

# Welcome

*(Open forum in the Harvard Physics Department, to discuss issues of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and belonging. Held on June 7, 2018.)*

This is a safe space to share your experiences, ideas, and expectations for a new committee on equity, inclusion, diversity, & belonging in physics.

- Be willing to listen and share
- Change requires community involvement
- There will be uncomfortable conversations
- It will be a learning experience
- Don't be afraid of getting the words "right"
  - just be open to learning & teaching

# Core Beliefs

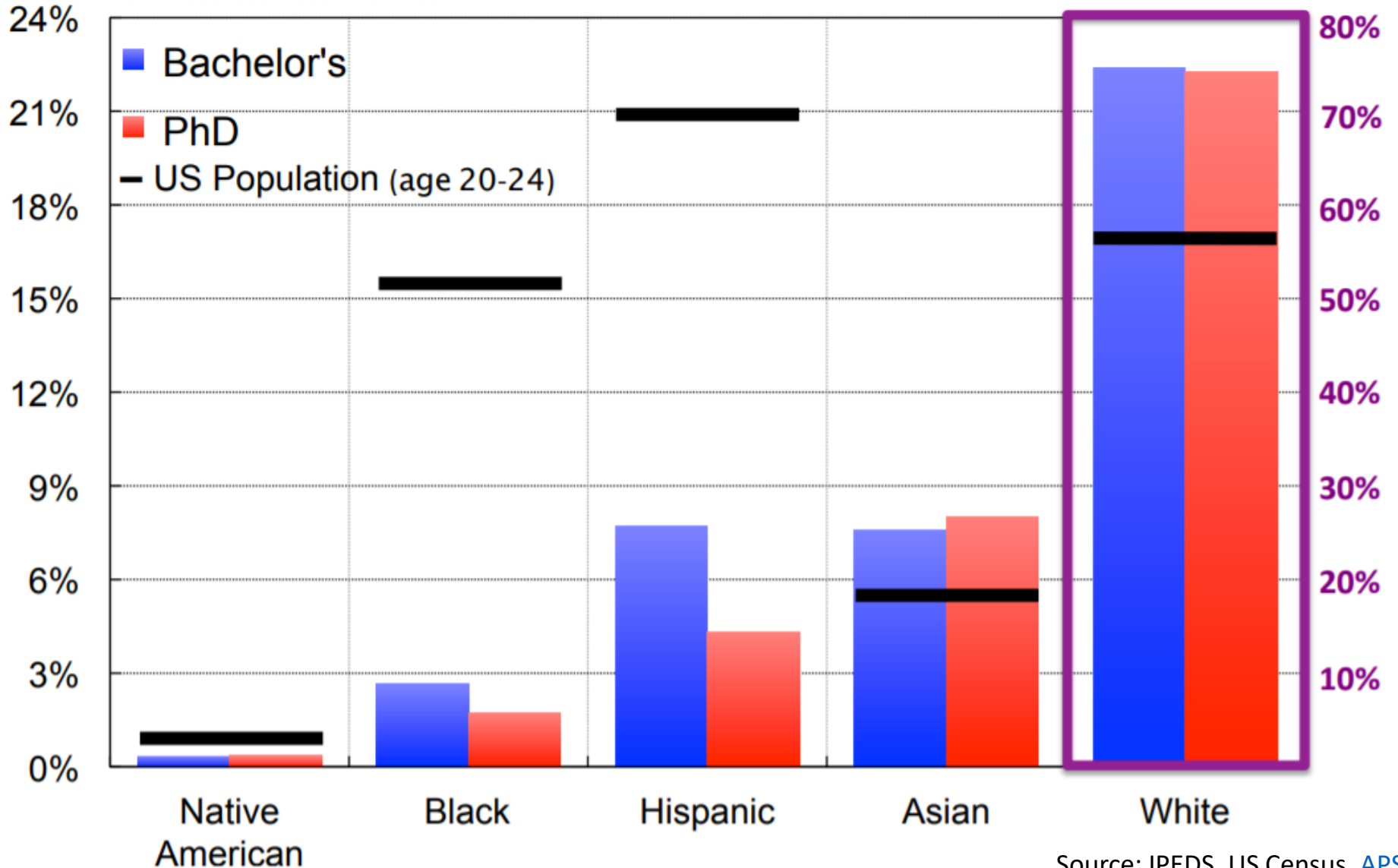
## **All people are created equal**

Within any two groupings of people, no matter how you group them (gender, sexuality, race, country of origin), you will find an equal distribution of intelligence, curiosity, creativity and desire to understand the Universe.

