

## **Mid-Career Faculty Leadership Program project executive summary**

### **“Inclusive Pedagogy: Teach all to care for all”**

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#### **Program Goal**

BUSM strives for inclusive pedagogy as a method of teaching that is learner-centered and equity-focused with a goal of preparing diverse students and trainees to actively advance diversity, inclusion and equity in teaching, research, and clinical missions of BUSM.

Our goals were to:

- Complete a needs assessment with quantitative survey and qualitative interviews with School of Medicine basic science and clinical medical educators
- Develop an implementation framework for an inclusive pedagogy faculty development program

#### **Significance**

Inclusive pedagogy is a student-centered approach to teaching in which faculty create an inviting and engaging learning environment for all students with varied backgrounds, learning styles, and physical and cognitive abilities in the classroom and the clinic<sup>1</sup>. An important priority on the Boston University Medical Campus (BUMC) is diversity in our community as such diversity leads to better learning, more impactful research, improved patient outcomes, and reduced disparities in healthcare<sup>2</sup>. If we are to attract and retain a diverse and talented student body, we must create a learning environment in which people of all backgrounds and with a multitude of perspectives can thrive. Moreover, teaching inclusively is essential to meet the mission of BUSM and BUMC to train diverse groups of students and trainees who will define and deliver equitable care<sup>3</sup>. Medical teams who embrace diversity provide better healthcare. Finally, reflecting on our teaching

environments and practices and making strides towards improving the safety and inclusivity of our learning spaces can have a dramatic impact on students' learning outcomes<sup>1</sup>.

All schools on the medical campus are striving to address the challenge of inclusive pedagogy. The focus of this study was on the environment, context, and needs of the School of Medicine. The recommendations of this project can be expanded and mutualized for all schools on the medical campus.

## **Methods**

We used a design thinking approach to perform a needs assessment at the School of Medicine and to develop recommendations.

### *Internal and external environment scans*

We reviewed resources on inclusive pedagogy available at BUMC and at other institutions. We reviewed the reports from the Vertical Integration Groups (VIGs) on racism and gender and sexual diversity; we also reviewed resources and seminars at BUSPH (<https://www.bu.edu/sph/faculty-staff/teaching-and-learning/inclusive-teaching/> and <https://www.bu.edu/sph/conversations/uncategorized/teaching-public-health-diversity-inclusion-equity-and-justice/>). We reviewed resources from other institutions as well, for example from the Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching at Iowa State University (<https://www.celt.iastate.edu/teaching/creating-an-inclusive-classroom/>) and we compiled a list of articles, exemplar initiatives, and tip sheets for inclusive teaching.

### *Stakeholder interviews*

We met with our sponsors and completed interviews with stakeholders at BUSM, BUSPH, and BU Wheelock. Detailed notes from these meetings were recorded and guided us through various phases of the project. In particular, it led us to refine the scope and focus on developing a culture of inclusive pedagogy..

### *Faculty and student survey*

We developed a simple survey using REDCap and disseminated it to BUSM faculty and students. The survey gave a brief definition of inclusive pedagogy and then asked respondents to list three things that BUSM was doing well to support the practice and three “pain points” related to inclusive pedagogy. Respondents were asked to rank their answers in order of importance. The survey also asked if respondents would be willing to participate in a confidential (virtual) “empathy interview” so that we could gain additional insight into the experience of teaching and learning at BUSM with regard to inclusivity.

### *Empathy interviews*

We completed a series of empathy interviews with students, residents, and faculty to better understand how these stakeholders experienced teaching and learning at BUSM with regard to inclusivity. Using a script, we asked open-ended questions and avoided leading questions; we also tried to probe deeper with follow-up questions. Notes for each interview were recorded.

