

Diversity in Life Science Programs

Keystone Symposia on Molecular and Cellular Biology ...The Vision and Model

Laina King, Director, Diversity in Life Science Programs; Andy Robertson, Chief Scientific Officer;
Heather Gerhart, Grants Coordinator/Program Analyst

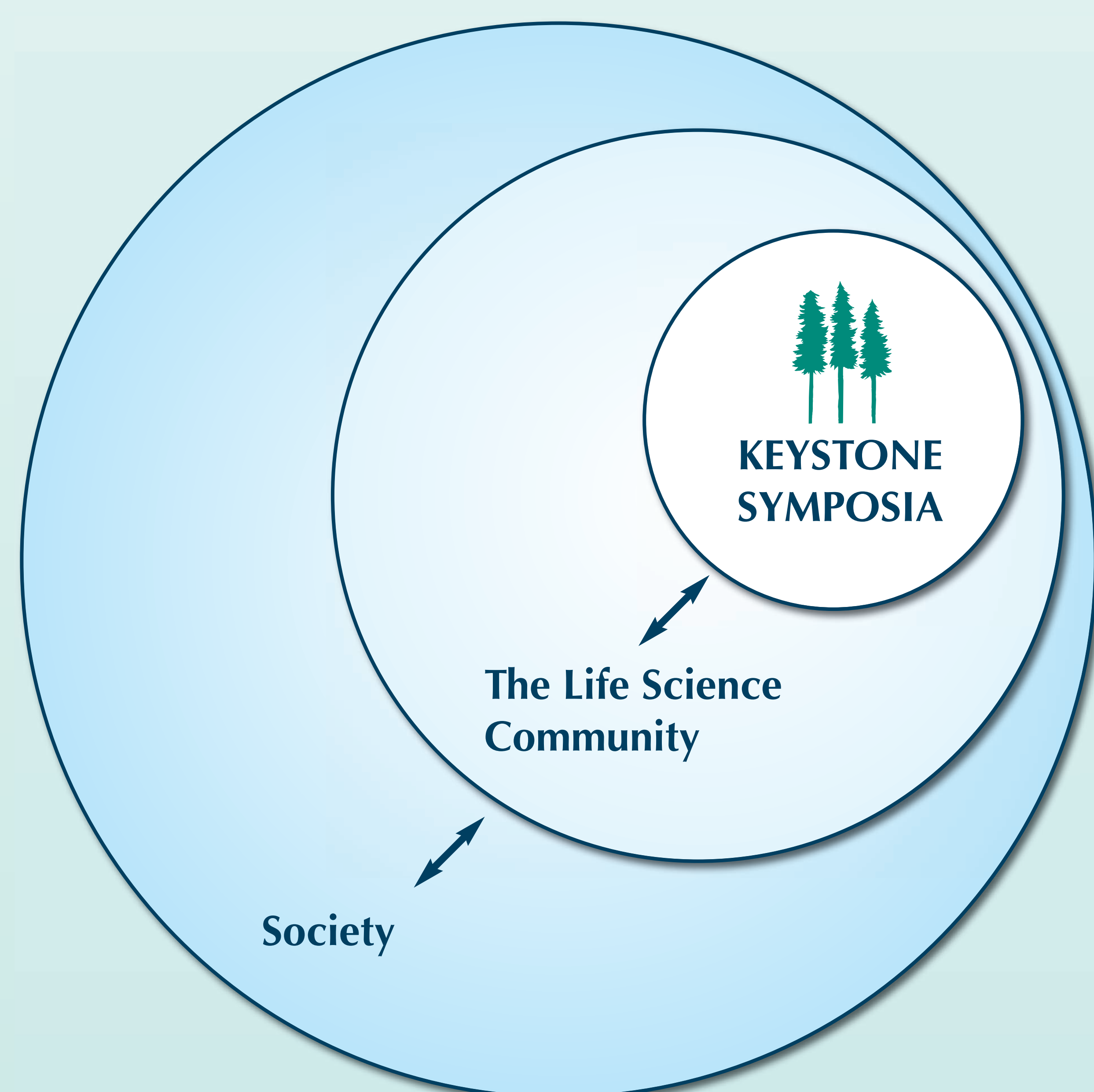
Perspective: Keystone Symposia has a rich history of serving the scientific community through its conferences offering cutting-edge research and world-class scientists.

