

The PanAmerican Society for Pigment Cell Research (PASPCR) is dismayed by recent events highlighted by the injustices concerning Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd and others. These acts of violence highlight the persistence of racism and systemic injustices against Black people. PASPCR is a scientific community that welcomes members from all races, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, religions and cultures. Our society is made up of scientists, clinicians and physician scientists united by our interest in melanocytes - the cells that make pigment in the body - and melanin – the pigmented compound that gives skin and hair their color. As researchers who study pigmentation and disorders such as melanoma, vitiligo and melasma, we celebrate the many natural variations of skin and hair complexion. We are grateful for our differences and celebrate them in our work. We understand that in a biological sense, the difference between dark skin and light skin is simply a matter of how much and what kind of melanin a person’s melanocytes make. However, social experiences can differ greatly based on these biological differences. As pigment cell biologists and chemists who study human pigmentation, we understand that humans of different complexions are far more alike than we are different. No matter our background, we are all driven by the same basic needs to be valued, to be respected, to feel loved, to be happy, and to feel fulfilled. We believe that everyone should be treated equally and that we all have the same basic rights and privileges, no matter the content of melanin in their skin. Recent events involving violence against people of color and Black individuals in particular exposes underlying racism and prejudice that prevent this group of people from being treated within the rights guaranteed by our Constitution. For people of all backgrounds to matter equally and to have the same opportunities, we must work to remove discrimination by listening to all perspectives, learning from these diverse experiences, and actively condemning racism. We must all do our part by working together to make our communities the places that children of all races need them to be – equitable, respectful and opportunity-filled for their future growth and success. We have much work to do and very far to go as individuals, as a scientific community, and as a larger society. We don't have all the answers, but we are willing to listen, learn and act. As a scientific society, we pledge that we will do our best to promote and value diversity in our endeavors. We welcome participation of scientists and interested persons from all backgrounds, irrespective of skin complexion, race, religious background, age, gender identity, or sexual preference. We commit to starting a scholarship or award to specifically nurture the careers of underrepresented minorities within PASPCR. We will establish a committee to increase equity, diversity and inclusion in our society and to support our members. This committee will be responsible for identifying possible structural racism that may be embedded within the society and to develop ways to elevate opportunities within the society for Black people, people of color and other under-represented minorities. Finally, we will include an equity, diversity and inclusion workshop or seminar at our annual meetings to highlight this critical issue, celebrate the work contributed by our diverse society members and provide tools to combat barriers to the success of our membership.