

Episode 2: Meet the DEI Shift - Morning Handoff

TRANSCRIPT

[0:00] Intro: Tammy - Welcome to The DEI shift, a podcast focused on shifting the way we think and talk about diversity, equity, and inclusion in the medical field. I'm Dr. Tammy Lin, along with Dr. Tiffany Leung, and we're the executive producers of this new podcast. And we'd really like to welcome you to join us on this adventure. Not only do we hope that you learn something new in each episode, but also have some fun along the way peeking into different cultures and experiences.

Today, we wanted to introduce you to some of members of our team of all stars, they're all incredible change-makers in their own ways but together we all share one goal and that is opening up a broader conversation around diversity, equity, and inclusion so that we can connect, we can share stories, we can take on the tough questions and challenges when we need to.

Now Tiffany, you and I have worked together on many projects over the last few years, including the Medicine in Motion conference from which this podcast has emerged. You know how much I enjoy working with you because we have so many shared interests and not only are you an award-winning assistant professor of medicine at Maastricht University in the Netherlands but you're an expert in gender equity, wellbeing, and physician suicide. And on top of that, you're also the principal investigator of an AMA grant that looks at how early-to-mid-career female Physicians navigate their careers. I'm always really impressed at how passionate and productive you are, so please tell us - how did you become so committed to these issues?

[1:40] Tiffany - Thank you so much Tammy, I think you give me so much more credit and I think that credit equally goes back to you, because honestly I think a lot of my motivation started very early in my career when I was coming out of residency. I'm very fortunate to connect through professional societies with people like you, in fact, to be able to have these really in-depth and important conversations. Not only about, you know, the standard things that we deal with in early career, forming our professional identity as an attending physician and dealing with the practicalities of working in practice, but really getting in depth into those more subtle issues like this. Dealing with diversity and equity, making sure that inclusion is an important part of all the work that we do. It was really that opportunity to be able to have these conversations and dialogues and explore these things that I think was one of the big catalysts for me to get into this. To that end I've been really

fortunate to be able to connect again with you, Tammy, but also with so many other people who are so passionate and have such diverse and interesting life experiences and knowledge about these issues.

Actually Tammy, why don't you go ahead and share, you know that's my motivation, but what are your motivations in exploring diversity, equity, and inclusion. You've done really wonderful things, and a lot of work in this area as well. What drives you to do that?

[3:08] Tammy - Thanks so much Tiffany, that's such a huge compliment. Like you, I'm an internal medicine specialist with interest in well-being, equity, and leadership issues, but also with a really strong interest in mentorship and how it can be optimized throughout the pipeline. I think it's never too early to start having a mentor, and in fact I started a mentorship program for high school students who wanted to become doctors. I was really fascinated, and a little bit sad by what they told me about what some of their barriers were - financial challenges by far they top the list, but it's also clear that you can be the academically prepared to become a pre-med or medical student but feel really underprepared in a lot of other ways. And it can be really discouraging when you don't see anybody around you that you can look to you as a role model or who you feel even understands where you are in your journey.

It's like Betial Asmerom, a medical student at UCSD, says and she was one of the people that was involved when we were developing this podcast: it's not just about having a safe space, but it's also about creating a bold space where people can feel comfortable about speaking up and being honest about what some of the true underlying problems are so that real conversations can take place.

I think your point about making connections within professional societies and organizations is a really important one too. A lot of this team met through the American College of Physicians and I'm so glad that we did, because look what it's led to. I never, ever take for granted that extra level of comfort we have with each other and so I think networking in those spaces is a really good thing because interesting collaborations and a lot of cool things can happen when you connect outside of your usual places. And I think that's what this podcast is all ultimately about too, it's a platform for people to learn from but I also think it's a place where people can find each other so they don't feel alone and one where we can connect around important issues and collaborate on solutions together. So I'm very excited and optimistic and I think our listeners will be too as they meet who's on the team and understand why we're doing this. And hopefully a lot of great things will happen as a result of our discussions.

[5:21] Tiffany - Wow! Tammy, I think there are just so many thoughts that go through my mind as you reflect on your own personal experiences and this shared identity of being an Asian American woman physician in medicine. I think what really strikes me is that ease of being able to make connections based on these shared traits that we have and experiences, and being able to articulate how we feel and the emotion, thoughts, and everything that we experience in those identities, in those stories that we have. I think those stories are really powerful parts of what we want to bring out in this podcast, in order to be able to make it as said this safe and bold space in order to be able to connect and to really hear that other experience that we might never have otherwise. So I really, really am very excited about this podcast, I'm so pleased to see how powerful and thoughtful our team is and they'll be able to bring those stories to light in order to be able to activate all of us in thinking about and understanding different perspectives.

