



Improving Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Across Residencies at Wayne State: A Perspective from Dermatology

Starling Tolliver, MD; Jahanavi Ramakrishna, MD; Dr. Stansfield

INTRODUCTION

Increasing diversity in the physician workforce improves patient outcomes and facilitates increased cultural competency among peers. Over the last few years there has been an explosion in interest for increasing diversity, however, actionable program specific items remain elusive. The Wayne State University School of Medicine (WSU) uniquely serves one of the most diverse patient populations in the country and as such has an opportunity to develop pipelines of access into medicine for students underrepresented in medicine (URIM).

METHODS

We used our extensive past experience in improving DEI and evidenced based URIM recruitment strategies to develop a guideline tailored to our residency in dermatology with 7 focus areas: research, mentorship, recruitment, community education, wellness, professional development, and building allies. In the 2021-22 academic year, the WSU Dermatology residency program implemented this plan through curriculum design and administration support.

- **Research:** Increase URIM medical student and resident research through SEMCME workshops, direct funneling of research projects, and targeted journal clubs.
- **Mentorship:** Building pipelines through mini-medical school events (K-6th grade), high school chats, involvement in MAPs, SNMA and other diverse organizations, cross residency URIM networking events, and direct mentoring through diverse attendings. Providing tutor services and initiated ambassador program.
- **Recruitment:** Encourage vendor participation in national conferences (ex. LMSA/SNMA), building a diverse resident class through holistic review, diversity meet and greets, and hiring of diverse faculty.
- **Community Education:** Participate in community health fairs and free clinics
- **Wellness:** Creating an environment of understanding and support for URIMs through safe spaces, increasing cultural competence, and cultural holiday recognition.
- **Professional Development:** Encourage society leadership participation, conference submission, professional development training, and invitation diverse grand rounds speakers.
- **Building Allies:** Develop health disparities curriculum for both faculty and residents

FIGURES



Figure 1: Skin of Color Journal Club



Figure 2: High School Skin of Color Education Series

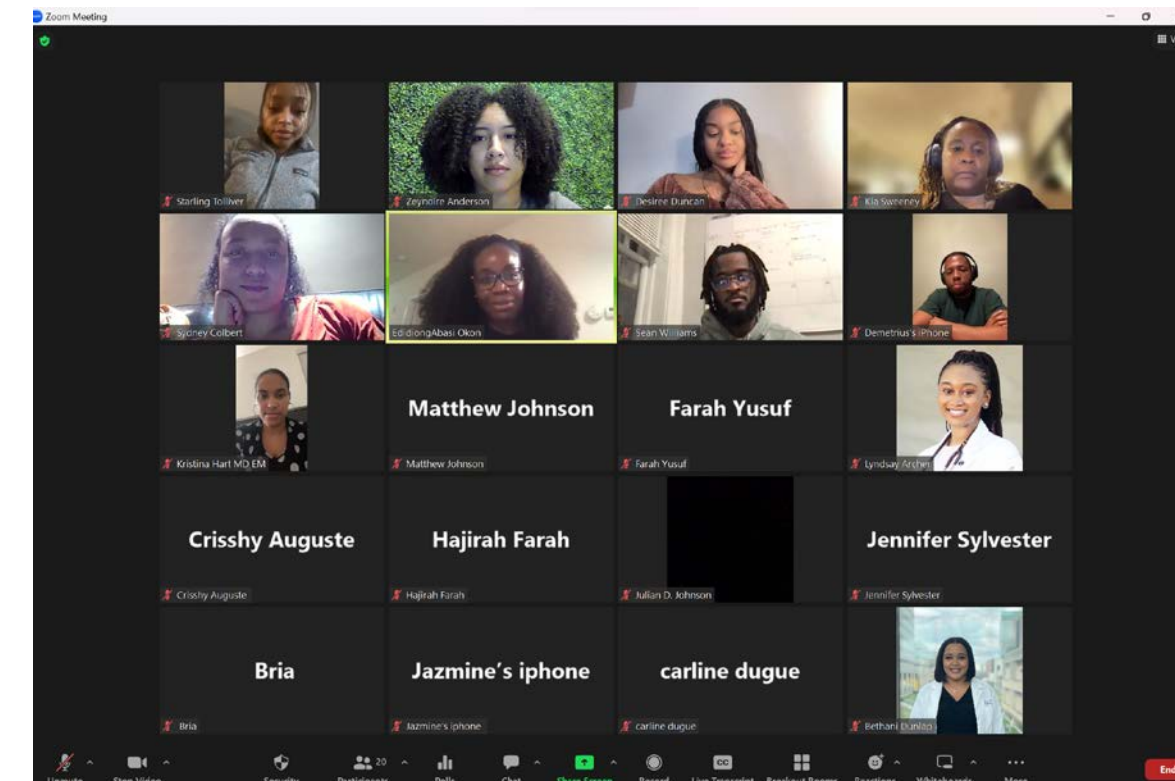


Figure 3: Competitive Specialty Panel

RESULTS

Initiative resulted in substantive URIM participation across many stages of education. Increase in interest in Dermatology and Medicine was noted pre/post test analysis of high school students. The initiative has been well received by non-URIM residents, faculty and Wayne State administration. Some accomplishments are as follows:

- Multiple posters, abstracts, presentations, and publications currently in submission.
- Over 250 URIM high school students reached with skin of color curriculum.
- Established community connection for upcoming mini-medical school event and health fair
- Journal club and Panel participation with URIM student organizations.
- Initiated monthly Chair free clinic meetings for URIM applicants
- We developed multiple outreach parameters such as our diversity meet and greet, ambassador program, and conference outreach.
- Development of health disparities curriculum
- Partnership with Wayne State free clinic
- Initiated personal statement workshops and mock interviews
- We developed a holistic recruitment and interview guide shared with all WSU residency programs.

CONCLUSIONS

The initiative strengthened the program's connection to URIM learners and to underserved patient communities. In the future, we will participate in community health fairs and festivals to increase awareness of skin conditions unique to these populations. We have increased URIM resident wellness through safe spaces, professional development through the WSU Graduate Medical Education Office's (GME) Developing Active Resident Teachers (DART) program and co-developed our health disparities curriculum in order to build allies. Institutional change can be slow, but with focused passionate leadership, institutional support and resources, major strides can be made for DEI at WSU.