

ARAC Meeting Minutes

January 17, 2019

Committee Members Present: Cicely White, Dan Cabrera, Elizabeth Slater, Elizabeth Stein, Laurie Bazan, Lee McKoin, Mark Snowden, Rachel Clark, Suzanne Allen

Committee Members Absent: Heidi Combs, Jacqueline Wilson, Janelle Clauser, Jordan P Lewis, Joshua Jauregui, Lauren J. Marcell, Sheridan M. Joseph

Community Members Attending: Brenda Martinez, Cindy Elder, Jessica Keese, Leo Morales, Melinda Frank, Pearl Nguyen, Raye Maestas, Tilden Keller

Welcome from Dr. Allen and Introductions

Sharing Experiences and Reason for Being in ARAC

Dr. Snowden shared his video of his personal experiences, including growing up in Memphis in the 1960s and 70s where it was very clear he could play with other kids in the neighborhood but he was not welcomed to come into their homes, the MLK riots, being the only black student in the medical school in 1986 and feeling like he could never relax or feel comfortable because of that, working as the psychiatric attending at Harborview and how patient encounters can turn from calm patients seeking help to the staff escalating it into a confrontational encounter, and how we need to reassess and change those policies that create that environment. What if we are the system?

The medical school has increased diversity slowly over the past several decades and we now have a critical mass of students of color who can vocalize their experience. He wants to support these voices through the ARAC Committee.

Students Updates

The students stated they want to focus work on the students' needs. The first ARAC Meeting in 2016, there were so many students you could not sit down. Unfortunately, we don't have as much student involvement over the last few years. We should be critical of ourselves and our work to ensure we are improving the School of Medicine, and are incorporating input for our community. What about this work no longer feels safe?

- A student suggested a specific experience in Spokane's EHM lecture on microaggressions. As marginalized students, it is difficult to balance feeling vulnerable enough during the session to share their experience in order to teach others, instead of learning themselves and focusing how to help other marginalized communities. This tension of sharing lived experience as teaching moment versus growth puts a strain on the students of color. They struggle with whether they should allow facilitator views without a balanced dialogue or whether to speak out.

- In Seattle, they feel they don't have enough role models to demonstrate what it takes to take a risk to teach and not be defensive. Often speaking out creates divisions, even between liberals and like-minded who find inclusive vocabulary is difficult. In the moment, it is hard to experience this tension. However, one great example was Dr. Kost in the EHM week showed how to say "I am sorry. I will fix that." and move forward.
- One of the students even came to ARAC as community member before starting at UW, because they were really impressed that this committee exists but the tone of this committee doesn't permeate throughout the school. Maybe we need more loudness about how we are active in the school (be included in the presentations at Orientation, and conversations in daily experiences.)

The previous classes of medical students had similar experience. Minority students were expected to share and that was incredibly taxing and challenging.

- Many of the senior students feel that speaking and participating led to negative consequences in their experience here. So there is a lot of fear about losing their standing when they have worked so hard to get here. We need to focus on creating cultural change, not just on the committee.
- We are centering this on students but how do we center students on color without tokenizing or adding extra stress to their workload, when they already have traumatic experience in class, and wards, and difficult courses?

Another student is nervous that at the end of the day, we may just be a mission statement on the website. We want to be part of cultural shift, and have an impact like new hires to work on diversity. We want really big goals because it is worth it.

The structure of the curriculum allows the MS4s who were in SARU (Students For An Anti-Racist UW School of Medicine, organized in 2016) to come back now, even though they had to disengage for a while.

- They announced they will re-engage now and later this month will hold retreat to re-center, re-evaluate the work we did and to articulate struggles and solutions. This will be an event for students of color and allies.

We discussed the fundamental vision of ARAC. We can consolidate the student part of that equation, but the students are also curious about the structure and hierarchy of the committee, and what sustainability and funding efforts are being pursued in order for these efforts to continue to exist.

- Basically- Is the school putting their money where their mouth is? The students have questions about the ideological and functional scope of the committee.
- The Original SARU Asks included the concept of transparency and student support. The students noted that in the last few years since they started CEDI staff has almost completely rolled over. They requested more transparency and clarity.
- They want to hear more about the changes in topics like the Child Psych lecture, CEDI changes, and agendas for ARAC etc.

The students thanked Dr. Snowden who started the meeting with an open discussion of his history. They also noted that this underline Eliza's point that this room feels special space but that there are multiple barriers in the road in the medical school at large. The MS4s asked how can we use the time and energy to move forward?