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[6:47] - With that said, we thought it would be interesting to hear some of the voices featured that you'll hear over this season. For this introductory episode since The DEI Shift aims to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion one story at a time, we'd like for you to hear from some of our team members why they felt it was important to be part of this podcast. We have a diverse and enthusiastic team of co-hosts, guest co-hosts, and production assistants who bring fresh voices to this discussion. Now I'll turn the mic over to Maggie, Pooja, DJ to help introduce you to The DEI Shift team and some of their stories.

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[7:29] Maggie - So who are we to be talking about these issues? We, Pooja and I, have been working together throughout our training and some of these additional diversity projects, but we'd also like to introduce you to some of the other members of our wonderful team. So we'll start off with Pooja. Pooja, you have single-handedly started up projects like the California Council of Student Members and an ACP resident blog series chronicling internship year for a diverse group of interns, and these are things that actually had not been done before. So what motivates you to find the time, and energy, and the passion to create these initiatives that include so many different voices and help people feel like they're part of something bigger, including this podcast?

[8:18] Pooja - Thank you for such a flattering question. Well really, it's a little bit selfish, I was the first person in my family to go into medicine. And I didn't really think that I'd ever like pictured myself in the field, and so I think hearing other people's voices and seeing

people that looked a little like me, really empowered me and made me think that I can actually get there.

So that's one of the big reasons why I feel the need to foster more of these stories and hear more voices. Just because I think we've come so far in medicine, we have a way long way to go, but I think we see a lot more diversity in the field. We just don't have a lot of those voices speaking out as much, we don't hear as many of those stories, and we don't see a lot of those voices and faces and experiences in leadership positions. So I really wanted to make sure that I did what I could on my end to be able to facilitate those stories and get them to a wider audience. For me, personally, it's something that inspires me, and it is the thing that when I go meet a patient, especially with a Peds patient who is young, if he's coming from a really difficult background to be able to point to different examples and different role models that they can follow to get where they are to where they want to be.

[9:38] Maggie - That's incredible, and I think it's really impactful to hear what your individual background as someone who was underrepresented and didn't see people that looked like her doing what you wanted to do. So now you're using that as motivation to help other trainees.

[9:57] Pooja - Thanks, yeah and I will say I still don't feel like I truly belong in medicine. You know, like I went through med school, finished residency. So it's like a little bit of imposter syndrome, but I think definitely the more people that I hear from, the more I feel like there's a sense of belonging and ownership of this field, to like own the fact that I'm a doctor. Still not there yet.

And Maggie, you're one of those people that really inspires me. So I'm going to ask you more about you, so that people can be impressed by you. So you have done some really groundbreaking work in diversity, equity, and inclusion curriculum. You've taught me, you've taught all of our fellow residents to shape and increase recruitment in underrepresented minorities within medicine. It's been really well-received by faculty, by administrators, and I think it's really inspired a lot of efforts, just kind of on the ground as well. So what was that experience like for you to create this groundbreaking curriculum and how do you hope to have this conversation of DEI continue as you go to the next stage of your career, graduating residency, and moving on?

[11:08] Maggie - Thank you, very kind and generous. I'm really glad that some of the work we've been doing with curriculum development has been very fruitful, and well received. So I think I didn't originally think I was working on curriculum development. A lot of this stemmed out of some of the work I started doing in medical school, recruiting underrepresented minorities to my specific medical school and then thinking a lot more

and learning more about obstacles to that happening. So now at the resident level, where curriculum is not as well structured about diversity, equity, and inclusion issues as it is in many medical schools, I just felt like there was a gap and room for us to first learn why it's important to diversify our health care workforce for the benefit of our patients and their improved health outcomes, for our own innovation and improved creativity, and acumen as physician scientists and educators and then for the health care system, in terms of dollars saved. So I felt like we needed a little bit more education about why this was important before we would all feel collectively more motivated and empowered to improve recruitment in these areas. And then other issues clinically that motivated the curriculum is talking about implicit bias and microaggressions, which we all interact with and encounter everyday clinically. Now progressing from residency and moving into life as an attending and working with trainees, I'd like to be able to pull from these experiences and some of the curriculum development to be able to foster an environment where we are talking about these issues more, and are more equipped to handle implicit bias and microaggression issues and then we're empowered to have tangible steps that we can take to create an environment where people who are underrepresented in medicine feel welcome.

[13:16] Pooja - Yeah, I love how action oriented that is. Because I think that is super important, a lot of times we hear about these topics and they are something that we learn about, and then we forget about and it's just left in this abstract area. I was just in one of your lectures last week, it was the last hour before a 3 day weekend, and you still managed to engage everybody, get everybody talking about real conversations and sharing their experiences and creating actionable items for the next time they are in these situations. Which, like you said, planning ahead is so important, and you have to be aware of everything. And first you have to know the foundation to be aware of. It's all these steps we need to be able to make these actionable plans. So that was really cool!

