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DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION IN THE DORIS DUKE FELLOWSHIPS

Chapin Hall Research Brief

Doris Duke Fellowships
for the Promotion of Child Well-Being
Seeking innovations to prevent child abuse and neglect

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INTRODUCTION

The Doris Duke Fellowships for the Promotion of Child Well-Being focused on identifying and nurturing promising doctoral students from multiple disciplines to address intractable challenges in the child well-being field. With the support of a national advisory board comprised of child well-being research experts, the program engaged 120 fellows, in eight cohorts, in a peer-learning network that fostered interdisciplinary thinking and collaboration while promoting actionable research. The first cohort was selected for 2-year fellowships in 2011 and the final cohort was selected in 2018. Since then, a fellow-led transition is expanding the network to other emerging scholars and researchers. The Child Well-Being Research Network launched in 2021, with a central focus on improving diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice in the child well-being research field.[1]

The Doris Duke Fellowships Equity Study assessed how staff members, national advisory board members, academic and policy mentors, and Doris Duke Fellows experienced diversity, equity, and inclusion ("DEI") during their participation in the Doris Duke Fellowships for the Promotion of Child Well-Being ("fellowships"). The study also identified future strategies for the newly established Child Well-Being Research Network ("CWRN").

We shared study findings via four Equity Study Research Briefs[2] that each highlight specific findings pertaining to unique topics:

01	02	03	04
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ELEVATING DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION IN A PROFESSIONAL NETWORK	**THE ROLE OF SOCIAL SUPPORT AND BELONGING IN A PROFESSIONAL NETWORK**	**DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION IN MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS**	**DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION IN THE DORIS DUKE FELLOWSHIPS**

The fourth and final research brief focuses on the fellowships program itself; it discusses how diversity, equity, and inclusion were conceptually considered, structured, and experienced by the program's key constituents. The brief discusses what was done well and what opportunities were missed and includes recommendations for similar programs to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion in the child well-being research field.

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[1] The Child Well-Being Research Network (CWRN) transitioned to a new institutional home in early 2023, after the Equity Study's conclusion. It is now a part of the University of Kentucky College of Social Work.
[2] The first three Equity Study briefs are in the References list and cited throughout this report.
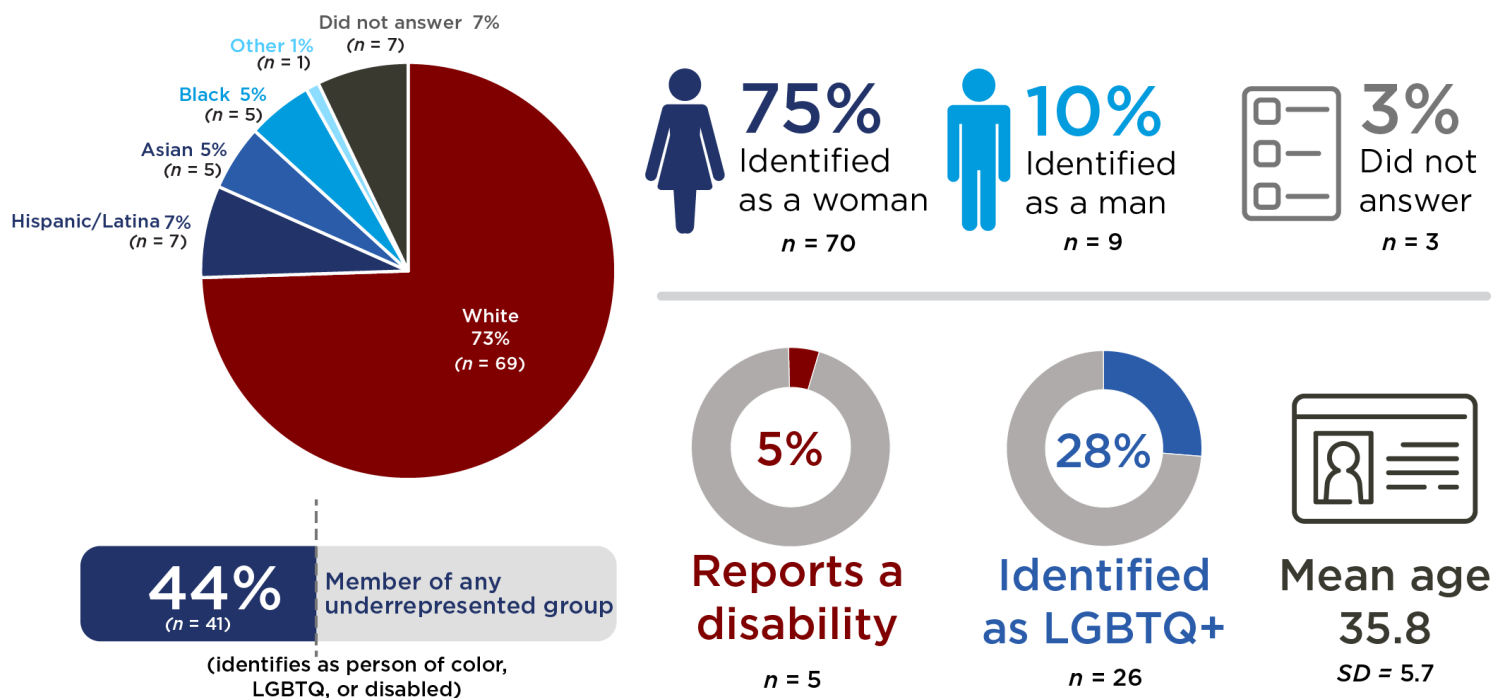
METHODOLOGY

Study data were collected via a sequential mixed-methods approach that included online surveys and videoconference interviews. Online surveys were completed by Doris Duke Fellows and their academic and policy mentors; interviews were conducted with fellowships staff, national advisory board members, and fellows (see Table 1 for participant numbers). This brief focuses on results from all data sources; readers can see prior briefs for more in-depth reporting on specific topics.

Interview audio recordings were transcribed through a third-party service. The interviewer redacted identifying information and transcriptions were shared with the research team. Qualitative interview data were thematically analyzed using Atlas.ti (Braun & Clark, 2006). Surveys were collected via REDCap and analyzed using SPSS; Table 2 shows demographic data about survey respondents. After all data were collected, the research team identified and summarized similarities and differences in themes across data sets. Participation in the fellow survey was anonymous, thus we do not know the number of unique fellows who completed both an interview and a survey. The research team looked at aggregated survey findings by subgroups and used qualitative data to extend our understanding of what the quantitative data analysis revealed. For each section, we present qualitative and quantitative data together. Equity Study participants provided rich descriptions of how they experienced DEI in the fellowships, and we are grateful for their participation.

Table 1. Equity Study Participants

Role	Data Collection Method	Total Participants	Participation Rate
Fellowships Staff	Interview	4	100%
Advisory Board Member	Interview	9	53%
Academic & Policy Mentor	Survey	69	36%
Fellow	Survey	94	78%
Fellow	Interview	28	23%

Figure 1. Demographics of Fellow Survey Respondents

Did not answer 7% (n = 7)
Other 1% (n = 1)
Black 5% (n = 5)
Asian 5% (n = 5)
Hispanic/Latina 7% (n = 7)
White 73% (n = 69)

75% Identified as a woman *n = 70*

10% Identified as a man *n = 9*

3% Did not answer *n = 3*

44% (n = 41) Member of any underrepresented group (identifies as person of color, LGBTQ, or disabled)

5% Reports a disability *n = 5*

28% Identified as LGBTQ+ *n = 26*

Mean age 35.8 *SD = 5.7*

In order to conduct tests of significance, we created a variable that included any survey respondent who identified as being from a marginalized or underrepresented demographic group: 1) person of color, 2) having a disability, or 3) being in the LGBTQ community. We recognize that identifying with any one of these characteristics may influence a person's life in myriad ways. We used this variable as a proxy to measure some level of how membership in these groups might have affected a fellow's experience of the program.[3]

Study Team

The Equity Study was led by a team of four researchers. The Principal Investigator was a Chapin Hall researcher who was a part of the fellowships project team since its inception. The Co-Principal Investigator was an assistant professor at Rutgers University and a Cohort Two Doris Duke Fellow. The other two team members were employed by Chapin Hall. One of them had been on the fellowships team for 4 years. As such, each team member brought their own insights and biases to the Equity Study. Each member reflected on their roles and positions in relation to the Equity Study, considering their own perspectives and biases. During the study we considered how our individual identities and positions influenced our thinking and we collectively ensured we made comprehensive interpretations. These conversations helped us more thoroughly consider myriad ways of interpreting the findings and arrive at a more accurate representation of what the data meant.

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[3] We did not include gender in this variable. We understand that women face barriers and have historically been marginalized; however, in the fellowships program they were overrepresented and were a large majority of fellows (86%).
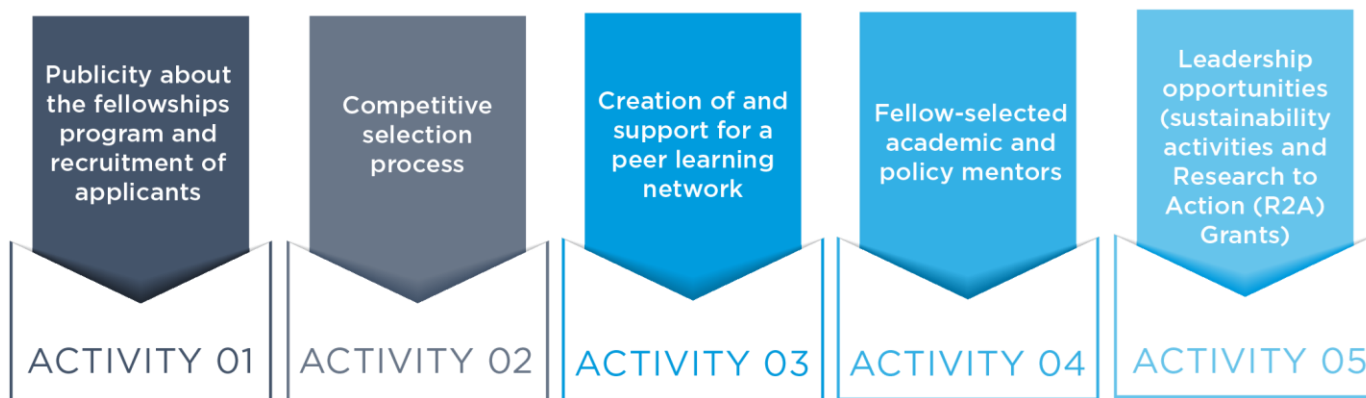
FELLOWSHIPS PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The Doris Duke Fellowships for the Promotion of Child Well-Being began at Chapin Hall in 2010 with funding from the Doris Duke Foundation. It was led by a Chapin Hall senior research fellow and had a project team comprised of three to four individuals who coordinated and evaluated its activities over the years. There was a national advisory board of 12–18 members, with 6–9 individuals serving on a Selection Committee each year to select each of the eight cohorts. Beginning in 2016, we began planning for sustainability of the network built through the program via fellow-led workgroups and a Leadership Committee. In 2019, we began offering small Research to Action (R2A) Grants to interdisciplinary teams of fellows and their policy or practice partner for applied research projects.

The fellowships program had four goals throughout its tenure:

GOAL 01	GOAL 02	GOAL 03	GOAL 04
Develop leaders in the child well-being and maltreatment prevention field	Increase interdisciplinary knowledge and research	Foster the creation of new knowledge and strategies to prevent child maltreatment and promote child well-being	Increase the visibility of the child abuse prevention and child well-being fields

The fellowships program's primary activities included:

ACTIVITY 01	ACTIVITY 02	ACTIVITY 03	ACTIVITY 04	ACTIVITY 05
Publicity about the fellowships program and recruitment of applicants	Competitive selection process	Creation of and support for a peer learning network	Fellow-selected academic and policy mentors	Leadership opportunities (sustainability activities and Research to Action (R2A) Grants)

The remainder of this brief examines these activities in light of results from the Equity Study. Each section briefly describes the activities, shares insights based on the Equity Study results, and highlights the facilitators and barriers to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Fellowships Goals

All Equity Study interview respondent categories (advisory board, fellows, staff) had a clear understanding and were able to articulate the ideas behind the four main goals of the program. At the same time, there was wide agreement that having a diverse group of fellows, defined by personal characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, abilities, first generation status, was not an explicit goal of the fellowships program. Respondents were clear that diversity, in both personal identities and academic disciplines, was discussed during the selection processes (see section below on Competitive Selection Process). Respondents explained that academic discipline diversity was well articulated as a primary goal and was widely discussed during recruitment and selection. Respondents also agreed that the concepts of equity and inclusion were not defined goals of the program.

