Introduction

Changes in the culture of higher education institutions have led to an increasing number of integrity related concerns. Professionalism initiatives in colleges of health professions education have been focused on students, residents and/or faculty members. None included staff members, important members of the college community. Thus, an innovative approach to enhancing professionalism across the college community was developed to include all stakeholders in the college.

Surveys of the public indicate that dentists are among the most trusted professionals. However, incidents of unprofessional behaviors in dental schools could undermine the public’s trust of dental professionals. Thus, it is imperative that colleges of dentistry promote professionalism across their college community.

Goal: Make the Ohio State University College of Dentistry known nationally for the importance the college community places on professionalism.

Professionalism Task Force

A task force led by an outside consultant was charged to evaluate the current state of professionalism in the college, and to investigate options and make recommendations for enhancing professionalism. Task force members were chosen to ensure that students, staff, faculty stakeholders in the college community were represented. In addition, a representative from organized dentistry and a medical bioethicist were also members of the task force.

College-wide Seminars

The Task Force invited speakers to talk about topics or their experiences with issues raised by the Task Force (Table 1).

Table 1: Invited Speakers

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<tr>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Janet Ousch, MD</td>
<td>Assistant Dean of Pre- Clinical Curriculum, College of Human Medicine, Michigan State University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Katherine Kelly, PhD</td>
<td>Associate Dean for Assessment and Strategic Initiatives, College of Pharmacy, The Ohio State University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ashley Fernandes, MD</td>
<td>Associate Director, Center for Bioethics and Medical Humanities, College of Medicine, The Ohio State University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roberta Gibbons, PhD</td>
<td>Merit Consulting</td>
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<td>Ryan Nash, MD</td>
<td>Director, Center for Bioethics and Medical Humanities, The Ohio State University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dorothy Perry, PhD</td>
<td>Associate Dean for Education and Student Affairs, School of Dentistry, University of California, San Francisco</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ed Morales, DPT</td>
<td>Director of Sales, ExamSoft</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annette McMurtry, JD</td>
<td>Director of Admissions, College of Dentistry, The Ohio State University</td>
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<tr>
<td>J. Davis, MD</td>
<td>Associate Dean for Medical Education, College of Medicine, The Ohio State University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cynthia Beeman, DDS, PhD</td>
<td>Assistant Professor, Division of Orthodontics, College of Dentistry, University of Kentucky</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sara Fowler, DMD, MD</td>
<td>Assistant Professor, Division of Endodontics, College of Dentistry, The Ohio State University</td>
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PTF Subcommittees

PTF Subcommittees and Charges

- Initiating & Branding New Initiatives
  - What should the new initiative be called?
  - How should this project be branded to align with the vision, principles, behaviors, etc.?
  - What graphic(s) should represent it?
  - What are three best ways to introduce the initiative to the college community?

- Change, Augment or Increase Curricula in Professionalism
  - Identify how, where, what, and what curriculum is in place.
  - Can an informal curriculum be identified?
  - Is the current curriculum sufficient in eyes of students, staff, faculty, and administrators?
  - If not, what are options for improving it?

- Increase Awareness of Professionalism in the College
  - What are options for emphasizing the importance of professional behavior to all?
  - Is it best to approach this as a college or to work in concert with other University units?
  - What resources may be important?

- Developing Better Assessment Methods for Professionalism
  - How do we assess professionalism now for students?
  - How do other institutions evaluate students, staff, and faculty members?
  - What behaviors should be included in the assessment?
  - What needs to happen before new assessment schemes are implemented?

- Reward Examples of Especially Strong Professionalism
  - What types of behavior should be recognized?
  - What would be the mechanisms for nomination, selection, and bestowing the awards?

- Identifying Important Points to Include in an “Elevator Speech”/Mission Statement
  - How might the mission statement/philosophy of the initiative be refined?
  - How might the mission statement/philosophy be aligned with other University units?

References

4. Fernandes A, Han G, Borges N. Presentation made to The Ohio State University College of Dentistry, Columbus, OH on April 29, 2015