

# THE AWIMS ADVISOR

NEWS FROM THE ALLIANCE FOR WOMEN IN MEDICINE & SCIENCE

## Gratitude and Hope

Dear Colleagues,

As a community, we continue to work towards our shared vision of equity and justice for women in medicine in science. Humanity shines through as we engage in difficult but necessary discussions about gender bias and workplace violence, to name just a few topics. What I am most proud of is how we consistently center the dialogue around our shared values with a focus on solutions.

Amidst the uncertainty brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, mass shootings in the United States, and our global political climate, I remain grateful to our AWIMS family as we always triumph in the face of adversity together. It's what keeps me going and helps me stay hopeful and grounded. I am thankful to be a part of this extraordinary group of individuals who consistently put their families, patients, and community above themselves. Your selflessness, courage, and integrity are a gift. Much gratitude to our phenomenal AWIMS Advisor Editorial Board members, Dr. Ayame Takahashi and Ms. Tyra Jones, and our AWIMS Executive Committee and Advisory Board for their exemplary work. Special thanks to Dr. Wendi El-Amin and Dean Jerry Kruse for their ongoing support. We are one.



Vidhya Prakash, MD, Director of SIU AWIMS

# The AWIMS Advisor Editorial Board



Vidhya Prakash, MD, Editor-In-Chief

"Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is not to stop questioning." Albert Einstein

This quote underscores my commitment to staying hopeful in the face of adversity, and to always keep pushing.



Tyra Jones, Associate Editor

If I do not have love , It profits me nothing.  
1 Corinthians 13:3

It reminds me to put love in everything I do.  
The world needs more love.



Ayame Takahashi, MD, Associate Editor

"I am learning every day to allow the space between where I am and where I want to be to inspire me and not terrify me." Tracee Ellis Ross

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# AWIMS Executive Leadership Program: Kick-Off Retreat

AWIMS kicked off its Executive Leadership Program for mid-career women faculty on April 8<sup>th</sup>. An inspiring group of leaders discussed their values, passion, and career goals in a stimulating environment of small groups followed by larger group debriefs. The future looks bright with this fantastic group!



Left to right: Dr. Vidya Sundareshan, Dr. Janet Albers, Dr. Lillian Houston, Dr. Susan Olivo-Marsten, Dr. Ayame Takahashi, Dr. Diana Sarko, Dr. Giovanna Capriolo, Dr. Charmaine Mziray-Andrew, Dr. Jody Lack, Dr. Haneme Idrizi, Dr. Anna Hickey, Dr. Katherine Hild-Mosley, Dr. Ruchika Goel, Dr. Nicole Sommer, Dr. Careyanna Brenham, Dr. Lauri Lopp. Front row: Dr. Wendi El-Amin, Dr. Vidhya Prakash

## AWIMS Journal Club

Dr. Susan Hingle and Dr. Christopher McDowell discussed the article, [Why So Many Women Physicians Are Quitting \(hbr.org\)](#). What followed was a robust discussion about the state of women in medicine and science. While we have come a long way, we clearly have a long way to go in terms of gender equity, workplace harassment, and work-life integration.

“The world has been very different these past two years,” one participant remarked. “Augmented mental health issues. Women have sustained more abuse and are just tired.” On the topic of work-life integration, one participant said, “I think anyone regardless of gender who wants/needs to take care of their children should be respected and accomodated in their