> What I recall is that the vision was to grow the field of child welfare professionals who had strong research skills, as well as policy acumen, and the goals for that vision were to support students who are at the dissertation stage so that they could receive funding to be able to complete their work, could get mentoring, policy-related mentoring, and could participate in a network that could help them think more about how their work is relevant and engaged as policy. And also to not just grow the numbers, but to develop a network, where fellows could collaborate with one another.

> I will say that equity and inclusion were not really a part of the conversation, at least in that language early on. But diversity was always something that we talked about and we thought about…but it was not included as one of the goals. It wasn't like a written goal.

Publicity and Recruitment

To publicize the fellowships, program staff compiled a list of individual university faculty members to whom they sent the fellowships announcement and call for applications. Over the years, this list was substantially expanded; the team added all fellows, mentors, advisory board members, and speakers or other individuals engaged with the program. Another publicity strategy was to publicize the fellowships at national conferences and on graduate student and faculty listservs. In an attempt to increase applicants' racial diversity, staff researched faculty at HBCUs whose work was in the child well-being field and added them to the outreach list. Staff also identified national organizations (for example, National Research Center on Hispanic Children & Families, Society for Research in Child Development [SRCD], and American Psychological Association [APA]) whose membership might be racially diverse.

Fellows reported hearing about the fellowships primarily through two sources: faculty members (47%) or peers, friends, or colleagues (25%). Additional sources were web searches (15%), listservs (9%), and other sources (5%). Table 2 illustrates the racial diversity of applicants for each cohort did not significantly change despite attempts to recruit a more diverse applicant pool. Table 3 shows applicants' gender identity over the years. The discipline diversity in applicants, which significantly increased over time (X^2 (56, N = 536) = 75.37, p = .043) is displayed in Table 4.

Table 2. Applicant Race and Ethnicity

Race or Ethnicity	Cohort One	Cohort Two	Cohort Three	Cohort Four	Cohort Five	Cohort Six	Cohort Seven	Cohort Eight	Total
African American	16%	9%	13%	18%	14%	18%	15%	8%	14%
American Indian	0	0	2%	0	1%	0	0	1%	0.6%
Asian	0	3%	5%	6%	5%	5%	4%	6%	4%
Hispanic	7%	3%	8%	6%	4%	5%	10%	3%	6%
Multiracial	0	6%	5%	6%	2%	3%	2%	10%	4%
Other	3%	3%	3%	0	1%	0	2%	0	2%
White	74%	76%	65%	64%	73%	69%	67%	71%	70%

Table 3. Applicant Gender Identity

Gender Identity	Cohort One	Cohort Two	Cohort Three	Cohort Four	Cohort Five	Cohort Six	Cohort Seven	Cohort Eight	Total
Woman	90%	79%	85%	96%	86%	87%	87%	83%	86%
Man	10%	21%	17%	5%	14%	3%	13%	15%	13%
Nonbinary or Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2%	0.4%

Table 4. Applicant Academic Disciplines

Discipline	Cohort One	Cohort Two	Cohort Three	Cohort Four	Cohort Five	Cohort Six	Cohort Seven	Cohort Eight	Total
Child/Human Development	2%	0	6%	3%	5%	9%	10%	12%	7%
Education	5%	0	4%	7%	6%	3%	7%	6%	5%
Healthcare/Public Health	7%	1%	10%	5%	15%	11%	13%	12%	11%
Multidisciplined	2%	0	4%	2%	0	5%	1%	5%	2%
Psychology	21%	24%	30%	22%	26%	22%	20%	25%	24%
Public/Social Policy	7%	0	4%	5%	4%	5%	3%	1%	4%
Social Work	54%	58%	31%	44%	35%	30%	28%	27%	37%
Sociology	2%	0	0	8%	1%	8%	5%	6%	4%
Other	2%	8%	16%	3%	7%	6%	14%	5%	7%
Total Responses	61	38	67	59	81	63	86	81	536

To understand whether the applicant pool generally reflected the national pool of PhD recipients in similar disciplines, we used two sources of data that focused on social work and psychology doctorates, as those had the highest representation in the fellowships' applications.[7] As Table 5 illustrates, the demographic characteristics of the program's applicant pool were significantly different than the national sample in racial and ethnic representation (X^2 (4, N = 6,497) = 24.97, p < .001) and gender (X^2 (1, N = 6,734) = 76.15, p < .001). The fellowships had significantly more White applicants than the national sample would suggest. Additionally, the program attracted far more women applicants than the national sample.

Table 5. Race and Gender: Applicants and National Doctoral Degree Recipients

	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Asian	Black	Hispanic or Latino	White	Other race	Women
Applicants	0.6%	4.3%	13.8%	5.7%	69.7%*	5.9%	86.5%*
National sample*	0.6%	8.4%	10.7%	8.8%	65.4%*	3.3%	73.0%*

* Denotes significant differences between groups found by chi-square tests, p < .05.
[a] Social work research PhD recipients in 2020 (Council on Social Work Education, 2021); Psychology PhD recipients in 2017 (Falkenheim, 2020). The fellowships had applicants from other disciplines as well; this sample is used for comparison purposes only.

Program staff members were primarily responsible for recruitment efforts and reported being aware of the need for publicity efforts to reach a wide audience. One staff member explained that they had the most success with direct contact with individual faculty members who then shared the opportunity with their students. However, staff noted that there were some limitations with ensuring the recruitment list reflected diverse faculty because of a lack of diversity on the Chapin Hall team. Another limitation was the reliance on word of mouth, which might have led to people sharing the opportunity only with people similar to them, lessening the likelihood of increasing the diversity of applicants.

Advisory board members were also asked about recruitment and they confirmed that program staff were primarily responsible for this component. A couple of these respondents noted that they were aware of staff efforts to diversify the pool by reaching out to faculty of color and to universities that were less represented in the applicant pool. One advisory board respondent suggested that there should have been more of a "personal approach" to recruitment, saying,

> Charging [advisory board members] with finding three good candidates and incentivizing them to do that would be a great way to bring more to the selection committee to think about…there could be more of a personal touch there, where people would think they weren't qualified or people who just felt like their circumstance wouldn't allow it, needed somebody to recruit them in.

In addition to diversifying the publicity list, respondents talked about wanting to offer information and resources to applicants, especially those whose universities did not provide robust support for fellowship applications or for those who had less access to mentoring. One staff member explained the value of the application webinar (initiated with Cohort Four):

> 💬 I liked that there was that informational session. I think that that was really helpful. Give people an opportunity to ask questions, connect, get to know more, for our staff and other fellows to share their thoughts and insights into the application process. I think that's really important to give people a place to have that opportunity to ask questions and get more details. Then I know we also have that recording of the webinar and shared that as well, for people who weren't able to join. People could watch that at any time. So I think that that's a really good process.

Individual program staff were available to answer questions and provide advice to potential applicants, and provided that kind of assistance to a couple of applicants each year. However, this support was reportedly not well publicized or utilized.

Competitive Selection Process

Fellowship applications went through four selection phases:

Phase 1: Eligibility review

Phase 2: Internal dissertation review (rigor, topical relevance, communication) and first cut

Phase 3: Selection Committee review and second cut

Phase 4: Interviews and final selection

Phases 1 and 2: A team of Chapin Hall staff first reviewed all applications for eligibility (which required being enrolled in an accredited university, having finished doctoral coursework, being eligible to work in the U.S., and conducting research broadly related to child well-being). Very few applications were excluded after the first phase. The second phase involved a different Chapin Hall team reviewing all eligible applications. The Chapin Hall team was comprised of the primary researchers administering the program. The focus during this phase was on the perceived rigor of the dissertation research, writing quality, and topical relevance. Approximately 25–50% of applications were excluded during this phase, based primarily on research topic or rigor. Respondents explained that demographic characteristics were rarely considered at this phase—the perceived rigor of the dissertation design was the primary factor in excluding applications.

Phases 3 and 4: The remaining applications were then sent to the Selection Committee for review. The Selection Committee was made up of individuals from the National Advisory Board, which was comprised of nationally recognized, doctoral-level child well-being research experts from a variety of academic disciplines. There were between 9 and 11 Selection Committee members each year. In the first several years of the program, Advisory Board members were primarily colleagues of the fellowships' founder; as the program continued it expanded to include a fellow and other experts. Table 5 highlights the academic discipline and demographics of the Board.

**Figure 2. National Advisory Board (*n*=18)**
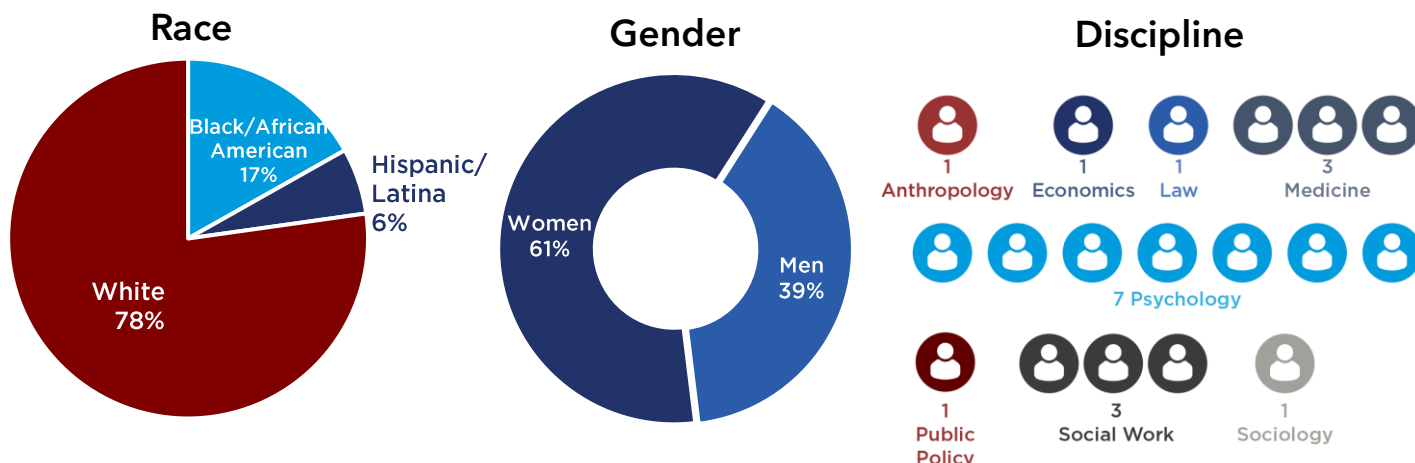
Selection Committee members were assigned between 5 and 9 applications to review and were expected to complete a "review sheet" for each application. The review sheet focused on the proposed research (relevance, innovation, impact, and feasibility), the applicant (academic and professional background, career trajectory, and leadership potential), and planned mentoring approach (engagement, relevance, recommendations). Program staff compiled scores and comments across reviewers and selected the final pool of applicants based on those scores and comments. The final selection phase involved a 2-day meeting of the Selection Committee at Chapin Hall to interview finalists via telephone and select the 15 fellows for each cohort.

Applications and Selected Fellows

Chapin Hall received 536 applications over 8 years; the Selection Committee ultimately selected 120 fellows across eight cohorts. Tables 6–8 show the academic discipline, racial and ethnic identity, and gender of the fellows.[4] Figure 3 highlights the race and ethnicity of fellows over time. To examine whether racial diversity in the fellowship changed over time, we tested the distribution of racial and ethnic identities across the cohorts. We found no significant association of racial and ethnic group and cohort (X^2 (28, N = 120) = 19.73, p = .87). Because the sample sizes of several of the racial and ethnic groups were small, we also aggregated the racial and ethnic identities of color to test if there was an association between the proportion of fellows of color and cohort. The number of fellows of color compared to White fellows was not significantly associated with their cohort (X^2 (7, N = 120) = 6.93, p = .44), even when we combined Cohorts One-Four and Cohorts Five-Eight, (X^2 (1, N = 120) = 1.60, p = .21). In other words, racial and ethnic diversity of the fellows as a group did not significantly change over time.

