

Present: Drs. Abraham, Abrams, Blackwell, Born, Bourdeaux, Chang, Daley, DePace, Donoff, Ferran, Galaburda, Gaufberg, Howley, Khoshbin, King, Klig, Lee, Lovejoy, Mullen, Murray, Nour, Park, Patel, Pian-Smith, Rexrode, Rodriguez, Rose, Solomon

Guests: Drs. Bates, Muto, Reede, Schwartzstein, and Westlund

Staff: Mss. DeCoste, Hecht, Ryan, Williams

Dean Daley called the meeting to order at approximately 4:05pm. He asked for and received acceptance of the minutes for the November 13, 2019 meeting, as presented.

Dean Daley announced that this meeting was Bruce Donoff's last meeting as Dean of the Harvard School of Dental Medicine. Dean Daley provided the Council with Dean Donoff's key accomplishments as one of the longest serving deans at Harvard, serving 28 years. He thanked Dean Donoff, who will remain a vibrant member of the faculty.

Next, the Dean reviewed the meeting agenda, noting the new standard of having Faculty Council members review slides in advance of the meeting and come ready to discuss and ask questions.

He then introduced Melissa Brodrick, Ombudsperson, to present the annual Ombuds report and Dr. Rich Schwartzstein, chair of the HMS Learning Environment Committee, who will comment on behaviors and trends impacting the learning environment.

Ms. Brodrick gave an overview of the Ombuds office. The office was established in 1991 with support of the Joint Committee on the Status of Women (JCSW) to foster the understanding and tolerance of differences through education in order to prevent harassment and discrimination. The Ombuds office is a highly confidential, neutral, independent and informal forum in which any faculty, staff, student, or trainee may raise concerns that may be affecting their work or studies. As a neutral party, Ms. Brodrick said that she helps visitors to clarify their issues and goals and consider their options as they make choices for themselves about potential next steps. In January 2019, the Ombuds office added an associate ombudsperson, Justin Neiman.

Ms. Brodrick shared activity summaries and statistics from the past four academic years, focusing on info about faculty. More individuals are finding her office, but she is also seeing an increase in issues. She provided general demographics of those visiting the Ombuds Office and the kinds of issues that are self-reported. Work and academic environment (peer relationships, supervisor/supervisee relationship, leadership, departmental functioning, physical conditions, workload) issues remain the significantly high.

The Ombuds offices does not see too many students, but the associate ombudsperson is working on outreach and worked with students in his last position. They do not track onetime vs repeat visitors. They do not track gender/ethnicity of those whom people are complaining about.

A suggestion was made about doing a work environment survey about what events are occurring, as there is no HMS wide climate survey.

The learning environment committee formed two years ago in response to poor numbers coming back from the annual AAMC survey. They are charged with monitoring the quality of the learning

environment for students in the classroom, laboratories and clinical setting; reviewing and coordinating initiatives to enhance the learning environment; and make recommendations to the Education Policy and Curriculum Committee (EPCC), department chairs, and the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine for efforts to improve the environment for teaching and learning. Dr. Schwartzstein, discussed behaviors and trends seen in the learning environment which include mistreatment, humiliation/embarrassment, some gender and racial issues. There have been some cases of interaction between political differences and students not being included in certain study groups. Looking at the classroom experience vs. clinical studies, issues on the clinical side are higher especially with a occasional teacher who teach a night or a weekend course.

Dr. Schwartzstein discussed a few areas in particular that were reported most:

- Feedback- students not given feedback
- Not given direction
- Bad behavior- departments bad mouthing other departments
- “tribalism”- studying

Certain departments struggle more (surgery and neurosurgery), but having strong leadership and department chairs is one way to improve behavior, and they have removed people from teaching because of bad behavior.

Progress has been made in the last two years, but still have a way to go. Dr. Schwartzstein mentioned that they have had trouble getting research leaders to serve on the learning environment committee.

The Council then exchanged dialog, floating suggestions and ideas on preventative measures including providing people with more skills, having in person trainings which are more effective than online ones, create motivation/inventive interwoven within other training/skill sets, provide peer support training and networks, improve management training (approaching different conversations, navigating/communicating, role models).

After some discussion, Dean Daley adjourned the business portion of the meeting at 5:20pm and transitioned into honoring this year’s recipients of the Program Award for a Culture of Excellence in Mentoring (PACEM) hosted by Joan Reede, Dean for Diversity and Community Partnerships. A video was shown and the dean took pictures with this year’s recipients and a mini reception followed.