DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE
DIVERSITY APPRAISAL

1. Student access and opportunities

While students are admitted by the School of Medicine, the Department is active in programs designed to recruit students from groups that are underrepresented in the biomedical sciences and to bring students from other schools to UW. For example, the division of Allergy and Infectious Diseases sponsors the attendance of 8-10 medical students from Howard University, a historically black school, to the annual Principles of STD/HIV Research Course offered each summer. The division also provides research opportunities for students in the Northwest Consortium Minority Medical Education Program, which encourages talented minority students to pursue careers in medicine, with emphasis on American Indian/Alaska Native American students. A number of DOM faculty members have participated in U-DOC, a high school summer enrichment program offered by the School of Medicine Office of Multicultural Affairs, including Drs. Florence Shadlen and Terry Mengert. At least 27 medicine faculty members have served recently as mentors for the Summer Medical Education Program, an enrichment program for talented underrepresented college students sponsored by the School of Medicine Office of Multicultural Affairs.

DOM faculty also provide opportunities for UW undergraduate, graduate, and medical students to participate in research experiences designed to heighten interest in and enhance preparation for careers in health sciences.

2. Student development and retention

Department of Medicine faculty have been active participants in the work of the School of Medicine Office of Multicultural Affairs, which provides counseling and tutoring support for minority students.

3. Engagement with the external community

The Department of Medicine serves the community beyond UW through clinical, educational, and other support activities, many of them designed for specific communities. In addition, the department is active in research designed to investigate patterns of health and disease, as well as service delivery, in diverse populations.

Many faculty members serve the larger scientific community through leadership in professional associations, scientific societies, and academic journals, as well as advisory and policy-making bodies and study sections for funding agencies. Department faculty are prominent among presenters in the annual SOM UW Mini-Medical School, as well as other community and patient-education forums. Faculty and fellows from every division
attend national conferences to present their research as well as to meet with colleagues from other parts of the country and the world.

The heart of the Department's service to the community lies in clinical care, and much attention is directed to training practitioners to treat populations with special needs and the medically underserved. Dr. David Spach is clinical director, Dr. Chris Behrens is medical program director, and Dr. Anthony Back is a medical educator for the Northwest AIDS Education and Training Center, which serves a very diverse group of providers in the community. The Center’s Minority AIDS Initiative programming specifically targets minority providers, those serving HIV-infected persons of color, and minority-specific community-based organizations, including the Tribal BEAR Project, the Latino/Migrant Farm Worker Training Project, the African American Training Project, and the Alaska Native Training Project. Dr. Robert Wood is Program Director for AIDS Control for Seattle & King County Public Health.

Dr. Emily Y. Wong, assistant chair for practice management, is director of the UW National Center of Excellence in Women's Health. The center is dedicated to improving the health of underserved and minority women through leadership in clinical care, outreach, education, and research. Dr. Wong is also a member of the Expert Panel on Minority Faculty Development of the Health Resources and Services Administration, engaged in developing a model to improve faculty diversity in the nation's health professional schools.

DOM faculty have been instrumental in developing EthnoMed, a 10-year-old website containing medical and cultural information on immigrant and refugee groups designed to help bridge cultural and language barriers between providers and patients. This resource was developed in part to serve health care providers working with highly diverse patient populations, such as those seen at the Harborview Medical Center International Clinic. Information provided on the site helps to bridge the knowledge gap that often exists for small immigrant groups such as Somalis or Hmong people.

Dr. Steven Kahn is principal investigator of the UW Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) which performs outreach in communities where type 2 diabetes is particularly prevalent. About half of DPP participants are African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, or Native Americans.

A program of the Northwest Geriatric Education Center, Health Promotion for Ethnic and Rural Older Adults, addresses health disparities among the aged by enhancing leadership skills of professionals in the field and upgrading quality and access to geriatric health promotion training and programs.