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[4] The program did not ask about first-generation status or any other variables that are correlated with marginalization (such as SES, disabilities, or language). Those were not taken into consideration when selecting fellows.
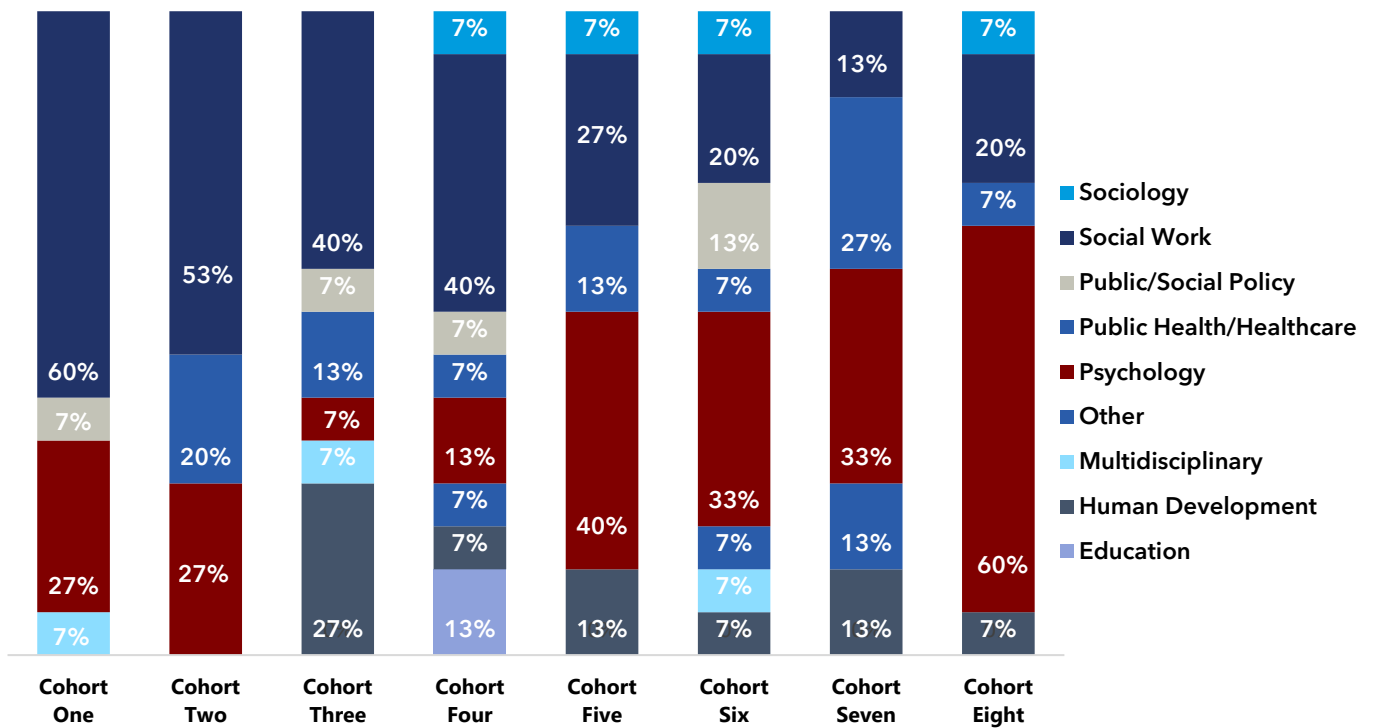
Figure 3. Fellow Race and Ethnicity
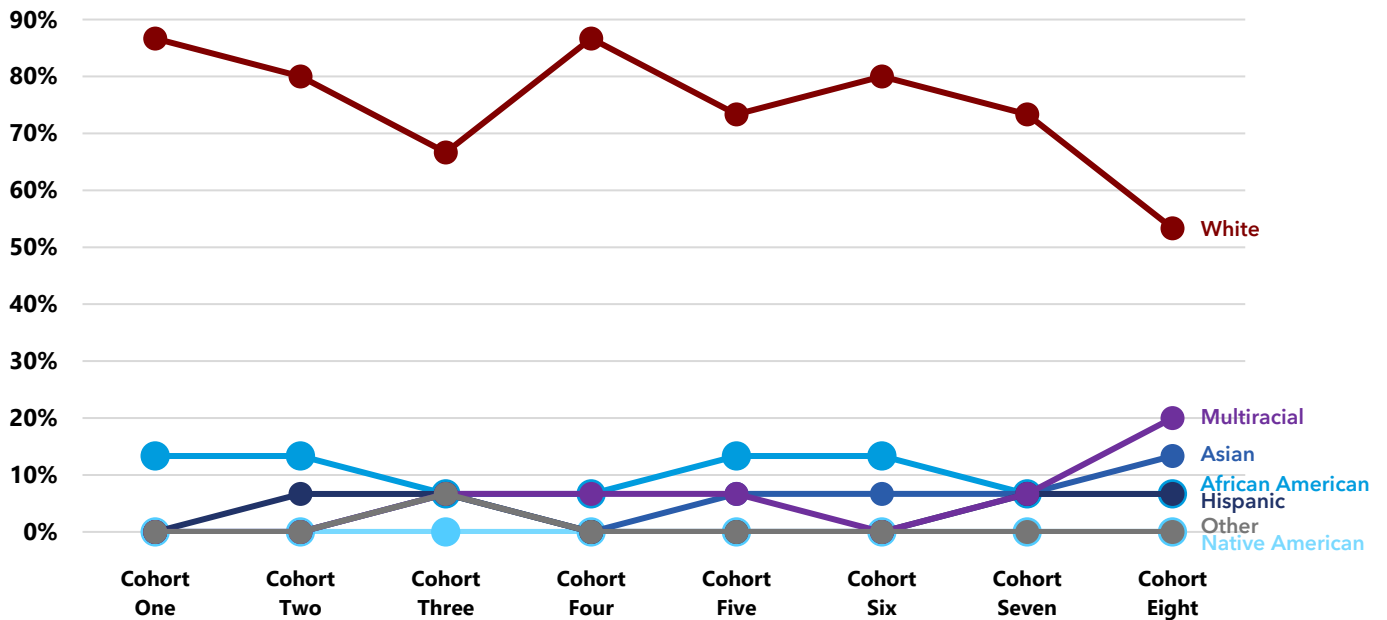
When examining the fellows' gender identity (see Figure 4), we found that there was no significant difference in acceptance rate by gender in any cohort. We also compared the acceptance rate by gender over time and found no significant difference. The fellows were predominantly women (86%).

Figure 4. Fellow Gender Identity
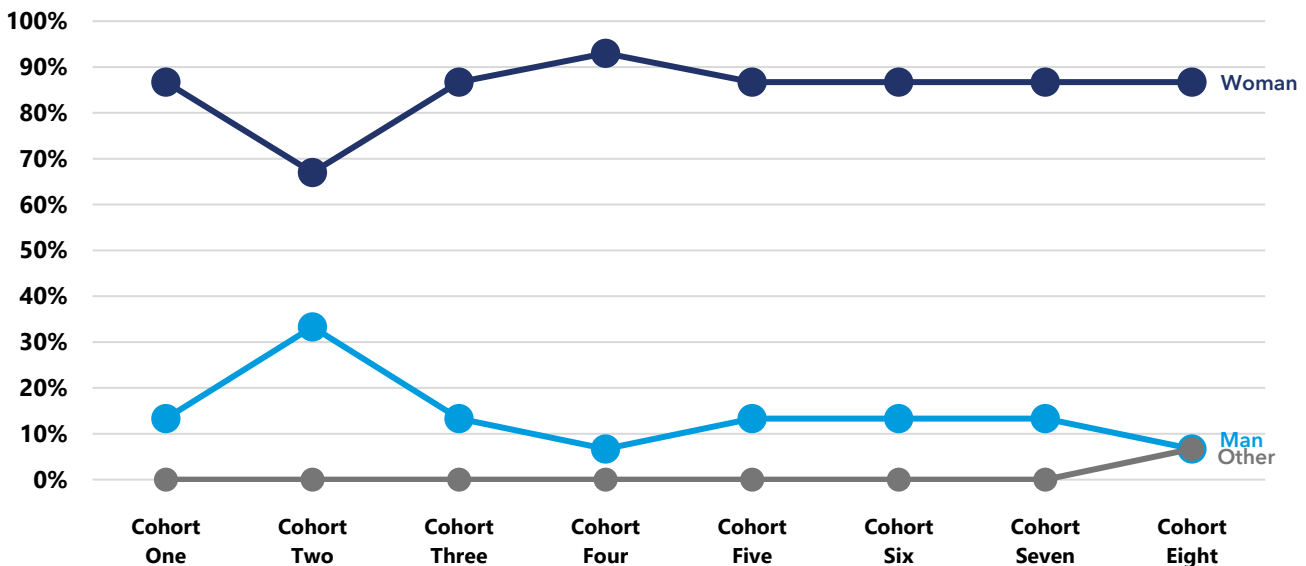
Reflecting the increase in applicant disciplinary diversity over time, the fellows selected also showed an increase in disciplinary diversity (X^2 [56, N = 120] = 75.22, p = .044). The academic disciplines that fellows were studying became significantly more diverse over the course of the fellowship, with social work becoming less prevalent (X^2 [7, N = 120] = 19.52, p = .007). This reflects the increase in applicant disciplinary diversity over time.

Figure 5. Fellow Academic Discipline

Legend:
- Sociology
- Social Work
- Public/Social Policy
- Public Health/Healthcare
- Psychology
- Other
- Multidisciplinary
- Human Development
- Education

As explained earlier, there were significant differences between applicants and the national sample related to race and gender identity (X^2 [4, N = 6,497] = 24.97, p < .001). As seen in Table 6, there were also differences between the final 120 fellows selected and the national sample (X^2 [4, N = 6,127] = 9.74, p = .044). Post-hoc analysis found that White people were over-represented in the applicants (X^2 [1, N = 6,538] = 6.50, p = .011) compared to the national sample, but not the fellows (X^2 [1, N = 6,165] = 3.39, p = .065), meaning the fellows were similar to the national sample in the proportion of people who identify as White. Women were also over-represented among the applicants (X^2 [1, N = 6,734] = 76.15, p < .001) and the fellows (X^2 [1, N = 6,345] = 9.90, p = .002), compared to the national sample.

Table 6. Demographics: Applicants and Doris Duke Fellows Compared to National Samples of PhD Recipients[a]

	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Asian	Black	Hispanic or Latino	White	Other race	Women
Applicants (*N* = 509)	0.6%	4.3%	13.8%	5.7%	69.7%[a]	5.9%	86.5%[c]
Fellows (*N* = 120)	0%	4.2%	10.0%	3.3%	71.7%[b]	5.8%	85.8%[d]
National sample[1]	0.6%	8.4%	10.7%	8.8%	65.4%[ab]	3.3%	73.0%[cd]

Note: Superscripts (a, b, c, d) denote significant differences between groups found by chi-square tests, *p* < .05.
[a] Social work research PhD recipients in 2020 (Council on Social Work Education, 2021); Psychology PhD recipients in 2017 (Falkenheim, 2020).

Advisory Board Diversity

We wanted to understand how the composition of the Advisory Board may have affected the selection process and asked about this in our interviews. Most Advisory Board respondents believed that the level of diversity on the board was sufficient (see Figure 2). One Advisory Board respondent said, "Actually the advisory group was diverse. We had people from different professions, different race, ethnicity, different gender, people from different parts of the country." There were, however, a handful of staff and Advisory Board respondents who suggested that the Advisory Board could have benefited from additional diversity, including in age, race, and career-stage. As one respondent said, "There actually needed to be more diverse members of the Advisory Board, that is something I wish were different." A few respondents reflected on the need to have more diversity on the Board with regard to where people were in their careers. One respondent said, "It might have been good to have more diversity in the board itself with regard to where people were in their careers. A newer faculty member, for example, or someone who just was tenured as opposed to people who were 15 to 20 years out." Another respondent discussed this, saying "People on the review committee are comfortable with the things that they have experienced and done, and so, perhaps shaking up that review committee a bit with some outside viewpoints that don't seem like the usual suspects, could have possibly led to some different conversations." Another respondent suggested that senior leaders in the field, like those on the Advisory Board, need to do "anti-bias work" to ensure they are not privileging certain perspectives over others.