[13:59] Maggie - Well thank you, I am so glad that everyone was still hangin in there at the end of the week, and I was really pleased that we're all becoming much more motivated about working together on these issues, whether you're underrepresented or not.

Transition

[14:21] Pooja - So Dr. DJ Gaines, we have been classmates since starting residency and have come up together, and you were so impressive. I love that you are going to be one of our chief residents in internal medicine next year. One of your goals is to increase the number of underrepresented minorities in residency, and really making changes to the system regarding how residents are recruited. So what I really want to hear is about your

experiences leading up to that point, and what your goals are for this new role, what inspired you and all of that?

[14:52] DJ Gaines - First of all, thanks Pooja for allowing the opportunity to be part of this team. I am very excited, I really looked up to what you and Maggie were doing in our residency program. Especially with diversity, equity, and inclusion. So to kind of start off, my first desire to become a physician when I was young, when I was about 5 years old, my brother was born at 23 weeks, very premature.

It was kind of a long process with my family and it left a big impression. That impression stayed with me and as I was going through undergrad, that whole process I noticed that there really was a lack of physicians of color, people that looked like me. What really got me through these times where I felt like, especially in some undergrad classes, chemistry classes, or in medical school or studying for the boards, was just having those mentors of color to push me through. My father's from Washington DC, he is an African American male, and my mother's from Panama, she is Latina, so having those types of mentors for me personally really helped. Now going through the residency process, I'm seeing that despite like a lot of effort, like a lot of universities started doing, there is still issue pertaining and recruiting underrepresented minorities in, you know, despite the amount of efforts that they are doing. So one thing I'm wondering is, why is that? Why are there still some retention issues, recruitment issues? You know one thing I talked with some of the applicants of people going into residency, one concern that they've had was lack of support. Are they going to be supported when they might encounter microaggression? Are they going to have the backing of the residency program? Are there mentors or other people that they can talk to to help them through these specific and difficult times? So that's something that as a future Chief Resident that I really want to start putting down the foundation and help students of color in the future, and kind of help with recruitment and retention. I'm hoping that this podcast that the team is creating can really encourage and also provide some ideas for people listening to what they can do to improve their program, improve recruitment and diversity, equity, inclusion in their residency program. So I am really excited.

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[17:39] DJ Gaines - So you know part of the reason I'm so excited to be part of this podcast is the chance to work with like-minded co-hosts, like Dr. Brittäne Parker. Brittäne, you've been Chief Resident, an Associate Program Director and you've been a leader throughout your career. You have served on boards, you teach residents and students, and your favorite quote is by Jeff Wahl, which goes "The difference between good teachers and great

teachers, is that great teachers have mastered the art of teaching people things they didn't know they needed to learn.”

So just wanted to ask, what is the biggest thing about diversity, equity, and inclusion that most of us would benefit from learning?

[18:18] Brittäne - Thank you DJ, in my experience, an inclusive learning and work environment is highly dependent on non-verbal communication and the culture of the group. Medical students, residents, and staff of diverse backgrounds need to be shown that they are invited to participate as contributing members of the team as opposed to being simply invited to the table. How leaders and educators respond to real or perceived discrimination, informs everyone who has welcomed and valued. Being mindful of what we say as well as what we don't say in these situations is so important.

[18:49] DJ Gaines - Awesome, that's wonderful Brittäne. We are excited to have you on the team, and excited to work with you!

[18:54] Brittäne - Thank you, I'm glad to be a part of it.

Transition

[19:05] Pooja - Sarah, I'm so excited that you're going to be joining us as one of our co-hosts. You've done some really incredible work throughout medical school, you've created an advocacy model to help students become more informed and more involved, to advocate for their patients and for themselves. You've helped create safe spaces for patients with substance use disorders, and you've done lots of work with medical education. So my question to you is what draws you to this work, and how do you find the passion to keep doing it, and what's your inspiration?

[19:33] Sarah - Well first off, thank you so much Pooja. I'm really excited to join The DEI Shift team. That's a big question, I think that there are a lot of different things that draw me to this work. The biggest one is that I was very lucky, in that my introduction to medicine really started off with talking about diversity, equity, and inclusion.

I'm a fourth-year medical student at UCSF and when I started medical school I was one of the first students to go through their new Bridges curriculum. Our orientation was called 'Differences Matter', and so for me and for my peers we started off entering medicine talking about how race, racism, privilege, gender, sexuality really influenced who we are as providers. Also, how that influences the patient's experience on the other end. For me

diversity, equity, and inclusion and medicine have always been intertwined. There is no talking about one without talking about the other.