## **We live/work in a meritocracy**

People rise to higher positions in society and in academia, and achieve better life outcomes, by virtue of their demonstrated hard work and talent alone.

# Physics Degrees (3-yr avg 2013-2015)



Number of science faculty in the Ivy League: 2000  
 Number of Black science faculty in the Ivies: 22  
 1% of Ivy Profs vs 13% of the US population

## Uncomfortable contradiction #1

If we do live and work in a meritocracy...

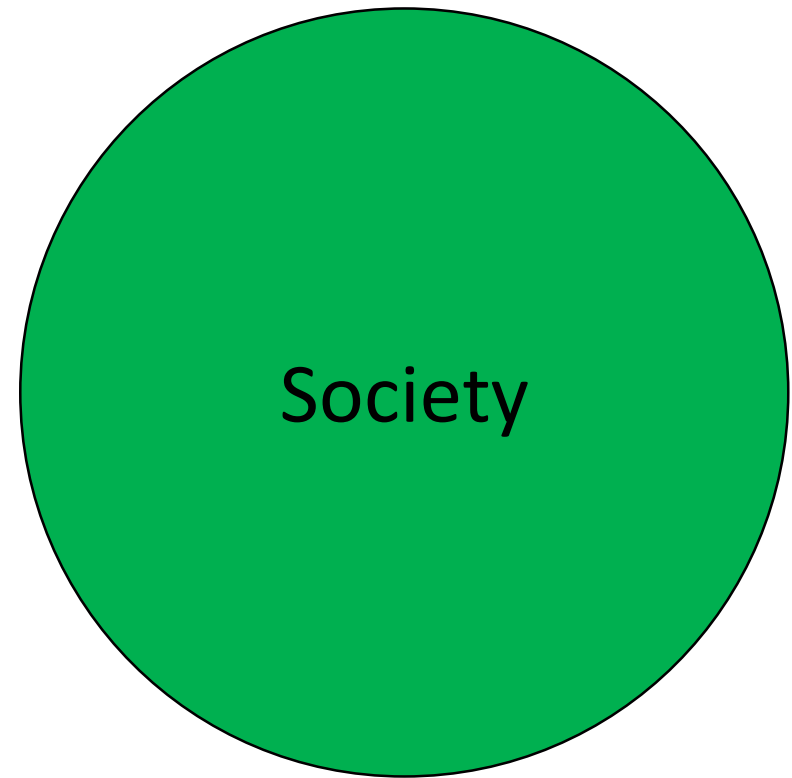
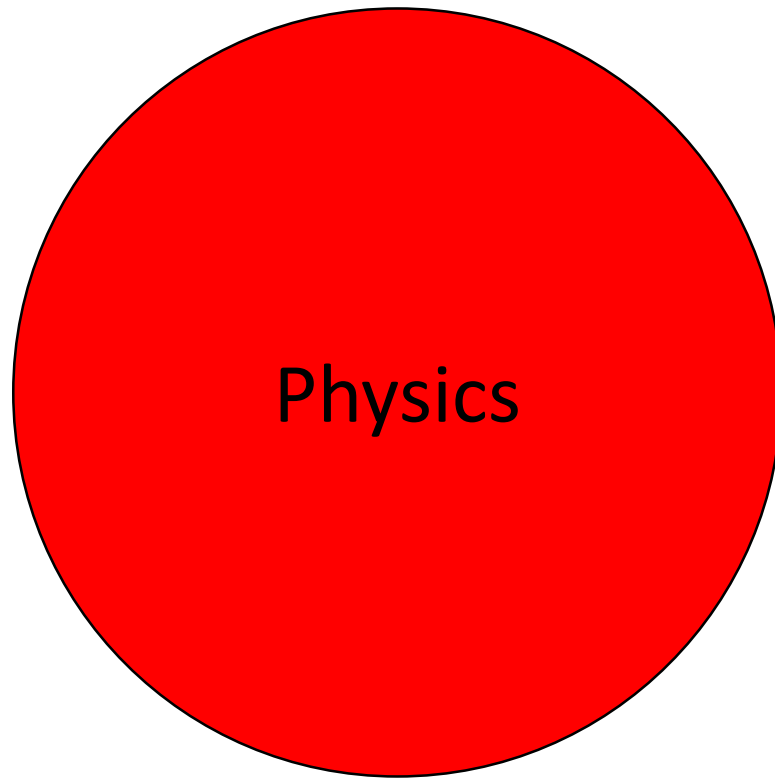
...then we must conclude that white physicists demonstrate the most merit, and different races must be inherently unequal.

