



HMS/HSDM Faculty Council

Faculty Council Minutes
January 12, 2022

Present: Abrams, Adelman, Becker, Caradonna, Chang, Chen, D'Amico, Da Silva, Desrosiers, Gaufberg, Giannobile, Goldstein, Haigis, Hatfield, Huang, Ingelfinger, Klig, Lee, Molina, Mullen, Nayak, Okereke, Park, Patel, Pian-Smith, Rodriguez, Silver, Solomon, Spring, Subramanian, Wagers, Weinstock

Guests: Drs. Bates, Golan, Hundert, Muto, Reede, Westlund; Mss. Bittinger, Lewis

Staff: Mss. Hecht, Ryan, Williams;

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

Dr. Rose Molina called the meeting to order at 4:01pm and asked for and received approval for the December 8, 2021 meeting minutes.

Next, Dr. Molina introduced Melissa Brodrick, Ombudsperson for HMS/HSDM/HSPH to give an annual report on the trends she's observing.

Ms. Brodrick provided a document in advance of the meeting which gave an overview of the Ombuds services and updates. She mentioned that this year, Harvard's individual Ombuds offices will merge into one office: the Harvard Ombuds Office. Both the LMA and the HU sites will remain, but will develop a university-wide data collection system, a marketing plan, and PR resources to reflect the merger among other initiatives. She reviewed some datapoints highlighting burnout issues imbedded within categories of Career Management and Work/Academic environment. She highlighted the work of JCSW who is doing a great job with providing peer support groups, something that has been increasing for professional development. On the topic of burnout, she covered what she is seeing as contributing to burnout as well as what seems to help alleviate burnout for some.

Next, Dean Anne Becker gave a brief recap of the deep dive the Faculty Council subcommittee on burnout and wellness did on the two topics in 2018. In 2018, there was some rich and thoughtful discussion focusing on selfcare and systemic and cultural issues. Dean Daley had asked then Faculty Council Vice Chair, Dr. Hal Burstein to chair this subcommittee. The subcommittee collected information from affiliates and reported out in June 2018. Advance material was provided in advance of the meeting containing a couple NEJM perspectives, minutes from when the Burnout and Wellness subcommittee presented at Faculty Council in 2018, along with some presentations. With physician burnout approaching crisis levels pre-COVID, the Faculty Council Docket Committee felt it was time to dust off the work that was done in 2018 and think about new ideas and data.

Dr. Molina reviewed the most recent data from 2019 which measured physician burnout at the Massachusetts General Physicians Organization (MGPO/MGH). The MGPO Physician Survey received over 2,000 responses (93% response rate). She highlighted the findings:

- 43% of physicians met the criteria for burnout and 56% were engaged
- Women physicians, PCPs, and early career physicians had higher rates of burnout than their colleagues
- The Harvard promotion process, clinical note documentation, prior authorizations, and patient-related messages were reported as the most burdensome administrative tasks
- Physicians report that in an average week, 24% of their total hours are spent on administrative duties related to patient care

Dr. Molina discussed MGPH Central initiatives to promote physician resilience and well-being, which was broken down into five categories: admin burden relief, connectivity, grant funding, wellness, and 20% meaningful work. While some of the initiatives were placed on hold due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, Dr. Molina noted that activities that promoted connections and a sense of community were the most well received.

The Faculty Council then broke out into five small groups to discuss two questions:

1. Has burnout improved since Faculty Council last had a subcommittee focused on this issue? Why or why not?
2. What is the best way for Faculty Council to support efforts to counteract burnout?

At 5:00pm, the breakout groups returned to the meeting and reported back.

Dean Giannobile reported out for group #1. His group discussed how promotions and people departing has gotten worse with the pandemic. Blurred lines with time in virtual world has allowed Zoom calls at all hours, people make themselves available all hours, further blurring work/life balance. Ways to protect hours are needed. He noted his group had discussed Joy Grants which helps support efforts to counteract burnout. Good ways to counteract burnout include finding ways to get together, sharing tokens of appreciation, and giving gratitude. They also discussed stigma that is often attached to resources and how important it is to eliminate that stigma.

Dr. Park reported out for group #2. Her group agreed that burnout has worsen over the years with the current state of the country and climate, the pandemic and the equity and classes issues. Balancing work/life is a significant factor, especially for women faculty who are disproportionately affected. With school/daycare closures, there have been challenges on professional life. They reviewed the 2018 Faculty Council committee's recommendations and questioned how many (if any) of the efforts were implemented and if not, that leadership accountability is needed. This

group also proposed establishing a budget through Dean's Initiatives or Diversity initiatives, dissemination of information on wellness programs across institutions, providing childcare for HMS faculty, install a pool or gym in the area. Protected time for scholarship and selfcare are critical to help the current situations. Lastly, Dr. Park mentioned how this year, the Council should formulate actionable plans with follow-up so there is accountability.

Dr. Ingelfinger reported out for group #3. Her group discussed several issues, summarized as follows: While the pandemic has contributed to burnout, burnout existed at Harvard and Harvard Hospitals before COVID, as faculty have been relatively underfunded and under supported. The often "loose federation" of entities at HMS doesn't help matters. As far as a remedy or partial remedy, group #3 discussed the importance of the creation of an office that includes a substantial budget that could offer help to those faculty members who need support. Further, HMS should encourage coaches, mentors, and practice sessions prior to presentations of many types. The group consensus was that there needs to be a culture in which people will come forward when they need support—to a place where faculty can turn when lacking support or have a need to fill - including childcare, family leave, or even situational help with projects. For example, for someone asked to put something together at work and didn't know where to begin to plan it or gather resources. On the topic of system changes, this group thought that gathering qualitative data on what has worked, how successes have worked and how other attempts have not would be helpful.

Dr. Pian-Smith reported out for group #4. She mentioned that tactics her group discussed have also been brought up by others. Additionally, they spent some time on a humanity-based approach. The work/life imbalance pre-dated COVID, and the complicating factors over the last two years have made it feel worse with staff flexing and pivoting to new work areas and roles. One strategy discussed was finding ways to remind clinicians what brought us to the profession: teaching, kindness, connections, healing. Faculty Council can contribute to communications, HMS messaging about values, enforce a sense of urgency, and develop metrics so we can measure our successes. Faculty Council can serve as an advocacy group, including engaging local and hospital leaders to come to Faculty Council meetings.

Dr. Nayak reported out for the last group, group #5. Her group discussed while there was clearly burnout from the 2018 Faculty Council subcommittee report, the issues are slightly different. There are some new issues and also same issues but different in the context of the pandemic. There's childcare issues impacting feasibility to do work. There's less collegiately, less seeing faculty. It's different teaching students on Zoom, as it's harder to get active participation and engagement. This group discussed the timing and the clock that ticks for promotions, especially for junior faculty, and pointed out while more time was given, it's not a solution because stuff still needs to get done. The promotion process needs more refining for Junior Faculty. This group also

discussed the fluctuation in terms of support that are different for faculty and the impact unplanned holidays had played this last year. Solutions discussed include more transparency in process, messaging, engage leaders to be more proactive and anticipate staff shortages and have contingency plans in place for that. They also discussed how appreciating work in a timely fashion and celebrating accomplishments goes a long way.

Dr. Molina thanked everyone for their participation. In terms of what's next, she mentioned that the Docket Committee may dedicate one meeting in the spring to dive deeper into issues and solutions so the Council can move towards more meaningful actions.

Dr. Molina adjourned the meeting at approximately 5:29pm.