

Accreditation and mission; a double-edged sword
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Sponsor

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Collaborators

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Background

Every medical school has mission that drives the medical education program and is used by the school to differentiate itself. Mission is particularly important for new medical schools like the CUNY School of Medicine, established in 2015. While developing the CUNY School of Medicine and working towards full accreditation, some of Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) accreditation standards seemed to make it harder to meet our mission to recruit and educate students from backgrounds historically under-represented in medicine (URiM). Changes to standards may be made for mission congruent reason and the LCME has a system for reviewing and making changes to standards. For example, in 2009, the LCME introduced two new standards to address concerns about diversity in medical schools. More recently changes to quality improvement standards may have led to increased resource allocation towards CQI. The purpose of this project is to consider how accreditation standards may support or may be a barrier to a school meeting its mission and to develop a reproducible approach that schools and particularly new schools can use to design an educational program that is mission congruent while meeting accreditation standards.

Methods

The data was collected via a cross-sectional survey of members of the APQI group (a community of practice that supports professionals who are involved in accreditation and quality improvement for undergraduate medical education programs and currently runs a list serve with more than 200 members). The survey was designed to collect information on the participants thoughts on accreditation and mission. They were asked about standards that they saw as supportive of mission and to identify those that they saw as a barrier. The survey included 16 items consisting of multiple choice, and open-ended responses. The electronic survey was posted on the Accreditation Preparation & Quality Improvement (APQI) list serve.

Results

The survey opened in April 2023 and remains open. The preliminary data from the first twelve respondents is provided. The majority 84% of these respondents work at medical schools that were established more than 50 years ago. They reported titles that include directors of CQI, faculty accreditation leads, and medical education deans. Fifty percent represent a student body that includes 20-30% students from URiM backgrounds. The respondents were split between academic health centers (33%) and community-based schools (66%). The two elements described most frequently as helping schools meet mission were Element 3.3 Diversity Programs and Partnerships and Element (42%) and 3.2 Community of Scholars Research Opportunities (20%). Responses about elements seen as a barrier to mission included Element 12.1 Financial Aid/Debt Management (43%) which was mentioned as a barrier to recruiting a diverse class. Element 8.7 Comparability of Education/Assessment was mentioned as a barrier to mission for community-based schools (20%).

Discussion and Summary

Preliminary data from this ongoing survey reveal Element 3.3 Diversity Programs and Partnerships as a standard to focus on. With the changing socio-political climate, many schools want to leverage this element to support their ability to focus resources on recruitment and retention of URiM students and faculty.