The goal of the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMCA) at the University of Washington School of Medicine (UWSOM) is to facilitate the identification, recruitment, retention, and professional development of those individuals who are interested in pursuing M.D. or M.D./PhD degrees that are from populations that are underrepresented in medicine, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, and/or those individuals who have a demonstrated commitment to serving the underserved populations.

Our mission statement has recently undergone a revision:
The mission of the Office of Multicultural Affairs at the University of Washington School of Medicine is:

- To support the academic and professional success of students who are underrepresented in medicine, including those who have demonstrated a commitment to working with underserved populations
- To promote a standard of tolerance and training in cultural sensitivity among medical students, residents, and faculty in caring for all patients irrespective of ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or disability.
- To enrich the academic and clinical training environment of the School of Medicine by actively promoting a diverse faculty and student body which in turn will better prepare medical students and residents to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse society.

Considered a strong support program by students, faculty, and its peers, OMCA is staffed by a group of professionals who are deeply committed to diversity in the educational and health care system, as well as the elimination of health disparities particularly in minority communities. The specific ways that diversity is integrated into our mission includes the following:

- Provides individual counseling and academic advising to students;
- Assists students during the admission and application process (for medical school and residency programs);
- Serves as a general information resource for both academic and non-academic needs;
- Facilitates access to the multitude of resources within the School, Region, and the community;
- Develops several academic, informational, and social programs for pre-medical and medical students throughout the year.

Figure 1 illustrates the many programs and projects that the OMCA either participates in and/or has developed to integrate diversity into our mission.
Figure 1
Diversity Target Areas

1. Student Access and Opportunities

The Office of Multicultural Affairs utilizes a pipeline approach in designing its recruitment and access opportunities. By reaching out to students in the earlier stages of their academic preparation, we are able to identify potential premedical students and foster and encourage their interest in the health professions. In order to facilitate the entry of students to the University of Washington (UW), OMCA implements the following activities to increase access of minority students:

A. UDOC

A program for high school juniors and seniors encourages exploration of health careers while being introduced to college life. This program is funded by a Federal Health Careers Opportunities Program (HCOP) grant and attracts students from 10th to 12th grades. The UDOC program is held concurrently not only in the Seattle, WA campus, but also in the following partner sites – University of Alaska Anchorage, Washington State University /University of Idaho, Montana State University, and the University of Wyoming. UDOC serves almost 80 students per year in all five sites, and OMCA oversees the grant and program operations at all sites.

B. The Summer Medical Education Program (formerly known as Minority Medical Education Program or MMEP)

A program that offers undergraduates and some post baccalaureate students an academic enrichment opportunity in science, verbal reasoning, clinical experiences, study skills and medical school application and preparation. This program is funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The program here at the University of Washington is one of the original and oldest SMEP sites in the nation. The University of Arizona in Tucson serves as our partner site in delivering SMEP to 125 minority students, and together we are known as the Western Consortium. Of the 1600 students who have participated in SMEP, over 600 are now in medical school throughout the U.S. SMEP alumni have experienced a 63% acceptance rate to medical school in comparison to 40% for other minority non-SMEP applicants.

C. Collaborative agreement with Washington’s Community Colleges (Seattle Central, Bellevue, Highline, Pierce and Everett)

This agreement provides on-site pre-medical advising to students transferring to four-year institutions. About once or twice a quarter, OMCA staff visits community colleges to provide information, encouragement, and advice to potential UW transfer students. Activities have included staffing a health careers fair and transfer fair. In addition OMCA has also provided presentations during orientation for underrepresented minority transfer students, in cooperation with the colleges advising or minority affairs office.

D. Cooperative partnership between the UW Office of Minority Affairs

This partnership promotes a health careers pipeline for underrepresented and disadvantaged students affiliated with the OMA. This allows us to focus on those who are participating in various programs such as EOP, Gear Up, Upward Bound, Early Identification Program, and Early Scholars Outreach Program. Each quarter, an OMCA staff member lectures to Millie Russell’s Biology 110 class. OMCA staff also work jointly with OMA
counselors in assisting premedical students. For example, Dr. Rusty Barcelo and Ms. Elena Guevara serve on the Steering Committee of the Chicano/Latino Mentor Network that helps develop mentorship activities for Chicano Latino prehealth students.