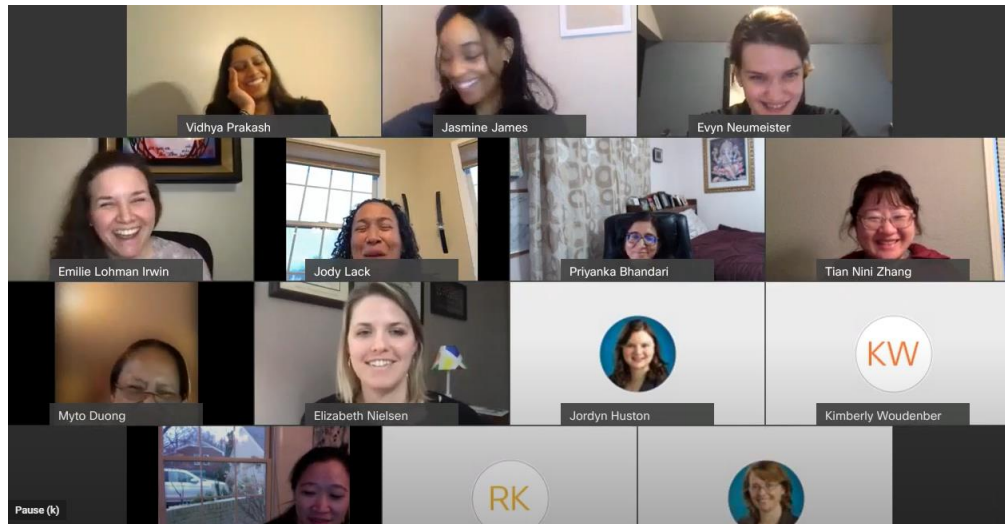
work settings - Organizational culture to accept people as who they are.” Another replied, “Some women who chose not to have kids also deserve a work-life balance and that respect as well.”

A valid comment on the experience of international medical graduates (IMGs) was, “When I was pregnant , I had to make sure I did not take one day extra being deathly ill with pneumonia, so I can make it within that time. I often told my friends: my academic clock was just as important as my biological clock, but it need not be that way.” Another participant added, “We need to nurture a ‘wellness in all policies’ mindset, so that it is thought of whenever any organizational decision is made.”

Indeed, we have a great group of people committed to moving the needle at our organization. We will keep these discussions going.

## AMWA-AWIMS Panel

President and Vice President of our AMWA chapter, Emilie Lohman Irwin and Jasmine James led a riveting discussion with six inspiring women physicians at SIU School of Medicine! Featuring Dr. Priyanka Bhandari, Dr. Mary Francine Chua, Dr. Jody Lack, Dr. Eryn Neumeister, Dr. Elizabeth Nielsen, and Dr. Tian Zhang. Check out the recording here: [AMWA-AWIMS Panel Featuring SIU Women Physicians](#)



# Habitat Sangamon: Walk for Housing

AWIMS is a proud sponsor of Habitat for Humanity Sangamon County's Walk for Housing. A dedicated team raised funds and enjoyed a lovely walk, visiting eight homes built by Habitat for our community in the Enos Park neighborhood. Please read more about this worthy cause and [volunteer/donate!](#)



Above, left to right: Nicol Moore, Areli Valeria Calderon, Vidhya Prakash, Patrice Jones, Hannah Turley

Below, left to right: Nicole Moore, Areli Valeria Calderon, Vidhya Prakash, Patrice Jones, Hanna Turley



# 5<sup>th</sup> Annual AWIMS Conference

AWIMS hosted its 5<sup>th</sup> annual Women in Medicine and Science Professional Development Conference on May 5<sup>th</sup> and May 6<sup>th</sup>. The conference included phenomenal plenary sessions on the theme of intersectionality, with nationally renowned leaders including Dr. Archana Chatterjee, Dr. Chiquita Collins, Dr. Baligh Yehia, and Colonel Heather Yun sharing their leadership journeys and engaging participants in meaningful discussion. In addition, Dr. Stacy Sattovia and Dr. Vidya Sundareshan featured community members in a thought-provoking discussion on religion and how it shapes their identities. Dr. Vidhya Prakash engaged women military physician leaders in a powerful discussion about gender equity, harassment, and allyship. SIU poets and writers shared their work which was incredibly inspiring. Finally, Dr. Ruchika Goel was honored with the 2022 AWIMS award, while chair of the conference awards committee, Dr. Susan Hingle, celebrated several phenomenal nominees.

Please check out the conference by accessing the recordings:

[5th Annual Women in Medicine and Science Conference 2022 - YouTube](#)

Gratitude to our generous sponsors listed below!

Memorial Health System

SIU Center for Human and Organizational Potential

SIU Department of Family and Community Medicine

SIU Department of Internal Medicine

Department of Emergency Medicine

Department of Medical Education

Simmons Cancer Institute

Department of Population Science and Policy

# Passion and Inspiration



Thank you for inspiring so many!