There were a couple of respondents who did not view diversity as an important goal for the Advisory Board and were uncomfortable with the very idea of how diversity could improve outcomes, reflecting a desire to be "color blind" or "diversity blind."

💬 My discomfort is: Why point out the fact that three of the people on the Selection Committee were Black? I don't want that to make a difference. I get that it does. But there were however many there were, eight, 10, colleagues of mixed interests, mixed backgrounds, that come together to talk about how we're going to help prepare future generations. And at some level, I respect them for who they are and accept them for who they are. I don't need to. I don't know how to, whether making, paying attention to people's differences helps or exacerbates the problem. People are people. Let's treat them that way.

💬 So could we have had a more diverse group? I don't know how diverse the group was. In other words, I don't know the educational backgrounds. I don't know their ability. I don't know. Did we have LGBTQ members of the committee? I have no idea, and I don't want to know. It's not my business. I respect their opinion.

Selection Process and Diversity Considerations

Selection Committee members and Chapin Hall staff were aware of applicants' race, gender, academic discipline, and university throughout the selection process. There was wide agreement among staff and Advisory Board member respondents that an applicant's dissertation research design was the most important criterion considered during the selection process. Unless an applicant's dissertation research was viewed as rigorous, feasible, relevant for policy or practice, and innovative or unique, the applicant would not move forward in the selection process. As respondents said,

> There was a strong emphasis on the rigor and the newness or the "novelness" of the applicant's dissertation. So their research, there's a big emphasis on that, whether this was a feasible dissertation. What new insight it could lead [to] for the field, whether this was something that was related to child well-being.

> First and foremost, the quality of their research. In my mind, it had to be a study that was feasible and was rigorous, so that was number one.

> Really the ability to represent research, their dissertation research, in a way that was unique or would make a contribution to the field. I think that was our highest priority. We really wanted good and solid research designs.

At the same time, Equity Study interview respondents explained that during the latter two phases of the selection process, questions of diversity, especially academic discipline, applicant race, and applicant gender, were "top of mind" in order to "create classes of fellows that were as diverse as possible." As one respondent said, "Race, gender, and discipline, I think, were the three. We always had on a spreadsheet during the Selection Committee [meeting] and it was something we tally at each stage." Respondents explained that the Selection Committee considered diversity of personal identities more as the program continued, or that it became more explicit and openly discussed during the Selection Meeting as the years went on. They explained that racial and gender identity played the largest role during the final selection phase—when the Selection Committee was choosing the final 15 fellows.

Respondents explained:

> So, we definitely took that [diverse representation] into consideration trying to make sure that there was good representation, and it wasn't just like 14 White females and then one Black male. We wanted it to be more meaningful than that. And not just so that the fellow didn't feel alone, I think that's important, and we do care about that. But noting that their experiences and expertise is really valuable for the cohorts, and [for] some of these fellows it really might be their only opportunity to work with people who are different from them, in terms of discipline, in terms of race. And that. . . a really important part of the fellowship would be to have lots of different diverse methods, opinions, experiences, things of that nature.

> That's [the final selection meeting] where a little kind of overview postcard-sized overview post it notes were made where it had the individual's name, institution and their academic focus. So psychology, social work, etc. Then it also had gender identification and race/ethnicity as a part of that little postcard of information as well as their shortened version of their dissertation topic. So that was something that was a very visual portion of the selection process where those were literally put up on the wall of something that we could review and see is this person a strong applicant, leading applicant. Do you still have questions for this person? That was a really big part of [the selection process], especially as it got later in the selection process. When you could really start to envision, okay what does this cohort potentially look like, that's where all of those kind of aspects of diversity really came in to play more, what would this look like if this cohort had five social workers, or what would it look like with three men or this person who is gender nonconforming? Things like that.

However, not all Advisory Board interviewees had the same view on diversity considerations during the final selection stage. One respondent explained that they did not recollect deliberations specifically focusing on race, and another explained that the conversations focused on meeting an arbitrary definition of "enough" diversity.

💬 I guess we didn't feel compelled to say, "Oh, we have no African Americans in the class. If there's an African American applicant, let's try and get them into the mix." We were not deliberate in that way.

💬 There's often this feeling of wanting diversity, just enough diversity. If we just get over that. . . back to the sports analogy of the pole vaulter; we set the bar and we just barely get over it, well that's okay, we did it. Instead of thinking of it as front of mind all the time, there's really never enough that you can do, you can push it through. So it would be my recollection that there was much more of this bar approach of, and I'm hesitant to say this because I don't really want to criticize the people involved. I think this is just, again, a natural thing. That there's a view of who's going to be looking at this and are they going to be "satisfied" that the diversity attention was enough? Want a presentation of people where people say, "Oh that was a diverse enough group," as opposed to clearly this group looks the same, acts the same, comes from the same background, studies the same thing and is not diverse. So there's this implicit view of where the bar [is] and what are we trying to get there. Which can minimize constant attention to it.

Respondents overwhelmingly perceived that the diversity of academic disciplines was a huge success of the fellowships, but there was not clear agreement among those interviewed that the fellows selected were diverse in other ways, such as race or gender. Additionally, other aspects of personal characteristics were not considered during the selection process at all (such as ability, socioeconomic status, first generation status, and language).

💬 Well, when it comes to diversity, I think that there is a strong emphasis placed on academic or research diversity or multidisciplinary diversity. So that's something that I think is pretty clear with a focus on having different academic backgrounds such as social work, psychology, public health, medicine. There's a bunch of different backgrounds, all with the same goal of working to prevent child maltreatment or for child well-being in general.

Systemic Barriers

Respondents identified and acknowledged systemic barriers to high-quality doctoral programs and research training (for example, racial discrimination, fewer resources for marginalized groups, lack of exposure to research as a career path, smaller networks, fewer mentors, poor K-12 educational opportunities). However, no consensus existed about how the fellowships program should respond to those barriers. Most respondents pointed out that efforts to successfully remove these barriers requires much earlier efforts, such as in the K-12 education systems and having more equity in college resources.

According to respondents, the Selection Committee grappled each year with making final decisions that took into consideration the sometimes "competing demands" of research rigor, leadership experiences or potential, discipline diversity, and diversity of personal characteristics. The Committee typically discussed the lack of a diverse pipeline of researchers and the systemic barriers to becoming a high achieving doctoral student. One member said:

💬 Every selection committee meeting had a discussion at least once, if not more than once, around what I would term these equity issues at a more systemic level. And really grappling with, say you had an applicant, there were clearly systemic barriers in their life. And their application reflected that. And how do you make those decisions and what seems to be the right thing to do? There were always those discussions.

Advisory board member ideas on how to address systemic barriers coalesced around four themes: 1) increasing higher education's responsibility to recognize and address limitations earlier; 2) modifying reliance on traditional methods of assessing researcher quality to reflect different experiences and trajectories; 3) improving senior leaders' understanding of bias and racism and how those lead to privileging certain perspectives or methods; and 4) increasing opportunities for meaningful mentoring and concrete support. A member said:

💬 …Undergraduate programs need to pay more attention to the way in which they are preparing their students, for whether it is straight to a doctoral program, or to go out into the field and work, and then go on to a doctoral program. So, there are multiple places, I think, where what I would say is higher ed as a field, needs to be much more aggressive, in the way in which they identify, recognize, and then help students address limitations that they have as they are moving through their programs.

💬 I think we know that scholars of color, in some cases women, in some cases men, get less of an opportunity for access, potentially, to the supports that other people get. So, I think part of it is thinking through, even just saying that we want to not be biased in this way, as we do reviews of people's candidacy could potentially help. But also helping the field to develop a pipeline that isn't based on the number of citations people have. It needs to be based on the actual work and the quality of the proposed work. I think we have a lot to address in the field of postsecondary education.

💬 I think senior leaders in the field have to do the work of anti-bias work because senior leaders were trained at a time when there were very clear perspectives that were privileged, and that rule to this day, and as the field, as multiple fields have shifted, the seniors may or may not have shifted with the changes, and so that is a really critical one.

💬 Yeah, I think current leaders could be very strategic about trying to encourage people from different backgrounds to apply to PhD programs. They can give them research opportunities. . . I was a first gen college student who knew very little about academia and research. And I really never even considered that that was part of what could be a possibility for me. But it was through really good mentorship, and having people say like, "Wow, you are really good, and you have good ideas and you can do this." That was really meaningful for me in my development.

Fellows were also asked if they had any ideas about how the child well-being research field could tackle systemic barriers for minoritized researchers. They offered several ideas centered on three themes: 1) explicitly acknowledge the racist foundations of child well-being programs, policies, and research, especially around the child welfare system and parenting; 2) increase explicit discussion and valuation of topics related to diversity, equity, and inclusion in research settings; and 3) deliberately increase the diversity of teams and departments through thoughtful hiring decisions, including engagement with people with lived experience of the phenomena being studied. Several members elaborated on this topic:

💬 We need to be willing to examine where popular practice maintains oppressive systems and biased perspectives on parenting. This is hard if your career is built on collegial relationships with systems that need dismantling. We need to grapple with this and have more external funding and access to data that is not reliant on such close partnerships with state agencies.

💬 Holding conferences/meetings/grant competitions specific to these [DEI] issues, making work in these areas something that is professionally lauded and seen as important and worthwhile to tenure committees, hiring committees, granting agencies, etc.

💬 Targeted universalism in networking and professional development to build a pipeline of leaders that reflect the general population and those with lived experience.

Summary: Fellowships Program Structure

Almost all respondents were aware of the four primary goals of the fellowships program and were aware that they did not explicitly include diversity, equity, or inclusion, with the exception of academic disciplinary diversity. Advisory Board respondents explained that racial and gender diversity were key considerations during the selection of the final 15 fellows in each cohort, although these were not formal components of the selection process.

> **The fellowships achieved academic discipline diversity but did not improve racial or gender diversity over time**

There was wide recognition that the program would benefit from increased diversity in the applicant pool, and some efforts were made to accomplish that (such as identifying HBCU faculty and offering an application webinar). Unfortunately, those efforts did not result in more racial or gender diversity in applications across the years. However, they did improve academic discipline diversity, with fewer applicants pursuing social work and more applicants pursuing other disciplines. When compared to national numbers of doctoral recipients, the fellowships' applicant pool had a higher proportion of White applicants and women applicants than would be expected. Reflecting the applicant pool, the cohorts selected saw increased disciplinary diversity over time.

One important finding was that the perceived rigor of an applicant's research was the most important selection criteria, across all phases of the selection process. When considering this from the perspective of DEI, this presumes that everyone has an equal chance to rise to the top based on their research design. But we know that socialization, opportunities for research and training, and educational quality can make a difference in one's ability to plan a "rigorous" study. Additionally, research rigor is rooted in European ideas (for example, standardization, quantitative research, randomized-control trials, and other ideas.). Similarly, the ability to communicate "appropriately" (verbally or in writing) is a matter of socialization, training, and opportunity.

Respondents widely acknowledged the presence of systemic barriers for individuals from marginalized groups, but two issues repeatedly came up: 1) the fellowships' role in addressing these barriers, and 2) how the broader field should address barriers. Making final selections in response to these considerations may have indirectly

mitigated some systemic barriers, but it was not the primary motivating factor in the decision-making process. In the early years, the fellowships program did not consider the breadth of its potential role in redressing barriers in the field. However, by the end of the program, the administrative team was more aware of these issues and sought to offer some support to address barriers (for example, the application webinar and access to staff support). During the transition to the CWRN, the program has prioritized efforts to directly tackle these persistent barriers.

PEER LEARNING NETWORK

The peer learning network was one of the primary strategies used to achieve the fellowships' goals. Staff created numerous opportunities for fellows to make connections and learn from one another during their two years in the fellowships as well as after their cohort completed their active time in the program.[5] Strategies included:

| Small groups | Peer mentors | In-person meetings | Virtual learning opportunities | Informal gatherings at national conferences |

In this brief we discuss three of these strategies: small groups, peer mentors, and in-person meetings.

Small Groups

Fellowships staff assigned each fellow in a cohort to one of three small groups. Assignment was based largely on similar research interests and efforts were made to ensure disciplinary and demographic diversity within each group. Small group goals included:

- building relationships among fellows;
- group members becoming familiar with the work of other fellows focusing on the same broad topic area; and
- identifying potential collaborative projects or activities.

