



UNIFORMED SERVICES UNIVERSITY OF THE HEALTH SCIENCES

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School of Medicine
Office of the Dean
SOM-DPM-017-20202 (ADF)
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MEMORANDUM FOR FACULTY, STAFF, AND MEDICAL STUDENTS

SUBJECT: USU School of Medicine Policy on Diversity and Inclusion

A. Reissuance and Purpose. This Dean's Policy Memorandum (DPM) reissues School of Medicine (SOM) DPM-004-2015, and explains the reasons why our SOM seeks diversity:

1. Enhancing Medical Education: Association of American Medical College (AAMC) Graduation Questionnaires consistently demonstrate that the majority of medical students report that diversity within their classes enhances their training and skills to work with individuals from different backgrounds. There is persuasive evidence that recruiting and retaining a diverse student body, faculty, and administration has strong positive effects on the quality of medical education for learners. Some of the educational outcomes include:

- a. Helping students break down stereotypes, examine implicit bias, and look beyond socioeconomic and cultural biases to challenge long-held assumptions;
- b. Broadening students' understanding of the effects of language and culture on medical care;
- c. Teaching students how differences in cultural and life experiences can adversely affect the interactions that occur between health care providers and their patients and families who seek their help;
- d. Increasing students' awareness of disparities in health and health-care among military beneficiaries and the larger community to identify areas for action; and
- e. Increasing students' interest in service to disadvantaged and underserved communities both within the United States and around the globe.

2. Reducing Health Disparities: Healthcare Disparities can be defined as inequalities that exist when members of certain population groups do not receive the same access and quality of healthcare that other groups enjoy. Disparities in healthcare, as well as disparate access to other factors that influence health such as education, nutrition and exercise, can result in unequal levels of health. Healthy People 2020, sponsored by The Office of Disease and Prevention and Health Promotion in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, has published compelling statistics that document striking disparities in health that exist among certain U.S. populations including racial and ethnic minorities, women, disabled individuals, low income urban and rural

communities, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ) + communities. Health disparities also exist in medical care provided to military members and their beneficiaries. Building and maintaining a diverse academic community is an important way to help students perceive, address and overcome disparities in health and healthcare. The Healthy People 2030 framework continues these messages, with one of its overarching goals to eliminate health disparities and achieve healthy equity.

3. Support the Commitment to Diversity of the Armed Forces: Diversity and inclusion are integral to strengthening our nation’s Military Health System (MHS). Diversity is valued as a “force multiplier” throughout the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD). Accordingly, the U.S. DoD Directive 1020.02E (*Reference (b)*), serves as the foundation of the SOM’s commitment to diversity. As the leadership academy for military medicine and the U.S. Public Health Service, the SOM brings together students from all parts of the country representing varied educational, geographical, cultural, economic, racial, ethnic and experiential backgrounds. Because our graduates work in a wide-range of clinical and operational settings in the U.S. and around the world, our approach to military and medical education must embrace, by necessity, the values of diversity in order to create the camaraderie crucial to foster teamwork, inspire leadership, and foster the cultural sensitivity required for success as uniformed physicians and officers dedicated to national service.

B. Background. The F. Edward Hébert SOM recognizes that a diverse student body enhances the School’s scholarly and learning environment and adds value to the faculty and student body by broadening the mix of talents and attributes, including prior life experiences, military service, past employment, socioeconomic status, and “distance traveled.” Because we regard ourselves as “America’s Medical School,” the SOM fully embraces the ideals of inclusiveness and diversity that define the United States and contribute to its greatness as a nation. The ultimate goal of the diversity programs within the SOM is identified in the vision statement: “Strength through Diversity: America’s Medical School must reflect the diversity of America.”

To be true to this vision, the SOM subscribes to a series of policies and programs that seek to create and sustain an academic environment that enables it to meet the Liaison Committee on Medical Equipment (LCME) Element 3.3: Diversity/Pipeline Programs and Partnerships:

“A medical school has effective policies and practices in place, and engages in ongoing, systematic, and focused recruitment and retention activities, to achieve mission-appropriate diversity outcomes among its students, faculty, senior administrative staff, and other relevant members of its academic community. These activities include the use of programs and/or partnerships aimed at achieving diversity among qualified applicants for medical school admission and the evaluation of program and partnership outcomes.”

