

Dean and Chair Pledge to Advance Gender Equity

Your leadership is needed now more than ever!



#HerTimeIsNow

"The future has always been considered an ideal time to address gender equity. That strategy has not worked well for half the world's population. Her time is now."

*Julie K. Silver, MD
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[#HerTimeIsNow](#)
[#BeEthical](#)
[#NeedHerScience](#)*

Join Us in Supporting the Her Time Is Now Campaign

In 2018, the [Be Ethical Campaign](#) focused on gender-equity issues as they relate to key gatekeepers--organizations that directly or indirectly affect the training, hiring, and promotion of students and faculty--in academic medicine. The [Her Time Is Now Campaign](#) is the next step and builds on the *ethical* issues documented in the previous campaign by looking at them through a *financial* lens as they relate to two of the gatekeepers.

The two gatekeepers are:

1. Medical societies
2. Medical journals

Here's why these two gatekeepers are important to focus on now:

Women and their employers (e.g., medical schools, academic medical centers) financially support medical societies and journals. Despite this, there is a lot of research--dating back over many years--that demonstrates these two gatekeepers have unaddressed gender equity issues. Medical societies and journals have had ample time to address gender disparities, and they have both a financial interest and an ethical obligation to do so. Yet, many have not.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted an urgent need to address patient disparities. Simultaneously, the pandemic has caused a financial crisis for many healthcare organizations. Thus, deans and chairs are actively prioritizing financial and other resources in order to facilitate their organization's economic recovery as well as to best support diverse patient populations, diverse students and trainees, and diverse faculty.

As part of the process to prioritize resources, deans and chairs need to have data related to diversity, equity, and inclusion metrics for medical societies and journals--which were published in the [Be Ethical Campaign report](#). The Dean and Chair Pledge to Advance Gender Equity will help to provide deans and chairs with this information as they make strategic decisions on behalf of their institutions' students, trainees, faculty, and patients. Now is the time to provide equitable opportunities in academic medicine for every person who identifies as a woman, especially women with intersectional identities, as they often face not only gender-related bias but also additional forms of discrimination such as racial discrimination.

An Open Letter to Deans and Chairs in Academic Medicine

Dear Deans and Chairs,

We applaud you for training and hiring talented women and diverse students and faculty. In an effort to provide them with equitable support, we direct your attention to medical societies and their affiliated journals as they are important components of career advancement. Inequities at the level of medical societies or their affiliated journals, result in barriers to faculty promotion from instructor to full professor levels and may impact grant funding as well as other critical metrics. We know you are making large financial investments on behalf of your institutions--hiring and supporting qualified women and diverse faculty. However, disparities at the level of medical societies and/or journals may negatively impact your institution's return on investment. In academic medicine, we can more efficiently and effectively advance the careers of women and diverse faculty if medical societies and their affiliated journals treat them fairly. Medical societies that treat people fairly should be the ones that are financially rewarded with loyalty. The problem is that right now you do not have enough data to make informed decisions about which societies are most deserving of your financial and other support.

However, there is an impressive and growing body of research--primarily conducted by women and their allies on their own time and without funding--that demonstrates many societies have deeply troubling gender-equity issues. Though there is a paucity of research documenting how women with intersectional identities fare at medical societies, the data on the advancement of Black/African American and Hispanic/Latina women to full professor and chair level promotions is at an inexorable zero level (for details refer to the [Her Time Is Now Campaign report](#)). It is difficult to see how you can fix disparities in faculty promotion at your institution--especially for women with intersectional identities to advance to the professor level--unless medical societies and journals equitably support them.

The Dean and Chair Pledge To Advance Gender Equity is focused on inviting the societies themselves to provide you, leaders at your institution, and all members of the society, with an annual report that includes the metrics and data needed to make informed decisions. In 2018, the [Be Ethical Campaign report](#) provided a list of metrics that should be a minimum standard. The cost of producing such a report should not be a barrier, particularly for the larger specialty societies that have the most members. For example, in the Her Time Is Now Campaign report an analysis of 22 specialty societies found that--according to their most recently available Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Form 990--they have a combined annual revenue of more than \$1.4 billion. Much of this revenue comes directly from medical schools and academic medical centers as well as individual students, trainees, and faculty.

