

Couples Research & Therapy: *DIVERSITY NEWSLETTER*

The Newsletter of the Couples Research & Therapy ABCT–SIG, Special Edition, 2018

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“Our ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and the test of our civilisation.”

- Mahatma Gandhi



Letter from the Editors

Eileen Barden¹ & Alexandra Wojda²

¹SUNY Binghamton; ²University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

We are happy to present a special edition of the Couples SIG newsletter focusing on the theme of diversity in academia, research, and clinical work. This newsletter was inspired by the members of the Couples SIG, their passion to better understand the experiences of couples from different backgrounds, and their drive to increase the inclusion of diverse voices in the field. To capture their varied perspectives, the contents of this newsletter are split into three sections. In “Diversity in the Field,” SIG co-presidents, Drs. Flanagan and Fleming, reflect on the importance of recognizing diversity within our current political climate. In “Taking a Look Back,” former student co-presidents, Kayla Knopp and Dev Crasta, provide an overview of the Clinical Round Table-turned townhall meeting at the 2017 ABCT conference. Additionally, in “The Road Ahead,” current student co-presidents, Judith Biesen and Alex Wang, consider the future of diversity and inclusion in the couple field. Interviews with several members of the SIG and other professionals whose work focuses on underrepresented populations are also presented. Lastly, we are excited to feature the op-ed “The Credibility Gap in Academe” by Annmarie Cano – a piece that focuses on the challenges of women and other marginalized individuals in academic environments. This is followed by an interview with Dr. Cano on her sources of inspiration for writing the article. We appreciate Dr. Cano’s willingness to share her article with all of us, and thank her for participating in the interview.

Many thanks to Sarah Bannon, Annie Le, and Kate Nowlan for their guidance into our new role and sharing their expertise. Thank you to the Couples SIG presidents and student co-presidents for their contributions to this issue. A special thank you to everyone who took the time to participate in our interviews; your feedback is valuable and very much appreciated. A final thanks to all the members of the Couples SIG—we appreciate you taking the time to read this and leading the effort to change the way of the field.

We are enthusiastic for this great opportunity to be your newsletter editors and look forward to presenting future newsletters sharing the accomplishments of everyone in this wonderful Couples SIG!

DIVERSITY IN THE FIELD

Letter from the SIG Co-Presidents

Julianne Flanagan¹ & C.J. Fleming²

¹*Medical University of South Carolina*; ²*Elon University*

Dear Couples SIG members,

The struggle is *real*, isn't it? We are living and working in a time filled tension and divisiveness to our country. It has been challenging to stay informed and employ our emotion regulation skills while maintaining professional productivity and overall well-being. And if we as experts in managing relationships and emotions are struggling with this, who isn't?! Fortunately, our expertise also helps us remember that positive change and solidarity often arise out of times of challenge, chaos, and uncertainty. This is where we believe we have room to capitalize on our unique and valuable strengths – on our important work and on the value of awareness, togetherness, and inclusion. We believe that our collective value as a SIG is to provide a safe space to grow and learn both personally and professionally. We seek to honor the founders of our field and of this group, and to celebrate *all* of the voices that have contributed to building and sustaining the field of couples' research and treatment. At the same time, we seek to identify and amplify the voices of the present and future generations of researchers, clinicians, and educators whose voices have yet to be heard. Our group is among the largest and most active in the ABCT community, and we hope to lead the effort on recognizing and championing diversity.

We applaud this group for cultivating a space where sometimes-uncomfortable conversations are safe, and action to promote diversity is prioritized. We are grateful to the many members who have offered suggestions about how to increase awareness and diversity by ensuring support to every member of the SIG, and to those who demonstrate commitment to this effort in their actions every day. We would also like to take this opportunity to extend our appreciation for the members of the SIG newsletter team who have taken the very important initiative to organize this effort. We hope that this newsletter will facilitate more dialogue and action in our group by increasing the amount and visibility of critical research on marginalized groups, efforts to promote gender equity and the advancement of students and faculty from diverse ethnic backgrounds, and to model and engage our trainees in behaviors to increase awareness and inclusion. Let's be the change we wish to see in the world.

