

**Initiatives, programs etc. developed post the 2015 town hall and listening sessions focused on diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging and beyond...**

I am pleased to submit the following material in response to Dr. Lisa Coleman's memorandum to deans dated October 23, 2017. It addresses initiatives, programs, and related activities developed post the 2015 NYU-wide town hall and listening sessions focused on diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. I have also used this as an opportunity to discuss initiatives begun prior to the town hall sessions:

We have long been conscious of the need for increased diversity at the NYU College of Dentistry, and, indeed, in the dental profession as a whole. By way of example, let me note that less than 10% of our student population self-identify as Black or Hispanic, while 70% of our patient population (among those willing to self-identify) would be considered Black or Hispanic. We recognize that the dental school does not exist in isolation, and therefore must align itself with the goals of the broader communities it serves. Addressing the disparity between caregivers and those seeking care must be a top priority. In fact, there is some evidence that a health services workforce which is not diverse fails to provide meaningful access to care for a sizeable percentage of the population as a whole. For all too long, such patients in need have been rendered "invisible" to the profession. Inasmuch as roughly 10% of the dentists in the United States are educated at NYU, we have a unique opportunity to influence not only what happens at our own institution, but also what the future of dental education and the dental profession itself will look like. A hallmark of the College of Dentistry is care for the underserved, given that 43% of our 300,000 patient visits annually are people who are on Medicaid or other forms of public assistance. For a learned profession entrusted with the health and well-being of the public at large, effectively addressing such disparities is vitally important to fulfilling our mission and our calling.

The report that follows is divided two sections; the first describes new diversity initiatives begun after the 2015 campus-wide listening session. The second section discusses preexisting diversity initiatives based on the College's commitment as a health sciences and health services organization, recognizing that a failure to provide a diverse workforce of dental professionals compromises our core mission of caring for patients and educating practitioners from among all segments of our diverse population—most especially those who are economically- or educationally-underrepresented.

**I. New Diversity Initiatives**

- A. **New FTE:** The College of Dentistry has made a \$10M investment over 5 years in its new faculty diversity initiatives. Until now, the gender, racial, and ethnic composition of our faculty has reflected the composition of dental students from decades past. In recognition of this disparity and in line with University efforts, we are focused on broadening the diversity of our faculty. To that end, we have developed a college-wide faculty diversity initiative. The intent is to hire faculty from groups that, historically, have been educationally- or economically-disadvantaged. The recruitment plan allocates 10 new full-time positions over three years. Under this plan, departments having no vacant FTE will be given FTE for a qualifying recruitment. Moreover, departments that do have vacant FTE will be given an additional FTE for qualifying faculty recruitments. We have seen remarkable enthusiasm among our department chairs about this diversity initiative. Indeed, this program has already succeeded in recruiting 4 of the 10 allocated positions. Among the new recruits are Dr. Lorel Burns, an African-American endodontist who began a full-time tenure-track position on July 1, 2017. Also, Angelita Leon began a full-time faculty position as Director of our new Dental Assisting Program (described below).

B. Tuition-free Dental Assisting Program: In October, 2017, the College initiated a program admitting 6 underrepresented minority students per semester into a tuition-free, College-funded certificate program in dental assisting (Figures 1 and 2). In addition to charging no tuition, the College pays for all books and uniforms. The intent is to identify individuals on public assistance (including patients) who are unemployed and lacking in job skills. We will provide the needed education, including assistance with interviewing techniques and appropriate attire for job interviews and then will seek to place each graduate into a paid position as a dental assistant with a practicing alumnus/a dentist. Notably, dental assisting was included in the 2017 *US News and World Report* list of “Best Jobs.” Moreover, based on past experience, it is predictable that some of these students will go on to further their education by pursuing baccalaureate or master’s degrees. We have examples of earlier students who have done so, using dental assisting as a launching point for entry into broader professional life and employment. The school is supporting this program at a cost of approximately \$125,000.



Figure 1—First class of tuition-free dental assisting students standing in front of College’s Diversity Pledge Wall in the main lobby.



Figure 2—New tuition-free dental assisting students proudly display their NYU I.D. cards.

