

ABSTRACT: 2019 ELAM Institutional Action Project

Establishing a Center for Gender Equity in Medicine and Science (GEMS) at the Keck School of Medicine (KSOM) of the University of Southern California (USC)

Name and Institution: Zea Borok, MD, Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California

Collaborators and Mentors: Laura Mosqueda, MD, Elizabeth O'Toole, MSPH, Judy Garner, PhD

Topic Category: Administration

Background and Significance:

Like many academic health systems, the Keck School of Medicine (KSOM) of USC has faced challenges related to sexual harassment in the context of a culture in which subtle and overt gender biases and discrimination exist. Studies indicate that 30-52% of female faculty members in academic medicine experience sexual harassment during their careers. To address challenges at the KSOM, we examined issues including gender representation and promotion, transparency regarding incident reporting, and how to implement processes to achieve sustainable culture change. An intentional, visible, and comprehensive initiative to improve gender equity was needed.

Purpose/Objectives: To establish a Center for GEMS focused on building infrastructure and developing policies and procedures to achieve a climate of gender equity, representation and safety at the KSOM.

Methods:

1. Obtain commitment from the Dean to establish the Center
2. Establish a working group to establish a charter and define Center goals
3. Create a governance structure
4. Develop a financial model and budget
5. Communicate charter to the community at large
6. Identify a consultant with expertise in gender issues and culture change

Outcomes/Results: With the support of the Dean, the Center for GEMS has been established. A working group, including both faculty and administration, has met regularly over the last six months to define the scope of the Center and develop a charter. Organizationally, the Center will comprise a Governing Board and Advisory Council, ensuring broad stakeholder input. The Center comprises three working groups covering 1) Sexual Harassment, 2) Equity and Representation, and 3) Leadership Development. The leaders of each group are members of the Governing Board in addition to *ad hoc* members from the Dean's office. Working group members include previous task force members as well as faculty at large. The Dean has committed to initial financial support to launch the Center. We will seek philanthropic and/or grant support to ensure long-term sustainability. Communications about the Center and its charter have been disseminated to faculty and staff. We have retained a consultant who will guide establishment of the Center, provide coaching and support to the Director (Dr. Borok), and conduct implicit bias training for leadership.

Discussion/Conclusion: Establishment of the Center for GEMS will create a transformational culture change that goes well beyond regulatory compliance. We will establish methods to track the number of women achieving leadership positions and promotion, and collect data about sexual harassment over time using climate surveys and institutional data reviews. We also plan to analyze outcomes of interventions that are implemented to address gender equity. We anticipate that the Center for GEMS will become a national model to promote gender equity in academic medicine.

Establishing a Center for Gender Equity in Medicine and Science (GEMS) at the Keck School of Medicine (KSOM) of the University of Southern California (USC)



Zea Borok, MD, Professor and Chief,
Division of Pulmonary, Critical Care and Sleep Medicine
Collaborators: Laura Mosqueda, MD, Elizabeth O'Toole, MSPH, Judy Garner, PhD

Keck School of
Medicine of USC

Background and Significance

- Academic medicine has faced challenges related to sexual harassment in the context of subtle and overt gender biases and discrimination.
- To address challenges at the KSOM, an intentional, visible, and comprehensive initiative to improve gender equity was needed.

Objective

To establish a Center for GEMS focused on building infrastructure and developing policies and procedures to achieve a climate of gender equity, representation and safety at the KSOM.

Approach

1. Obtain Dean commitment to establish the Center
2. Establish a working group to develop a charter and define Center goals
3. Create a governance structure
4. Develop a financial model and budget
5. Communicate charter to the community at large
6. Identify a consultant with expertise in gender issues and culture change

Outcomes

The Center for GEMS at the KSOM has been established with the support of the Dean and Dr. Borok as director.

Charter: To achieve a climate of gender equity and safety for all at the Keck School of Medicine.