Best,

Julianne Flanagan (hellmuth@musc.edu)

CJ Fleming (cfleming6@elon.edu)

TAKING A LOOK BACK

Letter from the Former Student Co-Presidents

Dev Crasta¹ & Kayla Knopp²

¹ *University of Rochester*; ² *University of Denver*

Dear Couples SIG,

It is with great admiration for the members of our wonderful professional community that we reflect on the town hall event that arose during this past year's ABCT conference.

The event was originally proposed as a Clinical Round Table where several senior researchers in the field would be able to look back at where the couples research and therapy field has come over the past few decades and to look forward to where we aspire to go in the future. A key piece of looking forward for our field is the professional development of students; thus, as the Student Co-Presidents of the Couples SIG at the time, we were invited to elicit questions from students to pass on to the panel during the CRT. When members of the Couples SIG voiced concerns about the representation of diverse voices at this CRT, especially those of women, the organizers of the CRT shifted its format to a town hall meeting during which all SIG members could contribute to this important discussion. We stayed on to moderate the town hall discussion in order to ensure that student voices and concerns were emphasized, including relaying some of the questions we had received from students.

The town hall discussion addressed many key topics in couple therapy and research that both highlighted past scientific contributions and charted a path for our evolution as a field. Several experienced researchers shared perspectives on the effectiveness of couple therapy, including a discussion about common factors versus the unique effects of different couple therapy modalities and their implications for research and practice. Attendees discussed several important ways of looking forward as a field, including better serving underserved groups and obtaining funding for our research. The important role of students in the field was highlighted, both in terms of the ways that students drive the field forward – especially in domains of diversity and inclusiveness – and on best practices for faculty mentorship to create opportunities for students to become successful young professionals. We were encouraged to hear discussion about ways to combat some of the structural challenges for students entering the field, particularly for women and people of color.

This town hall event seemed to be a valuable opportunity for the SIG to come together and share thoughts about the issues that matter to us as a field and a community. We further feel that the event was enriched by the collective wisdom of the SIG's diverse voices. We feel privileged to have been involved, and we are grateful to everyone who attended. We look forward to bringing the wisdom shared at this event with us as we take our own next steps toward becoming part of the new generation of young professionals and continuing the important work of carrying our field forward.

Sincerely,
Kayla Knopp and Dev Crasta
Former Couples SIG Student Co-Presidents (2015-2017)

SIG Feedback on the 2017 ABCT Townhall: In January 2018, a brief survey was emailed to the Couples SIG to gather feedback on the townhall meeting. Respondents were asked to (1) rate their level of satisfaction on the breadth and depth of the townhall, (2) indicate whether the meeting adequately addressed the topic of diversity and inclusion, and (3) report other areas that should have been addressed during the meeting. Of the total number of participants (N=12), the majority (75%) were at least somewhat satisfied with the depth and breadth of the discussion among SIG members, and with the way in which the topic of diversity was addressed. Approximately 17% of respondents were somewhat or extremely dissatisfied with the way in which the meeting content was handled. Other topics respondents wanted to discuss included the experiences of other marginalized groups (e.g., people of color, individuals of the LGBTQ+ community). In sum, despite the small sample size, results of this survey indicate that SIG members would like to maintain an open dialogue on the ways in which the couple field can actively change its approach toward inclusivity across multiple levels (professional, academic, and clinical).

THE ROAD AHEAD

Letter from the Student Co-Presidents

Judith Biesen¹ & Alex Wang²

¹ *University of Notre Dame*; ² *Binghamton University*

As your new student co-presidents, we're excited to be part of a group that is so invested in the betterment of couples' lives through research and development of evidence-based treatments, and is committed to fostering an environment where different backgrounds, beliefs, and approaches are not only accepted, but valued and desired.