C. Saturday Academy for High School Students: The goal of the Saturday Academy is to strengthen the dental careers pipeline for underrepresented high school students. The pipeline concept holds that by providing for successive—and successful—transitions for members of underrepresented groups across educational milestones, society will increase its stock of educated citizens and enhance the public good. In dental education, this equates to increasing enrollment of underrepresented minorities in dental schools as a means of expanding access to care. The program was established in fall 2013 by Dr. Lorel Burns and Dr. Cheryline Pezzullo who were dental students at the time, and have now returned to the dental school as faculty members.

Past experience has shown that the 10<sup>th</sup> grade is a pivotal juncture that determines whether a student will be able to pursue a career in the health sciences such as dentistry. The reason is that during the 10<sup>th</sup> grade students determine their 11<sup>th</sup> grade high school course schedules. If students do not enroll in chemistry in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade, they will not be able to take physics in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Absent chemistry and physics, it becomes extremely difficult to undertake a pre-health curriculum in college. The comparatively few minority students who do take the pre-health program in college often become diverted into the more prestigious field of medicine, choosing to pursue an MD degree rather than a DDS degree. While entry of these students into medicine is certainly praiseworthy,



Figure 3—Dental school alumnae who founded the Saturday High School Academy, Dr. Lorel Burns and Dr. Cheryline Pezzullo. Both have now returned as faculty members and will lead an enlarged Saturday Academy.

it does nothing for the massive number of people seeking dental care who continue to be deprived of a diverse professional workforce in this field and the attendant lack of access to care.

The 2013 Saturday Academy began with 15 underrepresented high school students; in 2014, there were 26 students from a pool of 50 applicants. Students attend sessions two Saturdays a month from September through December. At each session, students are provided with breakfast and lunch and five volunteers from the dental school's student clubs plus a core group of volunteers guide the participants through each step in the college application process and also introduce the students to various aspects of dentistry, including providing them with hands-on training. For example, participants learn to fabricate mouth guards, fill predrilled teeth using typodonts, and remove simulated plaque, also using typodonts<sup>1</sup>.



Figure 4—Participants in Saturday High School Academy.

- D. Council on Humanitarianism and Culture Change: In November 2015, the College announced an initiative to further enhance our campus culture, beginning with the appointment of 50 faculty, administrators, and staff as members of a Council on Humanitarianism and Culture Change. This initiative aligns with a new Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) Standard that requires that dental schools commit to establishing a "humanistic culture and learning environment" for all members of the academic community. In furtherance of this aim, a two-day retreat was held in Norwalk, Connecticut, from June 10<sup>th</sup> through 11<sup>th</sup>, during which these 50 Council members developed initial strategies and an action plan for fostering an even more compassionate environment that promotes trust and mutual respect beyond hierarchies, cultivates diversity, and enhances community while maintaining excellence in education, health care and research. The members of this Council were so energized by this retreat and the actionable goals it produced that they have continued to meet on a monthly basis and have now nominated and brought along two additional cohorts of faculty, staff, and administrators from across the College of Dentistry community to join this Council and its efforts, growing the Council to nearly 150 members. In addition to participating in on-campus retreats each semester, all Council members are invited to participate in monthly meetings and active working groups designed to support and further the Council's mission by:

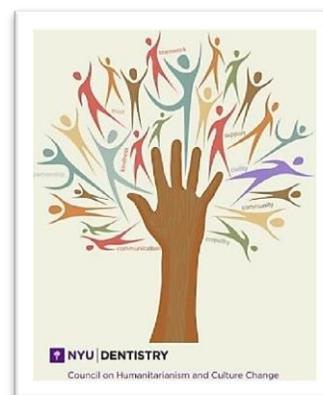


Figure 5— Council on Humanitarianism and Culture Change.

- a. identifying existing events and initiatives at the College that offer opportunities to celebrate and build connection across members of the NYU Dentistry community, and collaborating with departments to support widespread engagement and participation,
- b. identifying and promoting new and existing opportunities for professional development and training opportunities at the College to enhance widespread engagement and participation from faculty, staff, and administrators across all areas,

<sup>1</sup> In dental education, a **typodont** is an artificial replica of the oral cavity, including teeth, gingiva, and palate. It is used as an educational tool in simulation exercises allowing students to practice dental procedures on artificial teeth in a facsimile model before actually performing the procedures on patients.

