

ACTION PLAN FOR ANTI-RACISM IN MEDICAL EDUCATION

Recommendations from the
Vagelos College of Physicians & Surgeons
Anti-Racism Task Force

REVISED WITH SUMMER 2021 ACTION UPDATES

3

Introduction

4

Focus 1: Curriculum

6

Focus 2: Admissions

8

Focus 3: Student Support

10

Focus 4: Learning Environment

11

Members List: Vagelos College of Physicians & Surgeons Anti-Racism Task Force

The Vagelos College of Physicians & Surgeons (VP&S) Anti-Racism Task Force (ARTF) was commissioned by Anil K. Rustgi, MD, Interim Executive Vice President and Dean of the Faculties of Health Sciences and Medicine; Jonathan Amiel, MD, Senior Associate Dean for Innovation in Health Professions Education; and Lisa Mellman, MD, Senior Associate Dean for Student Affairs at VP&S as part of a Columbia University Irving Medical Center (CUIMC)-wide initiative to confront the issues of structural racism and implement durable anti-racist solutions.

The charge of the Task Force was to recommend best practices in anti-racist undergraduate medical education, focusing on:

1. Curriculum
2. Admissions
3. Student Support
4. The Learning Environment

The ARTF had nine weekly meetings from July to September 2020 and used a rigorous, multi-pronged process for developing our recommendations, including engagement with VP&S area directors and experts, review of statements and presentations from student-led groups (White Coats for Black Lives, Asian Pacific American Medical Student Association, and the Anti-Racist Coalition), and a review of scholarly literature with a focus on anti-racist initiatives within peer medical schools.

We thank VP&S leadership, especially Jonathan Amiel, MD, Senior Associate Dean for Innovation in Health Professions Education; Lisa Mellman, MD, Senior Associate Dean for Student Affairs at VP&S; and Hilda Hutcherson, MD, Senior Associate Dean for Diversity and Multicultural Affairs at VP&S, for their commitment to enhancing the VP&S educational experience through an infusion of anti-racist principles. We thank our patients whom we have the pleasure to serve and who we hope our recommendations will ultimately benefit.

We thank Amita Joshua, MPH, for executing all administrative responsibilities of the ARTF and sharing her perspectives as a recent alumna of the Mailman School of Public Health. We thank the students, faculty, staff, and administrators from CUIMC who have worked tirelessly to create this report.

Each focus area in this report includes (i) top recommendations annotated with an update on the status of discussion and/or implementation and (ii) the full recommendations of the ARTF.

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FOCUS 1: CURRICULUM

The Curriculum Working Group was charged with recommending best practices in anti-racist undergraduate medical education related to the curriculum. Curriculum is the content, methods, and assessment of the formal teaching program. Over the course of two months, we have engaged key stakeholders, critically examined the current state of medical education at VP&S, and begun the process of envisioning what medical education can and should look like through an anti-racist lens. Below are our top recommendations on the first steps toward creating a truly anti-racist VP&S curricular experience, from pedagogy to the practice of medicine.

TOP RECOMMENDATIONS

Launch an annual summit on anti-racist principles for faculty to revisit, assess, and make recommendations for ongoing improvements to the curriculum.

Launch a new Equity & Justice committee, including departmental diversity champions and students who will have representation on the Committee on Education Policy and Curriculum (CEPC).

Create and implement ongoing faculty development on race and racism for teaching faculty by individuals grounded in critical race theory.

Share biannual updates with VP&S community on anti-racist action in the medical education program.

Add Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) competencies to the school's medical education program objectives.

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The inaugural summit occurred in February 2021.

We are in the process of creating a new anti-racism coalition. This committee will work on and propose the best mechanism for their voice to best be heard on CEPC as well as other committees. Once recommendations are developed, the Office of Education will work with the Office of Faculty Affairs to ensure implementation.

CUIMC has developed system-wide training for faculty to complete. The Office of Innovations in Health Professions Education also provides resources for faculty in this area.

The initial Action Plan for Anti-Racism in Medical Education report was shared in 2020. We are currently updating our tracking and follow up protocols.

DEI competencies are being developed nationally (AAMC). VP&S will continue to work with this group.

TOP RECOMMENDATIONS

Highlight the school's bias-free curriculum process in orientations and at each teaching session.

Enhance simulation program with a higher representation of standardized patients (SPs) of color and ongoing monitoring for disparities in student ratings.

Commission a Task Force on clerkship assessments including departmental leaders, clerkship directors, and students to enhance shared learning about grading, critically assess current practices, and jointly develop and promote best practices.

Explore expanded longitudinal primary care opportunities for all students to work with patients in Upper Manhattan communities.

SUMMER 2021 ACTION UPDATES

All faculty teaching in Fundamentals have been oriented to the bias-free curriculum process. Many lectures have noted their work in this area at each teaching session. The process will be introduced to Major Clinical Year faculty.

The Mary & Michael Jaharis Simulation Center is actively recruiting SPs of color. The recruitment has increased the proportion of SPs of color. Several faculty are studying the data on student ratings.

There was a task force on Major Clinical Year grading that successfully provided options for possible changes. Further monitoring of disparate grading is underway as well as ensuring harm is mitigated. Continued review of this issue will happen during curriculum re-envisioning.

Initial conversations began for primary care development and expansion with CUIMC leadership.

