



A Challenging Future Ahead for Undergraduate Medical Education

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Educating and training physician providers, leaders, scientists, advocates, and educators of tomorrow is a daunting task amidst an ever-changing healthcare landscape, political climate in America, and a realization that our healthcare systems of the past may not be best in serving the patients and workers within them, especially as we undertake the critical mission to diversify our physician workforce. This is with the backdrop of – to name a few things – what has been declared a moral crisis for physicians today, the rising costs of education in America, and the emergence from a pandemic that depleted our healthcare systems.

Brown University launched its medical school in 1972. Serving the state for the past 50 years, today The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University (AMS) is Rhode Island's only medical school, placing it in a unique position to lead these educational efforts both locally and nationally. AMS undergraduate medical education (UME) leaders are considering many factors as we navigate this treacherous landscape and think about how to best serve our students, faculty, and diverse communities. Our efforts all focus on the goal of taking the best care of patients in the future.

Curriculum review & The Office of Belonging, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (OBEDI)

The medical school will begin to undertake a curriculum review over the next 12 to 18 months. In doing so, we will think about who we are educating and what we are placing in the curriculum. Our student body today is different from the student body 50 years ago, and our appreciation of the diverse backgrounds and life experiences students bring to AMS that shape how they learn continues to grow. The Office of Belonging, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (OBEDI), led by inaugural Senior Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Dr. Patricia Poitevien, is a national leader and critical for these efforts. The comprehensive goals, programming, and outcomes, all focused on sustainable health equity for individuals and community, are outlined in the article in this edition authored by members of that office.

Community engagement and service learning in AMS curriculum

Our understanding of knowledge areas that are essential to the health of our populations and communities continues to expand and evolve. We know medical school must be more than pathology and organ systems for physicians of tomorrow to be successful. At AMS we continue to integrate essential topics such as population and planetary health, artificial intelligence, professional identity formation, life-

style medicine and service learning, to name a few, into our curriculum. Within this special edition, our leaders in the Office of Medical Education describe how we have incorporated community engagement and service learning into the AMS curriculum. These efforts can impact professional development and build sustainable, mutually beneficial relationships with our communities, ultimately improving the health of those within the communities.

Student wellness efforts

Along with the who and what, medical education leaders need to think critically and creatively about how we are delivering material, assessing student learning and skills, and handing students off to our graduate medical education colleagues. The article from OBEDI outlines how we are working to achieve inclusive learning and teaching practices, with faculty coaching and mentorship for inclusive teaching and review of student-submitted curricular opportunity forms. Supporting student and faculty well-being is essential throughout. This includes intentional wellness programming alongside safe and positive working and learning environments free of mistreatment. At the forefront of this work at AMS and nationally, leaders from the Office of Student Affairs have outlined their efforts in this space in the article "An Integrative Approach to Addressing Medical Student Mistreatment and Promoting Student Well-Being." A healthy, resilient student body leads to a physician workforce that is well positioned for a challenging future, and better outcomes for patients and communities served.

Yes, the task set in front of us is daunting, and with that comes anticipation and excitement. As you will read, AMS faculty and staff have already made incredible strides in many areas. We are at an inflection point of change. We are positioned to make continued positive impacts in the state and beyond. And we will do so by continuing our legacy of listening to our students, thinking creatively, and embracing innovation.

Author

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