

An Environmental Scan of Faculty Diversity Programs at U.S. Medical Schools

Date:

Nov 2012

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PURPOSE: To update the information available on the number and type of faculty diversity programs at U.S. MD-degree-granting medical schools.

METHOD: The authors conducted an environmental scan of the 124 MD-degree-granting medical schools included in the 2010 Faculty Roster. They interviewed key informants in the faculty affairs and/or minority affairs offices and conducted Web site searches to identify relevant schoolwide programs. Using a conceptual framework, they categorized the faculty programs that they identified into four domains: mentorship, career development, social climate, and financial support.

RESULTS: Of 124 eligible schools, the authors interviewed key informants from 84 schools (67.7%) and conducted Web site searches for 40 schools (32.2%). They identified diversity programs at 36 schools (29.0%) including mentoring (20/36; 16.1%), career development (20/36; 16.1%), social climate (17/36; 13.7%), and financial support programs (15/36; 12.1%). Schools with diversity programs were similar to schools without diversity programs in terms of year established, public/private status, and designation as historically black but were more likely to rank in the highest quartile and have a greater number of total faculty, and less likely to be located in the South.

CONCLUSIONS: Less than a third of medical schools had programs targeting underrepresented minority (URM) faculty, and those programs that existed differed in scope and goals. These findings suggest that a lack of resources and a preference for programs that target all faculty may limit the development of programs targeting URM faculty. Future research should examine whether diversity programs contribute to URM faculty recruitment and retention.

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