Further, it has been a catalyst for change within the broader scientific community, connecting scientists within and across disciplines. Keystone Symposia's vision for inclusion and diversity flows from this perspective. THE FOCUS of our diversity initiatives is on scientists, students, graduate students, post-docs, fellows, trainees and new investigators in the life sciences who are US citizens or permanent residents. This definition of diversity aligns us with the NSF, NIH and the broader US life sciences community. It is consistent with our staffing pattern and allows for measurement of progress and outcomes vis-à-vis our goals.

Initially established as UCLA Symposia, the nonprofit organization relocated to Colorado in the 1990s, and a name change ensued thereafter. In 2009 we will celebrate our 25th anniversary of holding the first "open" international meeting on AIDS (M. Gottlieb, J. Groopman).

The Keystone Symposia Model of Diversity:

- Forward-looking and future-focused
- Richly resourced and ambitious
- Continually seeks creative input and suggestions from the scientific community
- Makes a contribution to society



Objectives and Purposes:

- 1) To enhance participation by scientists who are members of visible ethnic minority groups (African Americans, Native Americans, Persons of Hispanic origin and Pacific Islanders) at Keystone Symposia and in the broader life sciences community.
- 2) In achieving the former it is hoped that a broader and even richer perspective will be brought to life sciences at the level of "bench research."
- 3) To make a contribution to the broader society through our efforts and initiatives to increase diversity in biomedical research in the context of our increasing diverse domestic citizenry and the global context of disease.

Existing organizational structures which support this organization-wide initiative:

Board of Directors: A 15-member body comprised of world-renowned scientists.

Scientific Advisory Board: A 61-member body comprised of academic and industry scientists from across the United States and other nations.

Diversity Advisory Committee: A body of established, prominent scientists from such institutions as HHMI, University of Maryland–Baltimore County, University of Colorado at Denver HSC/Aurora, and the University of New Mexico, who provide knowledge, expertise and insight as Keystone Symposia continues to develop strategies and initiatives which foster and result in greater diversity within both the attendee and speaker populations at our meetings.

A Full-Time Diversity Staff Position: Dr. Laina King joined the Keystone Symposia staff in April 2008 as Director of Diversity in Life Science Programs. Laina brings more than 25 years of experience including past positions in higher education administration and consulting for the FDA.

Keystone Symposia Initiatives in Diversity include:

- 1) Networking with academic, industry and governmental agencies.
- 2) Keystone Symposia Focus Group on Participation by Visible Ethnic Minority Scientists – July 2008, Keystone Resort, Colorado.
- 3) Planned diversity interventions at upcoming Keystone Symposia meetings in the United States.
- 3) Keystone Symposia Fellows Program, enabling several outstanding early-career scientists to shadow the Keystone Symposia program development process.
- 4) Outreach to scientists who are members of visible ethnic minority groups via the Society for Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) and the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students (ABRCMS).
- 5) Scholarships: Keystone Symposia Minority Scholarships – approximately 120 scholarships awarded since 2004, and Keystone Symposia/ABRCMS Travel Awards.

How You can Help:

- Take advantage of NIH Research Supplements to Promote Diversity in Health-Related Research (PA-08-190).
- Share NIH opportunities for new investigators – such as Loan Repayment Programs and post-doctoral training programs at NIH – with junior colleagues. A wealth of information is available at: <http://www.training.nih.gov/postdoctoral/pdopps.asp>.
- Encourage participation at professional meetings by your colleagues who are members of visible ethnic minority groups.
- Indicate your gender/ethnicity when registering or updating your Keystone Symposia account information.
- Realize that not everyone has the benefit of early exposure to research experience or strong K-12 education.

visit: www.keystonesymposia.org • contact: lainak@keystonesymposia.org