When we talk about diversity in the world of academia, the focus of the conversation is often on increasing diversity by attracting and recruiting diverse graduate students or faculty members. Proclaiming our desire for greater inclusion and acceptance of individuals who bring different perspectives to the table is admirable and demonstrates the commitment of our field to diversity. Nevertheless, it is easy to lose sight of the fact that we first need to build an inclusive environment that enables and empowers diverse members to make meaningful contributions. Otherwise, we run the risk of sending a message that diversity is only a priority when it does not require significant effort or changes. A true commitment to diversity and inclusion means educating others by creating compassion for diverse persons and their unique backgrounds and experiences. This can be especially challenging in clinical or pedagogical settings. In these roles, we are not supposed to impose our personal views on our clients or students. We are expected to focus on our clients' emotional needs, and we are expected to teach our students facts and skills. Yet, by not challenging people's views and bringing to their attention the experiences of minority populations, we are maintaining the status quo, thus creating anything but an inclusive environment.

Moving forward, we first must identify and consult with individuals from diverse backgrounds and ask them what they need – after all, they are the experts. In a teaching/educational context, this may happen by asking directly about their lived realities and struggles. Other times, there may be the need for a more delicate approach, especially if minority persons are concerned about repercussions of voicing their concerns. Feedback could be solicited anonymously (e.g., through online surveys distributed to students or employees), or through the appointment of a trusted representative that keeps identifying information confidential.

Second, we need to identify the ways in which current rules and attitudes interfere with the implementation of procedures that would better serve the needs of certain populations. For instance, although as couples researchers and clinicians we value and promote commitment to our partners and families, our workplace culture might encourage women to return to work as quickly as possible after giving birth, or might frown upon the non-birth parent taking family leave, even if it is part of their official policy. This could even be more challenging for same-sex parents. Third, and most importantly, we need to take steps to address these issues by lobbying for and implementing changes. This can take many forms. Within a university setting, it may mean identifying faculty or staff with relevant expertise who are willing to take on a leadership role in the ongoing efforts to promote diversity. It could also mean developing and establishing appropriate training opportunities for staff, students, and faculty to raise awareness of issues related to diversity. Furthermore, it could involve developing and offering community outreach programs to educate the general population, decrease bias, and foster compassion for the experience of diverse persons.

Continued on next page

In terms of better serving diverse couples and families, our field has made great strides in this direction, and many members of our SIG have successfully developed and implemented protocols for minority/underserved couples and families. However, it is important that our efforts don't end here. What good is the most efficacious intervention if only a few hundred people in the world know it exists? Researchers sometimes fall a bit short in their efforts to educate those outside of academia about interventions that would be extremely valuable for many people. Although dissemination has been a recurring topic, it often doesn't translate into anything concrete, first because it takes considerable effort, but also because outside of our field there appears to be a genuine lack of understanding of the importance of relationships for psychological and physical well-being. This highlights the need to leave our academic bubble and put forth more effort to educate people (e.g., lawmakers, insurance agencies) not only about the importance of relationships, but also that we already have some of the answers. For example, when policy makers make mental health related decisions at the local, state, federal, or company level, they usually seek out input from a few "experts". One way of stepping out of our academic bubble might be to either influence or become these experts, so that our evidence-based knowledge can inform policy and improve the well-being of exponentially more people than we have been able to reach thus far.

The field of psychology is at an exciting crossroads. We have an opportunity to influence the direction of our field towards ever more emphasis on work that is beneficial for people of myriad backgrounds. We live in an interconnected world, and to achieve our goals we will need to communicate, work collaboratively, and ensure that no group is left behind. We are proud to be part of a diverse organization that is at the forefront of this movement. We look forward to working with this group of wonderful researchers to continue fostering a culture of diversity and acceptance as we strive to make a positive impact in the world.

Best,
Judith Biesen & Alex Wang
Current Student Co-Presidents

Interviews on Future Directions in Couple Research

Members of the Couples SIG whose research or positions have a strong focus on diversity were invited to participate in a brief interview. Questions focused on the present state of couples research in terms of diversity and future directions to facilitate the inclusion and representation of diversity.

Thank you to those who gave their time and responses: Drs. Christina Balderrama-Durbin, Anthony Chambers, Kristi Coop Gordon, Joanne Davila, Kim Halford, Barbara McCrady, Aimee McRae-Clark, Uzma Rehman, Shelby Scott, and Sarah Whitton. Their responses are summarized below.

Common Themes of the Interviews

1. In your opinion, to what degree does current couples research reflect the experiences of minority populations? (“Experiences” are defined broadly as couples’ struggles with individual, relationship, and environmental stressors; resiliency; and other factors that have an impact on relationship functioning.)

