

ABSTRACT: 2019 ELAM Institutional Action Project

Project Title: The Status of Sponsorship at the Perelman School of Medicine

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Topic Category (choose 1): Administration Clinical Education Faculty Development Research Faculty Development

Background, Significance of project:

Women comprise more than half of the students entering medical school. In addition, training opportunities for women to develop leadership skills have steadily increased. Yet, women continue to be underrepresented in positions of leadership in academic medicine. At the Perelman School of Medicine, women comprise only 20% of the department chairs. A potential strategy to further increase the number of women in top leadership positions may be sponsorship. Sponsorship is the public support by a powerful, influential person for the advancement and promotion of an individual for whom he or she sees untapped or unappreciated potential (Travis et al.). Initially developed in the corporate setting for protégé development, sponsorship has been increasingly promoted as a strategy to advance women in academic medicine.

Purpose/Objectives:

The objective of this project is to understand the knowledge of and behaviors related to sponsorship of women in academic medicine among the 28 clinical department chairs and other senior leaders at the Perelman School of Medicine of the University of Pennsylvania.

Methods/Approach/Evaluation Strategy:

A previously published questionnaire to assess the knowledge of and behaviors related to sponsorship (Magrane et al.) will be administered to the PSOM department chairs and other senior leaders. Sponsorship behaviors include: public acknowledgement of talents, achievements and decisions; appointment of protégés to high level committees and task forces; nomination of protégés for advancement and prestigious positions; assignment of roles that test new management skills (e.g. profit and loss responsibility); expanding the protégés professional networks; providing opportunities to represent the sponsor at meetings and events and to present to executive groups (e.g. board meetings); preparing faculty for the new leader's role; providing funding and resources for leadership program participation and/or coaching; engaging a team of advisors and consultants to support the protégé; and advocate with colleagues to advance the protégé. In addition, supplementary qualitative interviews will be conducted with purposely sampled department chairs to understand the barriers of and facilitators to sponsorship behaviors.

Mentorship and Sponsorship of Women and Diverse Leaders at the Perelman School of Medicine of the University of Pennsylvania



Carmen E. Guerra, M.D., M.S.C.E., Eve Higginbotham, S.M., M.D., Vicki Mulhern, Elizabeth Travis, M.D., Diane Magrane, M.D.

Background

The lack of diversity in faculty leadership hinders research impact, innovation, patient care and the economic success of academic medical centers.

Sponsorship is evolving as a potential strategy to further increase the number of women in top leadership positions.

Definition:

Sponsorship is the public support by a powerful, influential person for the advancement and promotion of an individual for whom he or she sees untapped or unappreciated potential (Travis et al.).

Objectives

To understand and further cultivate the behaviors related to mentorship and sponsorship of women and URM faculty leaders in academic medicine at the PSOM

Methods

A mixed-methods approach

1. Administer a previously published questionnaire to **assess the behaviors related to mentorship and sponsorship** (Magrane et al.) to the PSOM chiefs, department chairs and other senior leaders.

As a MENTOR, to what extent do you:	As a SPONSOR, to what extent do you:
Provide your mentee/protégé with candid feedback.	Publicly acknowledge her/his talents and achievements.
Discuss strategies for managing interpersonal politics.	Publicly support when he/she makes a difficult or unpopular decision.
Encourage attendance at internal or external leadership programs.	Appoint to internal or external high-level committees/task forces.
Seek feedback as to how he/she is doing in the new leadership position.	Directly nominate her/him for advancement and prestigious positions.
Set aside meetings on your calendar for regular mentoring.	Assign her/him to an administrative role that tests new management skills, especially those with profit and loss responsibility.
Advise her/him on executive presence and communications.	Introduce her/him to individuals or groups to extend his/her professional networks.
Guide her/him in development of an intentional and strategic plan for advancement to leadership.	Send in your place to important meetings, speaking appearances, and events.
Provide opportunity to shadow you.	Provide opportunities to present to executive groups (e.g., board meetings).
	Pave the entry to leadership by preparing other faculty for the new leader's role.
	Provide funding and resources for leadership program participation and/or leadership coaching.
	Engage a team of advisors and consultants to support the protégé.
	Advocate with colleagues to advance protégé.

2. Conduct semi-structured, in-depth interviews with purposely sampled chiefs, department chairs and senior leaders to understand the **barriers of and facilitators to sponsorship behaviors**.

3. Analyzed data to identify **best practices for advancing women and URM leaders**.

Results

- Determine the baseline state.
- Baseline data will serve as a comparison for determining the effectiveness of future interventions.
- Comparison of mentorship and sponsorship of male and female; URM and non-URM.
- Elicit barriers of and facilitators of mentorship and sponsorship.
- Identify best practices.
- Propose recommendations for establishing a formal sponsorship program for women and URM faculty at PSOM.

Conclusions and Potential Impact

- Sponsorship taps into unrealized potential and advances talented individuals to positions of leadership.
- For the institution, sponsorship also promotes a culture of inclusivity, results in greater engagement and enhanced career satisfaction, improves retention, produces valuable deliverables to the organization gained through the work of the protégé, and establishes succession planning.

Presented at the 2019 ELAM Forum

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Outcomes/Results: The results will allow us to determine the current state, barriers of and facilitators to sponsorship of women faculty leaders at the PSOM.

Discussion/Conclusion with Statement of Impact/Potential Impact: The information collected through this project will allow us to develop best practices for sponsorship of women faculty leaders. We will then disseminate the best practices to current leaders across the school. The results may lead to the design and pilot testing of the first formal sponsorship program for women faculty at PSOM.