- c. identifying opportunities to build community, foster authentic connections, and enhance collaborative engagement in the NYU Dentistry community, and
- d. collaborating with the larger Council and departments throughout the College to anchor the positive shifts in the environment into the culture of the College in lasting ways.

This highly engaged group has continued to meet in multiple forums to work together toward further refining and implementing an active culture change effort being carried out at the College.

- E. **Student Success Network:** The need for everyone in the community, most particularly students, to experience a sense of inclusion and belonging has led to the creation of the Student Success Network. Through it we aspire to help students reach their full academic and professional potential. It is organized around each Group Practice cohort and connects every dental student with a comprehensive network of students, faculty, and staff who provide individualized, one-on-one guidance and support from the moment they enter the College at New Student Orientation through the entire four years of dental school. The NYU Dentistry Student Success Network consists of:



Figure 6—Student Success Network.

- a. **Academic Advisors:** Professional advisors in the Office of Student Affairs & Academic Support Services who work in partnership with students to provide individualized support and who help them navigate the system, accessing resources and opportunities that contribute to their success.
- b. **Peer Mentors:** Dental students in the second, third, and fourth years offer guidance and insight into the student experience and provide all new students with opportunities to become engaged with the student body as a whole and with the NYU Dentistry community more broadly.
- c. **Peer Tutors:** Dental students in their second, third, and fourth years offer academic support through ongoing small group and one-on-one tutoring.
- d. **Faculty Mentors:** Faculty in the Assessment Skills course support students in the self-assessment of their learning, development of their E-Portfolio, and setting of professional goals.
- e. **Peer Assessment Facilitators:** Faculty in the Assessment Skills course guide students in the process of providing and receiving feedback from their peers and applying those experiences toward professional growth.

Especially notable is the introduction of the *Student Success Report* (see Figure 7): If a faculty member is concerned about a particular student and wishes the assistance of the Office of Student Affairs & Academic Support Services, the faculty member can submit an online request for assistance. If the request is marked urgent, the system automatically generates a text message to the Assistant Dean, Director of Student Affairs, and the Director of Advising & Academic Support Services. In general, both the reporting faculty and the student will be contacted and assistance offered within 2 minutes of the urgent request submission.

 The screenshot shows a web form titled "NYU DENTISTRY Student Success Report". At the top, there is a "PLEASE NOTE" in red text: "This system is not monitored 24/7. If this is an emergency, call 911. To speak to an NYU Wellness Center counselor immediately, call 212-462-9999." Below this, there is a "Request" section with a "Urgency of the request" dropdown menu set to "Urgent". The "Urgency" options are High, Medium, and Low. There is a text input field for "The name of the student you are concerned about \*". Below that is a "Program of the student" dropdown menu set to "DDS" and a "Class year of the student" dropdown menu set to "2019". There are also input fields for "Student e-mail address" and "Other contact information".

Figure 7—Requests identified as "Urgent" automatically generate a text message to Dentistry Student Affairs and are responded to within a 2-minute time frame.

## II. Continuing Diversity Initiatives (programs initiated before the 2015 listening session)

As mentioned above, the dental school does not exist in isolation, and its vision, therefore, cannot be completely our own. The school must align itself with the goals of the broader communities it serves. Accordingly, the dental school fully embraces the University's commitment to diversity in the varied backgrounds and identities of its students, faculty, staff, and patients locally and around the world. The College's *Diversity Working Group* consists of administrators in Admissions and Student Affairs and works closely with students to assess the climate of diversity and inclusiveness at the College. It promotes programs and provides resources that support diversity and inclusiveness education and awareness for all members of the College community—students, faculty, and staff. Our objective is to enhance the variety of personal experiences, values, and worldviews that arise from differences of culture and circumstance. Such differences include but are not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, language, abilities/disabilities, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and geographic region.

