

# Gender, Race, and Ethnicity of Faculty and Department Chairs in Orthopaedic Surgery and Comparable Fields, 2015-2022

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## INTRODUCTION:

The field of orthopaedic surgery has disproportionately low numbers of female and underrepresented minority (URM) groups. Even as the representation of women and URM in orthopaedics grows, the increase has not kept up with comparable surgical specialties. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the representation of female and URM faculty members and department chairs in orthopaedic surgery compared to other fields of medicine and to determine the trends in how gender and racial breakdown in faculty positions have changed in orthopaedic surgery and other medical fields between 2015 and 2022.

## METHODS:

This is a retrospective review of data presented within the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) regarding United States medical school faculty and department chair makeup in 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022, as well as 2015 data from the AAMC Group on Female in Medicine and Sciences (GWIMS) reports. Data regarding the gender and race/ethnicity of faculty and department chairs in orthopaedic surgery, a comparable surgical specialty (otolaryngology), general surgery, and clinical science as a whole were assessed.

## RESULTS:

Across all specialties assessed (orthopaedic surgery, otolaryngology, general surgery, and all clinical sciences) representation of female and individuals from URM groups increased between 2015 and 2022. During this period, orthopaedic surgery had the lowest growth rate of the four groups in female faculty (+0.63%/year to 21% in 2022), URM faculty (+0.32%/year to 23% in 2022), and URM department chairs (+0.11%/year to 13% in 2022). However, orthopaedic surgery had an increase in female department chairs, (0.96%/year to 7% in 2022), which was similar to increases seen in general surgery and all clinical sciences.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION:

The increase in representation of female and URM orthopaedic surgery faculty and department chairs in orthopaedic surgery lags behind comparable fields and medicine as a whole. Orthopaedic surgery had the lowest female and URM representation in 2015, which combined with less improvement leaves orthopaedic surgery with the lowest representation in 2022 as well. It is important to make efforts to improve representation in positions of leadership, especially when considering the direct effects poor representation of women and URM faculty and department chairs have on representation of these groups in orthopaedic surgery residency.

Annual growth rates for female and URM faculty and department chairs

Group	Female faculty	Female chairs	Faculty from URM groups	Chairs from URM groups
Orthopaedic surgery	0.63%	0.96%	0.32%	0.11%*
Otolaryngology	0.70%	1.01%	0.36%	0.63%*
Surgery	0.76%	0.75%	0.36%	1.43%
All clinical sciences	0.67%	0.97%	0.51%	0.91%

URM: under-represented minority

\*: not statistically significant at significance level of 0.05.