C. References. See *Enclosure 1*.

D. Applicability. This DPM applies to students, staff, faculty and contractors assigned or employed within the SOM.

E. Policy.

1. Definition of Diversity: USU adheres to and fully endorses the Federal Government policies that provide equality of opportunity for all persons on the basis of merit, and prohibits discrimination based on race, sex, gender identity, sexual preference, color, creed, religion, national origin, marital status, handicap, or State of residence. For students, we characterize diversity by several parameters, including educationally disadvantaged, prior military service, and most notably, racial and ethnic backgrounds that are historically underrepresented in medicine.

2. Rationale: The policy is to ensure that individual consideration is given to all applicants to USU programs and that acceptance decisions are made without unlawful discrimination based on race, sex, gender identity, sexual preference, color, creed, religion, national origin, marital status, handicap, or State of residence, and consistent with Department of Defense Directive (DoDD) 1020.02E (*Reference (b)*), as well as federal law and policies, recognizing the value of diversity as a potential force multiplier in DoD mission readiness and accomplishment. USU will establish focused, significant, and sustained programs to recruit and retain suitably diverse students.

3. Critical Elements: The Dean of the SOM has identified the following broad goals for the Office of Diversity:

- a. Enhance the diversity of the SOM's student body and faculty;
- b. Foster a campus environment that communicates our commitment to multiculturalism and diversity;
- c. Foster cultural competence among USU's students and faculty;
- d. Serve as an advisor and ombudsman to underrepresented minority students and faculty;
- e. Improve the process for identifying, recruiting, and retaining high-performing students and faculty; and
- f. Foster a safe and respectful climate for learning, scholarship, and service. To ensure an appropriate level of focus and accountability, the office regularly reports its progress through a dashboard that represents the level of achievement of each objective.

4. Student Diversity: The SOM acknowledges that there are a number of implicit and explicit obstacles to recruiting a diverse pool of applicants to the School, and our admissions committee has adopted a more holistic approach to medical school recruitment and admissions, and regularly participate in implicit bias training. Accordingly, we seek applicants from a wide

variety of backgrounds who demonstrate intellectual potential, have diverse and relevant life experiences, and communicate a strong commitment to national service. Our students learn from interacting with each other how to effectively and compassionately treat patients from all walks of life and all corners of the world. In order to guide recruitment and retention activities, the SOM has identified the following groups as noteworthy diversity categories: women, African American, Puerto Rican, Mexican-American, Latinx, Native American or Alaska native, Pacific Islander, first generation to graduate from college, and prior military service.

a. Recruitment Efforts:

1) Enlisted to Medical Degree Preparatory Program (EMDP2): EMDP2 is a partnership between USU and the Armed Services to provide opportunities for highly-motivated, academically-promising enlisted service members to meet the requirements to secure admission to medical school while remaining on active duty. To create the program, working groups comprised of members from the University and the Armed Services developed the strategic design, recruitment plan, and key milestones for the program. EMDP2 is a 24-month, full-time, in-service, academic program, with classes taken at George Mason University. Components include full-time undergraduate and graduate-level coursework in a traditional classroom setting, structured pre-health advising, formal Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) preparation, USU mentoring program, and integrated clinical exposure. Upon completion of the program, successful students are competitive for acceptance to the SOM as well as civilian medical schools.

2) Science Service Medicine Mentoring (S2M2): The S2M2 program operated from 2004-2011 in cooperation with USU's clinical partners at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) and other DoD agencies. The program was restarted in 2014 after the realignment of the medical centers into the WRNMMC at Bethesda. High school students from the diverse Greater D.C. Metropolitan area as well as students from across the nation participate in a week-long curriculum designed to encourage, nurture, and enhance the commitment to science and medicine in a welcoming, intellectually-stimulating environment. In 2019, a similar week-long program, S2M2 Jr., was started for middle school students.

3) Direct Recruitment: The Office of Recruitment and Admissions is responsible for a strategic (3-5 year) recruitment plan as well as a yearly master recruiting plan detailing the pre-health fairs and college campuses upon which the SOM wishes to participate. Long-term strategic goals include direct outreach to key Universities that produce large numbers of medical school applicants from groups Under-Represented in Medicine (URM), which the AAMC defines as “those racial and ethnic populations that are underrepresented in the medical profession relative to their numbers in the general population.” Efforts at these schools include attendance at recruitment fairs,

small group discussions with interested students, and for some, shadowing opportunities at local hospitals.

