

JRMC | Journal of Regional Medical Campuses

The Difference a Mission-Driven Regional Campus Can Make: Serving American Indian/Alaska Native Communities

Paula M. Termuhlen, MD; Mary J. Owen, MD; Anna Wirta-Kosobuski, PhD

z.umn.edu/JRMC

All work in JRMC is licensed under CC BY-NC



The Difference a Mission-Driven Regional Campus Can Make: Serving American Indian/Alaska Native Communities

Paula M. Termuhlen, MD; Mary J. Owen, MD; Anna Wirta-Kosobuski, PhD

Topic:

In order to create physicians who resemble the people we serve, it is vital for all institutions to develop methods of engaging and supporting individuals who are underrepresented in medicine and science (URM) and who are interested in becoming physicians. A regional campus has the ability to focus its mission on serving these individuals to help diversify the overall faculty and student body at a medical school. This session will explore the best practices and lessons learned from working with American Indian/Alaska Native communities. Using a modified World Cafe format, participants will explore how their campuses can recruit and support URM students and faculty and engage the communities from which they come.

Short Description:

In 2016, a letter to the editor entitled "Are Regional Campuses More Isolating for Minority Students" was published in *Academic Medicine* alleging that students who are underrepresented in medicine are socially isolated, potentially impacting their performance.¹ They assert that this may be magnified in a regional campus setting and that further research is warranted. This prompted a rebuttal from the GRMC Steering Committee.² The University of Minnesota Medical School, Duluth Campus has had a mission to train physicians for rural and Native American communities for over 40 years. The current AAMC monograph, "Reshaping the Journey: American Indians and Alaska Natives in Medicine" lists the University of Minnesota Medical School as the second highest producer of Native American physicians.³ The key to success has been a focused mission and engagement with an underserved community to develop programming that supports AI/AN students throughout the education continuum from kindergarten to medical practice.

Four questions were considered by session participants using a World Caf  model:

- 1) What do you want to accomplish? Define your mission and desired outcomes.
- 2) Who is your target population and how do you build relationships with them?
- 3) What are the needed resources for your work and how do you obtain them?
- 4) What do you need to sustain the effort?

Three take home points from our session:

- 1) Trust with community is critical to success; get it and keep it! Ask the community what they need/want.
- 2) Eliminate "othering"; you cannot be what you cannot see. Build inclusiveness.
- 3) Many partners are available; to sustain the effort identify and engage stakeholders. More partners are likely available than you realize.

References

1. Campbell, KC and Rodriguez, JE. Are regional campuses more isolating for minority students. *Acad Med* 2016; 91(7): 896-898.
2. Carter, L, Cooper, G and Johns A. A closer look at regional medical campuses. *Acad Med* 2017; 92(9): 1221.
3. Hill, G and Poll-Hunter, N. (2018) 'Learning from our community: effective practices' in *Reshaping the Journey: American Indians and Alaska Natives in Medicine*. Association of American Medical Colleges and Association of American Indian Physicians, pp. 41-54.

Paula M. Termuhlen, MD; Regional Campus Dean University of Minnesota Medical School, Duluth Campus

Mary J. Owen, MD; Director, Center for American Indian and Minority Health University of Minnesota Medical School, Duluth Campus

Anna Wirta-Kosobuski, PhD; Assistant Professor University of Minnesota Medical School, Duluth Campus