## Uncomfortable contradiction #2

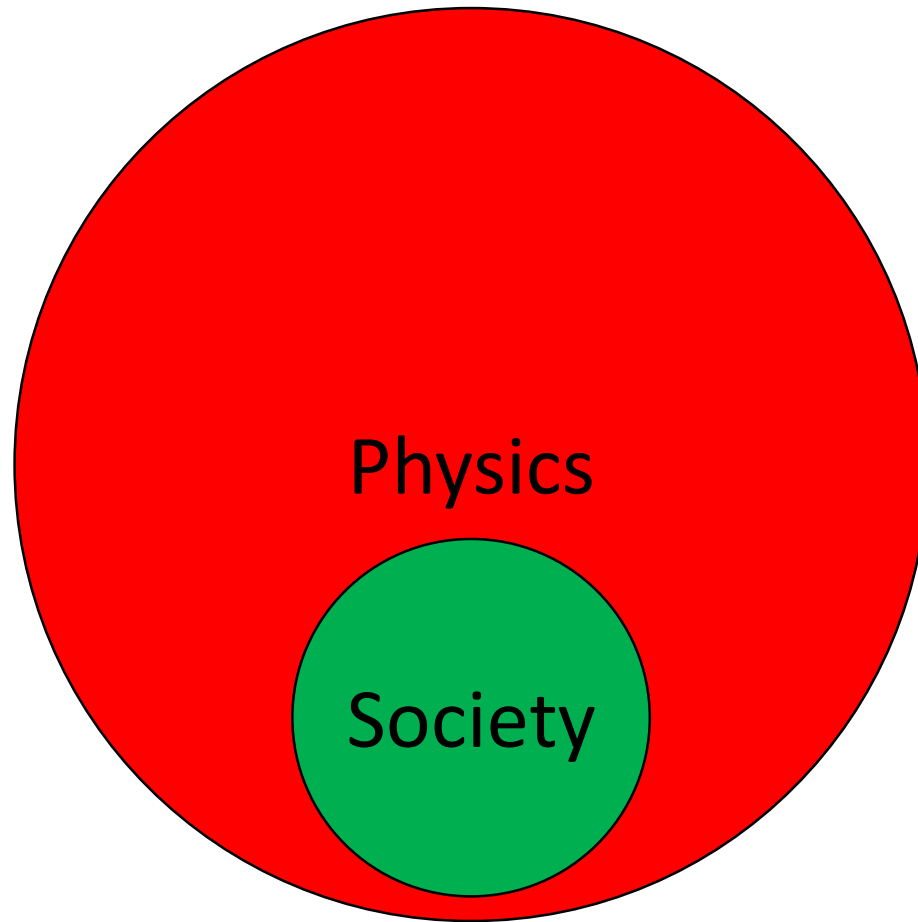
All people are created equal...

...then the overrepresentation of white physicists is evidence that we don't live and work in a meritocracy