### *Identification of themes*

We reviewed all survey and interview notes, to identify themes and note commonalities. Themes drawn from the survey and interviews helped us to understand specific actions that we can take to improve inclusive pedagogy at our institution. Through team meetings and with the help of the rest of this year's MFL cohort, we brainstormed solutions and prioritized a set of initiatives which we believe will move us toward an optimally inclusive learning environment.

### **Results from survey and empathy interviews**

The results revealed a strong interest on the part of both faculty and students in establishing a culture of inclusion and trust in our educational spaces. Faculty want to better understand how best to be inclusive in their teaching and also increase comfort with addressing challenging conversations with students in person, in the classroom or in a clinical setting. In addition, a major need expressed is the creation of an environment in which faculty can talk with their peers about inclusion and how to navigate through these challenges.

The empathy interviews conducted with the students revealed that students want to be aware of how to give feedback promptly and in a professional manner to avoid conflicts with their professors. At the same time they would like for the BUSM to provide and sustain a healthy and effective feedback system that leads to productive actions.

Therefore we propose the following initiatives to promote a stronger culture of inclusivity at BUSM.

### *A three-pillar approach to creating a culture of inclusivity*

1. Formal Training for Faculty in Inclusive Pedagogy
  - BUSM should provide formal training for teaching faculty on “Introduction to Inclusive Pedagogy” that covers the basic knowledge and practice in how to create an inclusive learning environment.
    - Model 1: Frequent, quick interventions (e.g. daily quick tips; short high-yield trainings at curricular meetings, etc.)
    - Model 2: Workshop-style training with opportunities for interaction and practice
  - Specific implementation suggestions include:
    - Recommend that the format of training involves both didactic and interactive components as faculty frequently voice the need to practice.
    - All teaching faculty should participate at least once
    - Ideally the training should be available to all educators in all schools on the medical campus. However, the needs in the three schools differ and there is unlikely to be a “one size fits all” training.
    - We highlight the opportunity to leverage the CME office's resources in curriculum development in order to grant CME credit

- Models for sustainability:
  - Program should be overseen by a funded individual focused on Diversity and Inclusion in our educational mission
  - Deliver the training through existing meetings or departmental faculty development times and activities. Tie faculty completion to the annual review process.
  - Use a “train the trainer” model, whereby a group of interested faculty are trained first, and this group can train additional faculty members throughout the institution.
- We propose the development of a set of resources and initiatives to supplement the development program. Many of these resources exist or are actively being developed, and include:
  - Resources currently being compiled by the Medical Education Office and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (glossaries, checklists for reviewing materials for inclusivity, etc.)
  - Individual “experts” who have been identified as go-to people for advice and support for faculty working on ensuring the inclusivity of materials.

## 2. Opportunities for Communication

We propose the creation of a forum which allows for faculty to communicate with their colleagues, get support and feedback, and learn from each other how to create an inclusive learning environment.

Model 1: Networks of peers who agree to observe each others’ teaching and provide feedback through the lens of inclusive pedagogy

Model 2: Regular “talking circles” for faculty and staff to share best practices for inclusive teaching and discuss situations that arise

## 3. Ongoing Monitoring of the Learning Environment

We propose routine, systematic evaluation of the inclusivity of the learning environment to ensure that we are making good and consistent progress. It is important to acknowledge and accept that asking about inclusivity will undoubtedly sometimes result in poor scores for this trait. This is a worthy outcome if it results in identifying instances of exclusivity in the learning environment resulting in opportunities to improve.

Model 1: Create a portal for learners to report feedback in the moment

Model 2: Regular, systematic evaluation of the inclusivity of both courses and the curriculum overall

A practical way to address the suggestion in Model 1 is to add a “tier” to the trusted ATM reporting system that would collect instances of non-inclusive teaching for review and examination by the ATM committee, with regular reporting to the school’s executive committee.

