Department of Neurology
Diversity Appraisal

1. Student access and opportunities

The Department of Neurology enjoys academic interactions with students at many different levels. The Neurology Grand Rounds, a weekly two-hour continuing medical education program produced by the Department of Neurology, is available to the public and is advertised broadly in the University Week publication, and through electronic mail groups and public announcements. Any interested student or member of the community is welcome to attend. Neurology faculty members also participate as mentors in the Undergraduate Research Program (further information is available at http://www.washington.edu/research/urp/), where undergraduate students can find access to hands-on research opportunities in the department. Undergraduate students are also employed in the administrative offices as student helpers. Faculty members in the department assume mentor relationships with academic student trainees. Neurology residents are paired with clinical faculty mentors, and postdoctoral students are guided by their research faculty mentors. These one-to-one relationships allow invaluable opportunities for students to develop as neuroscientists. Medical students, who are selected by the School of Medicine through rigorous interviews and their commitment to academic excellence, are rotated through the Department of Neurology as part of their clinical training. These students enjoy outstanding learning opportunities at our clinical training sites at the University of Washington Medical Center, Harborview Medical Center, the VA Puget Sound Health Center, Children’s Hospital and Regional Medical Center, and in the practices of our clinical faculty located in the Puget Sound Region.

Several neurology faculty members participate as members of the Graduate School faculty, and as such act as advisors and thesis committee members for students completing PhD dissertations at the University of Washington.

The Department of Neurology has a website (http://depts.washington.edu/neurolog/) that affords electronic access to faculty and describes our core missions of teaching, research and clinical excellence.

2. Student development and retention

The Department of Neurology attempts to develop a resident body that mirrors the diversity of society by evaluating candidates from virtually any appropriate institutional source worldwide. Toward that end, the department currently interviews approximately 15 to 20 applicants for every available residency position to ensure that it evaluates as diverse and representational a pool (from the perspectives of race, gender, and ethnicity) as possible. Accordingly, the department’s resident mix represents, to a large degree, the diversity of individuals beyond the confines of the program, with a strong representation of females and recognized minority groups. When including offers to candidates who subsequently declined to participate in the program, the department’s efforts represent an even broader spectrum of racial and ethnic groups.

The Department provides a diverse range of field experiences to residents and students through its placements in WWAMI (the region comprising training sites for the programs, encompassing Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho) settings. These
settings provide exposure to communities markedly different from those found in the Seattle metropolitan area, and most notably include sparsely populated rural areas and institutions serving predominantly Native American constituents. Students and residents assigned to these settings subsequently provide feedback regarding their experiences to the program staff, who then use this important information in finding ways of further enriching the training experience and evaluating new sites for their possible contributions to program goals.
3. Engagement with the external community:

The department is active in its community-based efforts to promote a broader understanding of its mission and generate greater interest in the sciences it comprises. These efforts afford opportunities to engage members of diverse backgrounds in the neuroscience activities within the department. In support of this mission, the department hosts a student chapter of the American Academy of Neurology. This Student Interest Group in Neurology, or SIGN, provides a forum for students who are interested in the field to get together and explore opportunities in the practice of neurology. This provides a visible source of information for students, creates opportunities for mentored experiences with departmental faculty members, and offers a mechanism for engaging departmental field experts in conversations regarding career possibilities in neurology.

4. Staff and administrative diversity:

The Department of Neurology recognizes diversity as an asset to the workplace and strives to achieve this enrichment, not only among its faculty ranks, but also among the groups comprising its administrative operations. Accordingly, the department has achieved a significant range of diversity in its administrative offices and laboratories, both in terms of gender and racial composition. The Department attempts to maintain this diversity by continuing to advertise job opportunities through multiple avenues in order to reach a broad spectrum of candidates.

5. Faculty diversity:

The Department of Neurology has continuously strived to achieve a faculty body that is similar in composition to the general population. The department’s efforts have been particularly successful in recent years in its recruitment of females (both in terms of faculty appointments and enrollment in fellowship positions). In addition, to ensure retention of all faculty members, the department closely monitors its assigned salary levels, with particular attention toward gender equity. Toward this end, the department regularly compares faculty salary rates with averages for each rank. Through this process, the department has achieved a high level of uniformity among salary levels (including those for women and individuals presenting minority racial and ethnic groups) when controlling for time-in-rank.

6. Curriculum and research:

As discussed above, the Department of Neurology has developed its academic programs to reach as many students as possible. Undergraduate students can register for NEURL 499 courses and receive credit for research experiences in neurology. The department actively solicits quarterly evaluations from students regarding our instructors; these evaluations are not signed by the students and provide a constructive and confidential vehicle for candid comments. In addition, the School of Medicine has established quarterly curriculum reviews that permit medical students to provide course chairs with formal evaluations on content and teaching quality. The School of Medicine has also recently reconfigured the curriculum to include a mandatory neurology clerkship (which has previously been an elective). Effective this year, all medical students will be
required to complete a rotation in neurology. The Department of Neurology has dedicated faculty to providing an excellent learning experience for these students.

Research excellence is one of the strong virtues of the University of Washington, and is well reflected in the efforts of the faculty in the Department of Neurology. Our faculty members now receive over $5 million in research funding each year from a wide variety of federal, public and private sources. Our outstanding reputation for quality research is further demonstrated by the three endowed professorships held by research faculty members in our department. We make every effort to educate our faculty and students about research funding opportunities, including those coordinated by the Research Funding Service at the University of Washington. Our faculty enjoy collaborations on an international level, and we are pleased to host students and fellows from institutions around the world to support global development efforts in the neurosciences.

7. Climate:

The Department of Neurology has consistently demonstrated its commitment to diversity through it recruitment efforts, philosophy and culture supportive of inclusion, and range of racial and ethnic groups represented in its work force. Furthermore, the department has developed systems to ensure constant evaluation of its diversity efforts and identify additional areas of opportunity. These efforts include the feedback loops established in its training program, its use of exit interviews for staff, and routine monitoring of faculty salaries to maintain high levels of equity. It is through these efforts that the department maintains its ability to attract students, faculty and staff representing a broad spectrum of races and cultures.