Happy Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, May 2021!

This issue highlights – Dr. Lindy Zhang, Dr. Rosa Lee, Dr. David Park – three Asian-identified academic medicine leaders who are dedicated to diversifying medicine and academia. They are also BNGAP members, co-authors on BNGAP submissions, and BNGAP leaders. They describe what it means to be a “sunsengnim”; to lead through APAMSA (Asian Pacific American Medical Student Association), and making medical education equitable. For a glimpse of Asian identity and academic medicine, review read our - Conference Summary – Pre-Faculty Development for Diverse Trainees

CONGRATULATIONS to Grace Huang MD, Editor in Chief of MedEdPORTAL for her promotion to Dean for Faculty Affairs, Harvard Medical School. Dr. Huang has been a huge supporter of BNGAP and has served as a distinguished speaker for numerous BNGAP conferences and seminars. Learn about her promotion Here.

CONGRATULATIONS to Laura Castillo-Page PhD, Senior Director, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion, AAMC for her promotion to Inaugural Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer for the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. Dr. Castillo-Page has been a huge supporter of BNGAP and co-spear-headed and co-authored BNGAP’s first research paper titled Racial and Ethnic Minority Medical Students’ Perceptions of and Interest in Careers in Academic Medicine. (Paper Link) Learn about her promotion Here.

THE BEST EVER BNGAP LGBT HEALTH WORKFORCE CONFERENCE occurred on April 22-24, 2021. Access highlights here! To join the planning committee for the 10th LGBT Health Workforce Conference scheduled for April 2022; email lgbthealthworkforce@gmail.com.

We also would like to reflect on the success of our National Center for Pre-Faculty Development’s Medical Education Conference hosted on April 10th and 17th. Over 200 individuals registered from across the country all in support of our National BNGAP fellows. We look forward to seeing the modules produced by the fellows turned into publications! More information on the National Center: Here.

Un abrazo,

J.P. SÁNCHEZ MD, MPH
PRESIDENT, BNGAP INC.
My career path into academic medicine was unplanned and occurred naturally through my predisposition to teach. I have always felt a sense of duty to take care of and teach those who were junior to me. As a resident, I would readily share my knowledge and give pointers to medical students and junior residents. I think this practice is pretty customary to all residents in graduate medical education, but perhaps it was more naturally intrinsic to me because of how I was raised culturally.

In the Korean culture, an older or more experienced person has an inherent authority, and thus takes responsibility to care for and educate those who are younger or more junior. In higher education and in the workplace, a more experienced person or someone at a higher level is called sunbae and the junior person is called hoobae. This honorific is ingrained in every traditionally-raised Korean person. In spoken language, it is considered extremely disrespectful not to use this terminology and call a senior person by their actual first name. This level of societal respect comes with the expectation that a good sunbae should teach their hoobaes.

In medicine, the proper and more respectful way to address a doctor in Korea is to call him/her sunsengnim, which translates literally to “teacher”. Even in western cultures, the duty of a doctor to teach can be traced back to the origin of the word doctor itself, which is derived from the Latin word docère, meaning “to teach”; therefore, it can be argued that every doctor should be involved in medical education.

It is often said that one of the greatest blessings in life is to do what you enjoy doing and get paid for it. I must admit that I get great personal satisfaction of fulfilling my inherent duty to share the knowledge I have attained. A career in academic medicine allows me to do just that, and it truly is a blessing. I hope that many other Asian-Americans will choose to experience this and join me on this wonderful path in academic medicine.
As a child, I went to the hospital with my grandmother and uncle for his appointments. The doctor spoke in a language unfamiliar to her, so she only gave empty stares, even after my direct translations. My grandmother was never able to fully comprehend my uncle’s lifelong struggle with epilepsy refractory to medication and surgery. I watched her struggle as she watched him slowly withdraw from reality; I felt helpless without the words and knowledge to guide her through these times. I recognized that being bilingual was insufficient—I needed to do more, and this led me to pursue medical education and advocacy.

As a medical student, as part of my efforts to do more, I became a co-chair of the Asian Pacific American Medical Student Association National Conference. I developed the conference’s theme based on my personal experience: “Breaking the Silence in Asian Pacific-Islander American Health.” It was an effort to spread awareness of the incongruity of epidemiological data and actual disease prevalence, like mental health and cancers. I also joined Building the Next Generation of Academic Physicians and led a team of medical students to explore the interest in and perception of academic medicine careers among Asian medical students. This led to the first publication that focused on the Asian perspective of academic medicine.

As a physician, I learned to provide that comfort and understanding to my patients and their families that I could not provide—but so desperately wanted to—for my grandmother. I recognized that good health care requires more than translating test results or describing medication side effects. Being involved in medical education allows me to use my experiences to impact the delivery of healthcare by educating providers to recognize the importance of culture and empathy in a patient’s care.

As a physician-scientist in training, I continue to successfully build my academic medicine career because of my mentors. I am especially indebted to those who believed in my story, helped me recognize that I can do more than translate words, and taught me to use my voice in advocacy.

