Center for Immunology Work Climate Survey 2020

Introduction

In November 2020, Center for Immunology (CFI) leaders developed a survey in consultation with members of the Restorative Justice for the Under-Represented in the Sciences (ReJUS) and Empowering Women in Science (EWIS) groups to understand how members perceive their work environment. The survey was sent to faculty members with labs in CFI-designated space in the Wallin Medical Biosciences Building, and trainees and staff members associated with these labs. The survey was sent to 84 people and 70 responded. This remarkable 83% response rate reflects the extent to which CFI members are committed to understanding and improving the organization. Thanks to all those who participated.

The main findings are summarized here. The full results of the survey are available in the attached PDF document. By clicking on the links at the bottom of each slide, you can see how responses differed by race, position (faculty/staff/trainee), gender, and sexual orientation.

General findings:

People in all CFI groups believe that CFI should make it a priority to hire, retain, and promote racial minorities.

People in all CFI groups are interested in the CFI offering seminars and discussions on racial and gender inequity. Women, trainees, and LGBTQ+ people were the most interested. There is strong interest in these seminars and discussions being led by faculty, staff, and trainees alike.

Many people in CFI reported not having bias training and few reported being comfortable responding to situations of bias.

More than half of CFI members reported feeling diminished, dismissed, or ignored, or experienced discrimination at times. These negative events were most prevalent for women, non-whites, and LGBTQ+ people.

Summary of survey responses where there was disparity by race, rank, gender, or sexual orientation:

Race

Non-whites reported that CFI is a less inclusive work environment for racial minorities than whites, but like whites, perceive that CFI is inclusive to women.

About 15% of non-whites, but no whites, have felt diminished, dismissed, or ignored on many occasions while working in CFI. Interactions with peers were the most common context in which these negative incidents occurred.

About 15% of non-whites, but no whites, have experienced discrimination on many occasions while working in CFI. These negative incidents usually related to citizenship or racial identity.
Non-whites are more likely than whites to engage in conversations with non-whites in social situations.

Non-whites are less satisfied than whites that CFI leaders and PIs are setting the tone for creating an inclusive environment.

Professional level:

Trainees were more likely than faculty or staff members to have felt diminished, dismissed, or ignored while working in CFI.

Faculty members were less likely than trainees or staff members to think hiring women postdocs should be a priority.

Trainees think CFI faculty members are comfortable and knowledgeable about working with trainees from diverse backgrounds, while CFI faculty members reported that they lack this comfort level.

Faculty members and trainees are less satisfied than staff members that CFI leaders are setting the tone for creating an inclusive environment.

Gender

Women were less likely than men to think that the CFI work environment is inclusive for women.

Women were more likely than men to have felt diminished, dismissed, or ignored, or to perceive bias while working in CFI. Lab meetings and social situations were the most common contexts in which these negative incidents occurred.

Women are more likely than men to engage in conversations with racial minorities in social situations.

Women were less likely than men to think that CFI faculty members are comfortable working with diverse trainees.

Women were more likely than men to be satisfied with CFI leaders in setting the tone for creating an inclusive environment.

Sexual orientation

LGBTQ+ people reported more instances of having felt diminished, dismissed, ignored, or discriminated against than any other minority group. 100% have experienced negative incidents in lab meetings and interactions with peers.

All LGBTQ+ people think CFI faculty members are not comfortable working with diverse trainees.
LGBTQ+ people have a mixed degree of satisfaction with CFI leaders in setting the tone for creating an inclusive environment.

Future directions:

The results of this survey will be used to help CFI leaders compose a CFI Diversity Statement and to inform priorities going forward.

The survey results, however, warrant some immediate actions. It is clearly the intent of CFI members that CFI make it a priority to hire, retain, and promote racial minorities. CFI leaders agree and will formulate an action plan to achieve this end. The survey finding that many members have not had bias training and are not comfortable responding to situations of bias will be addressed by CFI offering educational opportunities in these areas in 2021. CFI leaders believe that it is especially critical for faculty members to participate in these activities. The finding that more than half of CFI members reported feeling diminished, dismissed, ignored, or discriminated against at times, is sobering. Although these experiences can be expected to occur at some level in any group of people, the disparity in experience by race, gender, and sexuality is unacceptable to CFI leaders. They will be working with ReJUS and EWIS to find ways to make ALL CFI members feel as empowered and productive as possible.