Commitment to Inclusion and Diversity Penn Medicine

As the nation’s first institution of higher learning devoted to the art and science of medicine, the University of Pennsylvania sits at the threshold of a new era of academic medicine. It is a time when advances in science can more realistically close the gap between potential and reality. At this pivotal moment, there is an opportunity to more fully embrace a social contract with society. As stated by Dean Larry Jameson in the Introduction to the Perelman School of Medicine Plan for Faculty Diversity and Inclusion, “By fostering a vibrant and dynamic environment of inclusion, the Perelman School of Medicine will continue to welcome opportunities to address challenges and excel in academic medicine.” This commitment to embracing inclusion and diversity extends across all settings at Penn Medicine, including the workplace, classroom, and healthcare environments.

During a recent strategic planning process, faculty emphasized this commitment in the following statement:

“Diversity is a defining feature of an eminent medical school. The Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania embraces diversity and inclusion as core values. We are committed to the recruitment, retention, promotion and advancement of faculty reflecting a multitude of ethnicities, races, genders, gender identities, sexual orientations, historical traditions, ages, religions, disabilities, veteran status, and socioeconomic backgrounds. We are dedicated to enriching both depth and breadth of backgrounds, experiences, perspectives, and ideas represented in our institution to strengthen the quality of education, produce innovative research and deliver health care to increasingly diverse local and global communities. By fostering a vibrant and dynamic environment of inclusion, the Perelman School of Medicine will continue to welcome opportunities to address challenges and excel in academic medicine.”

To support these efforts, Dean Larry Jameson established the Office of Inclusion and Diversity (OID) in 2013. The mission of the OID, led by Eve Higginbotham SM, MD, is to strengthen the quality of education, produce innovative research, and support the delivery of high-quality, patient-centered care by fostering a vibrant, inclusive environment that fully embraces diversity. The OID will work jointly with academic offices, including but not limited to the Offices of Medical Education (Gail Morrison MD) and Graduate Medical Education (Jeffrey Berns MD), clinical departments, the University of Pennsylvania Health System, and others to accomplish this mission. The following are a few examples of the programs in place to advance these objectives.

THE ALLIANCE OF MINORITY PHYSICIANS: Led by Drs. Iris Reyes, Kiona Allen (Pediatric Cardiology Fellow), and Mikhail Higgins (Radiology Resident), this program supports underrepresented minority medical students, house staff, and faculty in mentoring families to enhance networking and professional development.

FOCUS on Health & Leadership for Women: Led by Dr. Stephanie Abbuhl, this program has two missions: (1) to support the advancement and leadership of women (2) to promote research and education in women’s health and careers. Since 1994, FOCUS has developed numerous initiatives including seminars and workshops; biennial reports of Penn gender statistics; conferences with national speakers; extramural grant support for research and medical student fellowships; Section for Women Residents and Fellows; Women’s Health Scholar Certificate Program; and the RO1-funded NIH-TAC randomized intervention trial. See www.focusprogram.org

PENN MEDICINE PROGRAM FOR LGBT HEALTH: Led by Dr. Baligh Yehia, this unique interdisciplinary program, involving the Perelman School of Medicine, School of Nursing, School of Dental Medicine, and affiliated health systems, supports the health and wellbeing of LGBT populations by advancing LGBT climate and visibility, health education, research, patient care, and community outreach.

Moreover, there are a number of faculty-led community initiatives which welcome broad participation of interested house staff such as Puentes de Salud (Steve Larson MD) and Penn Asian Health Initiatives (Giang Nguyen MD, MPH, MSCE). We look forward to welcoming you here to continue your training. Any questions you may have regarding any of these initiatives, please contact the Office of Inclusion and Diversity at PSOM, oid@mail.med.upenn.edu or 215-898-6006.