



Inspiring Medicine to Promote Opportunities for Well-Being, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (IMPOWER): An Interprofessional Framework for Advancing DEI and Well-Being in Academic Medicine

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BACKGROUND

A comprehensive interprofessional, interdisciplinary infrastructure is critical to driving sustainable culture change to improve diversity, equity, inclusion, and well-being (DEI-W) within a large academic department.

Inclusive engagement and representation of faculty and staff are paramount to achieving our mission of cultivating an environment that empowers all trainees, faculty, and staff to fulfill their purpose and potential.

METHODS

Develop Sense of Urgency, Create a Vision, Build a Coalition¹

Using the Kotter Leading Change Model as a framework, the University of Michigan Department of Internal Medicine (DOIM) Office of DEI & Well-Being embarked on a 10-month discovery and planning process to understand current state challenges, opportunities, and resources needed to support DEI-W initiatives.

Vision: To cultivate an environment that empowers our faculty, learners, and staff to fulfill their purpose and potential.

Mission: The Department of Internal Medicine will be a diverse and inclusive community that provides each person with the opportunities and support they need to thrive.

Five Strategic Priorities: Leadership Engagement, Development & Accountability, Developing People, Improving the Work Environment, Building Partnerships, and Tracking & Communicating Results.

As a key component of this initiative, we created the IMPOWER (Inspiring Medicine to Promote Opportunities for Well-Being, Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion) Council to facilitate multidirectional communication and support DEI-W initiatives that drive culture change based on our five strategic priorities.

RESULTS & OUTCOMES

Communicate the Vision, Enlist Others, Empower Others to Act¹

The IMPOWER Council, launched in December 2020, is strategically composed of lead pairs consisting of one staff and one faculty member from each of the DOIM’s 13 clinical divisions, administration, and our affiliated Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

Leads are recognized, valued, and compensated for their important contributions through supported effort (faculty, 2.5% FTE) or administrative differentials (staff, 5% salary supplement).

Guided by our shared vision, mission, values and the IMPOWER Council charter, the Council meets monthly to engage in professional and leadership development, problem-solve, and share best practices in a safe environment which focuses on identifying synergies and solutions across the divisions.

To complement departmental efforts, IMPOWER Council Leads lead division and unit-level Councils to advance and integrate DEI-W efforts across the department.

Generate and Celebrate Short-Term Wins, Consolidate Improvements/Accelerate Change, Institutionalize the Change¹

Notable outcomes include:

- interprofessional collaboration, professional development, and psychologically safe community amongst the IMPOWER Council;
- development of active Councils for each division/unit to advance, operationalize, and promote DEI-W work across the department;
- active engagement in identifying key barriers and defining clinical coverage models and processes to promote meaningful, restorative vacation time away from work; and
- development and implementation of evidenced-based best-practices for holistic faculty recruitment department-wide.

IMPOWER STRATEGIC PRIORITIES, OBJECTIVES & OUTCOMES

| Strategic Priorities | Objectives | Department Outcomes | Division, Administration, VA Outcomes |
|---|--|--|--|
| Leadership Engagement, Development & Accountability | Actively engage DOIM leadership to promote a culture of inclusive leadership and accountability in prioritizing and advancing DEI & well-being (DEI-W) initiatives. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusive Leadership Curriculum DEI-W Divisional Goal & Incentive Alignment IMPOWER Lead/Divisional Leader Meetings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infectious Diseases: Leadership Rounds |
| Develop People | Bolster recruitment, retention & promotion practices to create, sustain & advance a diverse workforce. Provide development and advancement opportunities to promote equitable achievement of career goals. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DOIM Faculty Recruitment Standard Practice Guide IMPOWER Grand Rounds Series Staff Career Development & Promotion Lunch and Learn 2023 Student National Medical Association Annual Medical Education Conference Michigan Medicine SiMfest 2023 Youth Summit at the Big House | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administration: Administrative Staff IMPOWER Council Structure General Medicine: Faculty Development/Mentorship Geriatric & Palliative Medicine: Faculty Retreats, Recognition/Spirit Committee Infectious Diseases: Crucial Conversations Training Metabolism, Endocrinology, Diabetes, Rheumatology: Book/Article Club |
| Improve Environment | IMPOWER leadership, faculty, trainees & staff to foster a more diverse, inclusive, accessible, safe, and balanced work culture. Promote efficiency of practice to achieve fulfilling and productive work environments. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vacation Coverage Guiding Principles DOIM Lactation Policy Patient Perpetuated Harassment Work Group Women Faculty in CVM Barriers & Facilitators to Advancement Manuscript | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allergy: Vacation & In-basket Coverage Cardiovascular Medicine: Multi-lingual Discharge Summaries/Focused Visit Encounters, Disability Awareness Gastroenterology/Hepatology: Faculty Town Halls, Staff Appreciation General Medicine: Portal Practice Pilot, Lactation/Relaxation Rooms Genetics: Division Email Standards Hem/Onc: Improve Faculty/Staff Vacation Utilization by Promoting Consistent Coverage Models Hospital Medicine: Division Email Standards, Focus Groups Nephrology: Division Email Standards, Mental Health Support, Staff Compensation Pulmonary/Critical Care Medicine: Vacation Coverage, Faculty Retreats, Faculty Young Family Focus Groups Rheumatology: Recognition & Appreciation with Emphasis on Staff and Clinical Faculty VA: Team-Building, Patient-Perpetuated Harassment Training |
| Track & Communicate Results | Promote transparency in continuously evaluating culture change progress and improvement opportunities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DEI-W Dashboard Development Dissemination of DEI-W Best Practices | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genetics: Quarterly DEI-W Newsletter |
| Build Partnerships | Initiate active partnerships to synergistically align and prioritize efforts to advance DEI-W goals. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Departmental: IMPOWER Council (Divisions), Faculty Affairs, Clinical Experience & Quality Institutional: Wellness Office, Office of Health Equity & Inclusion, Faculty Development, Organizational Learning, Office of Counseling & Workplace Resilience National: Alliance for Academic Internal Medicine (AAIM), Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Departmental: IMPOWER Council (Divisions), Faculty Affairs, Clinical Experience & Quality Institutional: Wellness Office, Office of Health Equity & Inclusion, Faculty Development, Organizational Learning, Office of Counseling & Workplace Resilience National: Alliance for Academic Internal Medicine (AAIM), Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) |

CONCLUSIONS

The IMPOWER Council framework provides sustainable infrastructure to strengthen DEI-W across our DOIM community through:

Identifying dedicated DEI-W leadership to create a unifying vision and departmental strategy with implementation flexibility based on division/unit needs.

Providing protected time and compensation to invest in staff and faculty which supports their professional growth and leadership development.

Creating a safe space to ensure interprofessional and multi-disciplinary representation and collaboration to advance DEI-W initiatives.

LESSONS LEARNED

Active leadership engagement, investment and accountability are critical to integrating DEI-W in our department. Relying solely on a “grassroots” approach is insufficient.

Celebrating and communicating short-term wins are critical to maintaining momentum.² Transforming culture around DEI-W is complex, requiring sustained engagement over time.

Incorporating change initiatives into the fabric and daily life of the department by aligning policies, processes, rewards, and incentives promotes sustainability.²

REFERENCES

- Kotter, J. P. *Leading Change*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1996.
- Lehman, S. & Barth, B. *Initiating & Managing Change*. AAMC, 2022.