Columbia University &
Columbia University Irving Medical Center

Working Group for Civility and Professionalism at Columbia University Irving Medical Center (CUIMC)

This Action Applies to Rubric Item(s):
8 (Identifying and Reinforcing Community Values); 2 (Civility or Respect Promotion Programs)

Description of Work:
On the CUIMC campus, the NASEM Faculty Network proposed exploring the development of an Office for Professionalism that would encourage collegiality and provide a resource to address negative behaviors that create an environment of incivility and non-collegiality. There was student liaison representation to provide input on the learning environment and how encouragement of collegiality would impact in that setting. In the spring of 2020, with heightened attention to the dual pandemics of COVID-19 and violence against Black citizens, Columbia University and CUIMC made a commitment to renewed and strengthened efforts to eliminate anti-Black racism. One of these commitments included attention to the organizational climate and culture, with mechanisms in place for specific actions to counter instances of behavior that on any level that promoted racism or discriminatory behavior in any form or context. The NASEM Faculty Working Group on Professionalism joined with the CUIMC Anti-Racism Taskforce Working Group on Professionalism to develop a recommendation for an Office for Professionalism. The key features of the process and outcomes are as follows:

A. Key Directives

- Formulate **principles of professionalism and behavioral expectations** with attention to respect across race, ethnicity, gender orientation and other demographic characteristics
- **Recommendations for creating structures** for promoting the awareness of these principles across CUIMC
- Recommendations for the development of **reporting structures that are fair, equitable and transparent and that minimize risk of retaliation** by those who report

B. Overarching Vision

At Columbia University Irving Medical Center, we each have an ethical and moral responsibility to professionalism and civility. We are committed to ensuring a positive work environment for all employees including faculty, allied healthcare providers, staff,

researchers, trainees and students whereby our core values of excellence, empathy, accountability, respect and diversity are embraced by all. Our mission is to encourage a culture that promotes acceptance, trust, equity and teamwork. The degree to which we achieve our aspirations of excellence depends upon us building a community where we feel comfortable and welcomed in our workday lives.

C. Chief Values and Principles

- The overarching value of CUIMC is that **all of its members**, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or religion, **are to be treated with professionalism and respect**. This includes:
  - students
  - educators
  - clinical care practitioners
  - researchers
  - public health professionals
  - all administration and staff
- To ensure that these principles are maintained, it is essential to have **mechanisms** in place that address concerns of **unprofessional behavior** in the organization.

D. Key Foci of the Working Group Recommendations

1. To develop a **code of conduct/values** that would be applied across the medical center community and be applicable to all students, educators, faculty/health care providers, public health professionals, researchers, and all staff
2. To **establish an Office for Professionalism** whose principal role would be to promote a culture of professionalism, implement and communicate the code of conduct/values, and to develop transparent reporting processes that would encourage a culture of excellence, acceptance, trust, equity, and respect across Columbia University Irving Medical Center
3. The office would have resources and responsibility for training and management of behaviors outside of boundaries of civility.

E. Specific Targets of Action: We Are Most Effective When Each Member:

1. Adheres to CUIMC policies and procedures
2. Values and invests in individual and collective well-being
3. Strives to be a role model of professional behavior at all times
4. Treats each person with courtesy, civility and respect
5. Recognizes the impact of biases on professional conduct
6. Uses words and actions that are thoughtful, constructive and tolerant

7. Is collegial and collaborative, fostering belonging and support of each member's value to the community
8. Respects and values diversity of sex, race, age, color, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, and national or ethnic origin
9. Makes inclusiveness intentional
10. Understands that civility and professionalism is a competency that requires life-long learning, development and improvement
11. Is accountable for one's behavior
12. Never engages in or tolerates inappropriate, disruptive or abusive behavior
13. Reports inappropriate, disruptive or abusive behavior as an ethical and community responsibility
14. Reports abuse of power in hierarchical relationships
15. Creates a culture where reporting is safe and free of retaliation
16. Listens and responds to constructive feedback; feels empowered and empowers others to provide honest and constructive feedback in a respectful manner
17. Attempts to resolve conflicts in a spirit of cooperation and collaboration, creating solutions together
18. Respects the confidentiality and privacy of all community members

F. Outcomes/Status of the Recommendation

- The Working Group's detailed recommendations for **creating structures to cultivate civility and professionalism** across CUIMC include specific objectives, actions and short and long-term implementation goals that were presented to faculty and CUIMC leadership and affirmed by each school.
- The major recommendation is to establish an **Office for Professionalism** that would serve as an institutional home for initiating, implementing, and evaluating programs to encourage civility; that will be led by a **recognized faculty leader, who exemplifies the highest standards of civility and professionalism.**
- Funding and space to support an office has been committed by the Office of the EVP for the Health Sciences and Dean of Faculty of Medicine.
- Position descriptions for a faculty Leader at .4 FTE, an administrative position at 1.0 FTE and an individual to act as interviewer/ trainer/ mediator at 1.0 FTE are under development and positions will be posted pending approval (we have a COVID-19 related hiring freeze review for all new positions).
- A final draft of a shorter more succinct code of conduct/values is being finalized.

Themes	Purpose/Objectives	Actions	Metrics of Success: Threshold, Target and Reach
Establish an Office for Professionalism	• Build mechanisms to cultivate institutional ethical and moral responsibility for professionalism and civility • Promote a culture of professionalism and zero tolerance throughout the entire organization • Address unprofessional behavior in a substantive, standardized and direct way with fairness and transparency in alignment with the EOAA, sexual respect initiative, medical school and NYP • Disseminate up-to-date scholarship, resources and information on progress at Columbia	• Define core values • Develop mission statement • Create a code of conduct • Create messaging and campaign on professionalism cultural values and expectations • Perform a gap analysis of other programs throughout organization to inform policies, reporting and approaches • Align with organizational/reporting plan for EOAA, sexual misconduct, medical students and NYP • Consistently align inclusion and diversity to professionalism and well-being • Identify leadership and organizational structure • Define scope - messaging x reporting x intervention • Identify a leader in year 1 - clinical care experience; high level administrative experience; ability to be firm and yet warm; respected in the community; "good human" • Identify a program administrator with strong communication and analytical skills in year 1	*Threshold* • Identify an advisor within Faculty Affairs to receive concerns *Target* • Create an independent Office for Professionalism • Successfully recruit a leader • Socialize community members to goals of professionalism, cultural values and expectations *Reach* • Hire Program Administrator for the Office for Professionalism • Complete gap analysis • Complete individual and community baseline culture and well-being surveys

G. Additional Recommendations when team is in place

- Develop/refine policies that address zero tolerance for disruptive behavior or retaliation
- Develop a process for reporting and addressing concerns within the Office for Professionalism
- Develop role models who demonstrate and nurture values of civility and professionalism
- Develop messaging strategy and educational programs to promote professionalism
- Develop peer support systems
- Enhance wellness program/resources
- Partner with hospital leadership for buy in and commitment
- Training and education opportunities for leadership
- Promote teamwork and equality
- Promote scholarly research on professionalism and civility

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