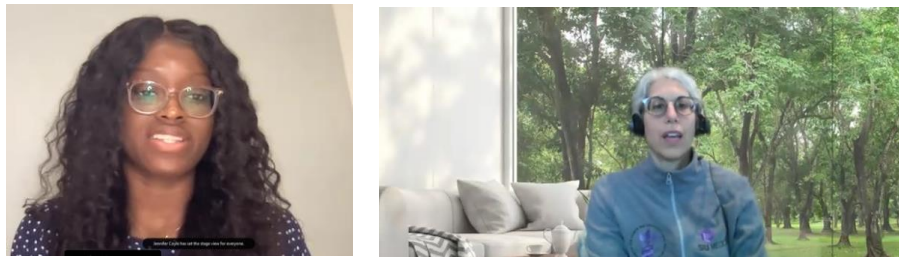
Top, left to right: Plenary speakers Dr. Chiquita Collins, Dr. Baligh Yehia

Middle, left to right: Plenary speakers Dr. Archana Chatterjee, Colonel Heather Yun

Bottom, left to right: AWIMS award recipient Dr. Ruchika Goel, nominees for AWIMS award



# Impactful Dialogue



Top: Women Leaders in the Military Panelists. First row, left to right: Dr. Vidhya Prakash, Colonel Heather Yun, Lt Col Alice Barsoumian. Second row, left to right: Lt Col Elizabeth Markelz, Capt Khandase Tate-Nero, Dr. Lisa Zacher

Middle: Bukky Tabiti, MS IV and Dr. Anna Cianciolo reciting their poems

Bottom, left: Religion and How it Shapes Our Identities Panelists. First row, left to right: Dr. Stacy Sattovia, Dr. Vidya Sundareshan, Rev Susan Phillips. Second row, left to right: Sammi Mander, Tarfa Khan, and Dr. Krishna Rao

Bottom, right: SIU Women Writers panelists. Dr. Christine Todd (left), Dr. Anna Cianciolo (top), and Dr. Vidhya Prakash (bottom)

# AWIMS Journal Club

## **Dr. Heeyoung Han reflects on a powerful article pertaining to gender bias in reference letters.**

AWIMS Journal Club is one of my favorite intellectual brainstorming spaces. This month was not an exception. Dr. Robert Robinson introduced an article about gender bias in reference letters for residency applications.<sup>1</sup> It was a systematic review study to uncover gender bias across 16 studies, involving 12,738 letters of recommendation for 7,074 applicants. The findings were shocking but sadly, not surprising that women applicants were more likely described using communal adjectives (i.e., delightful, compassionate) than men. Male applicants were often described using agentic adjectives (i.e., leader, exceptional).

The study did not further report or discuss the outcomes of the letters with such bias. But the paper certainly raised our concerns and opened several discussion points. First, we all agreed that communal characteristics, such as being compassionate, should not have any stereotypes. They are essential attributes of physicians, and we do not want women physicians (any physicians) to lose such characteristics and be uniformly socialized to agentic ones. However, we discussed that the issue is about how program directors (readers of the letters) interpret such adjectives in assessing applicants and what power each linguistic expression entails. It is necessary for program directors to be aware of the systemic gender bias and the consequences in recommendation letters.

This reflection led us to the idea that a resident selection process should entail a more formative group process to reflect on resident characters that are pivotal and necessary in actual practice, and aligned with the group consensus of resident characters. We discussed how the resident selection process is somewhat in a black box; that there is no clear information regarding selection criteria except test scores. Adopting a group consensus process, where such bias (gender, race, etc.) cannot work against the goal of the diversity and equity of the institution and community, would be the first step to opening the black box.

## Reference

1. Khan S, Kirubarajan A, Shamsheri T, Clayton A, Mehta G. Gender bias in reference letters for residency and academic medicine: a systematic review. *Postgrad Med J*. Jun 2 2021;doi:10.1136/postgradmedj-2021-140045

# Town Hall on Gun Violence

On July 14<sup>th</sup>, SIU School of Medicine leaders held a town hall on gun and workplace violence. Panelists included Dr. Richard Austin, Assistant Professor of Emergency Medicine; Dr. Wendi El-Amin, Associate Dean of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion; Dr. Anne Scheer, Assistant Professor of Population Science and Policy and member of Springfield area Local Advisory Council for Violence Prevention, and Teresa Smith, Executive Director of Human Resources and member of the FBI Citizens Academy.