What does it mean to take care of people, both internally and at a patient level?

In the Original SARU Demands, the 4th Ask was to make a race equity and justice initiative. This has not had any kind of work done, and it is an important way of answering the first point of student of color feeling safe or come to the table. We should revisit these SARU Asks.

- The work done by Prof Edwin Lindo and his center was acknowledged as a great example of this.

The students wanted to come forward in this meeting and say they are back and want to make meaningful changes. Thank for bringing forward the SARU asks and pushing forward.

Dr. Snowden noted that many of these concerns that occur in the classroom (about risk and fear) also happen on committees. In this committee we have dealt with this by getting to know each other and building trust.

- In previous year, there were some draw backs to having a room full of people (it was difficult to get to know each other and there were concern for power differentials of the individuals participating.) But this was more than just the positions. There is not a trust that we can work together and speak clearly and freely.
- He thinks there is also a fear of consequences.
- With new members of the committee this year, that means we have to do this work again.
- But there is a reality of fear and risk that can be managed by getting to know each other and understanding we really have the same goals. We have different priority and skills.
- Last year, after getting to know each other, we were able to focus on the other limiting factors: mainly resources.

In some ways the worst thing that happened to ARAC was that we started with a 1-year commission and we had to start over again this year.

- Now we have made it a standing committee with a history and vision. This committee won't restart every year.
- There are term limits for faculty co-chairs, but the students can continue until they graduate.
- Our first priority was for the Student Co-Chairs to be paid because they are going well beyond their responsibility.
- We also approached student membership differently this year. We did not request any specific students to join ARAC this year, because having to say no is a burden. This is a conscience effort

that has changed since last year and that is why the room was full but it was challenging for the students.

- We hope and desire that students of color would flock to this committee on their own.

Dr. Maestas shared her experience entering medical school in 1978 as the only Latina in her class. She received many microaggressions. She was asked numerous times “How did you get here?” meaning “You don’t belong here. You shouldn’t be here.” She had to persist, and endure and stay no matter what because the only other option was to quit. The WWAMI program had just started had some allied faculty asked minority students recruit other students. She was a token, heavily used to recruit and she almost flunked out of medical school because of the cost. She also struggled with internalized inferiority and the fear that “I don’t belong here.” But she had no option. Her family couldn’t support and no one could bail her out. She had to dig heels in and figure out how to survive.

When she started medical school, her classmate all talked about how they wanted to save the world, but then in 4th year they all went into cardiothoracic surgery or dermatology and left her feeling isolated. She took a year of leave, and enrolled in the School of Public Health because they focused on thinking systematically about helping whole communities. She almost didn’t come back to medical school, but she had advocates who helped us get through the challenges and she started clerkships. She loved seeing patients, and thrived. Luckily, back then Board Scores didn’t keep you from residency but because she had a mission to serve the underserved she was able to match to Swedish Cherry Hill. She then continued her work at SeaMar, and then as the medical director and opened the clinic to clerkships. She also started residency program at the Community Health Center and started a buddy system that is still operating. She loved teaching and eventually joined Harborview and then SOM Colleges. She has had a life of service and hasn’t haven’t deviated from what is important, and that includes supporting students of color in med school. When they say they need to prioritize and do XYZ, we support that.

She is committed to every student, minority or majority, and does her best to help everyone thrive. But she struggles with what I can do more with only 24 hours in the day. She wants to be part of a collective effort acknowledging and address racism.

Others often would ask her “Where are you from?” but what they really mean is “Are you competent?”

She struggles with imposter syndrome, and internalized inferiority and tokenism. She wonders “Am I in my position because of tokenism?” but has decided “Even if I am, maybe there is still some good I can make of it.”

This is a heavy burden and there is a cost to it. She can’t do it all but she is in the game.

And she commends that students that are doing it and they will continue to do it. “When you write your memoirs, you will see that this commitment to the underserved has helped you to stay the course.”

Brenda Martinez was happy to hear these stories and see Dr. Snowden's the video this time. She also thinks the biggest challenge for students is not feeling comfortable or that they can trust the ARAC committee is because there hasn't been consistent communication and has been a lack of transparency.

