As background, the field of Neurological Surgery has traditionally been a very male dominated field (nationally) in both the clinical and research fields. Over the last decade, the field has experienced considerable advancements in attracting women and minorities in the field. The Department of Neurological Surgery at the University of Washington has worked diligently to encourage diversity throughout the Department at all ranks and at all levels including: faculty – clinical, faculty – research, residents, and staff. As we move forward in a recruitment phase, the Department will continue to encourage diversity at all levels within the Department and incorporate it as appropriate in our academic mission.

1. Student access and opportunities

We have two basic types of students: our residents and other students in our research labs.

**Residents** - Neurosurgery is subspecialty area of medicine and is very competitive field with a small pool of interested/qualified candidates. All resident applicants must first qualify and register with the San Francisco national matching organization which typically consists of approximately only 220 or so applicants nationally. Second the applicants then apply to our program based on their interest in our program which is focused on developing Academically Focused Neurological Surgeons with an investigative career. Annually, the UW program receives approximately 125-150 applicants. The Department then reviews all applicants, and invites 30-40 applicants for interviews. We rank the applicants, with faculty and resident input, and submit our information to the match. The evaluation process if focused solely on identifying the best candidates to be successful in our program and ultimately in an academically oriented investigative career. This year approximately 30% of our interviewees were women and a very diverse ethnic mix of male interviewees.

Over the last 10 years, we have been able to achieve a significant amount of diversity in the resident ranks, especially in the area of recruitment of female candidates. The program graduated its first female resident in 1999. We also currently have two female residents in our program and a 3rd to join the program in July 2004. This 3rd resident is both female and Hispanic. Another way of looking at this is that 50% of the applicants (n=2) we matched this year were women. That will bring our compliment of female residents to 3 out of 16. This is a significant advancement from zero in 1990.

As far as the diversity of the male residents, the Department has had a solid mix of different ethnic backgrounds enrolled in the program during the last 10 years including: one African American, two Asian Americans (one from mainland China and one from the USA), one of Indian heritage, and two of Hispanic heritage. We feel the male residents have had a very diverse set of ethnic backgrounds.

**Students** – The Department has approximately 10 research labs. Each lab offers opportunities to students to participate in on going research. The department has no special program in place to recruit or attract students. The students in our labs come with significant diversity as reflected by the overall diversity of students throughout the UWSOM. The diversity mirrors that of the UWSOM.
2. Student development and retention

The department’s primary students are its residents. The residency program follows the standards of the ACGME in regards to evaluating the residents every six months. The Program director meets with each resident every six-months to evaluate their progress and address any personal concerns regarding their training. One of the program director’s/chairman’s primary responsibilities is to ensure that the teaching environment remains appropriate and is sensitive to ALL our residents’ unique backgrounds.

3. Engagement with the external community:

The Neurological Surgery pool is more of a national recruitment pool. Accordingly, we do not have an active engagement with the local community in regards to recruiting resident applicant. Despite that fact, in the last 10 years, 4 of our residents have been from the local community, including 3 currently. The only active programs the Department participates in locally to highlight our program to potential resident applicants are:

- The annual Mini-Medical School
- Brain Awareness Week at UWSOM.

4. Staff and administrative diversity:

The Department of Neurological Surgery has already achieved a significant level of diversity within our administrative staff and research staff. Although HR does all of the screening and recruiting to identify qualified applicants for departmental staff positions, the Department performs the interviews and makes all final hiring decisions. The Department has achieved significant diversity in the administrative staff. The administrative staff includes diverse backgrounds including three of Asian decent and one African American. In the area of research staff, the Department has also achieved significant diversity. The research staff includes ethnic background includes: Asian decent, and African American. The future goal will be for the Department to continue to maintain a diverse workplace as new positions are added and or current positions are replaced due to attrition.

5. Faculty diversity:

The Department of Neurological Surgery currently has 15 attending physicians and 8 basic scientists. Historically, the field has been highly male dominated. As a result, our faculty reflects the diversity of the overall field. The Department is sensitive to the overall desire by UW for diversity and does consider the need for additional diversity within the Department’s faculty ranks a priority. Accordingly, as the Department looks to add upwards of 8 additional faculty members over the next 5 years (both new and replacement) diversity of the applicants will be a significant consideration.
6. Curriculum and research:

The Department of Neurological surgery’s curriculum is very focused and must also meet the ACGME requirements. The curriculum also includes an extra year in England as a learning opportunity to experience how neurosurgery is done in a different health care system. Additionally, our program provides for two years of research rather than the standard one-year. We provide flexibility and counseling for our residents in selecting their area of research interest. The curriculum is very flexible to allow the residents to tailor their residency training experience, both clinical and research, to match their career direction upon graduation.

7. Climate:

The Department of Neurological Surgery is committed to promoting a working environment that treats all members in a respectful and professional manner. The Chairman has an open-door policy to mediate all issues and expounds a very strong and clearly enunciated policy of civility within the Department. Over the next 10 years, we anticipate our Department will continue to witness more diversity in our resident, faculty and administrative staff. The changes in the national climate for Neurological Surgery such as the 80 hour work week for residents and more flexible job descriptions have contributed to attracting a more diverse population of applicants. The goal of this Department is to capitalize on the changing nature of the national pool of applicants and pioneer an approach that will recruit the best, brightest and most interesting/diverse in this increasingly diverse pool.

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