E. Recruitment

The OMCA has a full time recruiter who is Native American, and facilitates recruitment by attending key conferences (AISES, SUMMA, SACNAS, etc.), networking throughout the region and nationally, promoting the School of Medicine through media exposure and marketing, and giving presentations given at high school and college campuses locally, regionally, and nationally.

F. Admissions Committee

Dr. David Acosta, Assistant Dean for Multicultural Affairs, is also an active member of the School of Medicine Admissions Committee. In promoting a diverse medical student class, the OMCA meets with all out of state, pipeline, disadvantaged and other students who have demonstrated a commitment to work with underserved populations and provides an additional interview. The personal attention, and interaction between applicant, students and staff serves to give applicants an accurate reflection of the kinds of support available for students at the UWSOM.

G. RUOP (Rural/Urban Underserved Opportunities Program)

The OMCA helps facilitate student interest in this program that was developed by the Department of Family Medicine Pre-Doc Section. This program is a 4-week immersion experience for the medical students between their first and second year into practices that serve the rural or urban underserved.

H. CHAP (Community Health Advancement Program)

The OMCA helps facilitate student interest in this program that was developed by the Department of Family Medicine Pre-Doc Section. This program provides an immersion experience for the medical students into local community projects and services that serve the underserved. CHAP sponsors student-initiated and directed, extracurricular community direct service projects, educational programs and a seminar series addressing the health needs of underserved communities. Students design, plan, implement, staff and evaluate these programs, with assistance, guidance and support from staff and faculty in the Department of Family Medicine and from community organizations.

Student Development and Retention

A. The Prematriculation Program (PreMat)

This program facilitates accepted students' transition into medical school by providing focused instruction in histology and enrichment activities in areas such as study skills, stress management, test taking and research. In PreMat, students take a condensed version of histology, and those who pass the challenge exam, receive credit for the course normally taken in the fall. With 30 plus credits per quarter, most medical students benefit greatly from the reduced course load after participating in PreMat. Early interaction with students before the formal start of the quarter also allows our OMCA staff to identify any high-risk behavior and reinforce positive study habits and strategies for these students. Students from underrepresented or disadvantaged backgrounds are encouraged to participate in this program. This program is funded in part by a Federal HCOP grant.
B. One of the most important goals of OMCA is to graduate 100% of our matriculated minority medical students. This is accomplished by providing a supportive environment for minority students that fosters academic achievement and success, professional development and leadership activities. Several activities are in place to ensure students success. These include:

1. A fulltime Learning Specialist position funded by OMCA to provide individual assessment, counseling and test-taking or study skills support for students who are in academic trouble;
2. Free tutoring for all students, paid for by institutional funds;
3. Boards preparation stipends for minority students who fail the required USMLE 1 or 2;
4. Institutional funding to allow medical students to attend national conferences that focus on minority health issues, professional development, mentoring, or networking;
5. OMCA advocacy support in the Student Progress Committee, if needed. The student progress committee makes decisions related to student performance, professional behavior, academic course load (also known as expansion), student dismissal or suspension, and ultimately, graduation. Dr. Acosta serves on this committee, and serves as a liaison to our students;
6. Facilitating the year round activities of the Chicano/Latino Mentoring Network, the African American Mentoring Network, and the Medicine Wheel Society to provide ongoing physician mentors and community support for minority students in various stages of training;
7. Curricular innovations that include the Indian Health Pathway (more on this on the Native American Center of Excellence) and on-going development of similar pathways for the Chicano/Latino community as well as the African American community;
8. Coordinate and teach three academic classes: Spanish for Health Professionals, Issues in Indian Health, and Indian Health Problem Based Learning classes;
9. Encourage all students to pursue research on minority health issues;
10. Encourage minority medical students to seek out leadership positions within the School of Medicine; for example, curriculum committees, admissions committees, poster presentations, and curriculum development;
11. Funding of a fulltime Research Adviser to serve as adviser for medical students who are interested in minority health research, as well as an emerging mandate to develop a comprehensive, collaborative research center that houses all pertinent and applicable research related to health disparities both within the region and in the nation;
12. Funding and support for minority student organizations such as the OMCA student group, Student National Medical Association, and the Medicine Wheel Society.

