



***Annals of Surgery* Takes the Challenge**

September 2020

Annals of Surgery, the oldest and most prestigious surgical journal in the world, and our new “partner” *Annals of Surgery Open: Perspective on Surgical History, Education, and Clinical Approaches*, one of the newest surgical journals, are pleased to join the list of over 115 surgical journals in support of the pledge to support diversity in the editorial process. As part of the pledge, we will continue our commitment for diversity amongst our editorial leadership and editorial boards. We will strive for diversity in the peer-review process and in our invitations to write editorials or commentaries for our journal. Although the call for action may have been triggered by an example of gender bias in the peer-review process, we at *Annals* believe that this commitment, now more importantly than ever, should also include diversity and inclusion in of all other important factors such as race, color, ethnicity and sexual orientation, to make sure that systemic racism or biases of any kind have no role in the editorial process.

Annals of Surgery, with a 135-year history and with its long association with the American Surgical Association and the European Surgical Association, has long been considered to be slow to make transition and perhaps, to embrace diversity. However, we strongly believe in the importance of inclusion and diversity and are committed to change and believe we have made progress. Our editorial board at *Annals* currently is 25% female with one one-third of the appointees since 2014 being female. *Annals Open* has just over a 40% of female members of the editorial board. Currently, half of the Associate Editors for *Annals* and one-third of the Associate Editors for *Annals Open* are female. Associate Editor Mary Klingensmith has long led our efforts focusing on gender diversity. In June, we added our newest Associate Editor at *Annals*, Zara Cooper, MD, MSc, to lead our efforts to promote publication of papers related to social justice and diversity and inclusion. Further evidence of our diversity is nearly 20% of our editorial board is international. Finally, 30% of our editorials solicited to comment on our most important papers have been written by women. Furthermore, our Senior Publisher, Vindra Dass is female and importantly our Creative Directors, responsible for the social media aspects of the journals, are outstanding surgical residents at the University of Michigan and Yale. Unfortunately, only 7% of our editorial board are under represented minorities. So, clearly our two journals have much work to do and we are committed to doing this work.

Thus, we hope to echo the call for action to our fellow surgical editors and hope, as both the oldest and newest members of the editorial world, we can lead by example in our work, both through improving inclusion in our leadership and renewing our commitment to equity in the editorial process. As we close this commentary, we would like to leave you with three quotes which we hope will be the theme which *Annals of Surgery* and *Annals of Surgery Open* will adhere to in our efforts to promote diversity in the editorial process in the future. The first is quote from the Harvard Business School Professor Boris Groysberg who stated “There is a big difference between diversity and inclusiveness. Diversity is about counting the numbers. Inclusiveness is about making the numbers count”. The second quote comes from one of the most important figures in American history, Ben Franklin, and is probably not just



important in the editorial process but throughout the entire world, “Justice will not be served until those who are unaffected are as outraged as those who are”. Finally, to quote former President Barack Obama, “If you are walking down the right path and you’re willing to keep walking, eventually you’ll make progress.” We believe we are on the right path at *Annals* and are committed to providing objective measures of improvement in all aspects of the editorial process.

Keith D. Lillemoe, MD

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