The majority of interviewees agreed that concerted efforts to increase our understanding of the relationship experiences of individuals from minority and under-represented populations have increased within the past decade. In particular, a number of investigators have completed basic research on relationship outcomes in African American, Latino, and LGB couples. While this progress is encouraging, interviewees claimed the field still has a long way to go. Primarily, very little has been done in terms of conducting *couples therapy* research with minority populations. Once we have a better grasp of the unique circumstances, stressors, and strengths that shape the relationships of diverse couples, the field will be better equipped to address the multifaceted needs of said couples via relationship education programs or clinical trials.

The *way* in which this research is conducted is equally important. Some interviewees suggested that we must do better in our research efforts – “ranging from recruitment to measurement to the implementation of our scientific methods” – to adequately and sensitively capture the experiences of minority couples. Currently, dozens of studies have limited their data collection to non-minority couples (i.e., White, middle-class, heterosexual) for practical or statistical reasons; using a culturally-informed theory-driven approach might be one way to change this. Furthermore, conducting well-designed qualitative research might provide valuable insight into ethnic/cultural differences among diverse couples. As one interviewee eloquently stated, “[Doing such studies] with members of various cultures will help us to better understand the nuances [of their relationships] and to allow important themes that we are not *a priori* aware of to emerge organically.” This work can then be used to inform larger-scale quantitative investigations.

2. How do you address diversity within your lab, research, clinic, and day to day work?

In terms of research, most interviewees noted their work focuses on sexual minority and economically disadvantaged samples. Within this domain, specific interests range broadly from recruiting international couples to working with interracial couples and individuals in arranged marriages. Many noted that their ability to pursue empirical work within these populations is a function of their access to resources: Whereas some investigators have graduate students and staff members who are committed to, and knowledgeable about, conducting research with diverse populations, others claimed that such work depends on the community within which their research institution is located. When the communities one recruits from are inherently diverse, study samples are more likely to be representative of a multitude of cultures and ethnicities. This cannot be said of communities that are more homogenous in nature.

Within the realm of clinical work and academia, nearly all interviewees spoke of their attempts to maintain cultural humility. Many respondents discussed the importance of rejecting a “one size fits all” approach and underscored the clinical utility of administering individually-tailored treatment. By acknowledging a couple’s intersecting identities, clinicians are better equipped to sensitively address the complexities of individual, dyadic, and systemic influences within a couple’s life. Similar perspectives were shared with regard to graduate instruction and the maintenance of research lab environments. Several of our respondents openly discussed continuing education – that is, “continually educating ourselves about how to be more inclusive in our work” and recognizing that we all have blindspots where “we need to grow and improve.” Most importantly, some claimed that when these blind spots are pointed out, it is vital to respond with openness and a willingness “to look inward and change.” These practices will not only improve the quality of our research; they will also enable us to consider, explore, and discuss diversity and cultural considerations more profoundly.

3. What are some factors you consider in the recruitment of faculty and/or graduate students?

Many respondents echoed one another's comments on important factors that influence the recruitment of graduate students and new faculty. The most common responses included: (a) looking for students who are diverse in terms of their ethnic/cultural background and their experiences prior to attending the program; (b) considering the potential adversity and lack of opportunity afforded to the prospective student/professor related to their identity and/or cultural background; (c) ensuring that students/faculty themselves are accepting of, and value, diversity; (d) attending to the unique background, qualities, and perspectives that candidates "bring to the table"; and (e) having search committees who are diverse with respect to gender, ethnicity, experience, student representation, and discipline.

Although programs often strive for representation of diverse students and faculty, many claimed their departments are partially successful in meeting this goal. While reasons for this outcome were not consistently provided across respondents, it is clear that a gap exists between the *ideal* recruitment method and the *reality* of the recruitment process.

4. What are the biggest barriers that negatively impact diversity in couples research as well as the recruitment or mentoring of underrepresented minority investigators/clinicians?

