

**Dipping Your Toes in the Water: A Recruitment Strategy to Engage New Faculty in IPE (29)**  
**Interprofessional Education Experience: Describing educational offerings when students from two or more professions learn about, from, and with each other to enable effective collaboration and improve health outcomes**

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**Background:**

LIFE (Longitudinal Interprofessional Family-based Experience) is an innovative interprofessional experiential program connecting interprofessional student teams with patients who have a chronic illness with a focus on Interprofessional CoreCompetency skill development. LIFE emerged from student feedback consistently indicating a desire to have more contact with each other to build interprofessional relationships, and a desire for integration of direct patient contact beyond hypothetical case studies. LIFE was first piloted in Winter, 2021 in the wake of the COVID pandemic as a virtual, synchronous and asynchronous learning experience providing students the opportunity to meet in real teams and with real patients virtually. Efforts to explore expansion of this innovative impactful program have emerged based on consistent positive feedback from students, patients and faculty from the initial pilot.

For IPE programs such as LIFE to expand across a larger variety of schools, programs and students, so too must the number of faculty members who are engaged and equipped in teaching IPE learning experiences. Expanding recruitment of faculty in IPE must overcome a number of potential barriers including lack of knowledge or skepticism about its value and benefits, lack of IPE teaching experience and training, workload constraints, among others (Buring, et al., 2009, Gilbert, 2005). Thus, it can be difficult to engage faculty, who are already carrying full workloads, in an area with which they are unfamiliar and untrained. Without an expansion of faculty engagement, it is also difficult to innovate and scale IPE learning experiences. Thus, it is critical that intentional and innovative strategies be developed to engage new faculty. To support potential expansion of LIFE, the planning team developed a strategic faculty-engagement pilot plan to recruit new faculty focused on providing a “dip your toes in the water” faculty IPE experience.

**Actions, Methods or Intervention:**

LIFE (Longitudinal Interprofessional Family-Based Experience) is an innovative online program that provides interprofessional students an experiential team experience including contact with real patients receiving health care through Michigan Medicine over a period of 8-10 weeks. The program has been well received by students, participating patient/family units and faculty such that there is intent to explore increased scalability of this innovative program to involve more UM students from all 10 health science schools across three campuses. This expansion would require additional faculty; thus, a plan was developed to engage new faculty focused on personal outreach invitations to “dip your toes in the water” of IPE with LIFE.

Existing LIFE faculty from 8 health science schools personally reached out to colleagues, particularly targeting Interprofessional Leadership Fellows and any faculty thought to have interest in IPE, to invite them to partner with existing LIFE faculty as Faculty Observers for our Winter 2022 program. This invitation described that this would be an online low-level time commitment designed “to dip one’s toes in the water” to see if they might be interested in becoming more involved in the future. An email invite was sent briefly describing the benefits of LIFE including opportunities for faculty to engage and observe team teaching, engagement with IPE students and IPE training and mentorship, all afforded with a limited time commitment, and all done virtually. An information link about the initial offering of LIFE and its success was also provided. Faculty observer roles were clearly delineated including an opening and closing event and the opportunity to be involved in review and feedback of student-patient/family visits, with an anticipated total time commitment of 6-7 hours.

During the LIFE Kick-off session, faculty observers were introduced with a facilitated structured activity to engage and get to know them as welcomed team members. New faculty were able to see the program kick-off in real life and experience the teamwork of the existing faculty and staff team in the planning and

implementation of the program.

A pre-program faculty observer-survey was administered during the Kick-off meeting. This voluntary and anonymous pre-survey took approximately 5 minutes to complete. The survey focused on gathering information about factors that encourage or create barriers for faculty engagement in IPE. Questions about previous levels of engagement in IPE and anticipation of potential future engagement were also included.

### **Results:**

15 faculty observers attended the opening LIFE Kick-Off program and completed the pre-survey. The 2022 LIFE program is currently in progress, thus the post-faculty survey has not yet been completed. The faculty observer post-survey will explore the experience of being an observing faculty, including self-reported changes in interest in IPE and likelihood of becoming more involved in IPE. Results from the pre-survey are provided here.

#### **IPE Experience**

Preliminary data indicate that 53.3% of faculty observers have had no formal training regarding IPE teaching and the same percentage have not taught an IPE-designated course/learning experience. 20% indicated that they were currently actively involved in IPE teaching/activities with 20% indicating they had not ever been involved with IPE in the past. 40% indicated limited involvement in the last year, and another 20% indicated involvement in IPE in the past, but not currently.

#### **Motivators to be involved as a LIFE Faculty Observer**

Most frequently noted motivators to be engage in this program included: a colleague invited me (80%); general interest in IPE (80%) and IPE is a part of my professional goals; and low stakes commitment before making a larger commitment (53.3%) and the program sounded interesting (53%).

#### **Barriers to IPE involvement**

The two most frequently noted barriers to participation in IPE were: my school does not provide workload accommodations to be involved in IPE teaching activities (64.3%), and I don't feel adequately trained to teach IPE courses/activities (28.6%).

### **Lessons Learned:**

LIFE 2022 has not been completed at the time of submission, but very preliminary results indicate possible strategies to engage faculty with intentional outreach, promoting involvement in innovative, interesting program opportunities, and specific value and benefits of IPE along with a low-stakes commitment before making a larger commitment. It also appears that lack of IPE training may contribute to feeling inadequately trained may be a barrier for faculty engagement.

#### **Future Application and Next Steps:**

Further data analysis will be done after the post survey to see if this "dip your toes in the water" approach increases perceived likelihood of more engagement in the LIFE program. Data will be shared with the Center for IPE to contribute to ongoing efforts to increase faculty engagement.

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