

## Letter from the Director

I am honored to announce that I have taken on the role of Director of the Center for GEMS as of February 1, 2021.

The Center for GEMS founder and outgoing Director, Zea Borok, is now serving as the Chair of Medicine at the University of California, San Diego. Dr. Borok's vision, brilliance, and passion for equity have brought GEMS to where it is today, and we are so thankful to her. I know all of us, collectively, are committed to ensuring gender equity at the Keck School of Medicine to honor her leadership and hard work.

The GEMS leadership team is energized and excited to take this organization to its next phase over the coming months and years. As we slowly begin to see a light at the end of this COVID-tunnel, we are collectively thinking about how we can build a stronger, more equitable community. Over the coming months, we will develop and share our workplan for the current year, with concrete deliverables, as well as opportunities for all of you to support KSOM in its journey toward gender equity.

***You have my sincere and personal commitment that GEMS will uplift and act in alignment and solidarity with our colleagues active in promoting racial equity, diversity and inclusion across KSOM and USC.*** Notably, I and several of our GEMS leadership team serve as proud members of the Justice through Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Wellness and Social Transformation (JEDI-West) Committee, established by Interim Dean Rao and led by Dr. Ricky Bluthenthal. We must be able to safely bring our complete selves to work every day—our gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, age, and ability, among many other characteristics. All initiatives aiming to better our campus must fully integrate this reality into their work, and GEMS is no different.



Parveen Parmar, MD, MPH

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## Upcoming Events

[The Impact of COVID-19 on the Careers of Women in Academic Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine: Discussion, Reflection, and Understanding](#)

March 31, 2021  
1 to 4 pm EST

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine will host an event designed to highlight, discuss,

GEMS Working Groups on Equity and Representation, Leadership Development and Sexual Harassment have been working hard on developing workplans for the coming year. We have a great deal planned for our KSOM community—expect community engagement events, trainings, improved (user friendly) websites, scholarship opportunities for students—and so much more.

Finally, I am always available to all of you should you want to discuss concerns, suggest ideas, or critique the work we take on. I look forward to working closely with all of you, and sincerely thank you for all of your hard work to date, and in advance.

Sincerely,

Parveen Parmar, MD, MPH  
Associate Professor, Clinical Emergency Medicine  
Chief, Division of Global Emergency Medicine  
Director, Gender Equity in Medicine and Science (GEMS)  
Keck School of Medicine of USC

## Importance of Intersectionality

Imagine you are sitting in a classroom. The classroom is filled with members of your department, or division. There are individuals of all genders, racial backgrounds, ethnicities, religions, sexual orientations, and levels of ability.

A professor stands at the podium and asks you to engage in an exercise. First, they ask you to stand up. They say,

*"If you experience the world today as only a woman but not as your racial background today, please sit down."*

The room remains standing.

*"If you experience the world today as your religion, but not as your sexual orientation today, please sit down."*

The room remains standing.

In fact, **none** of us experience the world as a discrete demographic category on any day, but data on disparities parses us in this way regularly. Gender identities vs. racial

explore, and expand our understanding of how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the professional and personal lives of women throughout the research workforce. The event will build upon their [Report](#) on this topic, released on March 9, 2021.

### 2021 Report on the Status of Women and Girls in California™ Women and the Pandemic: Impact, Resilience and Moving Forward

Wednesday, March 31, 2021  
10 a.m. - 12 p.m. (PDT)  
(No Charge)

What have we learned in a year? This event brings together thought leaders to discuss the systemic vulnerabilities that the pandemic has revealed and consider how we create a stronger California for women and girls now and post-pandemic. Hosted by Mount St. Mary's University's Center for Advancement of Women. [Register here.](#)

### Bisexual Health Training (Zoom)

Tuesday, March 30, 2021  
12:00-1:00pm

identities vs. religious identities, et cetera—missing the intersections in which we all exist. Thus, the term intersectionality.

Intersectionality is defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary as the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect, especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups.

The Center for GEMS is committed to incorporating intersectionality into ALL of its work—recognizing that the experiences of individuals of all genders are affected by their racial, ethnic, religious, and other backgrounds.

As such, we are partnering with JEDI-WeST on several training initiatives—including implicit bias and upstander/allyship trainings. Stay tuned for more information to come!