- A. Diversity Working Group: The Diversity Working Group of administrators in Admissions & Student Affairs works closely with students to (1) assess the current climate of diversity and inclusiveness at the College, (2) promote programs and resources that support diversity and inclusiveness education and awareness for all members of the College community (students, faculty, and staff), and (3) enhance efforts to recruit, retain, and support a richly diverse student body. Our ongoing challenge is to ensure that all students, faculty, and staff engage in supporting a diverse College community.
- B. Academic Curriculum: The curriculum includes required courses within every year of both the Dental Hygiene and DDS curricula. These courses engage students in critical dialogue and skill-building around the complex issues of diversity, identity, cross-cultural competency, and culturally-competent care. Clinical experiences in patient care engage dental students in serving a broadly diverse patient population. Examples of diversity-related courses within the dental school curriculum include:
  - a. Cultural Competence (Dental Hygiene B.S.)
  - b. Professionalism and Ethics in Healthcare (D1)
  - c. Diversity, Attitude, and Health Beliefs (D2)
  - d. Diversity and Cross-Cultural Competency for the Healthcare Professional (D3)
  - e. Communication in Healthcare: Working with Diverse Populations (D3)
  - f. Integrated Basic and Clinical Case Presentations (D1-D4)
  - g. Peer & Self-Assessment (D1-D4)
- C. College Programming: College programming includes:
  - a. The NYU Dentistry Statement on “Institutional Commitment to a Diverse & Inclusive Environment” posted on the NYU Dentistry website (<http://dental.nyu.edu/aboutus.html>).
  - b. Local and Global Outreach: For over 20 years, NYU Dentistry has provided the nation's most extensive oral health outreach programs for New York City schoolchildren, the elderly, people with disabilities, and other underserved populations. The NYU Dentistry/Henry Schein Cares Global Student Outreach Program has also built an exemplary global outreach model that provides participants with a unique service-learning experience, opportunities to conduct critically-needed research, and an increased awareness of access to care issues, while fostering a passion for volunteerism and social responsibility.
  - c. NYU Dentistry/Colgate Palmolive Annual Student Leadership Retreat: 55 students participate in activities and workshops designed to promote individual reflection and skill building in communication, diversity, leadership identity, and more while exploring the impact of leadership on the dental profession.

- d. **New Student Orientation:** This includes a mandatory workshop on "Community & Identity at NYU Dentistry" and optional meet and greet sessions and workshops for different identity groups (Students of Color at NYU Dentistry; LGBTQ students; Students in the Military; Students with Children) for all DDS and Dental Hygiene students. The College has partnered with the Center for Multicultural Education and Programs to update the "Community & Identity" orientation diversity workshop and train 12 faculty and staff diversity workshop facilitators in Diversity & Inclusiveness at NYU College of Dentistry.
  - e. **Staff Professional Development:** Includes a weekly Friday Focus program which brings staff and administrators together from across the College for ongoing training in areas that support working within a diverse and inclusive environment.
  - f. **Administrators and staff participate in Zone Trainings** facilitated by the Central University's Center for Multicultural Education and Programs, Center for Spiritual Life, and LGBTQ Student Center.
  - g. **Presentations on efforts to enhance diversity and inclusiveness** given at numerous College-wide meetings
- D. **Student Clubs and Organizations:** Eighteen of the 43 student clubs and organizations at the College of Dentistry are designed around identity groups. These groups promote diversity and inclusiveness with programming that educates and engages all members of the College community. Examples of student clubs and organizations include:
- a. Global Students Association
  - b. Women of Color in Dentistry
  - c. Hispanic Student Dental Association
  - d. Muslim Dental Association
  - e. Allies & Queers for Understanding & Awareness
  - f. Travel grants to send NYU Dentistry students to participate in diversity-related conferences (including the American Dental Education Association's (ADEA's) Student Diversity Leadership Conference; the Student National Dental Association (SNDA) Conference, Hispanic Dental Association Conference
  - g. Bulletin board in Student Learning Commons was created for posting positive, inclusive information on programs and events being coordinated by identity-based cultural student groups at NYU Dentistry
  - h. Small group listening sessions with NYU Dentistry students who identify as under-represented (Fall 2015)
  - i. Small group listening sessions with student leaders of identity-based College clubs and organizations (Spring 2016)
- E. **Participation in American Dental Education Association (ADEA) efforts on diversity and inclusion:**
- a. Faculty and staff participation in ADEA Diversity Workshop Series
  - b. NYU Dentistry representatives on ADEA Minority Affairs Diversity Committee
- F. **Plenary Council:** Many other programs have also been instituted to personalize the dental school experience and make everyone feel welcome and appreciated. Directed toward building consensus and cultivating trust, the Plenary Council is an all-volunteer assembly of approximately 270 self-selected faculty members, staff, and students held during the fall and spring terms. It fosters a leadership style that takes a highly collegial approach to decision-making—one that expands the dental school's talent base and helps prepare junior faculty to take on senior level responsibility through day-long facilitated conversation. Moreover, students and faculty develop connections with senior leadership that extend into yearlong (and, hopefully, career-long) mentorship opportunities.