Led by Dr. Vidhya Prakash, Chief Medical Officer of SIU Medicine, the panel discussion started with a general question: "How are you feeling in light of the recent mass shootings in the United States." Participants and panelists shared words that captured where they were emotionally which included, "heartbreak," "sadness," "anger," "helpless," "vulnerable," "afraid," and "disgusted."

Proposed solutions to ensure employee safety against workplace violence included a deep dive into the data followed by a collaborative effort to generate a policy. One participant added that expansion of mental health services would be essential. Another participant added, "the media needs to be held responsible for the part they play, [we must] increase funding for social services, crime reform..the list could go on." Active shooter training added to health stream and through drills was another suggestion. "Vote" was yet another solution.

Proposed solutions to ensure our entire community was safe from violence included ongoing contribution to research, working with state legislature, and using our relationships with our patients to generate solutions. One participant proposed a collaborative approach with health professions, injury prevention experts, parents, teachers, law enforcement professionals to build consensus for bringing about social and legislative change. An important point made by one participant was that "We must be persuasive or else we cannot be effective."

As a result of this powerful discussion, a working group on workplace violence was formed. Katherine Moore and Dr. Richard Austin will lead the working group. If you are interested in joining, please email [kmoore75@siumed.edu](mailto:kmoore75@siumed.edu) and [raustin@siumed.edu](mailto:raustin@siumed.edu).

## Relevant Articles

[Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Prevention and Policy - Centers and Institutes - Research - Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health \(jhsph.edu\)](#)

[Sangamon Success | COL \(continuumoflearning.org\)](#)

[Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\) - State Employee Benefits \(illinois.gov\)](#)

[Gun Violence, Prevention of \(Position Paper\) \(aafp.org\)](#)

[Gun Violence Archive The Missing Data on Gun Violence - The Atlantic](#)

## AWIMS Research Leadership

AWIMS is expanding its research committee! **Dr. Heeyoung Han** and **Dr. Shruti Hegde** will serve as co-chairs of the AWIMS Research and Strategic Planning Committee, providing oversight of the RISE WIMS (Research Initiative to Sponsor and Empower Women in Medicine and Science) program. **Dr. Georgia Luckey** and **Dr. Akshay Kohli** will serve as co-chairs of the AWIMS Research and Scholarly Activity committee, taking charge of our Journal Club. Please welcome and applaud this fantastic leadership team!



**Dr. Georgia Luckey**



**Dr. Akshay Kohli**



**Dr. Shruti Hegde**



**Dr. Heeyoung Han**

## cHOP and AWIMS Mentoring Mixer



The Center for Human and Organizational Potential (cHOP) and AWIMS held a mentoring mixer on July 26<sup>th</sup>. Mentors and prospective mentees connected and engaged in enlightening discussions about career transitions, leadership, mentoring and coaching, negotiation, promotion and tenure, work-life harmony, and the impostor phenomenon. Special thanks to Dr. Krati Chauhan and Dr. Andrew Wilber (pictured above) and Dr. Susan Hingle for their great work in organizing the mixer. Also, much gratitude to our mentors who participated in the event: Dr. Janet Albers, Dr. Susan Hingle, Dr. Mary Dobbins, Dr. Christopher McDowell, Dr. Krati Chauhan, Dr. Andrew Wilber, Dr. John Flack, Mr. Eric Linson, Dr. Careyana Brenham, Dr. Amy Arai, Dr. Christine Todd, Dr. Jody Lack, Dr. Heeyoung Han, and Dr. Vidhya Prakash. If you are interested in coaching, please contact [shingle@siumed.edu](mailto:shingle@siumed.edu). If you are interested in mentorship, please contact [kchauhan85@siumed.edu](mailto:kchauhan85@siumed.edu) and [awilber@siumed.edu](mailto:awilber@siumed.edu).