Other initiatives and areas of participation in the department that seek to address health disparities in our community include the Japanese American Community Diabetes Study; the KAME Project, a study of the epidemiology of dementia in older Japanese-Americans; the Breast Cancer Screening and Diagnosis Research Group; the Harborview Pioneer Square Clinic; the Occupational and Environmental Medicine Clinic; the
Harborview International Medicine Clinic; the Women’s Health Care Center; and the Asian Health Promotion Program (Colorectal Cancer Screening in Chinese Americans; Liver Cancer Control in North American Chinese; Tobacco Cessation Program among Asian American Men), among many others.

4. Staff and administrative diversity

The Department of Medicine strictly follows University of Washington policy and adheres to Equal Opportunity guidelines with respect to hiring and employment of all departmental staff. Specific areas of responsibility include issues related to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, disability, or status as a disabled veteran or Vietnam-era veteran. Compliance for this process is reviewed for every staff recruitment by the DOM Human Resources Director, as well as the Director of Human Resources for the School of Medicine, Office of the Dean. Additionally, all Professional Staff recruitments are monitored and reviewed by the UW EOO to ensure compliance with respect to diversity issues. Both the Department and Dean’s office HR directors provide continuing education to departmental managers regarding hiring regulations as well.

5. Faculty diversity

The Department of Medicine is attentive to diversity issues in all aspects of its faculty recruitment efforts. Minority representation among all levels of DOM faculty has held steady at 18-20% over the past four years, but it has grown steadily at the assistant professor level (see attached figures and table). At every level except associate professor, the percentage of minority DOM faculty exceeded that of the School of Medicine as a whole in 2003, with the greatest differential occurring at the acting assistant professor level. The percentage of minority residents in the department has ranged from 27% to 32% during the past four years and was 28% in 2003. The percentage of minority fellows exceeded one-third in 2002 and stood at 28% in 2003.

According to the Association of American Medical Colleges*, in 2003 minority faculty members† constituted 18.9% of faculties overall and 20.6% of internal medicine faculties (DOM = 19%). Among internal medicine departments nationally, minority faculty were 10.5% of professors (DOM = 6.8%); 14.7% of associate professors (DOM = 6.9%); 26.5% of assistant professors (DOM = 28.8%); and 27.8% of instructors (DOM = 36% of acting assistant professors, 29% of acting instructors, 28% of research faculty).

Likewise, the total percentage of women among the DOM faculty in 2003 exceeded that of the School of Medicine as a whole overall and in every category except lecturer; the department matched SOM in the percentage of women at the professor level. The greatest differentials occurred in the lower ranks. Department gender diversity also compared favorably with national benchmarks. According to the Association of American Medical Colleges*, in 2003 women constituted 30.8% of faculties overall and 28.5% of internal
medicine faculties (DOM = ~34%). Among internal medicine faculties nationally, women were 13% of professors (DOM = ~12%); 23% of associate professors (DOM = ~30%); 35.5% of assistant professors (DOM = ~38%); and 43% of instructors (DOM = ~58% of acting assistant professors, ~42% of acting instructors, ~60% of lecturers, and ~35% of research faculty).

Dr. Christina Surawicz is assistant dean for faculty development in the School of Medicine. She works closely with Dr. David Acosta, assistant dean for multicultural affairs in faculty recruitment and retention initiatives.

All advertisements for faculty positions in DOM adhere to all UW affirmative action requirements and bear the notice that “The University of Washington is building a culturally diverse faculty and strongly encourages applications from female and minority candidates. The University is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer.” All hiring authorities within the department are notified of the procedures and requirements of the UW Equal Opportunity Office and provided with detailed guidelines for conducting faculty searches and hiring and for securing department and university approval of announcements.