4) Other outreach programs: Student interest groups as well as interested faculty are encouraged to organize efforts target at enhancing the pipeline. In the past, students and faculty have led programs for high school and college students to inspire them to pursue careers in healthcare including:

(a) The Simulation Center Experience, where the USU's Val Hemming Simulation Center provided high school and undergraduate students an opportunity to practice medical procedures using cutting-edge simulation technologies and experience first-hand some of the realistic procedures medical providers perform;

(b) The USU Summer Research Training Program (USRTP), which introduced students to biomedical research careers before they enter college or chose a major, with a greater vision to create a prestigious summer research internship program at USU that attracts highly promising students from diverse backgrounds and helps recruit under-represented minorities to pursue biomedical careers at USU and other US universities; and

(c) Adolescent Medical Interviewing Collaboration Day, where students from John F. Kennedy High School, a majority Hispanic school, participate in a skills exercise for our medical students by role-playing as standardized patients. They receive a tour of USU, along with a question and answer session with medical students and the School's Diversity Office. They are also given the email address and phone number of the School's Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion for any follow-up questions.

b. Retention: To engage and empower our medical students who are members of under-represented minority groups, the SOM has re-established connections with Student National Medical Association (SNMA) and the Latino Medical Student Association (LMSA) and facilitates other cultural and interest-based groups to foster student identity and belonging, such as LGBTQ+ and religiously-based student interest groups, as well as global health and clinical Spanish interest groups. Part of student identity is shared military service; as a result, medical students engage in service-specific military training prior to their first year of academic studies. Although USU is the nation's only military medical school, 60-70% of students have no military experience prior to matriculating at our school. For this reason, summer training prior to matriculation is important to teach students key service values, military culture and organizational structure. An important outcome of this process is creating an inclusive environment that allows students from diverse backgrounds to bond before they encounter the academic rigor of medical school classes. Parallel to these efforts, the School's Office for

Student Affairs and USU's Office of the Commandant provide guidance, mentoring and access to academic and professional resources to all students, and encourage their academic and professional development throughout their medical school experience.

c. Measurements of success: Although not meant to be all-inclusive, the following metrics are tracked: numbers of applicants from SOM-defined diversity categories; acceptance rates of students from SOM-defined diversity categories; percentage of acceptances from SOM-defined diversity categories; number of interest groups with a cultural focus; and number of students matriculating from the EMDP2 program.

5. Faculty and Staff Diversity: The SOM is committed to creating a working and learning environment dedicated to excellence, equity, and mutual respect for students, faculty and staff. Mirroring our broad goals for students, the SOM seeks faculty and staff members who come from diverse racial, ethnic, socio-economic and geographic backgrounds, represent a wide variety of personal experiences, and have a broad range of interests and academic pursuits. The SOM is committed to increasing the representation of the following diversity categories in faculty and senior administrators: women, African American, Puerto Rican, Mexican, Latinx, Native American or Alaska native, Pacific Islander, veterans, and first generation to graduate from college.

a. Recruitment Efforts:

1) All advertisements for new faculty include the explicit request that they have the ability to work with a diverse and inclusive population. Faculty hired in leadership positions are also sought who demonstrate a history of working with a diverse workforce and SOM search committees will be composed to reflect diversity and inclusion.

2) The SOM Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion, the Recruitment Specialist (Diversity) and others regularly participate in the AAMC's Minority Faculty Conference, meetings of the National Medical Association (NMA), National Hispanic Medical Association (NHMA) and similar professional organizations. We view these activities as critical to identifying qualified underrepresented minorities as potential faculty and staff candidates.

3) All applications for positions as faculty, staff and/or administration are made through the public website: HigherEdJobs.com. The Hébert School of Medicine and the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences are committed to complying with the spirit as well as the substance of all federal laws and regulations regarding equal opportunity and non-discrimination. Efforts to recruit faculty include targeted outreach through websites and publications that reach populations that might not otherwise be aware of opportunities.

b. Retention:

1) Faculty retention is focused on the two main types of faculty at USU: uniformed and civilian.

2) Uniformed faculty retention depends on the needs of each service, and personnel decisions are made at a national level. Extensions and reassignments within the University may be requested and are often approved but these decisions are ultimately at the discretion of the sponsoring service, which must balance the needs of the university with other priorities and demands. To enhance recruitment and retention of uniformed members from SOM-identified diversity categories, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion works with all 4 uniformed services (Army, Navy, Air Force and US Public Health Service) to identify promising faculty candidates and encourage their assignment to USU. To encourage retention, School of Medicine Chairs and senior faculty are encouraged to mentor and support merit-based promotion and retention of uniformed faculty.