Goals:

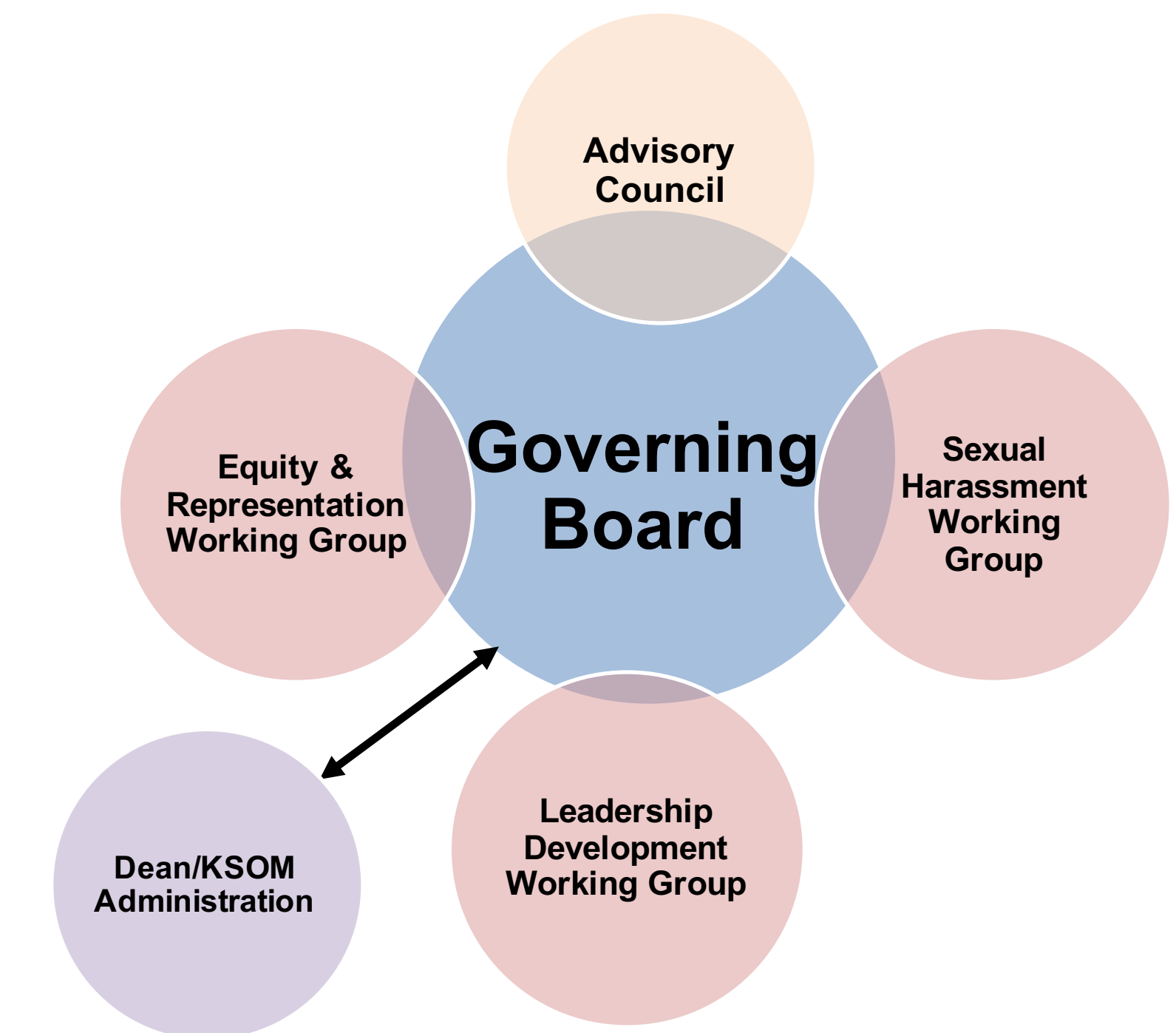
- Advance gender equity across the career pipeline
- Advocate for equal pay as provided by law
- Facilitate career development with the goal of achieving equitable representation in leadership for all regardless of gender
- Create a culture intolerant of sexual harassment and gender discrimination

Financial support: Initially from the Dean with philanthropic support for long-term sustainability.

Communication about the Center and its charter has been disseminated to faculty, staff and trainees.

Consultant retained to guide Center establishment and support Director.

Organizational structure



Discussion

We will track and analyze:

- Number of women achieving leadership positions and promotion
- Sexual harassment data over time
- Outcomes of interventions implemented to address gender equity

The Center for GEMS will create transformational culture change that goes beyond regulatory compliance and become a national model to promote gender equity in academic medicine.