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STFM RELEASES ONLINE COURSE ON URM LEADERSHIP PATHWAYS IN ACADEMIC MEDICINE

STFM has launched URM Leadership Pathways in Academic Medicine, a new, free online course to help underrepresented in medicine (URM) faculty hone their leadership skills. "Simply becoming faculty as a URM individual is often a long and arduous path with many obstacles," said Cleveland Piggott, MD, MPH, co-author of the new online course. "Then there are barriers to obtaining positions of leadership."

The course was developed by a URM Leadership Workgroup as part of STFM's multi-year URM Initiative, supported by the STFM Foundation and the American Board of Family Medicine Foundation. The new interactive course consists of 2 modules with recorded advice from experienced faculty, plus assignments to help learners set career goals, project their leadership voices, build professional networks, and identify opportunities for career advancement.

In the fall of 2019, STFM created a URM Leadership Workgroup with objectives to:

- Increase the percentage of URM family medicine faculty in leadership positions in academic medicine
- Raise awareness of the structural barriers to URM achievement

This workgroup is made up of family medicine faculty across the country representing backgrounds inside and outside of academic medicine at various points in their academic career.

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Family medicine recognizes the need to make diversity, equity, inclusion, and antiracism part of its core values. Though a lack of racial/ethnic diversity in medicine has been a known problem for decades, the results of the 2016 Leadership Development Taskforce formed by the Council of Academic Family Medicine helped elucidate some of the particular challenges faced by underrepresented minorities (URM) and women in family medicine.¹

It became clear to the group that they needed to create an enduring product talking about issues of URM leadership pathways and barriers in order to reach those who could not attend conferences or did not have support at their own institutions. Presentations and papers talking about these issues were a step in the right direction but were insufficient as the only means of addressing this issue. This product needed to use the principles of adult learning theory² to help URM physicians at all walks of life be successful.

STFM's past successful online courses provided a basic template and process to help create these modules on URM leadership pathways. To select what topics should be included, the group reviewed the literature and talked to successful leaders inside and outside of family medicine. The workgroup also brought their own experiences, challenges, and expertise to the table. "Throughout the process, attention was paid to exploring the barriers for URM faculty in balance with the potential rewards and meaning for a career as a family medicine educator," said Elizabeth H. Naumburg, MD, chair of the URM Leadership work group.

Having the modules be short and interactive was key to align with evidence-based techniques for teaching adult learners. It was important that the product be free to avoid creating barriers to access. In creating the course, URM family medicine educators were intentionally invited to share their wisdom and lived experiences as a form of virtual mentorship for each of the topics. In addition, to cement learning and make the course as interactive as possible, each topic has practical assigned activities such as learning about the promotion criteria in your institution or defining your own values and goals for your career.

Course Objectives:

- Assess the pathways to academic leadership in 4 domains
- Navigate and advance in academia by aligning opportunities with goals
- Find mentors, coaches, and sponsors
- Understand the financial impact of career choices
- Recognize what's valued for scholarship and promotion at your institution
- Find balance between your commitments and personal priorities
- Overcome isolation by building your professional networks
- Manage conflict in skillful and intentional ways
- Project your leadership voice

While URM Leadership Pathways in Academic Medicine was created with URM faculty in mind, it is also beneficial for allies who want to create a more welcoming and inclusive environment at their institutions. The retention of URM faculty is a major obstacle to increasing the presence of URM individuals in family medicine. Hearing from URM educators about issues of significance to them can raise awareness for allies on important structural issues that are common to virtually all institutions.

The course emphasizes the critical importance of URM representation in leadership and how URM faculty can shape

their own trajectory to to find a meaningful career in academic leadership.

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