Each year, the Plenary Council focuses on five key questions for open and uninhibited discussion:

- What’s *not* working?
- What *is* working?
- What are the best forums for meaningful dialogue, communication, and decision-making?
- Does the dental school’s existing strategic plan still inspire a level of commitment that goes beyond merely doing a job?
- What reward structures would be most meaningful to people at every level of the organization?

The President (Andrew Hamilton and John Sexton), the Executive Vice President for Health (Robert Berne), the Provost (Katherine Fleming and David McLaughlin), and the Deputy Chief of Staff to the President (Tracey Gardner) have all participated in one or more of the 7 Plenary events we have held to date. Significantly, the impact of the Plenary Council extends beyond the people who are physically present inasmuch as participants spontaneously disseminate both the findings and the spirit of the sessions. We use the plenary process to tease out concrete action items moving forward. In general, recommendations have fallen into two broad categories (1) relational and (2) transactional. The first category includes: culture change that reduces student stress; providing better ways of recognizing and acknowledging service among faculty, students, and staff; and incentivizing people to help each other. This, in turn has led to a major “Culture Change and Humanitarianism” initiative described above. The second—transactional—category includes curricular reform, better scheduling procedures, and better deployment of available space. Much has been done in these areas. The College has invested significantly in both personnel and processes to make improvements in accordance with the Plenary recommendations.

Among the recommendations from the Plenary Council has been increased recognition and acknowledgement of faculty and staff achievements. This suggestion has now led to the annual Dean’s Honors Day event (Figure 8) and recognition of NYU Dentistry faculty whose names were published in a Sunday, national edition, *New York Times* in 2008, 2012, and 2017.

Through the Office of Professional Development, the College supports the Faculty Staff Development Commission (FSDC) with a budget (\$400,000 annually) to provide professional development programming and travel support to meetings and training for faculty and staff. This year FSDC presented 166 unique programs each offering continuing dental education credit and lunch. One example is *Monday Morning Mentoring* (Figure 9), a form of “Micro-learning” or the condensing of material into short, very specific chunks of information that can be accessed on personal devices. Each week the Office of Professional Development’s *Monday Morning Mentoring* presents a different topic to the NYU Dentistry community, alternating between teaching and learning and career development. Topics thus far have included Public Speaking, Managing Emails, Peer Learning, Receiving Feedback, and



Figure 8—Dean’s Honors Day event to honor and recognize faculty and staff.

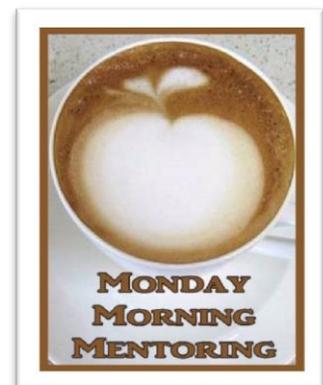
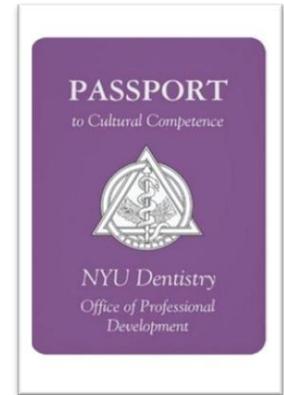


Figure 9—Monday Morning Mentoring Program.

Interleaved Instruction—all relevant to and structured around effective mentoring of young faculty members.

Another example is a development series for faculty and staff on cultural competence called *The Passport to Cultural Competence* (Figure 10). This program underscores NYU Dentistry’s commitment to the delivery of culturally competent care. Participants complete Passport-designated programs and then have their passports “stamped” to demonstrate participation. A prerequisite for entry to the passport program is completion of the Department of Health and Human Service’s three-course program in Cultural Competency for Oral Health Providers.

The College looks forward to continuing to expand and deepen its diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging initiatives.



*Figure 10—Passport to Cultural Competence for Faculty and Staff.*