An important aspect of the OMCA’s student development is the Native American Center of Excellence. Though not exclusively a student retention program, it is a critical part of the support that Native American students receive while studying medicine at the UWSOM. The Center was established in 1992 as part of the Office of Multicultural Affairs, encourages Native American students to pursue Medicine as a career and helps prepare Native American students
for faculty roles in academic medicine. The Program also fosters education and research on Native American health issues.

The NACOE is a comprehensive approach to the recruitment, training and career development of American Indian and Native Alaskan future physicians. This support begins at the high school level, follows students through college and medical school and on into their residency training after they have earned their medical degree. The program collaborates with universities and colleges in the Pacific Northwest, including tribal community colleges, to provide Indian and Native Alaskan students with the counsel, skills and information needed to prepare for and apply to medical school.

Through a program called the "Indian Health Pathway" (see section entitled “Curriculum and Research below), Native American and non-Native American medical students have increased opportunities to learn about Native American medical concerns in the classroom, through clinical training at sites with Indian physicians and patients, and by research on the diseases and the barriers to health care facing Native Americans.

The program's training goals are:

1. To encourage Indian and non-Indian students to become primary-care physicians for Native peoples; and
2. To relieve the national shortage of Native American medical school faculty by guiding students, residents and fellows who desire to enter academic medicine, and by developing an Indian health fellowship.

Engagement with the Community

There are several ways that OMCA is able to promote this ideal. Some examples are the following:

1. Outreach to K-12 schools
2. Migrant Camp outreach
3. Elders Dinner
4. Clerkship opportunities
5. Community Advisory Councils

1. Outreach to elementary and middle schools
   OMCA arranges day trips for medical students to go out to classrooms around the Puget Sound area, to conduct science enrichment activities and health careers promotion. OMCA highly prioritizes visits to schools that have high percentage of students who participate in free/reduced lunch programs, or have a large number of minority students.

2. Migrant Camp Outreach
   For about ten years now, each year from June to August, the OMCA collaborates with SeaMar Community Health Center to conduct health outreach activities in migrant camps located in Mt. Vernon, WA. Donations of clothing, toys, lotions, soap, household items, diapers, coats and other items are collected and packaged in the OMCA office. A group of premed volunteers (usually medical students and students who are participating in SMEP)
travel in UW vans and caravan to the Migrant camps with SeaMar clinic staff. Volunteers conduct tuberculosis, dental, and diabetes screening. All the instruction is conducted in Spanish and students are strongly encouraged to use their language skills to communicate with the workers. Donations are also given out. Volunteers are exposed to the living conditions of migrant workers and usually learn more about the health care issues affecting migrant workers and their families.

3. Native American Elders’ Dinner
   Every January of each year for the last ten years, the Native American Center of Excellence staff hosts an Elders Dinner for Native American elders in the community. NACOE coordinates the preparation of gifts, food, transportation, and activities for the elders. The elders have an opportunity to meet the medical students, engage in conversation and encourage them on their goals.

4. Clerkship Opportunities
   See section entitled “Student Access and Opportunities” that is mentioned above.

5. Community Advisory Councils
   The OMCA has been active in developing community linkages with health professional groups, community boards, clinics and organizations throughout the region. Most recently, the African American Community Advisory Council has been developed to identify issues regarding the community relationship with the University of Washington School of Medicine or lack thereof, and develop strategies to both resolve those issues and enhance the working relationship and communication. The OMCA is presently working on developing other similar community advisory councils with the Seattle Indian Health Board and with the Hispanic community in the region.