Finally, while not a formal part of our proposal, we want to highlight a complementary component of culture change which is the role of the students. Our interviews revealed that students are also uncertain how to respond to exclusionary faculty comments or teaching materials. We believe that the students would also benefit from training similar to the LIFT training, which gives strategies for responding to microaggressions. We propose the creation of a formal training for students inspired by the LIFT model about how to give feedback in the classroom, to be administered during Orientation or early in the year.

### **Challenges/Limitations**

The scope of this project is broad, encompassing training events and resources, improved evaluation and accountability, and entertaining lofty notions of culture change. Without an identified leader or champion, these efforts could be lost in the many worthwhile initiatives taking place at BUSM. We propose identifying an individual faculty “champion” to focus on implementation and to serve as a go-to resource for students and faculty with regard to matters of inclusive pedagogy.

Another limitation to implementing these recommendations is potential faculty uptake. While the majority of faculty with whom we met express a strong desire for training in inclusive teaching, there will likely be a group of faculty who don’t feel they need improvement in this area, or who are less invested because they have more limited roles in teaching. Delivering training through existing departmental or institutional learning avenues (such as scheduled faculty development meetings) would help capture all faculty members. Using these structures would also allow for updates to training as the topic of inclusive pedagogy changes.

### **Next Steps**

The next step for our group is to continue advocating for a faculty champion to spearhead the creation of focused training. We will leverage the experience of the School of Public Health to create communication opportunities. In addition, we will work with the Medical Education Office towards ongoing measurement of the inclusiveness of our teaching environment through course evaluations and institutional surveys of the learning environment.

### **Endnotes**

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3. <https://www.bumc.bu.edu/busm/admissions/introduction-to-busm/mission-statement/> accessed 2/9/2021

## Appendix 1.

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<https://www.chronicle.com/article/We-Can-t-Ignore-This/249001>

## **Appendix 2.**

### **Resources from Outside Institutions**

Universal Design for Learning: <http://www.cast.org/our-work/about-udl.html#XxES6pNKh25>

Western Washington Univ:

[https://www.wvu.edu/teachinghandbook/student\\_considerations/inclusive\\_toolkit.shtml](https://www.wvu.edu/teachinghandbook/student_considerations/inclusive_toolkit.shtml)

Iowa State University: <https://testcs.wpunj.edu/cte/resources-for-teachers/StrategiestoCreateanInclusiveCourse.pdf>

and <https://www.celt.iastate.edu/teaching/creating-an-inclusive-classroom/inclusive-teaching-resources/inclusive-pedagogy/>  
<https://www.celt.iastate.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/LearnerCenteredMindfulSyllabusChecklist-1.pdf>

Guide for Inclusive Teaching at Columbia: <https://ctl.columbia.edu/resources-and-technology/resources/inclusive-teaching-guide/>

Inclusive Teaching, University of Michigan: <https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/inclusive-teaching/>

Vanderbilt University teaching guide: <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/increasing-inclusivity-in-the-classroom/>

Pedagogy in Health Promotion: <https://journals.sagepub.com/php/collection-teaching-racial-justice>

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Boston University School of Public Health: <https://www.bu.edu/sph/about/diversity-and-inclusion-at-the-boston-university-school-of-public-health/>

And workshops: <https://www.bu.edu/sph/news-events/community-events/diversity-and-inclusion-events/unconscious-bias-workshops/>

The University of Oklahoma: <https://www.ou.edu/cfe/teaching/inclusive-pedagogy>

Colorado State University: <https://tilt.colostate.edu/ProDev/TEF/Inclusive>

### **edX courses**

<https://www.edx.org/course/teaching-learning-in-the-diverse-classroom>

<https://www.edx.org/professional-certificate/catalystx-race-gender-and-workplace-equity>

<https://www.edx.org/course/communication-skills-for-dialoguing-across-difference>

<https://www.edx.org/course/inclusive-teaching-supporting-all-students-in-the>

### **Others**

Inclusive Pedagogy Framework and references: <https://cirtlincludes.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Inclusive-Pedagogy-Framework.pdf>