Interviewees agreed there are unique barriers and considerations when working with diverse populations in couples research. Of the many factors identified, participants' knowledge about research was listed as a primary concern. There may be a lack of knowledge about this process that creates a barrier in reaching certain populations. Couples from oppressed and disadvantaged backgrounds may not engage in our research with the same level of trust, comfort, and knowledge about the research process creating a notable barrier in reaching more diverse populations. Respondents highlighted it would be helpful to create partnerships with trusted organizations in diverse communities and work to understand the specific barriers the community members may face. It is important to put our efforts towards decreasing these barriers instead of relying on undergraduate populations for convenience. Location was also brought up as a factor as a possible barrier. Depending on where you are conducting your research, you may not have access to certain populations of interest or them to you. Restricting our research to the laboratory can deepen potential barriers and divides.

When samples of participants are indeed diverse, interviewees stated that, there is a need to ensure we are providing culturally sensitive materials – that is, having culturally appropriate questionnaires (e.g., translation) and interpretation of results. A recommendation of having cultural informants was given to enhance sensitivity to cultural practices, beliefs, and customs. Additionally, to aid in our cultural competence, incorporating knowledge of research outside of the U.S. as well as other fields, such as behavioral health and sociology, would enrich our understanding of diversity considerations. Finally, responses reflected that there is a need for an increase in resources and funding in the area of diversity research. Moreover, there is need to incorporate specific training on how to competently study important aspects of different diverse populations.

As for mentoring minority individuals (e.g., investigators, clinicians or graduate students), it was acknowledged that those from diverse backgrounds tend to experience increased barriers, biases, and less resources available to them. Interviewees proposed considering diversity in the recruitment process, especially in leadership roles, to mitigate these barriers diverse populations face. There is a need to have more diverse representation of role models for mentoring, such as PIs, faculty members and supervisors. These individuals provide unique perspectives into research and mentorship approach informed by their own experiences of adversity and diverse knowledge.

5. What are some factors that currently facilitate diversity within couples research as well as the recruitment or mentoring of underrepresented minority investigators/clinicians?

Many of those who responded were encouraged by the growing awareness of the importance of diversity. There are actively growing areas of research examining diverse populations right now! In particular, research on LGBT relationships is gaining more attention. Additionally, the requirement of training in diversity and multicultural competence for accreditation has been a step in the right direction. This is promising in helping current and future members in the field become more competent in working with diverse populations and shows diversity is becoming more of a priority.

Collaboration was a common theme in many responses regarding research, mentoring, and teaching. To increase collaboration, it was suggested that we should be more proactive in seeking out underrepresented members to become involved, and create more opportunities for people from marginalized backgrounds. There are some programs available in the mentoring of diverse undergraduate students, especially those interested in research (e.g., McNair Scholars program). These types of avenues are useful opportunities that can aid in the inclusion of more diverse students. All acknowledged that the inclusion of diverse voices is advantageous and helps to bring in different perspectives and experiences.

6. What are some things that can be done (by students, faculty, and other academicians) to increase and maintain inclusion of diverse voices in research and clinical work in the long-term?

There were great suggestions provided from the interviewees for increasing diversity. The most common were: (a) continue raising awareness on the importance of diversity. We need to keep including diverse members into our teams (e.g., students, faculty, clinicians) and keep researching diverse populations; (b) actively educate ourselves on issues of diversity. We should not depend or solely rely on the effort of those from diverse populations to educate us. It is our responsibility to reach out and gain the knowledge we seek; (c) understanding how diversity impacts multiple domains. There are many different levels such as the individual themselves, couple or familial, systemic, and/or institutional; (d) expanding our understanding through multiple sources. There are many other fields that may be more advanced in their study of diversity. Creating collaborations from other disciplines or fields may lessen this gap and increase our knowledge collectively; and (e) leading by example. This can be done by all: students, faculty, clinicians, researchers, everyone. A concrete example for faculty would be taking the time to speak about diversity and inclusion in your labs. It is important to set the standards in our everyday practice, whether it be in research, practice, mentoring or teaching. Let's keep diversity a priority!

