



DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE THREAD (DIS)

DESCRIPTION: The Diversity, Inclusion and Social Justice Thread exists to advance diversity, inclusion and social justice as core College of Medicine values that enhance our individual and collective capacity to achieve excellence, drive innovation and ensure health equity in our communities. In the education of our medical students, focus is placed on striving towards cultural competence in the care of patients and recognizing social justice as an integral component of achieving equity in health. In alignment with the Association of American Medical Colleges, we define cultural competence in health care as “combining the tenets of patient/family-centered care with an understanding of the social and cultural influences that affect the quality of medical services and treatment.” The goals of our Diversity, Inclusion, and Social Justice curriculum are for students to: 1) demonstrate an understanding of how patients’ cultures and belief systems impact their experience of health and illness as well as their interaction with the health care system; 2) demonstrate the capacity to provide patient/family-centered care to individuals from backgrounds different than his/her own in a respectful, compassionate and professional manner; and 3) demonstrate the capacity to address the social determinants of health that result in health inequities in our communities; and 4) recognize social justice as one component of achieving health equity.



ETHICS, PROFESSIONALISM, AND PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY THREAD (EPP)

DESCRIPTION: It is of utmost importance that our students be professional, humanistic, and ethically competent as well as medically competent. The goal of the Ethics, Professionalism, and Professional Identity Thread is to teach students to recognize, analyze, manage, and prevent ethical issues in clinical settings; support students’ emotional wellbeing when faced with ethical dilemmas; and promote the exploration of personal values and the formation of students’ professional identities. Professional identity formation (PIF) is critically important because it pertains to a student’s very being: attitudes and biases, affective self-awareness, empathy, emotional intelligence, communication skills, and virtues ranging from humility and diligence to altruism and self-care. As stated by Cruess and Cruess, professionalism is the set of values, behaviors, and relationships that underpins the trust the public has in doctors, while professional identity formation is not just how others perceive you, but how you come to perceive yourself¹. The development of all these areas – ethics, professionalism, and professional identity formation – are crucial to being a “good” physician.



LIFELONG LEARNING AND DISCOVERY THREAD (LLD)

DESCRIPTION: To develop the next generation of physicians who will think critically, practice evidence-based medicine, participate in meaningful and ethical research, and pose thoughtful questions as life-long learners to enhance the care of their patients we have prioritized a life-long learning and discovery thread in our curriculum. Students will be systematically introduced to the basic scientific and ethical principles of clinical and translational research, including the ways in which such research is conducted, evaluated, explained to patients, and applied to patient care. This thread includes the overall goals of understanding: 1) The bidirectional relationship between scientific findings and patient care; 2) Ethical issues related to research, and 3) Variations in study designs and statistical analyses, and how to critically appraise methods in scientific articles, including interpretation of outcomes to guide patient-centered clinical decision making. The importance of self-directed learning will be highlighted in the thread and the skills necessary to practice evidence-based medicine will be taught such that students learn to independently identify, analyze, and synthesize relevant information, generate testable hypotheses, always appraise the credibility of their information sources, and assess applicability to patient care. This thread will focus on training students to develop the essential skills required to be motivated, self-directed, lifelong learners and evidence-based practitioners as the foundation necessary to provide the highest quality care to patients.



GERIATRICS AND HEALTHY AGING THREAD (GHA)

DESCRIPTION: Older adults are living longer, often with chronic, complex illness that affects all aspects of their lives. It is critical that physicians understand how to provide patient-centered, high quality care to this population. The goal of the Geriatrics and Healthy Aging Thread is to provide students with the knowledge and skills to care for the unique needs of an older adult population. The thread objectives align with the AAMC Minimum Geriatrics Competencies for Graduating Medical Students.



COMMUNICATION, COMPASSION, AND COLLABORATIVE CARE THREAD (CCC)

DESCRIPTION: The Communication, Compassion, and Collaborative Care Thread was developed to give medical students a strong foundation in the skills they will need as physicians to provide compassionate, humanistic, collaborative, and patient-centered care. Physicians must be empowered with an ability to communicate and empathize with the patient and their families. While excellent diagnostic skills are necessary in treating patients, it is insufficient to expect that merely making the diagnosis and crafting a treatment plan will result in desired patient outcomes. Being able to partner with our patients and other providers on the health care team has become essential to providing patients with the care that they need. Strong physician communication skills have been correlated with improved patient satisfaction and better patient outcomes in wide variety of diseases. The physicians of today must be able to function collaboratively on health care teams that include health professionals from other disciplines as they provide coordinated services to patients. Ensuring that our students learn effective communication skills with patients, families, colleagues, and other health professionals is critical to develop the physicians that patients and our society deserve.