- Since the town hall many students haven't know the work ARAC has been doing. It exists but it is unclear how they are working with the recommendations and moving forward. We haven't been circling back to the students.
- We didn't even know that Dr. Muzquiz was presenting on Admissions reforms or Dr. Maestas presenting on Student Affairs programs in the last meetings
- Those are barriers because they don't know. The other students may be more inclined to share and come if they see the results
- We also have to make sure this gets out to students in Seattle and regionally

She also mentioned that we need administrative buy in. The key people are not there. What is the buy in? The School needs to put our money where our mouth is. (again)

If we engage with these conversation, we can build the community and trust with the students.

Dr. Morales asked if just hearing what we do will be helpful? Diversity and inclusion is not limited to what CEDI does, it is almost every group and department in the SOM has people are taking this on. But if it is not having an impact on your experience, we need to change or do more.

- Diversity and support for underrepresented students has flourished while he has been here. And he thinks a lot of that is attributable to the students and their voices calling for change.

We also need to find ways to change the climate and faculty development.

- We have implemented trainings on Microaggressions and Structural Racism in a more appropriate way. But naming those things isn't enough if you don't feel it.
- It is happening but it is just a large school. The SOM Faculty Network don't even necessarily not know who their chairs are, and we also work with the VA, Regional Hospitals, etc.

Continuing to voice your concerns, even if it feels like it isn't changing. We are grappling with ways to make systemic change because we realize that needs to happen.

Your work has been invaluable! It has put pressure and we have tried to respond, with some successes but it takes time and effort but there are sincere and honest efforts to try to make everyone comfortable and to be the best they can be.

Dr. Maestas offered one specific example of the collective voice of ARAC and SARU have led to change. In Dr. Ramsey's letter that was sent to the faculty today, the last bullet addresses diversity in promotion:

"In addition to recruiting individuals from underrepresented backgrounds for leadership and faculty roles, the School is revising its faculty appointment and promotion criteria to recognize and reward faculty contribution to scholarship, teaching, research and service related to diversity and equity. This

will provide equity in the appointment and promotion process for faculty engaged in diversity and equity initiatives.”

Up until now, minority faculty have been so taxed that it has gotten in the way of their promotion. Now it is being equally recognized. The work they are doing has value and we are recognizing that. She never benefited from this, and she thinks she might have made professor sooner because she was only valued for the research and taxed for her work on minority issues. She think we can count this as your collective work in SARU and ARAC.

Dr. Snowden explained that during the ARAC Committee meetings, we will also hear the report backs from the Committees we worked with and sent recommendations to last year. We will see the impact.

- For example, the Admissions team addressed diversity in the EXCOM membership different because of this committee.

However, there is tension – and we will lay this out right away- because change occurs in revolutions and evolutions. It will never be as fast as everyone wants. But we also know that one time things don't stick. This committee wants to get things built in to the structure of the SOM – not just the emphasis of one faculty member who may go away.

Dr. Morales shared that your voices have had an impact and people are trying to respond. You can justifiably ask if it is fast enough and big enough.

The students stated they think the ARAC Committee needs to be radical because the faculty stories are still their story today. Students are still being traumatize every day. We have to be radical if this will work. We have to be critical because students of colors have been asking for these things for decades.

We don't want ARAC to be another committee. We want to help change the culture.

Dr. Snowden emphasized that there are many ways to contribute to this work. The SARU committee can work on some other things beyond ARAC. There are many other student groups and projects. He wants to make sure that we are as radical as we can be and still be effective. He thinks a thoughtful and process focused approach can be the most effective and sustainable.

If we were to be radical, what would you be different?

- Address the SARU Demands that students have already written
- Correct the things in curriculum that come up over again, like the child psych lectures
- We should be critical that the culture at the school has not changed
- And the culture in this room requires a transition from reactive projects and responses, to proactive foundational shifts

- We need a revolutionary approach because evolution approach has been going on for decade
- We want Dr. Ramsey to be here at the table, to hear if there are barriers at his level
- We want the will, and vision and ingenuity to help these changes occur

Dr. Snowden explained that we want the students to feel that their recommendations are not an “Ask”. They are now full Committee member would be just as empowered as the faculty to make these changes.

A student asked are the ARAC minutes passed up to Dr. Ramsey? What are the other relationships that we need to make? Who are the people to talk to outside of this committee to implement change? What are the barriers? What do we need to do to move things forward?

Goals of ARAC

The Original ARAC Committee was commissioned by Dr. Ramsey, but now it reports to Dr. Allen and our recommendations will be report directly to the Educational Quality Improvement Strategic Planning Committee (EQISP) since they manage funding and structural goals of the SOM.