The Credibility Gap in Academe

Annmarie Cano, 2017

**Article can be found on: <https://www.chronicle.com/article/The-Credibility-Gap-in-Academe/241980/#.WigcYfJPplg.facebook>*

The Harvey Weinstein scandal has led to renewed awareness about sexual misconduct in every sector, including a string of recent allegations in academe. In the past, claims by women — especially those in subordinate or less senior roles — were not always considered credible. That appears to be changing this time. Women are being believed, and predators are losing their jobs. Yet a recent incident showed me how much women's credibility remains under siege, in subtle ways, even when dealing with faculty peers.

In an academic environment where credentials are everything, women's credentials may still mean little.

Just a few days ago, a female professor and colleague emailed several of us to offer a handout with tips on how to write unbiased letters of recommendation for students pursuing graduate studies. Research has shown that one of the many reasons women lag behind men in academic environments is the fact that, compared with recommendation letters for men, the ones for women candidates often contain less powerful and more negative descriptions.

In essence, recommendation letters written on behalf of women are not as impressive as the ones written for men. Some might argue that women are simply less qualified but other studies have shown that women are evaluated as less competent than men even when both have the very same qualifications.

A male colleague who also received the handout then messaged all of us on the email chain to say the handout was a good resource, and that he would forward it to other professors and to graduate students. Then he added: "perhaps more effective coming from a man than a woman."

I was dumbfounded. Then the irony of his statement sunk in. Here was a man stating that he would be a more credible source about how to prevent gender bias against women.

I emailed him privately to explain that — while I knew he was trying to be helpful — he was simply maintaining beliefs that the handout was trying to dispel. I was hoping for a response like, "You know what? You have a point there. Next time I'll ask her to send it to the other faculty directly."

That's not the response I received. Instead, he replied: "Yes, I'd like to see that as well. But the question I raise is, 'Is a message advocating for women more effective coming from a woman, or from a man, at least at this point in our history/culture?'" He went on to suggest that if we were advocating for a men's issue, my voice as a woman would be more effective than his.

Granted, studies have shown that when people express a view consistent with their own self- or group-interest, their messages tend to be dismissed, scrutinized, or ignored. But does that mean we can never let women talk about their experiences, out of fear that men will dismiss the information or not pay attention in the first place?

What struck me about my male colleague's response, however, was that he was sharing the handout with a largely female audience. These professors and graduate students were already on board with the need to reduce gender bias. Equally troubling: I later learned that when he shared the handout with graduate students, he did not credit its female author.

Let's unpack his response because it sends messages that well-intentioned people may want to avoid if they are genuinely interested in being an ally to women.

Message 1: The status quo is reality and that's just the way it is.

My colleague acknowledged the problem of gender bias, which is good. However, his response and his solution sustained the problem. His response suggests that nothing can really be done. He might as well have said, "My thoughts and prayers are with you."

Message 2: I know more about your personal experience than you do.

By asking me to take his perspective, typically a good idea, he was also sending the message that I was not being objective. Perhaps I was too sensitive (as a woman). In fact, my personal experience of his initial message was not acknowledged or validated. And therefore, my personal experience as a woman is not important.

Message 3: We're all equals (but I'm a more qualified equal).

In his attempt to educate me about persuasion, he did not acknowledge the existence of gendered power differences in academe. The example he used assumes equality where there is none, and his choice not to credit the female author of the handout is problematic.

How can we confront the credibility gap?

A first step is for men to say they hear or believe "the women," as Sen. Mitch McConnell recently said about Roy Moore's accusers. Likewise, in the situation I describe here, men could acknowledge the experience of their female colleagues. They can invite women to participate as credible sources of valuable knowledge. All the attention this year to "manels" (all-male conference panels) also shows that men can refuse to participate in systems that perpetuate the idea that only half of the scholarly population has credible knowledge and skills.

Women and men need to work together to change attitudes about credibility in academe. Last month, for example, at the annual meeting of the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, an all-male panel of scholars was slated to discuss the current state of the field. After a female professor of color voiced her concerns online and other women supported her, organizers decided to convert the panel into an open forum that included discussion on diversity and inclusion in the profession.

We all have to be willing to risk speaking up when we see bias, to listen when it's been brought to our attention, and to engage in open dialogue. Those steps are key in moving toward equity and inclusion. Of course speaking up is not without risk. Thinking about my colleague, who couldn't acknowledge the unintended impact of his words, I also wonder about the impact of these situations on my peers and me when we raise our concerns and they are dismissed. What about for colleagues who are untenured or otherwise more vulnerable?