### **Missed our Fall Leadership Development Workshop Series?**

If you couldn't make it to the virtual leadership development workshops we held in Fall 2020, good news—you can view the recordings on the KSOM intranet! Visit this page to watch (see right column): <https://keckmedicine.sharepoint.com/sites/KSOM-Intranet/SitePages/Social-Justice-Resources.aspx>

**Crucial Conversations: Identity, Power and Social justice** with Jessica Thomas, MSN, RN and Shafiqah Ahmadi, JD

**Intersectionality: An Indispensable Critical Theoretical Framework for Advancing Health Equity** (P.S. It's Not Just About Multiple Identities) with Lisa Bowleg, PhD, Professor of Applied Social Psychology at The George Washington University

**The Power of Inclusion from a Man's Perspective** with Mike Kaufmann, CEO of Cardinal Health

*\*Need help accessing the KSOM intranet? Complete this online form and a staff member from KSOM Marketing and Communications will provide access.*

## **Get Involved**

The bisexual community represents the majority of the LGBTQ+ population; however, bisexual people have the highest rates of health disparities and are the least likely to come out to healthcare providers.

Speaker: Lindsey (Lawrence) Morrison, MHA, is the creator and chair of the Keck Pride committee and has spoken/taught on LGBTQ identity and issues for 20 years.

Earn 1 CEU/CME!

Learn more/register: <https://tinyurl.com/KeckBiHealth>

### **Trans\* Visibility: Gender Affirming Care at USC**

Wednesday, March 31  
4-6 pm

International Transgender Day of Visibility is March 31, and you're invited to join USC's Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services for a conversation with USC faculty, Student Health staff, and on-campus leaders about the services available to trans and gender-nonconforming students, especially those available for individuals impacted by gender- and power-based harm and sexual violence.

[RSVP here.](#)

Want to join one of our three Working Groups on Leadership Development, Equity & Representation and Sexual Harassment? Each Working Group is co-led by two leaders, who also serve on the GEMS Leadership Team, and is composed of a diverse group of members who act as representatives of the Keck School of Medicine. Working towards the overall mission and goals of GEMS, the role of the Working Groups is to:

- Establish priority projects and deliverables based on the particular focus of each working group
- Carry out project work in collaboration with relevant stakeholders

Going forward, leadership and membership will be based on a two-year term, with the option to be re-selected at the end of a term. The time commitment for participation in a working group is estimated to be 4-10 hours per month, depending on the group's activities. If you'd like to join a working group, please complete this online form/application: <https://forms.gle/QbFJtDVhGhuCDRTW9>

## **AAU Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct Campus Climate Survey**

In collaboration with the Office for Health Promotion Strategy, we hosted a Data Walk for students, and staff and faculty who work in education at KSOM, to review Keck School specific data from the AAU Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct Campus Climate Survey. It was a key opportunity to hear from our stakeholders about what issues are most important for us to address at KSOM to ensure a climate of safety. To learn more about the survey and recommendations for action, check out the [Report by the USC Task Force](#), submitted to leadership in October 2020.

## **NASEM Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education**

Under the leadership of Catherine Spear, Vice President and Title IX Coordinator for the [USC Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX](#), we and several other university

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## **In the News**

[MIT Offers Financial Lifeline to Graduate Students Seeking Escape From Toxic Advisers – The Chronicle of Higher Education](#)

[There's Realizing, and Then There's Realizing": How Social Support Can Counter Gaslighting of Women of Color Scientists Journal of Women and Minorities in Science and Engineering.](#)

[Ten simple rules for women principal investigators during a pandemic PLOS Computational Biology](#)

[Biden Establishes A Gender Policy Council Within The White House – NPR News](#)

[Exclusive: Goldman Sachs Invests \\$10 Billion In New 'One Million Black Women' Initiative – Essence](#)

[Biden Picks 1st Transgender Person for Senate-Confirmed Post – US News and World Report](#)

[Brain fog, fatigue and chronic stress — 53% of U.S. women are burned out. Here's how to cope – CNBC News](#)

representatives are reinvigorating our participation in the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine's [Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education](#). To learn more about the work of the collaborative thus far, check out their searchable [Repository](#) of resources focused on prevention, response, remediation and evaluation. And stay tuned for more news about USC's work in this arena.

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## Got a great idea?

Email our leaders or send an email to [Gems@usc.edu](mailto:Gems@usc.edu)

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Keck School of Medicine of **USC**

Visit our website: [keck.usc.edu/center-or-gems](http://keck.usc.edu/center-or-gems)  
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