Staff and Administrative Diversity
Diversity is active and visible within the Office of Multicultural Affairs. It is the largest diverse unit in Department of Academic Affairs with 10.5 FTEs (10 fulltime and two part time appointments). It is a diverse group of individuals who share a common commitment to diversity in the medical profession, as well as academic achievement and success for all students. Within the OMCA staff, we represent the following racial and ethnic groups: Native American, Mexican American, African American, Pacific Islander and White. In addition, we represent the interests of Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Trans-gendered groups, immigrants, language diversity (ESL), low income/working class, different religious beliefs, and rural/urban groups. These categories represent some of our beliefs, lifestyles, and upbringing. All but one staff member hold a bachelors degree, two hold masters degrees (with advanced postgraduate coursework), one Ph.D. and two M.D.s. Two staff members hold faculty appointments. Every effort is made in the hiring process to hire staff that come from diverse backgrounds. During the summer when approximately thirty additional staff are hired to teach and coordinate our summer programs, every effort is made to ensure that the teaching staff closely mirrors the diversity of the students in SMEP, UDOC and PreMat who are being taught.

Faculty Diversity
Diversity of the faculty in OMCA has been described above. Diversity of the faculty within the UWSOM is disappointing and do not reflect the sociodemographics of the region served, nor of the students taught. According to October 2003 UW EEO statistics, of the 2,701 total faculty in
the SOM, only 45 are African American, 104 are Hispanic, and 8 are Native American. These numbers include clinical attendings, basic science faculty, fellows, and residents.

Curriculum and Research
There are several places within the SOM’s curriculum where cultural diversity issues and racial and ethnic health disparities are covered very well, and are specific to a particular population. The best example is our Indian Health Pathway through the Native American Center of Excellence.

- The Indian Health Pathway (IHP) provides courses, clerkships and certification to medical students who wish to practice in Native American and Alaska Native clinical settings. Students are offered a variety of options to help them become more familiar with issues in American Indian health, develop skills in doing and presenting research, and experiencing health care services and challenges in rural and underserved areas. Students who complete the certification requirements are honored with a Blanket Ceremony at the end of their program. Courses include:
  - University Conjoint 530: Issues in Indian Health: Past, Present and Future
    - Health professionals present on such topics as traditional medicine, paleopathology, urban/reservation Indian health care, and more. Required for certification.
  - Family Medicine 560: Indian Health Problem-Based Learning (PBL)
    - Research and analysis of common and unique American Indian/Alaska Native clinical and patient health problems. Required for certification.
  - Elective Preceptorships and Clerkships: A successful completion of 4 weeks minimum electives in the following areas:
    - Family Medicine 501: Introduction to Family Medicine Preceptorship first and second year medical students participate in this 8-week preceptorship throughout the Pacific Northwest IHP sites. Optional for certification, but a great experience. (2.5 credits)
    - Family Medicine 680: Traditional Indian Medicine Clerkship
      Third and fourth year medical students participate at an urban or reservation healthcare facilities in the Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho (WWAMI) region for 4 weeks to learn how Western physicians collaborate with traditional Indian healers in the administration of care to Native populations. Required for certification. (8-12 credits)
    - Family Medicine 681: Indian Health Medicine Clerkship
      Third and fourth year medical students experience healthcare delivery at an urban or reservation facility in the WWAMI region for 4 weeks. Sites include the Crow reservation, the Lap Wai reservation, the Seattle Indian Health Board (SIHB), and approximately 25 other clerkship sites. Required for certification. (4-12 credits)

Outside of the Indian Health Pathway is a new course that is offered as an elective to medical students:

- Conjoint 450 Health Care for the Underserved
  - Elective
Interactive class that explores health issues faced by underserved populations. Lectures given by experts in the field. Topics include social determinants of health, mental health, addiction, hypertension, diabetes, sexually transmitted diseases, oral health, adolescents, pregnancy, and domestic violence.

One clerkship that is mandatory for either the third and/or fourth year medical students is the Family Medicine Clerkship that has one component of their curriculum cover cultural sensitivity. This is offered through the Department of Family Medicine:

- Family Medicine Clerkship
  - Third year required rotation – 6 weeks
  - Component of the clerkship requires the student to evaluate the practice’s patient’s cultural background. Students given a questionnaire to complete to evaluate their own cultural biases, philosophy, etc. and then discuss with their preceptor.