Why is it that we "get to" spend so much time thinking about things like this? I doubt my male colleague has given it a second thought. He has moved on to create more knowledge to enhance his credibility. In the meantime, I am expending additional effort thinking about this incident rather than writing that next scholarly publication. No wonder my credibility is at stake.

Interview with the Author: Dr. Annmarie Cano

What inspired you to write the op-ed, “The Credibility Gap in Academe”?

The making of this article stemmed from many, many interactions with lots of different people – interactions I participated in, along with ones I heard about – that underscored how the accomplishments of women and people of color continue to be discredited. The particular interaction described in the article [between Cano and a male colleague] happened a few days before Dr. Uzma Rehman emailed the SIG to voice her opinion about the Clinical Round Table at ABCT; both things occurred within the span of one week. At that point, I felt something needed to be said – indeed, many of us could be saying things, and are not. All too often, when individuals of a vulnerable group speak up about being treated a particular way, we may agree about the injustice but we remain silent, even when the injustice affects us in our marginalized identities. But with the MeToo movement in the national conversation, we see a shift in the dialectic from simple acknowledgement of the treatment of marginalized groups to folks saying that something needs to be *done* about it. In academia especially, the responses of individuals like Drs. Rehman and Snyder on the SIG listserv – that is what you want to see. I was particularly encouraged by that. You want to see someone who is bold enough to speak out when they see something that’s not quite right; you then want others to listen and say, “Yes, we hear you – let’s *do* something about this.” So, if anything, my goal with this article was to harness my privilege as a full professor/administrator and create a platform to motivate women and others to speak up.

What reactions have you gotten from others since writing the piece? Were these reactions what you hoped to hear from your readers?

All of the direct reactions were positive. Honestly, I didn’t think too much about what would happen after the article was published – I just knew that its ideas were incredibly timely and needed to be said. I didn’t know how people would react; I wasn’t looking for a positive reaction.

That said, I soon learned that the article was shared and re-shared and re-shared! People who I didn’t even know were reaching out and telling me how inspiring it was. Two words that continued to come up were “powerful and brave”; however, I didn’t necessarily feel powerful and brave for writing the article. I suppose it was considered powerful because it included a description of a real experience, as well as real thoughts and reactions, all of which felt authentic to the readers. On the other hand, perhaps it was brave to speak out about my observations. Most responses have been from women, some of whom have shared with me their own experiences in academia. Some senior women even mentioned that they have renewed hope for change – change that will affect even more egregious types of behavior than that described in the article. Ultimately, to hear that I affected people and inspired them has been really empowering for me.

Of course, when writing a piece like this, you run the risk of having people lash out; fortunately, that has not been my experience. I haven’t yet heard direct negative feedback from anyone. However, there have been some responses that weren’t completely positive. Some people wanted to identify the male colleague I referenced in the article. Others thought I misinterpreted the email exchange that in large part inspired the article; this is why I included its language verbatim. I understand the cognitive dissonance driving this assumption; it’s often hard to see our colleagues – who are kind, nice people – say things that are prejudiced in one way or another. Ultimately, you can still be a nice person and make mistakes. We all – every single one of us – have made judgments without thinking. With that in mind, we need to think more about the ways in which our biases are translated to behaviors that might offend/oppress people or affect their work. This is especially true for psychologists. We should be more self-aware so that everyone with whom we interact has an equal shot. Sometimes, it’s a struggle to reconcile the differences between being a good person and allowing our own biases to affect our behavior.

What are some things that can be done (by students, faculty, and other academicians) to increase and maintain inclusion of diverse voices in research and clinical work in the long-term?

