



HMS/HSDM Faculty Council

Faculty Council Minutes  
February 10, 2021

**Present:** Abrams, Adelman, Becker, Blackwell, Caradonna, Chang, Chen, D’Amico, Daley, Da Silva, de Girolami, del Carmen, DePace, Desrosiers, Ferran, Gauferberg, Giannobile, Goldstein, Howley, Klig, Lee, Livingston, Lovejoy, Molina, Mullen, Murray, Nayak, Park, Patel, Pian-Smith, Rexrode, Richardson, Rodriguez, Silver, Solomon, Stone, Subramanian, Taqueti, Wagers, Weinstock

**Guests:** Drs. Awtrey, Bates, Buckley, Dienstag, Garber, Golan, Haigis, Hundert, Lensch, Muto, Westlund; Ms. Brodrick and Brodnicki; Mr. Neiman

**Staff:** Mss. Hecht, Ryan, Williams.

*This Faculty Council meeting was held virtually, via Zoom, due the COVID-19 pandemic.*

Dr. Kathy Rexrode called the meeting to order at 4:02. Dr. Rexrode then asked for and received acceptance of the minutes from the January 13, 2021 meeting, as presented. She mentioned that the vice chair election for next year’s Council will be distributed after the meeting, eligible candidates are encouraged to self-nominate. As a reminder, the Council voted to change the leadership structure so that the vice chair serves a two-year term, first year as Vice Chair and second as the Faculty Council Chair. The election will be held the first week of March with results announced at the March 10, 2021 Faculty Council meeting.

Dr. Rexrode commented that the meeting’s agenda would focus on faculty and impact COVID-19 has had. She first introduced Provost Alan Garber. Provost Garber started by thanking the faculty and HMS for their efforts and leadership during the pandemic. He expressed gratitude to the many who provided expertise and guidance which informed University Policy. Provost Garber also provided an update on COVID-19 response at the University level, Massachusetts Consortium on Pathogen Readiness (MassCPR), vaccines, and the decision to bring most students back in the fall.

Dean Daley and Dr. Rexrode thanked Alan Garber for attending. Next, Dr. Rexrode introduced Ms. Melissa Brodrick and Mr. Justin Neiman, ombudspersons for HMS, HSDM, and HSPH, to give their annual report to the Council.

Mr. Neiman gave an overview of the Ombuds office. The office was established in 1991 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, Mr. Neiman said that they help visitors to clarify their issues and goals and consider their options as they make choices for themselves about potential next steps.

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.

After the presentation by the Ombuds Office, Kathy introduced the following individuals who work on burnout at their institutions: Chris Awtry, BIDMC; Marcela Del Carmen, MGH; Marcia Haigis, Quad and David DeMaso, BCH. They were joined by Melissa Brodrick.

Dr. Awtry discussed efforts at BIDMC around measuring burnout and providing measures to address known issues. In response to isolation, they engaged the slack platform and virtual meetings as well as connected people who lived in the same neighborhood. Additionally, they created a channel to support physical fitness, and engaged with meal delivery services, kits for children and laundry service. They will collect additional feedback in March. Finally, they expanded access to counseling so that providers can be seen free of charge without written record. They have not observed an increase in use.

Dr. del Carmen shared efforts at MGH. A survey was conducted last April indicating that people were concerned about COVID and lack of PPE as well as childcare, managing home activities, and limiting exposure of family to COVID. Some were also concerned about additional training burdens because of shifts in clinical care. MGH engaged in a portrait program so people could share what they looked like under the PPE. They also did a virtual coffee program to encourage people to check in with others and made funding available to departments if they could identify additional measures of support. Dr. del Carmen shared that the biggest challenge is mental and behavioral health. They have developed a website of resources but are struggling with how we can best support faculty virtually or working from home. Finally, Dr. del Carmen shared that the pandemic has heightened challenges for female faculty and they are looking to provide support with more intentional programs.

Dr. Haigis shared that she has assumed a new position and is working around female leadership in science. She indicated that the pandemic has shifted what was important but that the focus is on providing mentoring, career development and training.

The Faculty Council engaged with the panel around topics including discussion as to how we could collaborate across affiliates and expand the successful initiatives. Additionally, the discussion also addressed whether other efforts are sufficiently recognized in the promotions process such as supporting students and other faculty.

Dr. Rexrode adjourned the meeting at approximately 5:32 pm.