Thus, while faculty experts in diversity, equity, and inclusion can and should provide strategic advice/oversight in the development of these reports, medical societies should avoid using women physicians and scientists as a volunteer workforce in the manner that is often described as a "gender tax" or "minority tax"--as this takes them away from their core work responsibilities (e.g., clinical care, teaching, and research) and much needed time off for family and self-care.

The time is now to address gender bias and structural racism at medical societies and their affiliated journals. When you sign the pledge, you will be in the company of many other ethical deans and chairs who are committed to equitably supporting every person in academic medicine.

Sincerely,

The Her Time Is Now Campaign and Allies



Why will this pledge work?

Because it is:

DATA-DRIVEN--deans and chairs need more data from medical societies in order to dismantle gender bias and structural racism that limits career advancement for their students, trainees, and faculty

FOCUSED--on simple but specific actions that deans and chairs can take once they have the medical society data

AIMED--at financially supporting medical societies that are transparent with their data and demonstrate rapid progress in gender equity for women in medicine

SUPPORTED--by a large contingency of ethical leaders at the top combined with students, trainees, faculty, and allies (including patients and #HeForShe male colleagues)

Dean and Chair Pledge to Achieve Gender Equity

**Since I am committed to equitable support and career advancement for all students, trainees, and faculty--
*beginning in 2021 and going forward, I will focus financial and other support to medical societies that...***

- 1. Provide leaders at my institution and all members of the society with an annual report containing a detailed analysis of metrics for the society's inclusion of women and diverse students, trainees, and faculty;**
- 2. Hire and promote qualified women and diverse executives, leaders, staff, and consultants; and,**
- 3. Ensure the journal(s) they are associated with have a diverse editorial board with gender equity at all levels.**

Additional Notes:

- Regarding the first objective in the pledge: Women with intersectional identities, inclusive of but not limited to racial and ethnic minorities who identify as women, often experience greater levels of bias and discrimination. Therefore, the forthcoming annual reports should specifically document the status and progress of women with intersectional identities.
- Refer to the [Be Ethical Campaign report](#) for a list of medical society and journal metrics that should be included as a minimum standard.
- Regarding the second objective in the pledge: Gender bias and structural racism are reinforced when an organization lacks diversity in personnel. Thus, it is critical to ensure medical societies and journals equitably include qualified diverse individuals--whether they are staff, consultants, or volunteers--such as board members, executive leaders, policy advisors, attorneys, accountants, and communications experts.
- Regarding the third objective in the pledge: Gender disparities on journal editorial boards have been documented for 20+ years--refer to the [Her Time Is Now Campaign report](#) for a timeline and references. Ensuring gender equity at all levels of editors is a minimum standard. In fact, journals should aim to exceed this and be inclusive in representation of all diverse physicians and scientists at all levels of the journal leadership, staff, and in every aspect of the publishing process that affects authors.
- All three objectives listed in the pledge should be clearly documented in the annual report so that deans, chairs, and members can efficiently assess how the society is addressing them.
- Women and diverse individuals who are members of the society should be included in the report development; however, the medical society should financially and otherwise support the development of the report and take precautions to avoid a "gender tax" or "minority tax" --well described issues in the literature that drain the time and resources of individuals as well as reduce the availability of physicians and scientists for clinical care, teaching, and research.
- Both campaign reports can be downloaded for free at <https://sheleadshealthcare.com/>.

The Her Time Is Now Campaign was developed by Julie K. Silver, MD. Dr. Silver is an Associate Professor and Associate Chair in the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Harvard Medical School. She is the director of the Harvard Medical School women's leadership course titled [Career Advancement and Leadership Skills for Women in Healthcare](#). Campaign partners include the [American Medical Women's Association \(AMWA\)](#) and [Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine \(ELAM\)](#), a core program of Drexel University College of Medicine. Find out more about this campaign at [She Leads Healthcare](#), [AMWA Her Time Is Now](#), and [ELAM Her Time Is Now](#).

