocate or a sponsor who can give you advice that is in your best interests. When you encounter challenges, be steadfast, and look to your family, friends and mentors to help make difficult decisions.”

Assessing gender bias

In her talk, “Women in Academic Medicine: Where are we now?” Latha Chandran, M.D., M.P.H., executive dean and founding chair of the Department of Medical Education, cited two recent studies of national career trends.

Women in Academic Medicine: Where are we now?

Latha Chandran MD,MPH
Executive Dean
Bernard J Fogel Chair in Medical Education
Founding Chair of Department of Medical Education



Dr. Latha Chandran

Looking at 560,000 women graduates from 134 medical schools over the past 35 years, she found men were promoted more often than women across almost every department. “There has been little progress through the years,” she said. “In fact, we are almost back to square one.”

Dr. Chandran noted that gender segregation in medical specialties remained consistent from 1980 to 2017, the first year that more women than men graduated from medical schools. As a result, fields like surgery, which is dominated by men, pay more than pediatrics, which has more women doctors. “The Miller School is ahead of the curve here, with a woman chair of surgery as well as a female residency director for orthopaedics,” she added. “While gender bias is a national issue, we can make a difference here through our career advising and mentorship programs.”

During a question-and-answer session, Rose van Zuilen, Ph.D., associate professor of professional practice, cited national studies that found that women doctors, on average, spend more time with their patients, leading to better health care outcomes. “Those positive clinical results may have an impact in reduced revenue generation,” she said.

Changing the culture

In her talk on “Faculty Vitality: Moving Forward with Purpose and Intention,” Joan E. St. Onge, M.D., M.P.H., senior associate dean for faculty affairs, highlighted the importance of the 2018 C-Change Survey. “Under Dean Ford’s leadership, the Miller School has engaged in a culture change initiative to create an environment where faculty feel energized by their work and supported to develop personally and professionally,” she said.

The survey results showed that women faculty felt less respected than men, and that mentoring was a big issue for both genders, Dr. St. Onge said. “One of the most important findings was that leadership aspirations were very high for both men and women,” she added. “Our students, trainees and faculty come here to make a difference.”

On the research side, she noted that women’s authorship of journal articles has declined during the COVID-19 pandemic due to the difficulty of balancing work with child care, especially in single-parent households.

On the positive side, Dr. St. Onge noted that there are many excellent mentoring programs available throughout the Miller School. “We just need to do a better job in communicating what

is available for both women and men,” she said.

The NIH approach



Dr. Charlene Le Fauve

In her keynote talk on “NIH’s Scientific Approach to Inclusive Excellence,” Dr. Le Fauve noted that diversity and inclusion lead to stronger individual, team and organizational performance. In medical research, co-authors with diverse ethnic, geographic or informational backgrounds tend to make greater contributions to science based on the impact of their studies, she added. “Diversity is important for broadening the scope of inquiries, in areas such as health disparities, as well as for achieving global research preeminence.”

As for best practices to promote inclusive excellence, Dr. Le Fauve said the first step is raising awareness of gender bias, following by taking action. “Speak up, if you perceive bias in a group setting,” she said. “Foster science identity in younger women, and broaden their images of career success.”

But individual interventions are not enough to change the culture, she added. “It takes a concerted effort at the

institutional level, including transparency in hiring and promotion reviews, knowing your diversity metrics, and linking inclusion to the values and reward systems of the institution.”

Dr. Le Fauve said the NIH is supporting cultural change through the Faculty Institutional Recruitment for Sustainable Transformation (FIRST) grant program. “We are taking steps to improve funding for underrepresented minorities,” she said. “But we still have a lot of work to do.”

The Women in Academic Medicine (WIAM) group at the Miller School of Medicine is led by Dr. van Zuilen as president and Dr. Pillai as vice president. Among its objectives are:

- To support and promote the career development of women faculty at the Miller School.
- To promote clinical, scientific, and teaching excellence in women faculty.
- To increase the representation, participation, and leadership of women in the organizational structure of the Miller School and its standing committees.
- To promote strategies to enhance the recruitment, retention, and professional advancement (including rank, salary, appointment, promotion, and tenure) of women faculty.

For more information about resources and activities, visit the [WIAM website](#).

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