Impacting Underrepresented Minority Medical Education Through Peer and Alumni Mentoring

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Introduction to Feinberg School of Medicine

• Top 20 academic medical centers

• Seeks exceptional, compassionate, innovative diverse students

• Mission -- ensure all students acquire knowledge and skills required to be future leaders
Feinberg Students/Trainees

- Medical: 20%
- Residents/Fellows: 35%
- Postdoctoral fellows: 12%
- PhD students: 12%
- Master's Program: 9%
- Graduate Professional Program: 12%
The Medical Education Timeline

- Undergraduate Education (4 years)
- Medical School (4 years)
- Residency (3-7 years)
- Fellowship (2-4 years)
- Faculty
Problem Statement

- Underrepresented minority (URM) medical students face unique challenges during medical education that impact happiness, matriculation and success in medicine.

Orom, et al. Academic Medicine, 2013
Association for American Medical Colleges (AAMC) defines URM . . .

• “…those racial and ethnic populations that are underrepresented in the medical profession relative to their numbers in the general population.”

In no specialties are the percentages of black or African American and Hispanic or Latino trainees comparable with the representation of those group in the general population.
URM Acceptance Rates

- **White**: 44%
- **Asian**: 42%
- **Hispanic or Latino**: 42%
- **Black or African American**: 34%

AAMC, 2015
URM Medical School Graduates

http://www.aamcdiversityfactsandfigures2016.org
Unique Challenges of URM Students

• Social environment/social support
• Racial discrimination/microaggressions
• Learning environment
• Academic performance/progress
• Inequitable resources and exposure
Aspirational Experience from a Student Perspective

• A Diverse Class
A Culture of Diversity and Inclusion
Identifying Barriers at FSM

• 1:1 student survey on current FSM cultures and climate

• Discussion of results with deans address students’ concerns
  – Students wanted to feel like they mattered
  – Students desired a strong support network
Addressing the Problem at Northwestern

Underrepresented minority (URM) medical students face unique challenges during medical education that impact happiness, matriculation and success in medicine.

- Happiness through formation of support network
- Matriculation success through offering of additional resources
- Success via mentorship, networking, and encouragement
Student To Resident Institutional Vehicle for Excellence (STRIVE)

- Started by FSM alumni and residents with support from Offices of Diversity and Inclusion and Student Affairs

- URM young alumni physicians serving as a resource for support and mentoring of URMs
STRIVE Implementation

• Recruited 25 young alumni

• URM students invited to participate

• Supported by Office of Diversity and Inclusion and Student Affairs

• Promise of food and fun
Student Engagement Through Resident Mentoring

- **Didactic sessions**
  - Class material made clinically applicable

- **Informal mentoring sessions**
  - Alums share challenges\successes

- **Panel discussions**
  - Preparation for clinical rotations
  - Discussion of career paths\interview techniques
Testimonials

“As a medical student, I had an internal medicine resident who took my friends and me under his wing. Seeing a physician who looked like me in the next steps of training inspired me to work hard toward my goals and gave me the belief that I, too, would be successful. When I graduated, I knew that I wanted to build a program that could help provide every student with that feeling of support and belonging. STRIVE offers a framework for camaraderie and altruism, a shared sense of responsibility and purpose.”

Quentin Youmans, MD
Student Perspective – Bitania Wondimu
STRIVE and Enhancing FSM

Broad impact

• Enhancing the supportive and inclusive environment at FSM

• Increased dedication to diversity and inclusion

• Connecting trainees in their common paths in medicine
Benefits of STRIVE

- **Alumni** gain teaching and mentoring skills that can be carried into faculty positions
  - Mentoring Circles
  - Provost grant for Faculty Innovation in Diversity and Equity

- **Students** are exposed to trainees they relate to:
  - Mentorship
  - Support
  - Personal resources
Mentoring Circles and STRIVE at Feinberg
Applying STRIVE Principles Across Northwestern

- Change requires honest and open conversation
- Creating a sense of community is a key to success
- Important role for alumni to give back
- Promoting diversity and inclusion directly impacts patient care
- Importance of diverse faculty to the enhancement of community
Lessons Learned

- Acknowledgment of areas requiring improvement
- Honest and difficult conversations at many levels
- Support from many different areas to “build our village”
  – deans, university, students, faculty
- Participation is not guaranteed, but it comes with time
- Fluidity and flexibility is key
- Sometimes structure is not necessarily the best—organic interaction
Acknowledgements

• Office of Student Affairs
  Diane Wayne, MD
  Sandra Sanguino, MD

• Office of Diversity and Inclusion
  Clyde Yancy, MD
  John Franklin, MD
“If we always helped one another, no one would need luck.”

— Sophocles

“Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. This is the interrelated structure of reality.”

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Questions or Comments?