Small groups met for the first time during their initial annual fellowships meeting (held each September) and had subsequent in-person and virtual meetings throughout the two years of their fellowship. The activities within groups were varied and were driven by the group members' interests; some worked on joint papers or presentations, some explored topics for more policy-related writing (such as op-ed pieces), some focused on data access and methodology questions, and some prioritized moral support for one another as they completed their dissertation. Beginning with Cohort Three, small groups were expected to jointly complete a project of their own choosing to sharpen their ability to work across disciplines and forge strong relationships.

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[5] For a discussion of the connections amongst the fellows, see Schlecht, C., McGuire, E., Huang, L. A., & Daro, D. (2023). Creating an interdisciplinary collaborative network of scholars in child maltreatment prevention: A network analysis of the Doris Duke Fellowships for the Promotion of Child Well-Being. *Children and Youth Services Review, 153*, 107113. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2023.107113.

In the fellow survey, respondents were asked eight questions (see Figure 6 and Tables 7 and 8) about their small group experiences related to DEI. Generally, responses were very positive. There were no differences when examining the results by race or sexual orientation alone. When analyzing by gender, men were more positive about their group being culturally sensitive (Fisher's exact test, $p<.05$). Earlier cohorts thought their small group's workload was more equitable (Fisher's exact test, $p=.006$). A look at intersectional identities found some important differences. Those who identified with at least one underrepresented group (race, sexual orientation, or disability) were slightly less positive about whether group members were culturally sensitive (87% most or all of the time vs. 94%, Fisher's exact text, $p=.000$). Additionally, fellows from underrepresented groups reported being more likely to initiate conversations related to DEI during small group meetings (58% vs. 40%, Fisher's exact test, $p=.004$).

An overwhelming majority of fellows across both groups felt elements of inclusion while participating in their small groups. They stated that their ideas were seriously considered within their small groups "always" or "almost always" (96%). Similarly, 95% noted that they had a voice in small group decision making "always" or "almost always." When considering their experiences of equity, though, 19% of fellows indicated that the workload among their small group was fairly and equally distributed only "sometimes," with the remaining responses stating that it occurred "always" or "almost always."

Figure 6. Small Group Climate
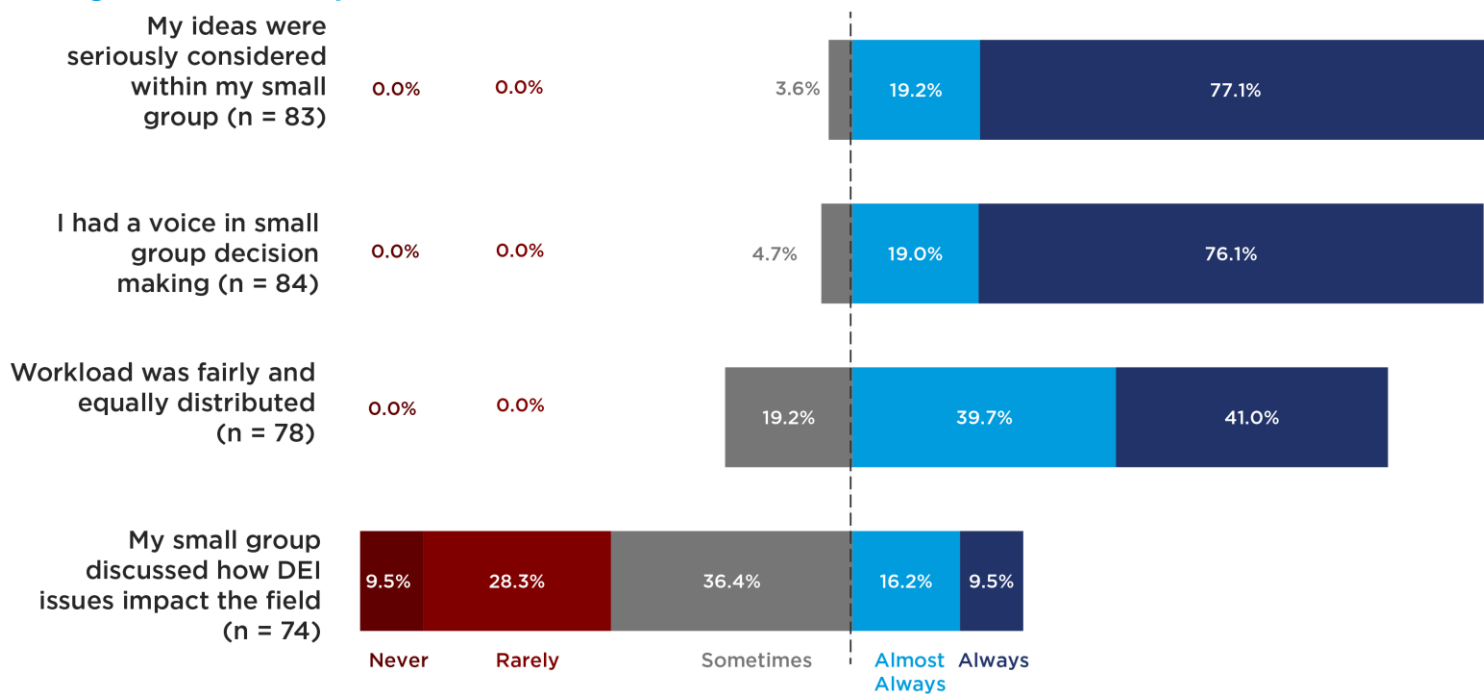
Table 7. I initiated DEI conversations within my group[*]

	Underrepresented identities		Majority identities		Total	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Never/Rarely	13	41.9	27	60.0	40	52.6
Sometimes	12	38.7	15	33.3	27	35.5
Almost always/Always	6	19.4	3	6.7	9	11.8
Total	31	100	45	100	76	100

[*] Fisher's exact test, *p*=.004

Table 8. I believe that the people in my small group were culturally sensitive[*, a]

	Underrepresented identities		Majority identities		Total	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Some of the time	4	12.9	3	6.4	7	9.0
Most of the time	12	38.7	22	46.8	34	43.6
All of the time	15	48.4	22	46.8	37	47.4
Total	31	100	47	100	78	100

[*] Fisher's exact test, *p*=.000

[a] Study definition: Culturally sensitive individuals do not necessarily know everything about every cultural group. They do, however, acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable them to find out what they need to know, to learn that information, and use it effectively.

Staff interview respondents reported prioritizing having fellows from diverse disciplines in the groups, which was reflected in the feedback from fellows. They highlighted the diversity of disciplines of small group members and explained that it enriched their relationships and work. Respondents also reflected on their small group discussions about differences—racial, disciplinary, academic life, lived experiences—and said that those dialogues were informative and improved their research.

It was wonderful. So, all of my small group members, we were diverse in our racial and ethnic makeup. We had two Black fellows, we had an Asian fellow, and we had a couple or a few White fellows. But we were not afraid to tackle or discuss race. So, we talked about it in our work. We talked about it in our small project in our group. And we continue to talk about it. My small group are still members that I still write with, present with, and this is past, after the fellowship. We check in with each other, we hang out, and we talk about these types of things. So, race is not a conversation that we won't have and we don't have. And everybody was able to participate equally and felt heard in our group. At least I say we, because we talked about not feeling heard in other groups and how it was nice to be a part of this

small group in this situation, because just everybody welcomed different points of view and different voices.

💬 I think what it did was the fellowship brought us together in a way that allowed us to discuss it. . . . And allowed us to meet other people from different backgrounds and to have those experiences to say, what's it like, what's your doctoral program like, what's your experiences like, how are your mentors, how do they support you? And. . . I had some great discussions about what it was like to be a Black student in a doctoral program with other cohort members, what it was like to have different experiences and to just have to be with other colleagues that were not from my own program that also added to that experience.

💬 Then my small group was also diverse in terms of gender, race, and ethnicity, and that's probably the group I worked most intensively with. I feel like that gave me exposure to a lot of different perspectives.

💬 Although I will say in terms of my actual experience during the two years of fellowship funding, I felt like there was a big emphasis on diversity in terms of our academic disciplines. So I think we were one of the first cohorts that had a lot of disciplines outside of social work. . . . And so for me, it was actually really great to be connected to folks both inside and outside the [redacted: discipline name] world. Our research interests were definitely diverse. I think I had a small group where we had some consistency in terms of we were all interested in [redacted: research topic], but we were really different assets or different pieces of it.

Peer Mentors

Beginning with Cohort Five and continuing through Cohort Eight, all fellows were offered a peer mentor from an earlier cohort. Fellows were asked to complete a short questionnaire to identify their preferences (such as specific individuals, disciplines, topical areas, or populations studied), and staff identified and recruited mentors. Staff matched fellows and offered the option for fellows to be matched with someone new for the second fellowships year. Almost all fellows continued with their original mentors.

Fellows and their peer mentors varied in how often they met: 39% met quarterly, 34% met only once or twice during the academic year, and 29% met monthly or more frequently. Fellows who identified as women met more frequently with their peer mentor than men did (X^2 [2, N=36] = 7.96, p=.019). Pairs met with one another through email (26%), phone calls (25%), video calls (15%), and in person (11%). A third of matches (33%) were still in contact with one another at the time of the survey. For pairs still in contact with one another, they communicated monthly (39%), quarterly (31%), or once or twice a year (31%).

The survey asked about diversity, equity, inclusion conversations between fellows and peer mentors. As seen in Table 9, 78% of respondents never or rarely discussed DEI issues. There were some significant subgroup differences. Fellows who identified as LGBTQ discussed topics more frequently, (X^2 [2, N = 41] = 7.62, p=.022), as did women, (X^2 [1, N = 39] = 4.17, p=041).

Table 9. DEI Conversations between Peer Mentors and Fellows

	N	%
Never had conversations	25	61
Rarely had conversations	7	17
Sometimes/frequently had conversations	9	22

Of those who did have DEI discussions with their peer mentor, all were *sometimes* or *frequently* comfortable with these topics. They reported that personal experience, training, self-study via reading, and frequent conversations with peers made them more comfortable. Fellows from underrepresented groups were more likely to say that personal experience prepared them for these conversations, (X^2 [1, N = 39] = 4.17, p=.028).

Interview respondents highlighted examples of peer mentors engaging in conversations about DEI. They said the conversations had positive effects. For example, when asked about peer mentors in the interviews, one fellow talked about how helpful it was to have a mentor who was also a woman of color:

💬 I requested a woman of color for my peer mentor. My peer mentor and I talked about what it's like to be a non-White woman in academia. What kinds of issues do you talk to your institutions about without explicitly calling them racist, for example, was one of the things we talked about. I found those talks really helpful.

Other fellows discussed experiencing a sense of inclusion with their peer mentors as well as frequent conversations related to DEI topics:

💬 My peer mentor was a great relationship. She talked about race and ethnicity all the time, not only in research, but she really helped me when I was on the job market. She was probably the only White person and White mentor that I've ever had that brought up race and ethnicity before I could, and I respected her so much for that. She opened it up, and she was like, "Wow, okay. So, you're going to be on the market. You're going to be interviewing. You're going to be interviewing where? Oh, gosh, [redacted: city name]? You know, there's not a lot of Black people there, right?" It's like, "Yeah, okay. We can talk about it." She was like, "You know, when you're interviewing, they may ask you about this or that. How would you like to talk about it?" So, it was just nice that somebody understood it without necessarily having to go through it. And there's something special in my mind around White people doing the work, and she did the work in order to have that conversation with me that was just meaningful, and I appreciated it.

💬 I would say, though it wasn't an explicit topic, with all my mentors, academic mentor, peer mentor, and policy mentor, I definitely felt like all of them had a strong value of inclusion. I felt like all of them, in various ways, made me feel valued and respected.

💬 Yeah, my academic mentor. . . he and I frequently talked about issues of diversity, inclusion, equity, justice. And as did my peer mentor, who I just really appreciated that relationship also. And we often spoke about those topics. Particularly as it relates to disability.

Some fellows we interviewed pointed out the lack of DEI discussions with their peer mentors One fellow said:

💬 In terms of other mentors [discussing DEI], like the policy mentor or the peer mentor, I would say no to both of those. I would say light and surface level at best, and definitely not comprehensive in any way or shape.