I would say that something I am guilty of in my own research is neglecting to look at the gendered and racialized ways in which couples' interactions affect relationship quality and health. I think this stems from the fact that recruitment is *so* hard to begin with; oftentimes, researchers are just happy to have a sample with an N large enough to run analyses. Nevertheless, we can learn more about ways to critically examine differences among racial and ethnic groups in sensitive and culturally competent ways. Too often, researchers just lump everyone together in their analyses and, in the limitations section of their manuscript, state "we don't have enough power to understand how these results apply to various racial/ethnic groups." In this day and age, we could be doing more. We could learn a lot from the work of sociologists, anthropologists, and social workers, and collaborate with researchers who have expertise in theoretical, conceptual, and large-scale analyses of majority and minority groups to better understand how the social structures of inequality, power, and stratification interact with, and affect, relationship outcomes. Therefore, it is important to diversify the professoriate – not just to diversify the individuals one works with, but also to obtain a diversity of *ideas*. The more psychology departments can hire faculty with new and innovative ideas, with creative and interesting ways of studying different relationship phenomena, the more we can start to fill the gaps currently in our knowledge base. To see more of that would be wonderful.

Additionally, I have a lot to say about how graduate recruitment is practiced. Typically, the process of graduate admissions is built around finding students who could potentially become "mini-me"s of the professors with whom they apply to work. This is not always a bad thing – however, it is important to think about the way this impacts the diversity of the student body *and* the potential diversity of the research pursued between the student and their advisor. For this reason, when recruiting students, we need to ask ourselves: what are important qualities that I want in my student beyond their standardized test scores? Am I looking for people who are really good team-players? To what degree are my applicants good at handling failure? So much of academia involves being OK when your research does not go as planned, picking up the pieces, and moving on. Certain indices, like test scores, do not capture one's ability to handle that. There is quite a bit of research showing that if programs are using GRE cut scores, they are automatically eliminating people, like women and individuals of color, who might have those vital qualities – that grit – that you are looking for. What's more, test scores are not correlated with graduate school outcomes beyond first-year GPA. This finding should not be ignored. That said, if a program is okay with that, sure, make that decision and use test scores as a way of guiding the admissions process. But if this is something a program does *not* choose to do, they need to address the broader question of which qualities and experiences truly make an applicant qualified for graduate work in their program. Two articles that do a really great job of touching on these issues include Posselt (2014; <http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/676910>) and Miller and Stassun (2014; <http://dx.doi.org/10.1038/nj7504-303a>).

Fortunately, there are a number of networks and initiatives that are bringing diverse scholars together and providing them with a platform to have their voices heard. One that immediately comes to mind is the "Op-Ed Project" (<https://www.theopedproject.org>). It was founded by a journalist who sought to increase the range of voices we see on various social platforms and encourage under-represented professionals, like women, to take thought leadership positions via op-eds and other pieces of writing. They run a number of different workshops at universities and other organizations that train folks to harness their voice in writing and provide attendees with a number of resources to help publish their work. Another example is University of Michigan's Diversity Scholars Network (<https://lsa.umich.edu/ncid/engagement-opportunities/diversity-scholars-network.html>). Started in 2008, it fosters an interdisciplinary community of scholars who care about issues of diversity and inclusion. I just joined a little while ago; membership is by application once per year. I'm so glad I made

that decision – I instantly connected with people who are concerned with the under-representation of marginalized groups in scholarship. I look forward to continue participating in their events. Additionally, there are many offices for diversity and inclusion across campuses; these are great resources for linking people together, people who are invested in the same goals. Finally, there are other informal networks, like the Couples SIG Women’s Happy Hour at ABCT spearheaded by Dr. Kristi Gordon, that provide young scholars with the opportunity to meet others who care about equity, access, and inclusion in academia. Taken together, these entities provide both local and professional communities with resources to enact social change.

As a whole, I am so heartened and hopeful by what started within the SIG during ABCT and hope that those conversations continue – when creating panels for symposia, when deciding who are the reviewers for posters, etc. It is a process, and I am so glad to see that we are taking a step in the right direction. I wouldn’t have expected anything less from our SIG!

Annmarie Cano is a professor of psychology and associate dean of the graduate school at Wayne State University, in Detroit. Her research focuses on couples coping with chronic illness and issues relating to diversity, equity, and inclusion in higher education.

Call for Lab Updates!

The next issue of the Couples SIG newsletter will be released *Summer 2018*. In preparation for this issue, we’d like to encourage all labs to keep their eye out for an email from Alexandra and Eileen requesting lab updates as well as “hot off the press” articles. Requests will be sent shortly in May.

We look forward to hearing from you!