FOCUS 2: ADMISSIONS

The Admissions Working Group was charged with recommending best practices in anti-racist undergraduate medical education related to the admissions process. Below are our top recommendations on the first steps toward creating a truly anti-racist VP&S admissions process.

TOP RECOMMENDATIONS

Engage an external consultant to review VP&S admissions processes for alignment with anti-racist principles.

Implement anti-racism and anti-bias training for all admissions interviewers.

Ensure the scoring rubric and comments form used for admissions interviews are aligned with anti-racist principles and further the mission of recruiting a diverse class.

Reassess the utilization of MCAT scores and GPAs in admissions decisions and the role of U.S. News & World Report medical school rankings.

Commit to admitting and matriculating more students who are underrepresented in medicine Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) and, more specifically, African American descendants of enslaved people and Native American indigenous people.

SUMMER 2021 ACTION UPDATES

External consultant report was submitted to vice dean in June 2021.

All admissions committee members have been invited to complete the training and requested to provide documentation of completion.

The screening rubric has been updated to reflect our priorities of an anti-racist strategy.

The admission office focuses on holistic review of all applicants.

The admissions committee is committed to admitting a diverse class inclusive of African American descendants of enslaved people and Native American indigenous people.

TOP RECOMMENDATIONS

Commit to recruiting and admitting more students from Asian populations underrepresented in medicine (e.g., Hmong, Vietnamese).

Publish demographics of students by race/ethnicity and gender on admissions website.

Commit to recruiting and admitting capable students from historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and enhancing representation from non-Ivy/high-ranked schools.

SUMMER 2021 ACTION UPDATES

Admissions uses AMCAS and other self-identification in the admissions application to identify students from underrepresented in medicine Asian populations.

This information is posted on the admissions FAQs website.

Admissions has increased its outreach to HBCUs.

FOCUS 3: STUDENT SUPPORT

The Student Support Working Group was charged with recommending best practices in anti-racist services that support student engagement, inclusion, health, well-being, and safety. Over the course of two months, we have spoken with key stakeholders, critically examined the current state of student support services and issues around inclusion, health, well-being, and safety at VP&S and CUIMC, and begun the process of envisioning a truly supportive, inclusive and anti-racist campus in which all students can thrive. Below are our top recommendations on the first steps toward shaping CUIMC and VP&S to meet this vision.

TOP RECOMMENDATIONS

Increase funding, resources, and staffing to support expanded functions of the VP&S Office of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs (ODMA).

Enhance mentorship programs pairing under-represented medical students and faculty (e.g., Black, Latinx, Indigenous, first-generation, and low-income students).

Develop a sustainable CUIMC-wide plan to celebrate the history and culture of minority physicians and students.

Maintain funding for school-supported student resources, including for United States Medical Licensing Examinations for all students and enhanced equitable access to study materials.

Monitor underrepresented in medicine and Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) students' needs and satisfaction with the Student Health on Haven Counseling Service.

SUMMER 2021 ACTION UPDATES

New coordinator recruited and new faculty advisor positions implemented to support and mentor students of color.

Mentoring programs for Black and Latinx students have been established with ODMA and Alumni Office. A faculty advisory program has been established for student affinity groups.

This work is being done in conjunction with the CUIMC Deans for Student Affairs and CUIMC Deans for Diversity and Multicultural Affairs.

Discussions are now ongoing in regards to how we might expand resources.

This is monitored by the Director of the Student Health on Haven Counseling Service in connection with the Senior Associate Dean for Diversity and Multicultural Affairs.

TOP RECOMMENDATIONS

Provide students with guidance about academic/career consequences of participating in peaceful protests.

Enhance transparency for Public Safety policies, protocols for filing complaints, staff training including de-escalation, and remediation for CUIMC community members who erroneously or inappropriately report BIPOC and/or AAPI people to Public Safety.

Increase support of local minority-owned businesses, expanding their inclusion on the Approved Vendors List.

Recruit more BIPOC faculty and appoint more as core curricular faculty, leaders, and Advisory Deans.

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Resources are provided to students in this regard, as well as guidance from the AAMC.

Conversations continue with the University's Executive Vice President for Student Life. Work with the findings of the University's Task Force on Public Safety.

Review and monitoring are being done by CUIMC Office of Government and Community Affairs.

Continue to work with CUIMC on recruitment and retention issues. Review opportunities for educational leadership positions for current faculty who can bring a diverse lens.

FOCUS 4: LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The Learning Environment Working Group was charged with recommending best practices in anti-racist undergraduate medical education related to the learning environment, including the treatment of students in curricular settings, referring to clinical and classroom environments. Below are our top recommendations on the first steps toward creating a truly anti-racist VP&S learning environment.

TOP RECOMMENDATIONS

Improve interdisciplinary and interdepartmental professionalism.

Make anti-racist and cultural sensitivity trainings mandatory for all educators, including MCY educators, and emphasize that discriminatory behavior is unacceptable and punishable for even the most senior faculty members.

Collaborate with leaders to target areas in which the hospital's allocation of resources shape/structure the environments and staff experiences that inform students' experiences.

SUMMER 2021 ACTION UPDATES

A new CUIMC Office of Professionalism and Civility will open in fall 2021 and this is part of its focus.

CUIMC has developed system-wide training for faculty to complete. The Office of Innovations in Health Professions Education also provides resources for faculty in this area. Further work is ongoing on the development of trainings in the new Office of Professionalism and Civility.

This action is also part of the focus of the new CUIMC Office of Professionalism.

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