3) Civilian retention of those under-represented in science and medicine is largely influenced by economics (salary, benefits and local cost of living), federal government policies, the faculty member's academic success and the campus climate. It is essential that the school's leadership foster and support a campus culture that values fairness, equality, and teamwork.

c. Measurements of Success: Although the following criteria are not meant to be all-inclusive, the following metrics are tracked:

1) Numbers of faculty and senior administrators who are members of groups under-represented in science and medicine;

2) The number of educators from SOM-defined diversity categories; and

3) Relative academic promotion rates and relative length of employment.

F. Responsibilities.

1. The Dean, SOM shall:

a. Appoint the Diversity and Inclusion Committee (DAIC) Chair.

b. Ensure administrative support to the DAIC.

c. Make decisions based upon recommendations or reports of the DAIC and notify the committee of those decisions.

2. The DAIC serves as the Dean's, SOM policy advisory group and has the following responsibilities:

- a. Provide recommendations for policy, plans and activities that foster diversity and inclusion.
- b. Ensure efforts are consistent with University policy, and consistent and visible across the School of Medicine.
- c. Provide a forum to assess obstacles or trends contrary to the DoDD 1020.02.
- d. Participate in university and outreach programs directed at diversity and inclusion efforts.
- e. Serve on subcommittees.
- f. Assist the Office of Diversity in assessing and strengthening the University's culture of inclusion and responsibility.
- g. Assist the office of Admissions and Recruitment to take into account USU's mission, the diversity of its student body, and the population that it serves.
- h. Establish subcommittees and chairs to address comprehensive areas of diversity improvement. This includes in-depth review of the following 4 pillars:
 - 1) Sustainment;
 - 2) Recruitment;
 - 3) Curriculum; and
 - 4) Retention and Support.
- i. Maintain situational awareness and compile information as necessary or requested by the Office of the Dean.

G. Procedures.

1. The committee reports through its chair to the Dean (SOM) or designated representative.
2. The Diversity and Inclusion Committee will hold regular quarterly meetings, and may meet more often if required and as situations may dictate.

3. The subcommittees will meet every two months lead by subcommittee chairs and report to the DAIC chair. Subcommittee chairs may invite additional members to join the subcommittee as needed. A brief description of the 4 pillars and overarching responsibilities are listed below.

a. Sustainment Subcommittee is tasked with evaluating and recommending policies to maintain gains made in diversity and inclusion.

b. Recruitment Subcommittee works closely with the office of Admissions and Recruitment to evaluate and address obstacles to diversity and inclusion and provide resources to attract the best qualified candidates to the University. They will also assist STEM and pipeline programs.

c. Curriculum Subcommittee recommends methods to include instruction and experiences related to bias, diversity, structural competency and cultural competency throughout the educational experience. The Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion is a member of the Academic Affairs committee to facilitate the rapid exchange of information and issues from this subcommittee to the medical education team for consideration and action.

d. Retention and Support Subcommittee evaluates and recommends programs for students, faculty, and staff to encourage diversity and inclusion and foster support for every represented group at USU. They will also assist in recruiting a diverse faculty that best represents our nation.

H. Effective Date. This DPM is effective immediately.



Arthur L. Kellermann, MD, MPH
Professor and Dean, School of Medicine

Enclosure:

1. References

REFERENCES

- (a) Presidential Policy Memorandum (PPM) 001-2000, "Committee Appointments," dated June 26, 2000.
- (b) Diversity Management and Equal Opportunity (EO) in the Department of Defense, DoDD 1020.02E, June 8, 2015, incorporating Change 2, Effective June 1, 2018.
- (c) Presidential Policy Memorandum (PPM) 002-2009, "University Committees," dated August 10, 2009.
- (d) Admission Policies for the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU), DoDD 6010.7, November 12, 1997.
- (e) AAMC Roadmap to Diversity and Educational Excellence: Key Legal and Educational Policy Foundations for Medical Schools, Second Edition.
- (f) AAMC Roadmap to Diversity: Integrating Holistic Review Practices into Medical School Admission Processes.
- (g) AAMC Assessing Institutional Culture and Climate Webcast Supplemental Guide.
- (h) LCME Functions and Structure of a Medical School, March 2020.