Otherwise, cultural competency and racial and ethnic health disparities are covered “globally” at best in some of the core curriculum in the first and second years, e.g. Introduction to Clinical Medicine I and II; and Medicine, Health, and Society.

The Independent Investigative Inquiry (III)

The purpose of the III portion of the curriculum is to engage students in activities that will foster the skills of life-long learning essential for practicing physicians in the 21st century. Students are expected to experience generating questions related to the practice of medicine and exploring the various methods available to resolve such questions. The student is strongly urged to select a topic of particular interest to him/her and to investigate the subject independently, utilizing the advice of a sponsor and other resources in the WWAMI community. The OMCA strongly encourages those medical students that have come from underrepresented or disadvantaged backgrounds to select topics that pertain to the underserved populations and/or those populations that underrepresented. Dr. David Acosta serves as a sponsor for those interested students.

Spanish Speaking for the Health Professional (elective)

This elective is a 6 week intensive course that trains the learner in medical Spanish.

The OMCA does not have a research section of their department at this time.

**Future Plans**

These are the department’s plans to improve diversity within our department for the coming year:

1. Recent reapplication for HCOP grant to refund operations for both UDOC and SMEP to allow their continuance.
2. A second recruiter position is presently being advertised in order to expand our efforts.
3. Dr. Acosta’s status on the Executive Committee for Admissions will transition from ex officio non-voting member to an official voting member within this year.

4. A survey is being developed in conjunction with the annual survey of all faculty and chairs of each department in the SOM, and will include questions to delineate how racial and ethnic disparities and cultural competency training are being covered in their respective fields at the present time.

5. Work with Dr. Christina Surawicz, Assistant Dean for Faculty Development Fellowship, in developing cultural competency training for all faculty – to be a part of her Faculty Development Seminars.

6. Curriculum development on cultural competency training and understanding racial and ethnic disparities in health care across the continuum from medical student training → residency training → faculty development. The following strategies are being considered:
   a. Develop Curriculum Development Steering Committee (one for each component: medical students, residents, faculty)
   b. Review and evaluate curricular strategies that have been successful at other institutions of higher education both regionally and nationally.
   c. Consider the development of Health Disparities Pathway with certification process that students can earn throughout their education.
   d. Incorporate curricular changes in areas of the existing curriculum that could accommodate them the best.
   e. Incorporate evidence-based research on racial and ethnic health disparities into the curriculum.
   f. Utilize standardized patients from different ethnic populations for OSCE’s.
   g. Develop evaluation process to measure outcomes incrementally as they relate to cultural competency training throughout all 4 years of medical student training, and throughout residency training.

7. Develop a Grand Rounds on Multiculturalism and Health Disparities.

8. Develop new Multicultural Center of Excellence – expand the Center of Excellence to include instruction pathway for other ethnic populations based on the Native American COE and the Indian Health Pathway model.

9. Expand the present course on Spanish Speaking for the Health Professional by including advance classes for the advanced learner. Also include a continuum for those learners who are just learning how to speak Spanish, and offer them a class on a yearly basis where they can advance their language skills over the 4 years of their medical education.

10. Develop a new research section of the OMCA Department to serve as a resource center for the UWSOM on racial and ethnic health disparities.

11. Develop strategies to recruit faculty of color within the SOM. OMCA is presently working with Dr. Surawicz on this. One strategy is to implement Faculty Development Seminars to help practicing physicians and scientists bridge the gap between practicing medicine and teaching. Another strategy is to increase the number of clinical faculty through activities developed within the Native American Center of Excellence, the Chicano/Latino Mentor Network, and the African American Mentor Network. Representatives from each community have been invited to be part of the mentor networks. OMCA would serve as a liaison to get these clinical attendings faculty appointments within their respective departments.
If there are any questions regarding the above information, please feel free to contact me at your convenience at 206. 616. 3042.

Respectfully submitted,

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