



HMS/HSDM Faculty Council

Faculty Council Minutes  
November 9, 2022

**Present:** Adelman, Agudo, Astley, Bauer, Becker, Bi, Biddinger, Caradonna, Chang, Chen, Daley, Damico, De Girolami, del Carmen, Desrosiers, Giannobile, Goldstein, Greenberg, Haberer, Hatfield, Hedt-Gauthier, Henske, Huang, Ingelfinger, Irani, Katz, Landrum, Molina, Murray, Okereke, Nayak, Parangi, Rosen, Silver, Subramanian, Treister, Wagers

**Guests:** Dr. DePace; Mss. Bittinger, DeCoste

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

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

Faculty Council Chair, Dr. Rose Molina, called the meeting to order at approximately 4:04pm. Dr. Molina then asked for and received acceptance of the minutes from the June 8, 2022, meeting, and the October 12, 2022, as presented.

Dr. Molina reviewed the meeting agenda. She provided framing for the issue stating that Harvard Medical School (HMS) has an opportunity to shape health and medicine, as well as the public discourse around it. She asked how we can best foster and support collaboration and communication to do so successfully. She then introduced Laura DeCoste, Chief Communications Officer at HMS.

Ms. DeCoste gave an overview of the core purpose of the Office of Communications and External Relations (OCER) with regards to science communications. She shared how HMS engages the community with respect to specific scientific developments and priorities. She also explained the difference between “owned” and “earned” media.

Dr. Angela DePace, Director, and Founder of the Scientific Citizenship Initiative (SCI), as well as an Associate Professor in Systems Biology and former member of Faculty Council asked how scientists interact with their communities. She posed the question: “What are the conditions that brought Faculty Council to the topic of scientific communication?” Faculty Council members responded, and a short discussion ensued. Dr. DePace stated that science is at its best when scientists are active citizens who value interpersonal skills. She also mentioned that SCI focuses on cultivating inclusive leadership, governance, communication, and ethics and that the skills taught at SCI include active listening, real world decision making, assessing trade-offs, and understanding value systems through experimental learning. Dr. DePace closed by stating 3 important questions: 1. How do we best communicate ourselves and our work to the world? 2. How do we best communicate with the world? 3. How authentically curious are we?

Dr. Joshua Goldstein, Faculty Council Vice Chair, led an exercise where faculty council anonymously shared its opinions on educational policy and then compared the results to average American views reported by the Pew Research Center. He specifically compared the following questions: should race play a role in college admissions, what should K-12 students learn about gender? and what should K-12 learn about the legacy of slavery?

Faculty Council then divided into small breakout rooms for more engaged discussion. The groups considered the following questions: How do we best communicate ourselves and our work to the world? How can we foster a community specifically to address major societal challenges and communicate them publicly in a way that fosters trust in science and medicine (pandemics, aging, health disparities, climate change, reproductive rights)? What are concrete action items that we can do as a faculty council to foster these aims?

Following the breakout sessions, Faculty Council regrouped for a period of discussion with designated spokespeople from each of the 5 groups.

Dr. Laura Hatfield explained that group one focused on the presence of social media and how to receive feedback from people who think very differently than we do. She stated how it seems the media concentrates on the same few faculty and that the same “experts” are often being quoted in HMS News. Group one discussed how department heads could play an important role in sharing the school’s communications plans with their faculty.

Dr. Goldstein, from group two, posed the question: what are the things we can do to “hear better?” and mentioned that the traditional belief that Doctors should not be sharing their opinions may need to be abandoned.

Dr. Grace Chang mentioned that group three discussed the true purpose of communication and the sense that science communication is often featured by just a select few. Should we be using different lenses for science presentations? She also questioned how faculty are going to be able to communicate when their viewpoints don’t align with the average American.

Dean Will Giannobile, from group four, explained that his group discussed the fact that we need to tie in our faculty and staff to best communicate. He mentioned that Dr. Jessica Haberer, in Global Health and Social Medicine, is working with a team to create “the Village,” a social media platform connecting individuals who usually do not interact with one another. Stating the platform is a cross between LinkedIn and Tinder, where information will be matched with people who want to hear it.

Dr. Linda Bi, from group five, explained that focusing on the populations we serve is important (science, clinical work) and that we need to ensure that we are addressing what is relevant. Group five discussed how to communicate most effectively and wondered if a professional could help faculty who are not fluent with the current social media platforms communicate.

Dean Daley shared a few final thoughts, mentioning that there is a consensus that not working to become more adept at our communication is not an option in our current environment. He called for a small working group to consider concrete steps the school could take to foster better communication.

Dr. Molina thanked the Council for their thoughtfulness and dedication and adjourned the meeting at 5:31 pm.