Establishing a College of Medicine Community Collaborative Academy
Engaging Community Leaders to Teach Future Health Professionals

“What we really took away is that what we do has larger implications on the community, by focusing only on the people we see at the hospital, we miss people who may not have access. This event left us thinking about ways not only to include these people in the conversation but also get them access. It was invaluable to us.”

“I feel that this is a very important day that could potentially leave us with the greatest impact on how we take care of our patients in the future. I will remember this day as an opportunity to reflect, learn, and grow as a person and as a future healthcare provider for people of all backgrounds.”

Preliminary Results
M1 students stated that the CED helped them:

- Gain knowledge about social and community factors in health problems.
- Gain more knowledge about health inequities experienced by the communities in Omaha.
- Reflect how they can contribute to eliminating or reducing health inequities in Omaha.

Conclusions & next steps

- Community partners & faculty have embraced the idea of community collaborative academy at its early stages.
- Ongoing work to complete academy curriculum and timeline of activities beyond CED.
- Student membership selection for first cohort of M1 post CED will be by competitive application.
- Vision is that academy curricular and experiential activities will eventually be required for all students across undergraduate medical education.
Project Title: Establishing a College of Medicine (COM) Community Collaborative Academy – Engaging Community Leaders in Teaching Future Health Professionals

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Topic Category: Education

Background, Significance of Project: In 2021, the AAMC stated that the “traditional tripartite mission of academic medicine – medical education, clinical care and research – is no longer enough to achieve health justice for all.” It called for academic medicine to embrace community collaboration as its fourth mission. To do so, academic health centers need to establish necessary infrastructure that support long-term community collaborations that promote teaching and scholarship centered on community needs. This approach to community engagement requires viewing community partners as assets who can help better understand and address social determinants of health, and by integrating these assets in health profession education, this will enhance learners’ ability to provide better care to the community they will serve.

Purpose/Objectives: The goal of this project is to establish a COM Community Collaborative Academy where community partners engage longitudinally with medical students at the University of Nebraska Medical Center and are actively involved in educating them as future health professionals through a series of didactics and service-learning opportunities that center on community needs. Building on existing faculty and/or staff community relationships and trust, the academy will also provide a venue for educational seminars for community members on relevant academic health center issues that impact their organizations.

Methods/Approach/Evaluation Strategy: We recruited an assistant Dean of student programs and community engagement and faculty/staff with established community partnerships for phase 1 of the academy activities, which involved planning and running a community engagement day (CED) for 132 M1 students in the Fall of 2021. In the winter of 2022, phase 2, we surveyed community partners on their organizational priorities that will inform the student curriculum and service-learning activities. This spring, an inaugural seminar will include meeting with the Dean of the COM and his cabinet as well as an overview of the medical school then faculty/staff and community partners will design curricular content to launch phase 3 of the academy in the fall 2022. A yet to be determined number of students will be accepted after applying for the longitudinal activities beyond CED. Feedback will be collected after each activity.

Results and Outcome: We had a successful phase 1 CED with 132 M1 first years with overwhelmingly positive feedback from students, faculty, staff, and community collaborators. 14 community partners have agreed to participate in the academy phase 2 and provided a list of priorities they would like to see in the student didactics, service-learning activities and in their own educational seminars. Currently, themes are being compiled and organized to development the curriculum and establish a timeline of activities to complete phase 2 prior to launch phase 3 in the fall.

Discussion/Conclusion with Statement of Potential Impact: All M1 students participate in the CED, participation to subsequent phases of the academy will be via a competitive application. We envision, however, that our partnerships will grow and students across all 4 years will benefit from this structured longitudinal community relationships. They will gain a better understanding of community centered engagement which in turn will help them provide better care to the communities they will serve.