# Women in Medicine Mixer



SIU Medicine’s Office of Marketing and Communications hosted a Women in Medicine Mixer on July 20<sup>th</sup>. Highlighting women in medicine and science from SIU Medicine, Memorial Health, HSHS, and Springfield Clinic, the event broke down silos and offered phenomenal women leaders across the Mid-Illinois Medical District an opportunity to connect. It was especially touching to see so many #HeForShe allies attend. Love is in the details—everything from the powerful graphics of women leaders to beautifully arranged flowers, live music, and delectable treats made for a magical evening. Grateful for our marketing team and for every woman in medicine and science who makes an impact in teaching, research, education, and patient care.

# Quotes and Articles

“We must reject not only the stereotypes that others hold of us, but the stereotypes that we hold of ourselves.” Shirley Chisholm



“I raise up my voice-not so that I can shout, so that those without a voice can be heard...We cannot all succeed when half of us are held back.” Malala Yousafzai



These articles focus on women in leadership positions. The final link is to a collection of articles recently published in Academic Medicine on issues pertaining in women in medicine and science.

[How Many Black Women Have Tenure on Your Campus? Search Here \(chronicle.com\)](#)

[Oral Health Newsletter Volume 4 \(illinois.gov\) \(Featuring our own Tyra Jones in “Community health workers receive oral health training, reach out to underserved communities”\)](#)

[Women-in-Leadership-Why-It-Matters.pdf \(rockefellerfoundation.org\)](#)

[10 Characteristics of Strong Female Leaders | Sparklight Business](#)

[To Get Ahead, Female Leaders Can Embody Many Qualities – Except One | Duke's Fuqua School of Business](#)

[What's Holding Women in Medicine Back from Leadership \(hbr.org\)](#)

[Fixing the Gender Imbalance in Health Care Leadership \(hbr.org\)](#)

[Collection Details : Academic Medicine \(lww.com\)](#)

# AWIMS Spotlight: Dr. Nichole Mirocha



**Role at SIU Medicine:** Associate professor in the Dept of Family & Community Medicine, Assoc Program Director and Director of Osteopathic Education for SIU Springfield Family Medicine Residency

**Born and Raised:** Mokena, IL (Southwest suburb of Chicago)

**Birthday:** January 28th

**Family:** Husband is Brian Mackey, and 2 boys Thomas (9) and John (6)

**Favorite Books:** Still waiting on Brian to write my future favorite book that pays off the mortgage.

**Hobbies:** Sewing, mostly. Started quilting during the pandemic. I wish my hobbies were housework and lawn care.

**Personal Hero:** Hard to list just one. I look up to all of the great mentors I work with every day, who teach me to be a better mother, wife and physician.

**Most Embarrassing Moment:** I'm not telling you that!



**What is your advice for achieving work-life balance?** I have to keep my charts caught up because when I get behind, life is terrible. It's like a light switch — when the charts are done, I am happy and feel instantly well. I've come to think work-life balance is a journey, not a destination, and we all have to try to do our best.

**What is the best piece of advice a mentor gave you?** Dr. Barnhart taught me the harder you work the harder you have to play. I will never forget that and I try to remind my students and residents about this whenever I can.

**As the holidays are upon us, could you share a recipe or tradition that celebrates your heritage and the holidays?** I wish I had something more profound to say here but I always look forward to Black Friday Shopping with my mom.

**What is your unique contribution to Women in Medicine and Science?** My focus clinically has been on Complex Care — raising our game for our most vulnerable patients at SIU. Our Comprehensive Care Clinic integrates social work, medicine, pharmacy, community health, and a medical-legal partnership. The *teamwork* is the focus, and a way to change our system to better meet *all* the needs of our most socially vulnerable patients.

## AWIMS Advisory Board



Left to right:  
Wendi El-Amin  
John Flack  
Susan Hingle  
Kari Wolf

Debra Klamen  
David Steward  
Hilary Sanfey  
John Mellinger

Vidhya Prakash  
Douglas Carlson  
Jody Lack  
Donald Torry

## AWIMS Executive Committee



Dr. Aysha Rafaquat and Dr. Robert Robinson



Dr. Heeyoung Han and Dr. Shruti Hegde



Dr. Georgia Luckey and Dr. Akshay Kohli



Ms. Patrice Jones and Ms. Erica Austin



Dr. Christine Todd and Dr. Alex Hopkins



Dr. Andrew Wilber and Dr. Krati Chauhan