Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Effective Date: 04/04/2016 Date Revised: 04/12/2016

Purpose

The Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine (ESFCOM) at Washington State University is committed to and values diversity and inclusion as assets to achieving excellence in its mission through education, research, clinical care, and service. Diversity and inclusion are essential to achieving the mission of the ESFCOM, improving access to quality healthcare, reducing health disparities, promoting equity and improving the health of communities in Washington State and beyond.

The ESFCOM’s commitment to diversity and inclusion is a part of Washington State University’s commitment and goal to create and sustain a university community that is diverse, inclusive and equitable, as expressed in its most recent Strategic Plan (2014-2019). This goal includes sub-goals to recruit, retain and advance a diverse intellectual mix of faculty, staff, and students, including women and those from underrepresented groups, as well as maintain respectful, inclusive and equitable behavior in all university environments.

The ESFCOM is committed to providing a diverse and inclusive environment for faculty, students, and staff. Diversity is defined as a community that appreciates, values and seeks different dimensions such as race, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, religious beliefs, experiences, perspectives, lifestyles, sexual orientation, geographic regions and cultures. Inclusion is defined as creating a supportive environment so that all have an opportunity to succeed.

The ESFCOM believes that diversity and inclusion enhance and enrich the educational and academic environment by creating understanding, sensitivity, awareness, cultural competency and cross cultural understanding that allow students, faculty and staff not merely to accept and tolerate, but to embrace and celebrate the distinctive perspectives and viewpoints of their patients and each other. An educational environment that values diversity and inclusion practices self-awareness, bidirectional learning, and the ability to engage patients and others with humility and respect. The ESFCOM collegiate, faculty and staff will be versed in recognizing conscious and unconscious bias and actively pursue each opportunity to reduce the impact of these biases in clinical care and society. They will internalize teamwork, new and different cultural perspectives and practices, incorporate cultural and linguistic competency, and espouse empathy for individuals and the context of their lives, families and communities. As a result, diversity and inclusion can improve the quality of clinical services delivered to diverse populations.

Diversity and inclusion enhances research by ensuring that research methods accurately address the issues, perspectives and needs of diverse populations, reflect cultural competency, help reduce health disparities, and improve access to healthcare. Diversity and inclusion can also bring innovation to research, including new and better methods to assess and improve population health. Diversity and inclusion strengthen the partnerships with communities served by the medical school and supplants faculty and graduates that advocate those ideals to the communities wherein they serve.

Policy

The ESFCOM will implement a variety of strategies to achieve its mission through a commitment to diversity and inclusion in its students, faculty and staff:

1) Leadership – the ESFCOM will demonstrate its commitment to diversity and inclusion through its leadership, policies and practices, including establishing:
   a. An Associate Dean for Diversity, Inclusion and Leadership position that reports directly to the Dean and is a member of the Dean’s Cabinet
   b. A Diversity Policy to guide all efforts to promote diversity and inclusion
   c. An Equity Committee as a standing committee under the ESFCOM bylaws to advise leadership on diversity and inclusion policy and practice, including identifying underrepresented and underserved populations and developing initiatives to facilitate an environment conducive to diversity and inclusion
   d. Regular training on diversity and cultural competence for leadership, faculty and staff

2) Recruitment strategies – the ESFCOM will develop a variety of recruitment strategies to ensure a diverse applicant pool. This will include:
a. Developing pipeline programs to recruit students to become physicians, focusing on specific target groups that will enhance the ESFCOM’s ability to meet its mission, including students:
   
   i. From rural communities with less than 25,000 population

   ii. Who are first generation in the health professions/medicine

   iii. From groups underrepresented in medicine in Washington State

       1. American Indian/Alaska Native

       2. Hispanic/Latino

b. Developing recruitment strategies to ensure a diverse pool of applicants for faculty and staff positions, with a focus on recruiting the following groups:

   i. Female Gender

   ii. American Indian/Alaska Native

   iii. Hispanic/Latino

c. Developing a recruitment and hiring policy for search committees to promote diversity and inclusion

d. Partnering with ESFCOM stakeholders to develop pipeline programs and recruiting strategies

e. Developing mechanisms to track, recruit and retain students along the physician career pathway from K-12 to practice

   f. Considering development of a bridge program or post baccalaureate program to provide students an opportunity to enhance their academic skills and to improve their chances for admission to medical school

3) Admissions strategies – the ESFCOM will develop a holistic admissions process that considers metrics, experiences and attributes. The interview will use Multiple Mini Interview formats (MMI) wherein each interviewing unit will assess a particular characteristic to ensure that the student body is broadly diverse and to help meet the mission of the college, while complying with federal and state law.

4) Education – the ESFCOM will include education on diversity and inclusion in the curriculum for students, including education and training in:

   a. Cultural Competency/Cultural Humility

   b. Conscious and Unconscious Bias

   c. Social Determinants of Health/Health Disparities/Population Health

   d. Working in Interprofessional Teams

   e. Leadership

5) Retention of students, faculty and staff – the ESFCOM will develop strategies to retain students, faculty and staff and continue to achieve its diversity and inclusion goals by establishing:

   a. Student support services, tutoring, advising and academic counseling that cater to the needs of a diverse student body

   b. Training and development opportunities for faculty and staff
c. Financial aid, scholarships and funding opportunities to aid in both recruitment and retention

d. Partnerships with student affairs, human resources, and the Office of Equal Opportunity

6) Awareness – the ESFCOM will help applicants, students, faculty and staff learn about its commitment to diversity and inclusion through statements and policies that will be disseminated widely through references on the medical school website, medical student handbook, faculty handbook, recruitment materials, student orientation, and other venues as needed. Focus groups, town hall meetings and other forums will be used to share policies and build a culture of diversity, inclusion and transparency.

7) Evaluation – the ESFCOM will develop evaluation and assessment of its activities to promote diversity and inclusion, through development of goals, objectives, outcomes, and monitoring through a continuous quality improvement process.

8) Commitment across ESFCOM Departments – the ESFCOM comprises three departments: Medical Education and Clinical Sciences, Biomedical Sciences, and Speech and Hearing Sciences. Some departments have or will have non-physician degree-granting programs, and those departments will identify specific underrepresented groups for outreach programs, recruitment and admission processes that may differ from medical students but will not differ in their commitments to diversity and inclusion.

Implementation of these initiatives will enable ESFCOM to achieve its mission by promoting diversity and inclusion among students, faculty and staff. In so doing, the ESFCOM will enrich education, research, clinical care and service activities and improve access to quality care for all communities in Washington State and beyond.