

April 19, 2021

During a session late Friday morning at the 2021 ACMG Annual Clinical Genetics Meeting, the outgoing ACMG president, Dr. Tony Gregg, used a racially inappropriate term in referring to diverse populations by “colors” in an unscripted response during the discussion period of a scientific session. It was a serious mistake that caused pain and distress for many, including ACMG leadership. These remarks were not made on behalf of ACMG nor was Dr. Gregg speaking in his official capacity as President of the ACMG during that session. These remarks do not represent the values of the College. Within hours of the statement, we personally addressed the attendees of the Annual Meeting at the beginning of the R. Rodney Howell Symposium. You may watch our remarks [here](#).

Former president Gregg resigned late Friday afternoon from the ACMG Board of Directors and the office of Immediate Past President. He has taken responsibility and apologized sincerely for his remarks. In his letter of resignation, Dr. Gregg said: “During this morning’s session: “What’s in a panel, a decade of expanded carrier screening; live Q and A,” I misspoke. The phrase - “Black people, white people and yellow people ...” was used. These words were not scripted or pre-prepared. My poor choice of words ignited social media. My words were not intended to insult any person or harm the reputation of the College. The poor choice of words does not reflect my views towards people of diverse backgrounds and those from any stage or walk of life. Let me say to the Board and to College members, I am sorry for the choice of words, left to speak again, those words would not be used. I am sorry.”

A culture of accountability demands that we take responsibility for our actions and their outcomes, good or bad, and use those as opportunities for learning and improvement. As we grapple with the complex challenges of diversity, equity, and inclusion, where implicit and systemic bias are present in all of us as individuals and institutions, it is critical that we strive to do this within a culture of accountability. This is the only way we can achieve the goal of the College as expressed in the 2020 [ACMG Diversity Statement](#) to, “...promote an environment in which the inherent worth and dignity of all people are recognized, respected and accepted.”

ACMG has championed diversity among our members and joined other professional organizations in their pledge to promote inclusivity and diversity in the genetics and medical fields. This includes participation in activities that are tasked with standardizing language that is acceptable and sensitive to groups that have been excluded in the past, while ensuring that information that has evidence supporting the improvement of outcomes is available to and used for all in an equitable manner. With the creation of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee in 2020, the ACMG has endeavored and will continue to work toward representation of diverse genetic backgrounds in genetic population databases and study cohorts, and to increase representation amongst our membership from historically underrepresented groups.

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Through the actions of the DEI Committee, ACMG will seek to define challenges that may affect the College's ability to meet its diversity, inclusion and equity goals and develop solutions to address these challenges.

In closing, we issue a call to action for all members of the College to help us to learn and improve. At an individual level, educate yourself about implicit and systemic bias and what you can contribute to the development of a culture of accountability for the College. Participate in current and future activities of the College to ensure we are receiving input from all as we strive to rapidly improve. Such improvement will inevitably involve some missteps and unintended consequences. When these occur, constructively hold us accountable for resolving and learning from these events. Tolerance and forgiveness are essential elements of a culture of inclusion. It is only through the actions of all of us that we can achieve our goal. We look forward to partnering with you in this critical work.



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