- In the springtime, we will make our recommendations to EQISP.
- In addition, throughout the year, we will work with program deans of Curriculum, Admissions, Student Affairs, PreMat (And other departments that we identify as areas of concern.)
- We can invite Dr. Ramsey as we would like. ARAC has access and we don’t have to knock on doors to try to get them to listen.

Students are free to work on whatever projects you want. We only ask if you do something outside of the committee, (if you are presenting your own ideas) that you don’t want to speak for the committee. We just want to be clear if this is ARAC recommendation or personal views so that the messages are clear.

The student has a vision that ARAC is a leader for the harder work. There are other student groups doing fantastic work but this Committee is stronger than the student groups. The words “Radical” and “Revolutionary” may be scary, but we have to work for this change and that is why we do this together.

We will work with the report backs from PreMat and Curriculum over the next two months. But then who else do we want to talk with?

- Dr. Ramsey just hired Paula Houston’s team to drive health equity efforts. We need to bring them here. We are not the only people pulling in this direction.

There are many groups doing this work like the Learning Environment Committee, The Diversity Subcommittee, IROC subcommittee (which handles reaction and prevention of student mistreatment.)

A quick plug for the Anonymous Student Mistreatment Tool-

<https://blogs.uw.edu/esom/learning-environment/>

Who else would be meaningful to the students? If there are other groups that you want to engage in this work, we usually want to know the background on their current work, then offer our concerns and recommendations. Please report back next meeting.

We also want to respond to significant events as they occur.

- Last year, Dr. Snowden immediately talked about the Child Psych lecture, watched video, talked with lecturer. We then responded as the ARAC Committee last year.

The Committee membership to the committee is officially closed for this year. We want to have a core group of students to compile documents, vote, etc. But we are very open to the other students who want to join in addition to the standing member. We just want to be careful not to diminish or dilute your time because you are here each month.

In closing the students want to take steps on transparency. Cindy will send the meeting minutes out to all students via the aux list serves (and post on the ARAC website.) Many of the students feel we have had no transparency since the Town Hall last year.

Could we have another Town Hall next month to talk about what has been done?? What would be barriers?

- This committee to plan town hall but it took several months to plan the last one. We can aim for another Town Hall in May.
- SARU's Asks already included hold town halls annually so the administration is accountable and students hear everything that has happened. ARAC has heard the updates but it should be available to the school as a whole.

Cindy also mentioned that we hope the student committee members will help to share the work with their class (in front of class meetings etc.) The students also emphasized that the students doing this work should also be protected and that previously there had been pressure and backlash on the students so we may want to have faculty present in these venues instead.

SARU wrote an 8 page demand list before the Call to Action in 2016. We can use that work that students have been repeatedly voiced to inform what we want ARAC to work on. We will add the SARU Asks to the next agenda and as we move forward with this work.

We will continue to discuss where should we Focus. It has been clear from the beginning that we don't just need to follow the ideas outline by Ramsey's charge letter. We can address the issues that the Committee feels passionate about. We will continue to develop the agenda over the next few months.

As a reminder: Before the next meeting, the students should choose 2 Student Co-Chairs. (Those Co-Chairs will help with the conference call to plan the agenda the week of Feb 11th.)

The meeting concluded.

Action Items:

Students:

- Choose 2 Student Co-Chairs. (Those Co-Chairs will help with the conference call to plan the agenda the week of Feb 11th.)
- Are there are other groups in the SOM that you want ARAC to engage with or share concerns with (We already heard from Student Affairs, Admissions and have plans for PreMat and Curriculum, EQISP and Dr. Houston's new health equity group). We usually want to know the background on their current work, then offer our concerns and recommendations. Please report back next meeting.
- Students will hold a retreat before the next meeting. Would they like to report back during the next meeting?
- Work with Dr. Morales to update website and make it more visible

Staff:

- Send Dr. Ramsey's email to ARAC Group
- Have deans send Dr. Ramsey's email to all students
- Ask Orientation Planning Committee to give time to ARAC
- Ask Student Class Meetings Committee to give time to ARAC (next meeting in April)
- Post meeting minutes to website
- Email meeting minutes to all students via Aux Lists
- Email minutes to Dr. Ramsey?
- Invite all students to next meeting via Aux Lists? Should we have all open meetings, or some as work meetings. Students suggest trying to raise profile of ARAC
- Work with Dr. Morales to update website and make it more visible
- Which meetings do we want to invite Dr. Ramsey to?

- Start setting up Town Hall/Dean's meetings for May
- Next meeting review the original asks of SARU