In-Person Meetings

The fellowships program hosted two in-person meetings each year throughout the eight cohorts.[6] The fall meeting was held at Chapin Hall and included only the fellows in the two active cohorts at the time of the meeting; all 30 were expected to attend and use their stipend to cover travel costs. The "mid-year meeting" was hosted by one of the fellows' universities. The university volunteered to collaboratively plan the agenda and provide physical meeting space; current fellows were expected to attend (and use their stipend to cover costs) and all fellows were invited (small stipends were offered to help offset travel costs).

Fellows who participated in study interviews were very positive about the importance of in-person meetings for developing connections amongst the fellows; exposing fellows to research, policy, and practice experts; and providing space for small groups to meet and develop their joint projects.

During the annual fall meetings, speakers were selected by fellowships staff and primarily included Chapin Hall experts and fellowship mentors. Speakers at the mid-year meetings were selected by the host institution and primarily reflected the university's faculty and partners. When asked about the adequacy of speaker diversity,[7] 64% of fellows reported it was either "about what I wanted" or "exceeded my expectations" (see Table 10). Survey respondents appreciated the diversity of topics covered at the meetings, with 79% saying it was "about what I wanted" or "exceeded my expectations." On the other hand, fellows reported that in-person meeting speakers discussed diversity, equity, and inclusion only "sometimes" (63%) or "never/rarely" (10%). Responses did not differ by demographic identities or cohort.

Table 10. Views of Speaker and Topic Diversity at In-Person Meetings

	Less than I wanted (*n*/%)	About what I wanted (*n*/%)	Exceeded my expectations (*n*/%)
Speaker diversity	36%	52%	12%
Topic diversity	21%	63%	17%

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[6] The first "mid-year meeting" was held during Cohort One's second year. The second meeting during Cohort Eight's final year was shifted to a modified virtual meeting due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
[7] The survey did not clarify whether diversity referred to personal characteristics or academic disciplines or some other aspect of diversity.

Interviews with fellows echoed the quantitative findings, with some fellows pointing out that speaker racial diversity improved over time. One fellow said:

💬 And it did seem to me that whereas at previous meetings it seemed like those folks that they brought in were predominantly White, it did seem like there was. . . a much more diverse array of folks that were brought in for all those different things like the workshops and the networking, which I really appreciated and I just remember really getting a lot out of some of the speakers in terms of some of the ways that they were talking about dimensions of cultural humility and dimensions of understanding how to implement programs in communities that are not your own.

Interviewees highlighted how speakers addressed, or did not address, issues of race and ethnicity when they presented research findings. Fellows reported that only about a quarter of speakers discussed DEI issues when presenting, and some fellows pointed out that some speakers inadequately explained why race was included in the analysis or did not provide context to interpret results.

💬 When they [presenters] talked about the outcomes, they talked about race and the differences between White people and everyone else, I would ask questions. So, I would challenge the person in a very professional way, I think, but would ask, "Why do you think those differences are other than the color of someone's skin?" So, I would question that, and I would challenge that. Like, okay, so if we're talking about race, which is a social construct, it can't cause these outcomes. Why did you choose to decide to discuss violence and break it down by race? . . . That's how I brought it up. It would be in the context of a question, like, "I'm interested in why you decided to discuss the findings by race. How does race impact these findings?"

💬 I actually can't research what I research without thinking about these things. And if I did, that would be a really big problem. So, I do think that the fellowship helped with that, certainly. It helped me think about some of these things. Especially, I really appreciated. . . I felt like there was a really diverse array of talks and speakers and seminars that we had. And that was really beneficial and useful for me in thinking about these things.

Summary: Peer Learning Network

To accomplish the program's goals, staff developed a peer learning network. Program staff implemented numerous activities to build the network, including having small groups of fellows within each cohort, in-person and virtual meetings, and peer mentors. Study respondents highlighted their positive experiences with these activities, noting their impact on relationship building and creating an inclusive and equitable experience within the program.

Respondents had especially positive feedback on the small group experience, noting that it was instrumental in creating connections amongst fellows and increasing their exposure to different disciplines, experiences, and perspectives. There was slightly less positivity about specific aspects of the small group experience for earlier cohorts (Cohorts One–Four), women, and those from underrepresented groups.

> **The peer learning network was viewed as predominantly inclusive and equitable**

The study explored how the peer mentoring strategy incorporated diversity, equity, and inclusion, and found that about three-quarters of pairs rarely or never discussed these topics. It appears that for those who did discuss these topics, the conversations were comfortable and informative. The fellowships program did not emphasize, or even discuss, the importance of addressing diversity, equity, or inclusion within these relationships and missed an important opportunity to elevate these issues amongst peer mentor pairs.

In-person meetings were lifted up as critical opportunities for fellows to build relationships and learn from experts in the field and one another. Our study found that over half of the fellows had their expectations met regarding speaker and presentation topical diversity, as well as intentionally focusing on DEI principles when conducting research. However, respondents also recognized that there was room for improvement in these areas. These missed opportunities may reflect that speakers were selected because they were recognized experts in the field, and due to systemic barriers, those individuals are predominantly White. In addition, partner universities featured their faculty, who again were predominantly White individuals.

ACADEMIC AND POLICY MENTORS

Each applicant identified an academic mentor, typically their dissertation chair, and a policy mentor who could provide guidance and support to ensure the fellow's research could influence policy or practice. Proposed mentors provided a recommendation letter for the application and participated in a one-time orientation and training session at the start of their 2-year commitment. Many mentors were invited to present during in-person meetings or virtual learning opportunities. The Equity Study team authored a research brief on mentoring in the fellowships that delved deeply into this topic (Duron et al., 2022). We include the main findings from those analyses here:

Summary: Academic and Policy Mentors

- Strong mentoring relationships correlated with the frequency of interaction between mentees and mentors. The more frequent the contact, the higher the relationship quality.
- Most mentors described the quality of the relationship with their mentee as excellent; no mentors described it as poor.
- When mentors and mentees identified differences in identities and experiences and discussed them, the discussions enriched mentoring relationships.
- Mentors were comfortable discussing some aspects of DEI, although these issues were most often discussed as they related to research efforts rather than institutional environments or experiences.
- Mentors identified lack of access to equitable resources and barriers to accessing professional networks as significant challenges to underrepresented researchers in achieving equitable educational and professional outcomes.
- Mentors suggest that training on institutional or systemic racism, as well as on how underrepresented groups navigate spaces that have traditionally been dominated by White individuals, would be helpful to their development as mentors.

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE FELLOWSHIPS PROGRAM

The fellowships program offered leadership opportunities in several ways, including the small group experience, hosting a mid-year meeting, presenting work during the mid-year meetings or virtual learning opportunities, sustainability activities, and the Research to Action (R2A) Grants program. The goals of these activities were to provide opportunities for fellows to learn and practice leadership skills, to begin to take "ownership" of the fellowships network, and to promote principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion. This section focuses on two of these opportunities— the R2A Grants Program and sustainability activities—and how they reflected and implemented DEI principles.

Research to Action (R2A) Grants Program

The Research to Action (R2A) Grants were an opportunity for fellows and their policy or practice partners to receive up to $80,000 to design and implement an applied research, translation, and dissemination project that focused on a child well-being policy or practice question. Program materials explain that the program prioritized principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and that grants were to be awarded based in part on teams' clear commitment to those principles. Additionally, project teams had to be interdisciplinary, with at least two Doris Duke Fellows from different academic disciplines in leadership roles. Fellowships staff conducted a pilot of the program in 2019–20 with three teams to gauge the program's viability and determine an effective structure for the grants. The program then funded three teams in Round One (June 2021–August 2022) and three additional teams in Round Two (January 2022–March 2023). The Equity Study data were collected during the pilot phase.

We asked fellows their thoughts on whether the R2A Grants Program will be an effective mechanism to promote DEI in the child well-being field. Eighty percent of those who answered thought the R2A Grants will be effective, with later cohorts (Cohorts Five through Eight) being more positive than earlier ones (92% vs. 71% answering "yes," Fisher's exact test $p=.022$). When discussing how the R2A Grants Program might enhance DEI, fellows noted several different strategies that could contribute, including the unique grant structure that prioritized partnership with non-researchers; the opportunity to establish a funding history for future, larger funding; the possibility of demographically diverse teams being selected or projects where DEI are an explicit focus of the research; and equitable support provided to the teams selected. Responses about the R2A Grants included:

💬 It provides seed funding for small scale projects that are community-based, collaborative, and action-oriented and might not otherwise receive funding. This initial investment helps to increase the value of the work when seeking larger scale funding. Helps to get good and under-studied ideas off the ground.

💬 I think it can promote DEI by prioritizing projects that focus on DEI issues. But its effectiveness as a mechanism for supporting investigators from diverse backgrounds is limited because of the homogeneity of fellows.

💬 Many fellows are doing excellent work on a smaller scale, and many of these same fellows are passionate about advancing DEI in the field. However, some of this work may not attract larger funders.
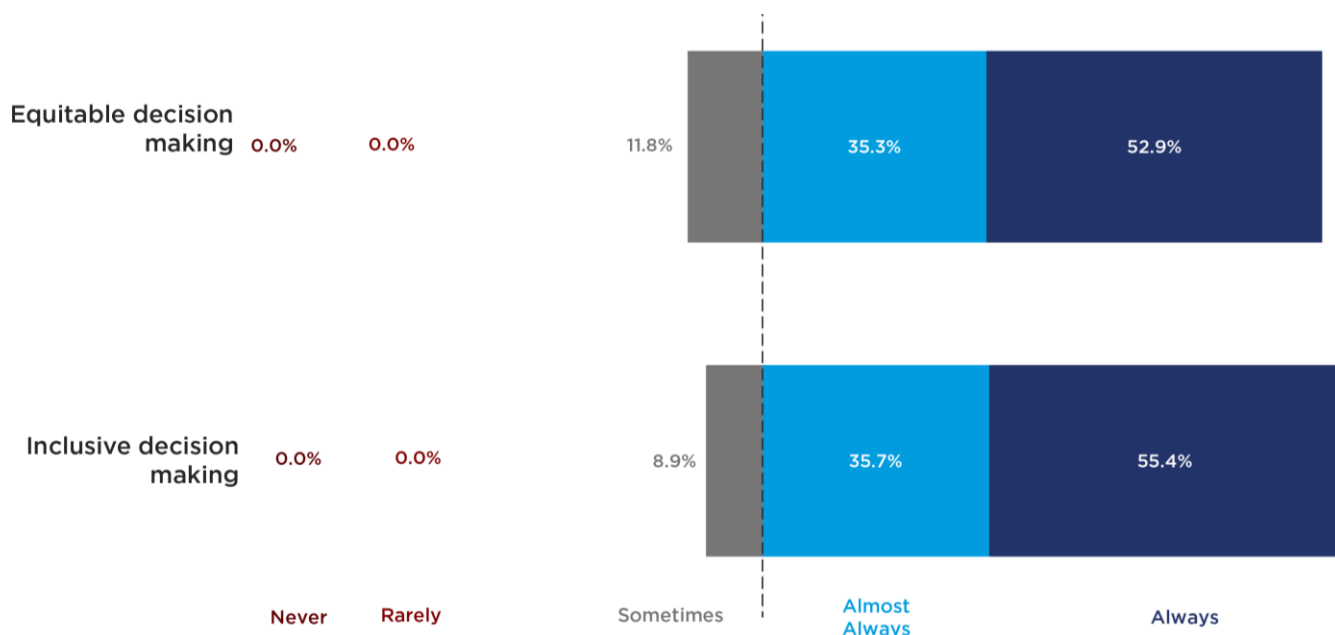
A separate evaluation of the R2A Grants Program is underway; findings will be released by December 2023 and will go into greater detail about the program's implementation, experiences, and outcomes.

Sustainability Activities

In 2016, fellowships staff created three "sustainability workgroups," led by fellows. These workgroups identified strategies to sustain the fellowships network to prepare for a time when the fellowships program would formally end. Workgroups focused on partnerships (potential partners to support the work), organization and infrastructure (how to keep the network moving forward), and research (continuing opportunities for collaboration and setting a research agenda). In 2018, once staff knew that Cohort Eight would be the last cohort, they created a Leadership Committee. The Committee had eight cohort-selected representatives and three at-large members and created a strategic vision for the future of the network and how it could continue to develop leaders and positively impact the child well-being research field. In 2021, the Child Well-Being Research Network (CWRN) was launched and was led by an Executive Committee, comprised of fellows and a Chapin Hall staff member.

