

# Integrating Consistent Reflection for Needed Changes in a Student Diversity Council and its Interprofessional Partnerships

## Background

The Student Diversity Council (SDC) is one of the two governing councils of the University of Michigan Medical School (UMMS). The SDC primarily focuses on advancing **diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility,** and **justice** (DEIAJ) at UMMS through education, outreach, and activism by partnering with and supporting students. The SDC was first redesigned in 2020 due to the lack of sustainable, student-driven DEIAJ efforts that became acutely visible following the murder of George Floyd. After a year of the redesign, issues were identified in the framework that led to reflections on potential restructuring for the incoming 2022 leadership.

## Structure Descriptions

- 2020:**
- 2 co–chairs
  - 3 vice chairs
  - 1 secretary of records/finance
  - 1 survey and research coordinator
  - 6 representatives – DEI lecture overview, educational series, community engagement, mental health and wellness, Anti–Racism Oversight Committee (AROC), and Student Council

- 2021:**
- 1 chair
  - 3 vice chairs
  - 6 representatives – curricular education, co–curricular education, mental health and wellness, mentorship and pipeline programs, community engagement, and medical student advocacy

- 2022:**
- 1 chair
  - 3 vice chairs
  - 6 representatives – same position titles as 2021
  - 3 MI representatives – one per committee
  - 1 director of medical student programs (faculty position)

## Reflection Outcomes

### **EDUCATION COMMITTEE:**

- The 2020 Representative for DEI Lecture Review limited their work to one project that remained under their oversight with their departure from the SDC.
  - Given that the work of this individual was limited to one project, the SDC sought to onboard members whose objectives focused on supporting DEIAJ initiatives of the general body while also developing initiatives that could be sustained within the SDC as student members inevitably transition.
- The 2020 Representative for Educational Series created a health disparities curriculum concept that straddled curricular and extra–curricular spaces, which highlighted the various avenues for DEIAJ Education.
  - The 2021 SDC Education Committee eliminated the aforementioned roles and established two positions: Representative for Curricular Education and Representative for Co–curricular Education.
- **Potential restructuring:**
  - Throughout 2021 it became evident that the unnecessary duplication of efforts could be avoided by creating one Representative for DEIAJ Education (and one Representative for Social Justice Activism discussed below) with the committee renamed to the Educational Advocacy Committee.

### **ACTIVISM COMMITTEE:**

- The 2020 Representatives to AROC and the Student Council served as liaisons in student and faculty/staff spaces to ensure that the voices of those not heard were amplified.
  - For the Representative to AROC, meetings were often difficult to attend due to timing.
    - This was also a concern for other committees and meetings with faculty and administration.
  - For the Representative to Student Council, the position reported items more often than building a collaborative partnership with the Student Council.
- For 2021, the positions of Representative for Community Engagement and Representative for Medical Student Advocacy were established to encourage more activity with this committee and the community.
  - The Representative for Community Engagement was originally part of the outreach committee, but there was room for adding a new role to this committee and shifting the position to the activism committee.
- **Potential restructuring:**
  - The advocacy efforts of the two representatives in 2021 may be easily integrated into those of the education committee. The education committee could absorb the activism committee.

### **OUTREACH COMMITTEE:**

- In 2020, the Representatives for Community Engagement and Mental Health and Wellness developed partnerships within and outside of Michigan Medicine to engage students and assess community needs.
  - A Representative for Mentorship and Pipeline Programs was created for the 2021 cohort in response to an identified, burgeoning gap between students and these programs.
  - The Representative for Mental Health and Wellness remained within the outreach committee with the task of continuing an innovative wellness mini–grant program.
- Funding for the wellness mini–grant program was secured for another year, but the student need was weighed against the program's aim for sustainability. To support students now, the program's final cycle will occur in March 2022.
- **Potential restructuring:**
  - With the advent of a new, comprehensive mental health program for students at UMMS and an oversight committee being established through the Office of Medical Student Education with student representation, the 2022 Representative for Mental Health and Wellness could be sought from this committee with an appointment in the SDC rather than inviting another student leader.
  - The Representative for Community Engagement could be combined with the role of the Representative for Mentorship and Pipeline Programs to streamline their responsibilities.

## Conclusion & Future Considerations

With each cohort of the SDC, feedback from students, faculty, and staff is solicited to evaluate how the SDC can better support a safe and inclusive culture and environment for all students to respond to acts of bias, prejudice, discrimination, and racism. Without continued reflection, the SDC's resolve to enact a cultural shift and ensure accountability for the continued progress of DEIAJ initiatives at the University of Michigan Medical School will stagnate as a new student executive board is selected each year. Student turnover is expected and essential for creativity and reform. To better achieve this vision for amplifying the collective voice, the SDC must continue to collaborate with Student Council, evaluate its proximity to power, and share its power with marginalized communities at UMMS.

***Access the SDC website  
via this QR code.***



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