WIMS Newsletter

Letter from Leon McDougle, MD, MPH, Chief Diversity Officer

Congratulations are extended to Sabrena Noria, MD, PhD, Assistant Professor of Surgery, Department of Surgery, Division of General & Gastrointestinal Surgery, and the planning committee for convening the successful 2nd Annual Women in Surgery Symposium on April 1st at the Longaberger Alumni House! This 1 day symposium was aligned with the highest traditions of excellence at The OSU Wexner Medical Center and advanced inclusive excellence in support of gender equity. Diversity and gender equity serve as catalysts for fulfilling our mission to improve people’s lives through innovation in research, education, and patient care. The OSUWMC has seen a steady growth in the percentage of full-time faculty who are women 39.5% (673/1,704) in 2014 to 42.7% (801/1877) in 2016. The percentage of full-time department of surgery faculty who are women faculty is also trending upward, 19.6% (18/92) in 2015 to 21.9% (21/96) in 2016. The national Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) benchmark averages are 39.5% and 23.6%, respectively. However, we must continue our efforts to advance opportunities for employment and leadership for women at the OSUWMC. I look forward to continued engagement with College of Medicine and OSUWMC leadership including Professor Joanne Turner, Director of Women’s Academic Advancement, to help accelerate progress.

To note, the Department of Surgery has done an exemplary job with increasing the percentage of general surgery residents who are women up to 49% (19/39) in 2015 and currently 41% (17/41). The AAMC benchmark average for the percentage of general surgery residents and fellows who are women is 38.1% (3,122/8,158). In future contributions to the newsletter I intend to share more information about women of color and importance of women in leadership. Stay tuned.
AAMC Mid-Career Women Faculty Leadership Development Seminar

Each year WIMS supports 2 candidates for the AAMC Mid-Career Women Faculty Leadership Development Seminar. Last year’s recipients for the AAMC seminar were Allison Walker, MD MPH and Abigail Turner, MD. Here is what they had to say about their experience.

Abigail N. Turner, PhD  
Associate Professor, Division of Infectious Diseases

“The AAMC Mid-Career Women Faculty Professional Development Seminar was an extremely valuable experience. Over 3½ days in December 2016, we participated in a thoughtful program which combined large lectures and highly interactive small-group workshops. Without exception, the speakers were honest, funny realists who spoke about their experiences as successful women in their respective professional domains. As the only PhD scientist in a clinical division in the OSU COM, I found most valuable the sessions on increasing visibility, finding a sponsor (vs. a mentor), charting a path toward a leadership position, and understanding the finances of an academic medical center. Ahead of time, I was concerned about whether the material would be relevant to me as a non-MD, and indeed the vast majority of the participants were MDs. However the speakers worked to make their material relevant to all participants regardless of background. I did not attend a single disappointing session. Everything about the seminar was well-organized: not just the speakers, but also the food and the break schedule and the table assignments (tables were assigned each day according to a theme: scientific area or rank or geographic region of the country). There was also considerable time set aside for independent processing of the information presented. Instead of taking notes during a session and then immediately moving to the next topic when it was over, sessions were typically separated by 30 minutes or more so we could think, write and plan how to use the information and strategies in our own settings. The small-group activities were also, surprisingly, fun – I usually find “tablework” in this type of environment to be tedious, but the activities were useful and revealing. Finally, it was a very friendly experience – almost everyone was attending by herself, so the social aspect was low-stress. In the end, despite the timing (mid-December with the holidays and a grant deadline approaching), I gained a huge amount from the experience. I strongly recommend it.”

Allison R. Walker, MD MPH  
Associate Professor, Division of Hematology

“I’ve often been told that there is a time in a physician’s career, usually after all the training is done, maybe after you’ve had your first “real job”, when you look up and ask, is this what it’s supposed to be like? For me this happened when I was attempting to go through the promotion and tenure process. Being forced to re-think what I had always imagined my career would be gave me the opportunity to truly reflect on and identify the areas of my work where I felt the most joy and fulfillment. As a result of this reflection I became more aware of a need to develop the skills necessary to navigate and advocate for my career development as a leader. Participating in the AAMC Mid-Career Women Faculty Professional Development Seminar has been one of the most valuable experiences that I’ve had thus far to help me along this path. Aside from the energizing feeling that you get from being around a group of people with a positive shared purpose, this conference offered so much more. From discussions on negotiations and developing a strategic plan, to enhancing your visibility within an organization, all of the sessions were applicable to the daily challenges that a woman in academia faces. If I had to distill what I took away from this experience into one sentence, it would have to be the importance of not falling victim to the rules you live by. Whether that applies to rules dictated by the leadership that you see every day, or perhaps more importantly, the rules that you impose upon yourself. I would recommend this conference to any woman who is wanting to take the next major step in her career and is looking for additional information on the obstacles she might face and how best to conquer them.”

The upcoming early-career seminar will be Jul 15-18, 2017 in Stevenson, Washington. The upcoming mid-career seminar will be Dec. 2-5, 2017 in Scottsdale, Arizona. For more information, please visit:  
https://www.aamc.org/members/leadership/catalog/
HIGHLIGHTED EVENT

The WIMS 2017 Annual Seminar Speaker: Julie Cohen on 7 keys to work-life balance

On April 27, 2017, Julie Cohen provided a 1 hour seminar followed by a 2.5 hour workshop that provided invited participants more in depth experiential learning about optimizing work-life balance. The event was well attended and engaging for the many participants.

The WIMS committee would like to recognize Erica Bell PhD, Brandon Biesiadecki PhD, and Gloria Fleming, MD for their hard work in bringing Julie Cohen to campus and providing an excellent seminar and workshop to the OSU campus.

For more information, please visit the WIMS webpage at https://medicine.osu.edu/faculty/fame/programs/advancement_of_women/pages/index.aspx