Project Title: Tulane Professionalism Project

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Collaborators and Mentors: Marc Kahn, MD (Senior Associate Dean for Student Affairs; Co-Chair) and the Tulane Professionalism Committee

Category: <u>Administration</u>

Background:
Tulane values professionalism as reiterated in July 2017 by the Dean. However, current processes to identify, address and manage lapses in professional behavior for the faculty are cumbersome, inconsistent, not transparent and not integrated through-out the learning environment. This leads to dissatisfaction, poor accountability, lack of trust and ultimately contributes to burnout.

Purpose:
To clarify that professionalism is a top priority and an explicit value of the Tulane SOM. To this end, our short-term goal is to establish the current state and needs of the faculty. With this information, our long term goal is the creation of a vision statement (living document), an educational program and ultimately the development and implementation of a fair, transparent and integrated process for identifying and addressing lapses of professionalism.

Methods:
A committee of stakeholders and interested volunteers was established with administrative support. After literature review, a survey of the faculty was created with validation and sent to the entire faculty. Senior administrative staff were interviewed. Raw quantitative data was reviewed and the unstructured data is undergoing qualitative analysis using commercially available software.

Results:
In February 2018, 547 faculty were surveyed and 42% participated. Overall, the data revealed positive assessment with respect to colleagues that demonstrate professionalism (87.2%) and an environment encouraging doing the right thing (74.6%). However, the results show that a majority of respondents have witnessed a lapse in professional behavior in the past year (51.5%) as well as experiencing personal lapses (53.3%). Concerning is the perception that unprofessional behavior is tolerated by leadership, hospital (17.0%) and school (27.2%). Regarding the process, a large number of respondents know how to report concerns (56.1%), while one quarter did not. How concerns are addressed was less understood (30.1%) and almost half (46.0 %) reported lack of clarity. Lastly, only one-third had confidence their concerns would be acted upon.

Discussion/Impact:
Tulane is in a similar situation to many AMCs and fortunately is able to utilize best practices already working at peer institutions. As this initiative progressed, it became clear that to achieve our ultimate goal, we must split the project into three phases. The needs assessment and opening the dialogue to allow feedback to help define professionalism for Tulane has been the Phase One goal. The survey data supports the need to continue with the project. Phase Two (Q3 2018) includes rolling out the educational program in the preferred formats identified in our survey, large group presentations (43.0%) and interactive web-modules (26.4%). Phase Three will be implementation of a fair, transparent and integrated process for identifying and addressing lapses of professionalism. If achieved, we will promote a "safe" environment and maintain the integrity of academic culture by creating the optimal environment for the education of our learners and the growth of our faculty and staff.