The program encouraged fellows to nominate themselves for the Leadership Committee. Staff communicated the opportunity to all fellows and also reached out to individual fellows to encourage them to consider nominating themselves, in the hopes of creating a diverse group of candidates. Survey respondents overwhelmingly supported the self-nomination strategy (95%). The survey asked respondents whether the Leadership Committee engages fellows in decision-making in an equitable way and in an inclusive way (see Figure 7); again, a strong majority reported that decision-making is equitable (88%) and inclusive (91%) "almost always" or "always." The only significant difference by demographic characteristic was that fellows who identify as LGBTQ viewed the decision-making process slightly less equitably than other fellows (X^2 [2, N=51] = 8.197, p=.017).

Figure 7. Leadership Committee Decision Making

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Almost Always	Always
Equitable decision making	0.0%	0.0%	11.8%	35.3%	52.9%
Inclusive decision making	0.0%	0.0%	8.9%	35.7%	55.4%

During the fellow interviews, we heard generally positive feedback about sustainability activities. Comments focused primarily on the Leadership Committee and the transition to the Executive Committee, with many respondents praising the equitable and inclusive nomination and selection process and how decisions were made.

💬 In terms of opportunities to present and be on the leadership team and things like that, I think that those have been presented equitably, from my perspective.

💬 I mean even things like maybe that sustainability committee where they made sure that there was someone from each cohort and there was an election within that. So making sure there's even representation across all of the years and everything too. Sometimes I think especially those of us who are newer in there, we just didn't have a decade of relationships some of the others did, so it would have been natural for us to not feel as involved or as easy to step in. So, I think unconscious steps like that were good.

💬 Just feeling like every single person within the fellowship is welcome to join into a project. That feeling, I found to be just professionally really wonderful and also made me feel like I was a part of this community and that I was welcomed into the community.

💬 I feel like the fellowship is pretty entrepreneurial. If you have an idea, that they'll support you running with it or trying to help you find the resources to achieve what you're interested in. I feel like the continued exchange of having the email list serve, and the way people use that to foster sharing opportunity and inclusion has been important, and that the invitations to serve on the leadership committees, even though I wasn't able to volunteer for time reasons right now, it felt like that was a very open process.

At the same time, there were fellows who had questions about these leadership opportunities and how members were recruited or selected. They also expressed difficulty balancing these opportunities with professional and personal burdens. One fellow said:

💬 I will say that as a faculty of color, when leadership opportunities are offered in the network I have to hesitate because I'm already carrying a pretty high service load and I wonder if other fellows of color are feeling the same way when these leadership opportunities arise. I would love to be part of the leadership but I can't. I can't balance all that.

Summary: Leadership Opportunities

Leadership opportunities were viewed as inclusive and equitable with some caveats

Fellows had numerous formal and informal leadership opportunities throughout the program's tenure. These included hosting a mid-year meeting, small group facilitation, research presentations, R2A Grants program, and sustainability activities. Fellows viewed these opportunities as inclusive and equitable and saw the decision making by fellow-led groups as equitable and inclusive as well. At the same time, there were some questions about how fellows were selected (for the Leadership Committee, for example) and whether opportunities were truly equitable. In an effort to increase diverse representation on committees, fellows of color are often asked to volunteer their time, facing higher service burdens than their White colleagues. Even when an opportunity is open to volunteers, it may not be truly equitable given the different career or life circumstances of fellows. This can perpetuate inequitable leadership structures. Given the relative racial homogeneity of the fellows, achieving racial diversity in leadership positions was difficult.

The R2A Grants Program centered principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and study respondents expressed hope about its potential to address these issues more directly. The full R2A Grants Program evaluation will provide further information about how successfully that initiative realized these principles.

OVERALL FELLOWSHIPS PROGRAM CLIMATE

One of the Equity Study's priorities was to explore the overall climate of the fellowships program. We wanted to understand fellows' experiences within the program throughout their entire time in the fellowships (including their two years as an active fellow and the years following). The survey and interviews asked fellows about the general environment, discriminatory experiences, belonging and feeling valued, respect, equality and equity, and satisfaction with the overall program. The results were overwhelmingly positive, although there were some notable differences by demographic characteristics and cohort.

Fellow Feelings and Beliefs about their Experience

The survey asked fellows to rank how they felt on 13 domains related to feeling welcome, a sense of belonging, respect, opportunity, and equity within the fellowships program. The answers were generally very positive, although there were several statistically significant differences by personal identities (i.e., race, sexual orientation, member of underrepresented group) and cohort. As seen in Table 11, and discussed below, the main differences reflected a more negative view on these domains by survey respondents who identified as a person of color, being in the LGBTQ community, being from any underrepresented group, or were from later cohorts.

Table 11. Fellow Feelings and Beliefs about Their Experience

	Disagree or strongly disagree		Neither agree or disagree		Agree or strongly agree	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
I feel valued as an individual*	0	0	9.5%	8	90.5%	76
I feel like I belong*	6.0%	5	11.9%	10	82.1%	69
The fellowships has a strong commitment to diversity, equity, and/or inclusion#+	6.9%	5	20.2%	17	73.8%	62
I have considered leaving the Fellowships because I felt isolated or unwelcomed	96.4%	81	0	0	3.6%	3
I am treated with respect	0	0	1.2%	1	98.8%	82
I feel others value my opinions	0	0	7.4%	6	92.6%	75
The fellowships is a place where I am able to perform up to my full potential*	1.2%	1	10.7%	9	88.1%	74
I have opportunities for professional success that are similar to those of my peers in the fellowships*#&	8.3%	7	8.3%	7	83.3%	70
I have found one or more communities or groups where I feel I belong within the fellowships*	6.0%	5	14.3%	12	79.8%	67
The fellowships provide sufficient programs and resources to foster the success of diverse fellows*#+	6.0%	5	39.8%	33	54.2%	45
I have to work harder than others to be valued equally*#&	73.8%	62	11.9%	10	14.3%	12
My experience in the fellowships has had a positive influence on my professional growth+	0	0	3.6%	3	96.4%	81

* Fellows of color reported lower (less positive) scores on these domains ($p=.027$).
+ LGBTQ fellows reported lower (less positive) scores on these domains ($p=.04$).
# Fellows who identified as being from any underrepresented group reported lower (less positive) scores on these domains ($p=.047$).
& Later cohorts reported lower (less positive) scores on these domains ($p=.025$).

As seen above, Fellows reported the most positive experiences with respect (99%), that their fellowships experience had a positive influence on professional growth (96%), and that their opinions were valued (93%). Additionally, 97% of respondents said that they never considered leaving the fellowships because they felt isolated or unwelcomed, although there were three individuals who reported considering disengaging. There was significantly more negativity around fellows feeling like they had to work harder than their peers to be valued equally, with 26% of respondents reporting some experience with this concept. Fellows of color reported significantly lower scores on this statement (Fisher's exact test, $p=.022$) as well as fellows who were from marginalized groups (Fisher's exact test, $p=.041$) and fellows from later cohorts (Fisher's exact test, $p=.0254$).

Similarly, fellows from marginalized groups felt more negatively than other fellows about whether they had the same professional opportunities as their peers (Fisher's exact test, *p*=.047). The statement that had the most overall negativity was, "The fellowships provide sufficient programs and resources to foster the success of diverse fellows;" only 54% of fellows said they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, and fellows from marginalized groups had significantly lower scores (Fisher's exact test, *p*=.0038). These differences all indicate a perceived disparity in equity—that fellows from underrepresented groups had to work harder, had fewer opportunities, and that the program had insufficient support for all fellows.

Even though there were some notable differences between fellow reports on the overall climate of the program, when asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with the overall climate/environment they experienced as a Doris Duke Fellow, 98% were either satisfied or very satisfied. This could indicate a positive experience overall while still noting room for improvement in equity and inclusion, especially by fellows who were from traditionally excluded groups (such as people of color or the LGBTQ fellows).

We produced a separate brief that delves deeper into two aspects of inclusion: *The Role of Social Support and Belonging in a Professional Network* (Brown et al., 2021). The brief drills down on these two concepts, finding that both were critical to a positive fellowships experience. It found that most fellows experienced a strong culture of social support:

💬 Fellows described the fellowships as a network fostering high levels of social support. There were important qualities that contributed to the sense of social support, including respect, collegiality, and a welcoming environment. Fellows further described the role that creating supportive spaces had on them where individuals felt like they could be themselves and have conversations often avoided in other circles (*The Role of Social Support and Belonging in a Professional Network*, p. 7).

It also found that there was a strong sense of belonging in the program. We offered recommendations for fostering social support and belonging in similar professional networks.

Discriminatory Experiences

Fellows were asked if they had experienced discrimination from other Doris Duke Fellows, mentors, or staff. The survey included 15 domains, and between 94 and 100% of respondents reported "never" experiencing discrimination (see Table 12). Unfortunately, a small number of individuals reported experiencing discrimination; one person reported experiencing gender discrimination two or more times.[8]

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[8] The numbers were too small to conduct tests of significance to see if there were any differences between groups reporting discrimination.

Table 12. Fellows' Experiences of Discrimination from Other Fellows, Mentors, or Staff

Domain	Never		1 or more times		Total N
	n	%	n	%	
Age	78	95	4	5	82
Gender	78	94	5	6	82
Sexual orientation	83	100	0	0	83
Height or weight	82	99	1	1	82
Racial identity	80	96	3	4	80
Ethnic identity	81	98	2	2	81
National origin	83	100	0	0	83
Religion	81	98	2	2	81
Ability or disability status	83	100	0	0	83
Veteran status	83	100	0	0	83
Marital status	82	99	1	1	82
Political orientation	82	100	0	0	82
Socioeconomic status	81	99	1	1	81
Educational background	81	98	2	2	81
Parenting status	79	98	2	3	79

When asked about discrimination during the Equity Study interviews, most fellows described an environment free from discriminatory acts. There were a few interview respondents who reported experiencing microaggressions during their time in the fellowships program, including negative experiences with mentors or when other fellows or presenters were discussing research results. Fellows gave the following responses:

> I think it's the way in which some of my research findings were discussed. For instance, if fellows were talking about different outcomes and they wanted to talk about disparities and they talked about it. . . . For instance, maybe we're talking about child educational outcomes. They may say that some students had a higher GPA versus others, and they may look at it by race. And the outcome could be that White students, they fared better on different scholastic tests or scores or subjects versus Black students, and then it would just be left there. I think that in itself is a bit of a microaggression in the fact that we know that race doesn't cause certain outcomes. But if you're going to talk about an educational outcome and you want to look at it by race, if you just present the numbers but you don't want to then talk about racism and what may have caused that or why there could be differences, then you laying

out the difference just perpetuates the issue at hand that Black people, people of color are not as smart, not as able, not as successful. But we also need. . . if you're going to talk about race, you have to talk about racism. And if you don't, that in and of itself to me is a microaggression.

I would hear things that were deeply concerning, and troubling, even in how the information may have been presented, or even in one's interpretation of how the work was presented. And so for me, I was always conscious of not being viewed as the angry or aggressive [person of color]. So, I would have to pick and choose the times in which I would sacrifice the battle because I was trying to win the war. And that could be mentally and emotionally taxing at times. And again, I can tell that in many cases, I'm not going to say all cases, but in many cases, I can say there was just a general lack of awareness on behalf of these individuals who really had never been challenged to think about how this foundation of truth that they cling to was even formalized to begin with, you know what I'm saying? We were just at times operating from two diametrically opposed universes of truth.

I remember one time. . . one of the other fellows was talking about their experience teaching and she said, "I mean, a lot of my students are first-generation college graduates so I just don't expect that much from them. It's just too hard for me to try to teach them the way that I was taught," or something.

Fellows who discussed experiencing microaggressions were asked if they brought these up to fellowships staff members, and they all said they did not. Reasons for that varied and included that they did not want to "make a fuss" because they preferred to handle it directly or because they did not want to jeopardize their fellowship. It should be noted that all fellowships staff members were White women and that may have led to discomfort in bringing up race-based microaggressions. In addition, the fellowships program did not have a process in place for fellows to share these kinds of concerns or experiences.

