

UF College of Medicine Statement on Diversity

PREAMBLE

Work force diversity and organizational inclusion are recognized as key strategic drivers for success in today's plural society. By valuing people for their differences, diversity becomes a fundamental value and strength in the ethos of an institution. To achieve and maintain true excellence, inclusion is imperative where these differences are celebrated as critical, with a central focus on individual strengths and talent. Inclusion must be embraced to achieve and maintain excellence and a competitive advantage.

As such, the University of Florida College of Medicine recognizes that medical education, healthcare excellence and health equity will best be achieved by a diverse and inclusive healthcare workforce caring for diverse patients in a multicultural environment. The College of Medicine will continually strive to promote, support and actively enhance the recruitment and retention of underrepresented groups to its student body, residency training programs, faculty and staff positions, in conjunction with the education in cultural humility of all trainees and healthcare providers.

The College of Medicine will promote excellence where all students, residents, faculty and staff can interact in an inclusive environment enhanced by differences in race, ethnicity, gender, nationality, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, sexual identity, age, disability, geography and socioeconomic status. The College is committed to nurturing greater inclusion of African Americans, Hispanics and Native Americans as well as the socioeconomically disadvantaged (rural and urban) as a primary objective for the achievement of excellence through Diversity. The College of Medicine however recognizes that inclusion of other ethnic minorities and groups underrepresented in medicine is essential to the promotion of excellence in healthcare and achievement of health equity for residents in the state of Florida. The College of Medicine is further committed to the establishment of an inclusive environment where the best minds and a diversity of talent are attracted to our community in support of our contribution to learning, healing, and the amelioration of human suffering.

Diversity is essential to our health care work force. Inclusion represents our active strategies to achieve cultural transformation. Equity is essential to the achievement of excellence in all outcomes for which we strive. These elements are embedded in our organizational strategy and are the foundation of our success. The University of Florida College of Medicine is committed to the integration of diversity and inclusion initiatives in the overall college and health center strategic plan and will continually promote an environment that remains relevant to the needs of society and is capable of preparing future generations of the health care work force.

PRINCIPAL AIMS

Introduction

Important strengths of the University of Florida include the diversity and size of the undergraduate enrollment in pre-health curricula. The University of Florida is one of the nation's leading pipelines for applicants –including those underrepresented in medicine (URM) - to American medical schools. The University of Florida has also had a successful program for recruiting economically disadvantaged students including underrepresented minorities and is well situated geographically to continue to develop partnerships with colleges and universities who have had a traditional focus on historically URM graduates. The College of Medicine was also an early adopter of the holistic review in admissions in the School of Medicine in the continuing effort to enhance the student body diversity as a means of achieving excellence. The College of Medicine has a long established Office for Diversity and Health Equity (ODHE) which is committed to the recruitment and retention of those underrepresented in medicine, and actively collaborates with the Office for Faculty Affairs and Graduate Medical Education to enhance diversity and inclusion in the faculty as well as in residency training programs.

Opportunities for achieving excellence through Diversity

The College of Medicine has the opportunity to:

- Leverage the University's large and diverse undergraduate pool through our existing pipeline programs to both consistently attract future talent to our local medical and graduate programs as well as to strengthen the pool of successful applicants to graduate and professional programs at medical schools throughout the U.S.
- Actively engage all URM faculty within the COM in ongoing efforts to develop a supportive environment that will aid in retention and professional successes as well as assist in the recruitment of others.
- Engage and partner with willing groups and individuals within the local community to help achieve diversity and inclusion goals. Increasing faculty diversity within the College of Medicine is also achievable leveraging UF's position as an institution of preeminence in the State of Florida and in the Southeast.
- Form partnerships with URM undergraduate institutions within Florida and the Southeast to expand the pool of URM student applicants.

Specific aims:

1. *Cultural Transformation:* To continue to transition our organization beyond mere compliance to a culture of inclusion and celebration of individual strengths and retention of talent, where the value of diversity and inclusion is truly recognized and embraced as a path to institutional excellence.
2. *Talent Discovery:* To leverage all opportunities available within the State and our local community to maximize the opportunities for the recruitment and retention of individuals including faculty, staff, students, residents, administrators, managers and leaders throughout our organization, within the College of Medicine and in educational and training programs the College supports, including the MD, MD/PhD, PHD and PA programs.

3. *Community Engagement:* To establish community partnerships that can champion diversity and inclusion efforts including recruitment and retention of faculty and staff, residents and students.
4. *Health Care Equity:* To further support and expand our efforts to understand the basis of health disparities and to reduce inequity through efforts in research, medical education, and outreach to our underserved community.
5. *Communication:* To disseminate through an effective integration with both a college wide and public campaign and social media strategy, a shared understanding of diversity and our transition to an environment of inclusion and the integration of such principles in the College of Medicine's mission, strategic vision and recruitment efforts. Leadership drives the institutional commitment and activities. Senior leadership must publically embrace, through broad, repetitive and effective communication, a definitive and unequivocal position that diversity, inclusion, and health equity is synonymous with excellence. The diversity, inclusion and health equity strategy must be communicated as a top down initiative in terms of defining this imperative for excellence.
6. *Faculty Development:* To support the office of Faculty Affairs as a significant driver in diversity and inclusion actions. Planning, developing and mentoring to a pathway of success should be a priority that bridges the needs and requirements of individual departments and units, and must be viewed as a competitive advantage to prospective faculty residents and fellows. These actions must be a clearly evident investment in the individual success of each faculty member. The building of trust and reducing marginalization must be a key outcome.

7. *Development of Diversity Champions:* To support unit level (Department Chairs, Administrators and Program Directors) champions of diversity by: 1.) providing detailed data about the diversity of each program's faculty, trainee and staff applicant pools, interviewed applicants, and successful recruits; 2.) Holding each unit accountable for improving the diversity of all applicant pools, interviewed applicants and those ultimately joining the unit (department).
8. *Infrastructure support:* To support the Office for Diversity and Health Equity (ODHE) in expanding its missions to effectively coordinate and continually develop programs impacting students residents faculty and staff that will benefit the College of Medicine's strategic effort in achieving excellence through diversity.

CONCLUSION

The University of Florida College of Medicine is committed to diversity, inclusion and health equity through the efforts of actively finding, developing and including the best talent to support our vision of being “a premier institution focused on promoting health and alleviating human suffering through exceptional education, discovery, innovation and patient-centered health care of the highest quality.”