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Medical Student Selection – Engaging Faculty and Community Members Across Regions in a Holistic, Mission-Aligned Process

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Medical Student Selection – Engaging Faculty and Community Members Across Regions in a Holistic, Mission-Aligned Process

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Topic:

It is widely acknowledged that serving on a medical school Admissions Committee, participating as an interviewer, and/or contributing as a screener in the selection process is a considerable investment of time and resources, both on the part of the individual and institution. Many medical schools rely solely on their Admissions Committee members or core faculty for all aspects of the admissions process. In a distributed campus model, engaging those on other campuses in the medical student selection process can be particularly difficult and resource-intensive. However, involving stakeholders from different contexts and campuses can help medical schools diversify the participants in each step of the admissions process, from recruitment, to screening, to interviewing, and to selection. Moreover, engaging stakeholders on other campuses and within the community allows for a much broader contribution to the selection of future physicians serving, in our case, the population of Washington state. Using the regional campus structure poses an advantage to embed multiple constituents, including faculty, staff, and community members, into the entire process supporting collective input in training future physicians for those communities. Involving local communities in the admissions process provides the opportunity for more people to become aware of institutional missions and to become invested in the holistic review framework used for candidate selection. This is especially critical when the admissions process is blinded to metrics from secondary application onward, and the focus is on a candidate's attributes and experiences and fit with the institutional mission. In sum, the effort of including faculty, staff, and community members across regional campuses contributes to an inclusive and collaborative effort which supports upholding school mission.

Short Description:

Many medical schools rely solely on their Admissions Committee members or core faculty for all aspects of the admissions process. In a distributed campus model, involving stakeholders from different contexts and campuses, can help medical schools diversify the participants in each step of the admissions process, from recruitment, to screening, to interviewing, to selection. Using the regional campus structure poses an advantage to embed multiple constituents, including faculty, staff, and community members, into the entire process supporting collective input in training future physicians for those communities and provides the opportunity for more people to become aware of institutional missions and to become invested in the holistic review framework used for candidate selection.

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Four questions that were posed to/considered by session participants:

- 1) *What are your barriers to including faculty and community members at all regional campuses in your admissions process?*
- 2) *Who do you want to attract to your College/School of Medicine and to your state/region?*
- 3) *What does the mission of your College/School of Medicine mean to you?*
- 4) *What are the goals of your College/School of Medicine?*

Three take home points from our session:

- 1) *Regional campus participation on the admissions committee (AC) and interviews allows for broad representation of the communities the College serves. Diverse voices such as non-physicians, varied specialties and practice environments, and unique personal backgrounds help in the selection of students who fit the mission.*

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- 2) *Involving members across distributed campuses in admissions means budget allocation for travel for in-person retreats necessary for trust-building. Dependable information technology services for videoconferencing during selection meetings is an absolute requirement.*
- 3) *Barriers to participation on the AC include faculty workload models that may not support service and potential reluctance to embrace holistic review processes. Overcoming these barriers requires stressing the mission-alignment of AC work, working with faculty to showcase service, and transparently discussing holistic review with prospective members.*