Program Climate

The survey included a set of climate variables to indicate how fellows experienced the fellowships program. Fellows were asked to use a "slider" to represent the overall climate they experienced on a variety of domains. Table 13 highlights the findings, highlighting the positive climate reported by fellows. The highest means indicated that the climate was collegial, friendly, welcoming, and respectful. The lowest mean was related to the homogeneity of the program. The only significant difference in scores pertained to gender; fellows who identified as men rated the climate 10 points more anti-racist (vs. racist) than women (t-test= 2.449, p=.02).

Table 13. Program Climate[a,b]

Domain	Mean	Range	N
Hostile—Friendly	90	3-100	83
Racist—Anti-Racist	70	10-100	79
Homogenous—Diverse	55	10-100	83
Disrespectful—Respect	89	0-100	83
Contentious—Collegial	90	1-100	82
Sexist—Feminist	78	0-100	78
Individualistic—Collaborative	84	13-100	82
Competitive—Cooperative	83	24-100	83
Homophobic—LGBTQ+ Inclusive	78	0-100	79
Unsupportive—Supportive	88	0-100	83
Ageist—Age Inclusive	75	0-100	76
Unwelcoming—Welcoming	90	0-100	83
Elitist—Egalitarian	68	5-100	79

[a] Definitions: Anti-Racist: engages in activities that are meant to intentionally end racism; Feminist: advocates for equal rights for all; LGBTQ+ Inclusive: works towards ending oppression against people in the LGBTQIA community; Age Inclusive: welcoming of individuals of all ages; Egalitarian: works towards equal rights and opportunities for all.

[b] A few survey responses included a 0 or 1 as responses to these variables. Based on the patterns in the raw data, it appears that those responses might have been user error and unintentional, but we left those responses in the analysis anyway just in case they were purposeful answers.

We talked with fellows during the interviews about their perceptions of the program's climate.[9] Although the majority of respondents stated they felt welcomed and observed open opportunities for engagement, there was a noteworthy variety of experiences related to feelings of inclusion. Regarding diversity, the general consensus was that there was not enough racial or gender diversity, and fellows did not know about other types of personal identity diversity. Fellows also expressed a lack of knowledge about recruitment strategies and about whether or not the fellows reflected the broader field. Disciplinary diversity was seen as a core strength of the fellowships program. Several fellows shared their thoughts on these topics:

> I definitely have always felt, from the fellows that I've interacted with, I have felt respected and welcomed. I have not encountered a situation with either fellowship staff or with the fellows themselves where I haven't felt respected or valued. The culture feels very warm and I think that's a thing to continue. And I know that's largely dependent on the people. But that's important too, you want to make sure that you are including and incorporating people who sort of have these values of warmth and inclusion, rather than competition or arrogance.

> One of the things that I think that stands out the most about the Doris Duke Fellowship is that it provided the opportunity for me to meet people who had a more diverse set of experiences than the people I would typically interact with at my home university. In particular, having conversations with people from different fields of study. So, I found that really to be a unique aspect, to work with people in sociology, people in social work, people in just lots of different fields rather than being siloed into psychology.

> I think inclusion is one of their strengths. Truthfully, I've never walked into a room and felt so welcomed by people and accepted as is. And I think that's really, really powerful.

> I just have very much felt "othered" throughout the fellowship experience. I could show up at those spaces, but I never felt like I belonged in those spaces or could lead in those spaces.

> My experience of the fellowship was that I felt that I had an equal opportunity to participate or a full opportunity to participate, and I felt that my peers did as well but I know that I can't speak for any of their experiences.

> If I'm thinking about diversity, it wasn't as diverse as it could have been. And I don't know if it was the pool. I don't know what the factors were, if it wasn't on the front end or the forefront of their minds. But when thinking about diversity, and particularly talking about race, I wish it had been more diverse, and I wish that the conversation about diversity, equity, inclusion had been incorporated in more topics, not only just the professionalism and those areas of growth but also the research and how we talk about it. Once it was presented, folks were open to talking about it, but it would have been nice for it to come from the top down, so coming from Chapin Hall versus fellows discussing it or talking about it and then Doris Duke reacting to it. It would have been nice for it to be more intentional.

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[9] In order to preserve confidentiality, we did not track the demographic characteristics of interview respondents. We are unable to determine if there were differences in how various groups of people viewed the general program climate.

💬 I think being an academia, everything is so siloed, even though we still say we want things to be interdisciplinary. So, to see a true interdisciplinary fellowship where there was really careful thoughts about what kinds of folks are going to be involved in the fellowship and then to see it really manifest in almost everything they do has been really helpful.

💬 In terms of inclusion, my experience with the fellowship is that the culture of our social interactions, of which there were lots and lots of sort of mandatory social interactions that were required by the fellowship, the culture of them was very, to me, I would say not inclusive of many different styles of speaking. I felt within the professional context of a doctoral fellowship that we were all always speaking in our most sort of with our most rigid, academic, professional face on. And then I really had a hard time making what felt like comfortable connections within the fellowship. And to me, that's an inclusion problem. And I think that the norm of professionalism, the norm of academia in general tends to be a very White culture norm. And so I felt that's what was happening within the fellowship in our social interactions.

Summary: Overall Program Climate

> ### Climate was respectful, collegial, warm, and welcoming

Respondents were very positive about their experiences in the fellowships program overall, while at the same time pointing out some missed opportunities to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. Fellows described the program as respectful, collegial, warm, and welcoming; 98% were satisfied or very satisfied with their experience. Social support and a sense of belonging permeated the program.

When looking at diversity, equity, and inclusion separately, our study highlighted that a vast majority of fellows felt included. Fellows overwhelmingly reported feeling invited to build relationships and participate fully in the experience. There were few instances of discrimination, and many said that this compares favorably with other academic spaces. Microaggressions did occur, however, and there were no systems in place to address these.

Feelings about equity were a bit more mixed—fellows reported a focus on equal opportunity, but the concept of equity was less well articulated or realized as one of the values of the fellowships program. Respondents noted some efforts were made to improve equity, such as the application webinar and staff support for applications, stipends available for in-person meetings, staff availability to support individual fellows as-needed, but these efforts were not well-publicized.

Fellows recognized diversity as an aspect of the fellowships program worthy of improvement, specifically noting that the racial and gender homogeneity of the program affected its ability to fulfill the four fellowships goals. Academic disciplinary diversity was highlighted as a success, though, and it allowed fellows to develop working relationships with individuals with whom they may not have crossed paths with otherwise.

INFORMING THE FELLOWSHIPS NETWORK MOVING FORWARD

The fellowships program was transitioning into the Child Well-Being Research Network (CWRN) as the Equity Study was underway. As a result, we wanted to explore the fellows' ideas about how the CWRN could or should incorporate principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion into the new structure and programming. The recommendations that fellows and staff shared with us are explored and summarized in the first of the Equity Study briefs, *Recommendations for Elevating Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in a Professional Network* (Joiner-Hill et. al., 2021). The recommendations are below.

Summary: Informing the Fellowships Moving Forward

- **Encourage introspection**. Study participants want the CWRN to place DEI at the core of all its activities, as opposed to as an afterthought, beginning with the Network being introspective and assessing how the fellowships' previous or current policies and actions promote homogeneity, exclusion, or inequity.
- **Promote equity**. Respondents discussed the need for the CWRN to focus on equity by providing support and opportunities to individuals based on what they need, rather than simply providing equal opportunities.
- **Plan for psychological safety**. The network should outline expectations for professional behavior and treatment of colleagues, and define what constitutes unacceptable behavior regarding DEI.
- **Encourage interpersonal connections**. The personal relationships that fellows created within the fellowships facilitated a firm sense of inclusion and emotional support.
- **Promote diverse leadership**. Study respondents emphasized the need for the CWRN to have diverse leaders across many domains, including race, gender, professional setting, and other lived experiences.
- **Strategically recruit to promote diversity**. Participants explained that recognizing the rich diversity inherent in distinct backgrounds and perspectives will encourage recruitment of racially and socioeconomically diverse members.
- **Continue workgroups**. There is strong interest in continuing to support and elevate the efforts of the CWRN Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice workgroup.
- **Foster interdisciplinary collaboration**. Having fellows from diverse academic disciplines significantly enriched the fellowship experience for many fellows.
- **Sponsor intentional dialogue and education**. Study participants expressed a desire to initiate and support intentional and recurring dialogues about DEI, as well as facilitate education on specific DEI topics.
- **Offer mentoring opportunities**. Study participants discussed mentorship as a crucial tool for their success.
- **Pursue grant funding**. Grant funding was often identified as a resource that could promote DEI.
- **Facilitate meetings**. Fellows would like to prioritize CWRN meetings.

CONCLUSION

The Equity Study produced rich findings about how the Doris Duke Fellowships incorporated principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion into its program. It is difficult to condense these findings into a set of concrete

conclusions that paint an accurate picture of how the program promoted these principles and also discuss the opportunities that were missed. However, five key findings emerge from the data.

The main finding is that the fellowships program was an overwhelmingly positive experience for most fellows. It built connections between the 120 fellows that were based on respect and warmth and generosity; these connections have continued far beyond fellows' active time in the fellowships. Inclusivity was cited as a fundamental experience of the fellowships and the vast majority of fellows felt included, setting the program apart from most other academic experiences. In fact, fellows' experiences in the program prompted them to create the Child Well-Being Research Network (CWRN) with the hope of expanding the key benefits of the program to a new cadre of doctoral students and emerging child well-being researchers. It is important to note, however, that fellows of color, those in the LGBT community, and those with disabilities consistently had slightly more negative experiences of many aspects of the fellowships. This points to a missed opportunity to intentionally create structures that support all fellows, especially those from minoritized groups.

The program missed a critical opportunity at its outset. Staff did not articulate explicit goals pertaining to diversity, equity, and inclusion when the program was established, with one notable exception: academic discipline. Our study illustrates that this affected all aspects of programming. Without explicit goals to elevate these concepts, efforts were ad hoc and intermittent, depending on individual staff member, Advisory Board, or fellow advocacy. Study respondents all agreed that academic disciplinary diversity was an unabashed success of the program, prioritized due to its inclusion as a clearly expressed goal. Without articulating diversity, equity, and inclusion as goals, the program was not accountable to its success or failure. In fact, the study illuminated that the fellowships has been successful in what it was purposeful about—growing leaders, creating an interdisciplinary network, and focusing on actionable research. Now, as the CWRN launches and grows, the network's efforts to focus explicitly on DEI will encourage sustained, specific efforts to achieve those goals.

Despite efforts to improve racial diversity, the program did not attract a more diverse applicant pool over time, nor did it select more racially diverse fellows year to year. There are several possible explanations of this fact, including implicit biases of the predominantly White staff and Advisory Board members, vast systemic barriers faced by people of color (for example, insufficient educational opportunities and less access to mentors or other resources), fewer racial minority individuals entering doctoral programs throughout the United States, the reliance on traditional or outdated definitions of research rigor, and the devaluation of innovative and community-based research methods. A lack of racial diversity narrows the perspectives represented in research and research settings, influencing the utility and accuracy of scientific endeavors.

Fellows had mixed perspectives on the principle of equity within the program. On the one hand, efforts were made to meet individual fellows' needs, but most opportunities were equal rather than equitable. There was little systemic recognition of the differences in strengths and needs of individuals or groups (for example, the needs of fellows who were providing economically for their families, or fellows who had access to fewer institutional resources) and interventions focused on these areas would have made the program more equitable. Again, it is important to note that equity was not a stated goal of the program.

Although staff and Advisory Board study participants explained how the fellowships grappled with issues affecting diversity, equity, and inclusion, the program did not delve deeper into these factors in order to develop strategies to address homogeneity, inequity, and exclusion. On one end of the spectrum, programs can try to ignore anything having to do with racial diversity and inequities faced by marginalized groups; on the other end,

programs can focus exclusively on marginalized groups and attempt to give them opportunities historically unavailable to them. However, for a research fellowship to develop the leaders of tomorrow, it should grapple with all these issues, recognizing that having a strong and intentional commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion improves the field by impacting the research questions we ask, the methods we use to answer those questions, our interpretations of data, and how we influence policy and practice on behalf of children and their families. As the CWRN grows, its efforts to focus explicitly on diversity, equity, and inclusion will encourage sustained and specific efforts to eliminate systemic barriers to doctoral programs, question traditional interpretations of rigorous and innovative research, and create a field that is more representative of the populations that it aims to serve.

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