Fellows

The majority of division in the department have postdoctoral fellows who are supported by National Research Service Award (T32) training grants. This program requires that “attention must be given to recruiting individuals from racial or ethnic groups underrepresented in the biomedical and behavioral sciences," and the department adheres to this policy. The policy is monitored by the NIH which requires that competing applications for the grants include a specific plan to recruit and retain underrepresented minorities in the training program and that all competing continuation applications include a report on the recruitment and retention of underrepresented minorities during the previous award period."

As an example of recruitment efforts, trainees in the department’s Division of Allergy and Infectious Diseases are actively recruited from historically black institutions, including Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science, Howard University, Morehouse School of Medicine, University of Puerto Rico Medical Sciences Campus, Ponce School of Medicine, and Meharry Medical College. Faculty members meet personally with prospective trainees at these institutions and at recruitment meetings in order to promote UW programs. Some divisions have funds reserved to support travel to UW by qualified minority applicants. In addition, fellowship opportunities are advertised in publications with minority readership, such as Affirmative Action Registry, The Chronical of Higher Education, and Black Issues in Higher Education. Postgraduate fellows from around the world have trained in programs sponsored by our 14 divisions.

* http://www.aamc.org/data/facultyroster/usmsf03/start.htm
† Native American, Asian, Black, Mexican American, Puerto Rican, and other Hispanic
6. Curriculum and research

For third- and fourth-year students, we have developed clinical clerkships in primary care emphasizing women's health, urban underserved populations, and rural medicine. "Students in the Community: A Collaborative Effort to Provide Health Care to the Homeless" is a multidisciplinary student-originated project to develop a free, student-run clinic for the underserved. Students in Medicine work collaboratively to provide services with those in the MEDEX, Nursing, Pharmacy, Social Work, and other schools.

Resident training program in DOM offers training opportunities in a wide range of practice settings—urban and inner city, rural, specialized clinics, civilian and military hospitals, and clinics serving a variety of specific populations, examples

The goal of the International AIDS Research and Training Program is to further international collaborative research on AIDS through bilateral exchange and training of scientists between the University of Washington and research institutes in developing countries. Involvement of these trainees in our Infectious Diseases training program and their interaction with our fellows enriches the environment for minority training at the UW.

Examples of specific research studies involving specific populations include: Dr. Timothy Takaro, in the Division of General Internal Medicine, has a grant from HUD to evaluate the impact on childhood asthma of new housing in low-income children. Dr. Randy Curtis directs “Improving the Quality of Clinician-Patient Communication for Non-English Speaking Patients with COPD” and “Improving the Quality of Clinician-Family Communication in the ICU for Non-English Speaking Families.” Jason Dominitz, of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine, heads a study of “Racial Differences in Esophageal Cancer Treatment and Survival.”

Research is also conducted by postgraduate fellows, such as those in the Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholars program. This program has a strong commitment to recruiting members of underrepresented populations, and its theme has historically been major societal health problems—including work-related illness, violence, AIDS, substance abuse, and others—and assuring equity, quality, and ethical standards of care for vulnerable populations. Many of the clinical scholars at UW have chosen research projects in those areas, in cooperation with department faculty members.

7. Climate

The Department of Medicine is committed to maintaining an open, inclusive, and welcoming environment in which to work, teach, learn, serve patients, and pursue research. We support a climate of respect for individuality, equality, and diversity of background, as well as local institutional values, in each of the sites where Department activities take place. As the largest department in Health Sciences, Medicine operates in
perhaps the most diverse settings of any UW unit—urban and rural areas in five states, civilian, federal, and military, large hospitals and neighborhood clinics, campus laboratories, regional research institutions, clinical research environment, academic classrooms, community centers, television, and the internet. The patients we serve represent a great variety of conditions and needs, reflecting the broad scope of internal medicine and its subspecialties. We are preparing students and trainees for an unusually wide range of career paths, practice options, and patient characteristics. To achieve that goal, we strive to maintain diversity and inclusiveness among faculty, employees, and trainees; provide trainees with a variety of appropriate learning experiences; and deliver clinical services to a broad spectrum of patients in the community, including the medically underserved.