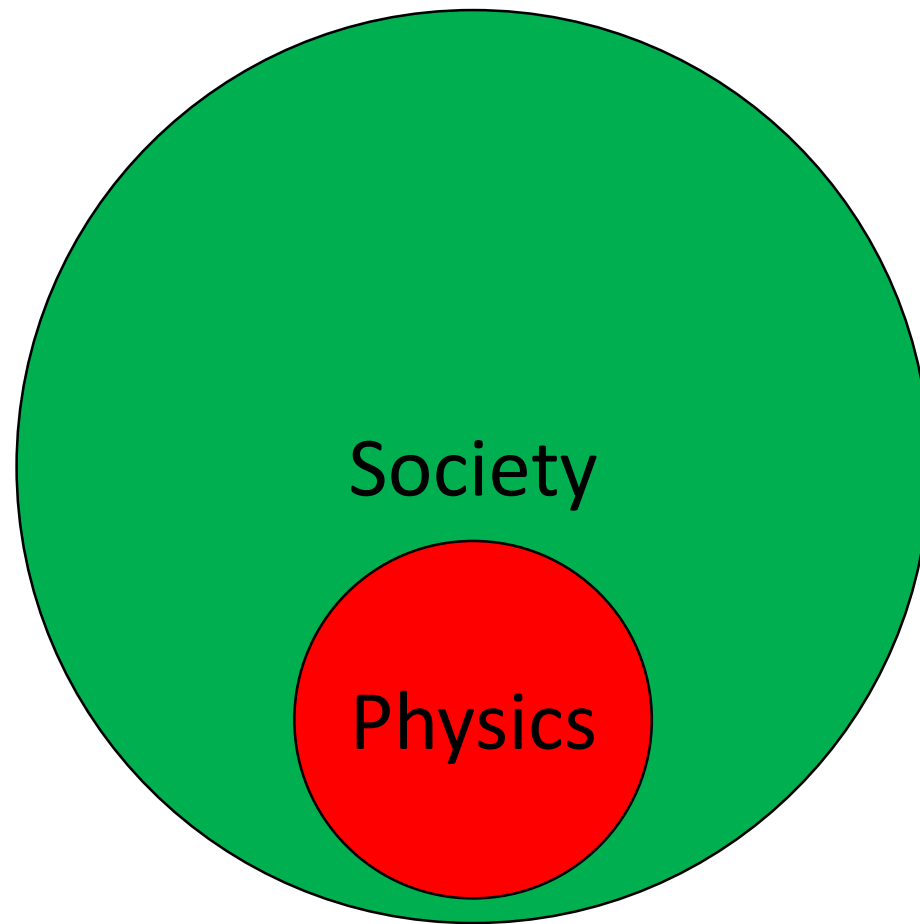
# How Physicists Sometimes Think



# Or Even

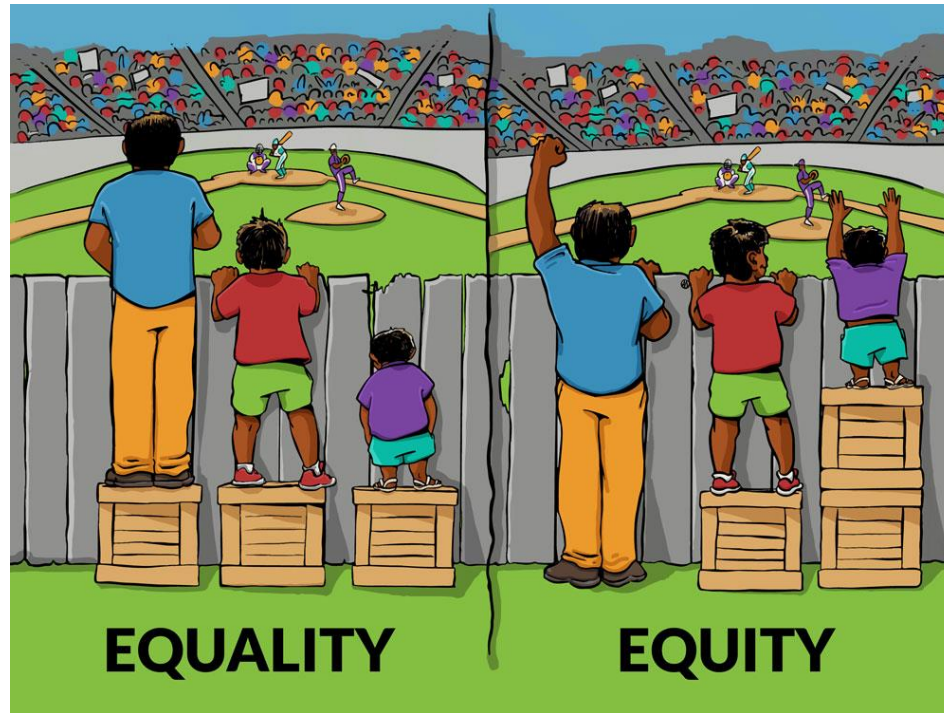


# The Way Things Are



# Equity vs. Equality

Here is a graphic that is commonly (but incorrectly!) used to explain equality vs. equity.