In academic medicine, I can be a compassionate physician seeking to connect with my patients, a scientist studying small molecule inhibitors to try to cure cancers, and an educator making a lasting impact in medicine. I challenge trainees to find mentors who are excited about their stories and goals and enable them to use their stories to better the world.
My career in academic medicine has been directed by my personal mission to make medical education equitable - to empower students from all backgrounds to succeed in becoming physicians. Since defining my mission, I have found it easier to identify the next steps to move forward in my career by using this mission as my guide. Having a clear mission has also helped me to identify like-minded colleagues whom I can lean on as mentors and peer support. As an Asian-identified person in academic medicine, I recognize that identity is a rich and multifaceted concept from which I can draw strength and support. Finding connections with other AAPI colleagues has been inspiring; at the same time, I am appreciative of how heterogeneous our AAPI community is and how important it is to acknowledge the varied life experiences of AAPI trainees and faculty.

My recommendation for the next generation of academic physicians is to remember that you – your life experiences, your values, your identity, and your voice - matter in academic medicine. If we are to deliver equitable healthcare that meets the needs of everyone in our diverse society, then we need to have that diversity present in our medical faculty and leadership too. When times are challenging, find your like-minded peers for support. But don’t be afraid to speak up even if you are the only person in the room who looks or thinks like you.
CONGRADULATIONS TO DR. CASTILLO-PAGE!

“The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine announced on April 29th, 2021 that Dr. Laura Castillo-Page will become its first chief diversity and inclusion officer, effective June 1. Dr. Castillo-Page most recently served as senior director for equity, diversity, and inclusion at the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC).

Dr. Laura Castillo-Page will lead the development of an overall diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) strategy and set of programs for the entire organization. Working as an adviser and resource on DEI issues, she will be a leader in growing diversity among staff and volunteers, diversifying academy membership, addressing DEI topics in programs and activities, and advancing a culture of inclusion within the National Academies. Dr. Castillo-Page also will help represent the National Academies on matters related to DEI with government agencies, scientific and professional communities and organizations, private foundations, and the public.

“I’m excited to join the National Academies during this pivotal time and look forward to working with many talented colleagues, members, and volunteers,” (Link)
CONGRADULATIONS TO DR. HUANG!

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Grace C. Huang as dean for faculty affairs beginning on July 1, 2021. Dr. Huang is an associate professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School and a hospitalist at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, where she currently serves as vice chair for career development and mentorship in the Department of Medicine, as director of the Office of Academic Careers and Faculty Development, and co-director of the Beth Israel Deaconess Academy. She also serves as director of the Rabkin Fellowship in Medical Education, a program for HMS faculty designed to help develop the skills needed to launch or advance academic careers in medical education or academic leadership. Finally, Dr. Huang is the editor-in-chief of MedEdPORTAL, a journal of the Association of American Medical Colleges.

Given her impressive past experience in faculty development as well as her leadership and scholarship, we believe Dr. Huang is optimally suited for this role. She is widely recognized for her leadership in faculty development, with a particular focus on publishing in medical education and scholarly writing, and is thoughtful about how best to recruit, develop, support, and promote our diverse faculty. She is a leader who fully embraces the importance of advancing the HMS mission.

As dean for faculty affairs, Dr. Huang will be responsible for the strategic leadership, oversight, planning, and implementation of the academic welfare of the Faculty of Medicine, including all aspects of the faculty promotions and appointments process. Additionally, she will lead the Office for Faculty Affairs. She will also oversee the academic activities, recruitment, development, academic advancement, and career satisfaction of our diverse faculty and serve as a key advisor to faculty, department heads, and affiliated hospital leadership on these topics.

Dr. Huang earned undergraduate degrees in English and biological sciences from Stanford University and her MD from Washington University in St. Louis. She completed her internship and residency at Beth Israel Deaconess. She joined the HMS faculty in 2003 and has been associate professor since 2013.

Dr. Huang will assume responsibilities that have been held on an interim basis by Jules Dienstag, the Carl W. Walter Professor of Medicine at HMS, who has been ably aided by Carol Bates and Bethany Westlund, associate deans for faculty affairs. We want to specifically acknowledge the outstanding service of Drs. Bates and Westlund, who guided faculty affairs seamlessly though the COVID-19 pandemic. We thank this dedicated team for its leadership and wise counsel.

We also want to thank the search committee, led by Dr. Shelly Greenfield, professor of psychiatry and chief academic officer at McLean Hospital. Presented with a remarkably talented and distinguished pool, the committee’s task was challenging, yet they brought forth truly exceptional candidates for us to consider, which ultimately led us to Dr. Huang.

Please join us in congratulating Dr. Huang on her new role.

Sincerely,

George O. Daley
Dean of the Faculty of Medicine
Harvard University

Anne E. Becker
Dean for Clinical and Academic Affairs
Harvard Medical School
CONGRATULATIONS TO THE LGBTQ HEALTH WORKFORCE CONFERENCE AWARD WINNERS!

Watch the LGBT HWFC Promotional Video Here!

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2021 Organizational/Institutional Award Winner - Fenway Institute

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2021 Junior Leadership Award Winner - Corey Kronman, Penn State SOM
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“Several resident physicians including myself seek to be physician leaders in academic medicine but are unprepared to face the challenges due to lack of exposure. Through BNGAP, I have been able to equip myself with training materials and networking opportunities to further explore an academic medicine career. BNGAP has particularly played a crucial role in helping me implement a community physician leadership workshop to prepare residents to become more effective physician leaders.”

Dimitri Tito, DO
Internal Medicine Resident