[20:49] Pooja - That's really incredible! That definitely must have given you a very different lens when you were walking into your clinical years. So how was that transition?

[20:58] Sarah - Yeah, I think it's challenging when you go from your pre-clerkship years where you're working with medical educators who are really changing how we think about these things and really opening and creating a space where we can actually talk about some of these issues, that often ask us to be very vulnerable. Then you go on the wards and sometimes you experience microaggressions from the patients you're caring for or you know it's not always the attending or the resident, sometimes it's your interprofessional team members. From your nurses, pharmacists, and that can be really jarring and difficult to accept. So I think one of the biggest things for me was realizing that the field of medicine is changing and we're starting to have more and more of these conversations. But it's not going to change overnight, and so it's on us to continue that discussion. I think The DEI Shift is one example of a project that I've gravitated towards to really keep this conversation going and bring more people to the table.

[22:23] Pooja - That's excellent, that's so inspiring! I appreciate the constant reminder of us having to continue having these conversations. That's something that we need to do day to day, not just in the classroom with some of these really supportive mentors.

Transitions

[22:45] DJ Gaines - So we have our wonderful team, in addition to our wonderful co-hosts, and we want to introduce you to our production assistants. They are going to have a big role in the creation and background for the future of this podcast. So we are very excited to introduce them. First, we have Sarahy.

[23:09] Sarahy - Hi everyone, my name is Sarahy. I am from Wilmington, California, and my background is - I am Latina, so Mexican American born and raised in the US, but I have some roots back in Mexico. In Wilmington, I am from what we would say is an underrepresented community, where it is predominantly Hispanic or Latino, a little bit Polynesian, but the majority Latino. The majority of us are involved in gang violence or not many make it out into college, so I am really blessed to be in college right now. So that's my background, and coming to The DEI Shift, I wanted to join it because basically because the goal and the purpose of it is to include what's going, like diversity issues in medicine and how we haven't actually seen that much diversity in medicine. I actually noticed that, just

as a student but also as like a care-giver for my grandparents. I have never had the opportunity of seeing another LatinX physician, I was always the person who had to break the language barrier and translate for my grandparents. So imagine being a 10 year old going with your grandparents office, but you don't really know their medical condition is but you are just translating. So that's why I decided to be a part of The DEI Shift. And along with that, there is a quote by Gandhi, "Be the change you wish to see in the world", and so joining The DEI shift is where I decided that is my first step of change. What am I going to do to be able to bring up these issues and have more individuals like myself be inspired and to try to be the change in medicine, but not only that, in higher education forums, or higher job forums in the world that we have now.

[24:51] DJ Gaines - That's great, I know that the listeners will especially love hearing about the experience you went through growing up. Especially translating, having to hear the medical conditions of a loved one. Having to translate. It's a very unique experience that not everyone would have. I think it would be very useful and helpful especially for listeners to hear that and get an idea of what that's like.

[25:18] DJ Gaines - Next, we have another one of our fantastic production assistants, we have Deepti here. So kind of the same question, so what made you decide this podcast and a little bit about yourself and your background?

[25:30] Deepti - Hi everyone, my name is Deepti. I am Indian American, I was born in India but completely grew up here, so I probably consider myself more American. I grew up in a very Asian and Indian centered community and I think because of that there's a tendency for us to want to be a model minority, but at the same time we tend to ignore all the problems in our own community due to that. So I think my interest in diversity, equity, and inclusivity comes from trying to be more spoken about the problems in my own community, problems in my own family. I see my own parents try to avoid problems, and be like 'It's ok, just ignore it. Racism exists'. I think that change only comes when you speak and you try to create dialogue. So that's what my interest stems from. And as a public health student, I am trying to go to med school, I am trying to become more involved in my community and just learn more day-to-day.

[26:39] DJ Gaines - Thanks for sharing, that's wonderful. I think that it is good to have something that drives you, especially from your background, and I know that the listeners are really going to appreciate the work that you are going to do.

[26:51] Pooja - So thank you so much for tuning in. We'd love for you to contact us. Give us your thoughts about the episode as a whole. Give us any ideas that you have for future

episodes or guests that you'd like to hear from. You can contact us by email at thedeishift@gmail.com. That's thedeishift@gmail.com. And you can also follow us and get in touch with us on social media [@TheDEIShift](https://www.instagram.com/TheDEIShift). Again, that's [@TheDEIShift](https://www.instagram.com/TheDEIShift). Online, you'll find information about our hosts, our guest speakers and resources, about the things that we discuss in each episode.

[27:30] Pooja and others - So until next time, this is, and we are...The DEI Shift.

Transition

[27:34] Outro

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