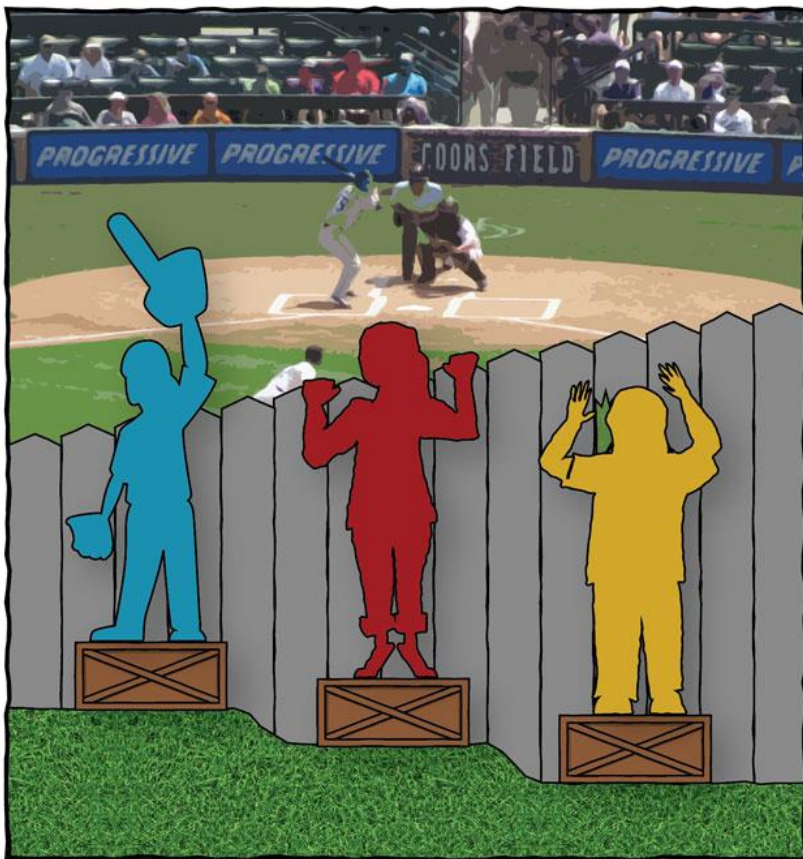


This graphic correctly explains that equality, i.e. equal distribution of resources (boxes), doesn't achieve the desired goal of allowing equal access to opportunities (view of game).

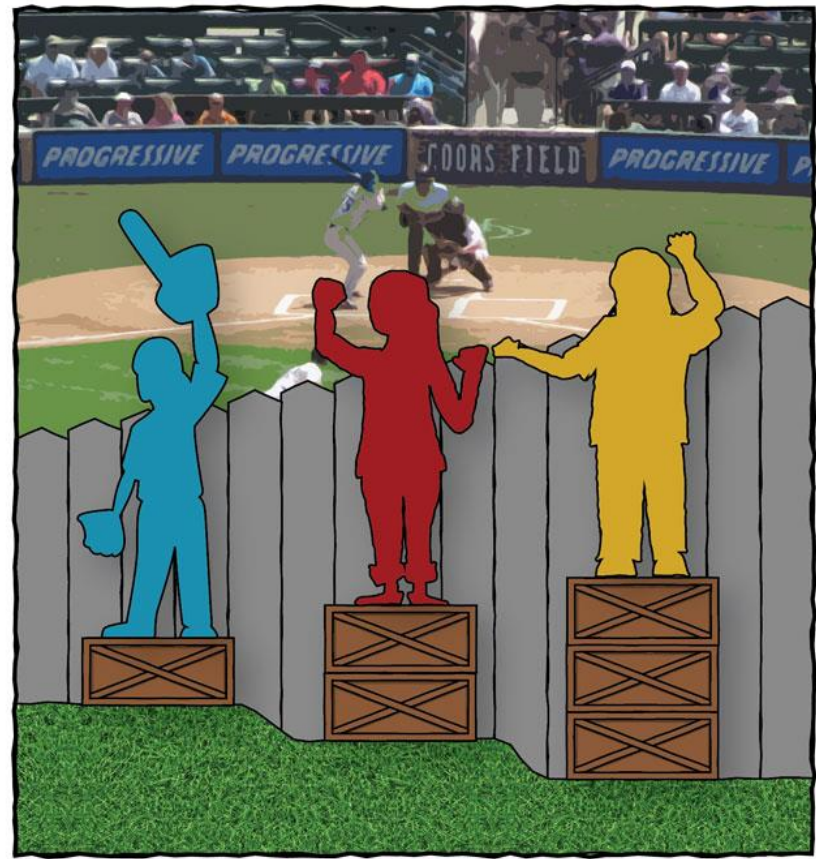
However, this graphic is **WRONG** because it conveys the idea that the original inequality is inherent to the people themselves.

# Equity vs. Equality

This graphic correctly shows that structural inequality (different heights of the ground & fence) rather than interpersonal inequality (different heights of the people) is the primary problem. The structural inequality requires an un-equal distribution of the resources (boxes) in order to achieve an equitable outcome (equal access to view the game).



**EQUALITY**



**EQUITY**

# Inclusion → Equity → Diversity

& many other factors  
(money, information, etc.)

According to core belief #1 (“all groups of people are created equal”) diversity follows automatically from true equity.

Most people can meet their full potential only when they feel safe and comfortable, i.e. when they feel that they are included, that they belong.

Therefore, inclusion is a necessary (but not sufficient) condition of equity.