BACKGROUND

A comprehensive interprofessional, interdisciplinary infrastructure is critical to driving sustainable culture change to improve diversity, equity, inclusion, and well-being (DEI-W) within a large academic department. Inclusive engagement and representation of faculty and staff are paramount to achieving our mission of cultivating an environment that empowers all trainees, faculty, and staff to fulfill their purpose and potential.

METHODS

Develop Sense of Urgency, Create a Vision, Build a Coalition

Using the Kotter Leading Change Model as a framework, the University of Michigan Department of Internal Medicine (DOIM) Office of DEI & Well-Being embarked on a 10-month discovery and planning process to understand current state challenges, opportunities, and resources needed to support DEI-W initiatives.

Vision: To cultivate an environment that empowers our faculty, learners, and staff to fulfill their purpose and potential.

Mission: The Department of Internal Medicine will be a diverse and inclusive community amongst the IMPOWER Council; development of active Councils for each division/unit to advance, operationalize, and promote DEI-W work across the department; active engagement in identifying key barriers and defining clinical coverage models and processes to promote meaningful, restorative vacation time away from work; and development and implementation of evidenced-based best-practices for holistic faculty recruitment department-wide.

RESULTS & OUTCOMES

Generate and Celebrate Short-Term Wins, Consolidate Improvements/Accelerate Change, Institutionalize the Change

Notable outcomes include:

- interprofessional collaboration, professional development, and psychologically safe community amongst the IMPOWER Council; development of active Councils for each division/unit to advance, operationalize, and promote DEI-W work across the department;
- active engagement in identifying key barriers and defining clinical coverage models and processes to promote meaningful, restorative vacation time away from work; and development and implementation of evidenced-based best-practices for holistic faculty recruitment department-wide.

CONCLUSIONS

The IMPOWER Council framework provides sustainable infrastructure to strengthen DEI-W across our DOIM community through:

- Identifying dedicated DEI-W leadership to create a unifying vision and departmental strategy with implementation flexibility based on division/unit needs.
- Providing protected time and compensation to invest in staff and faculty which supports their professional growth and leadership development.
- Creating a safe space to ensure interprofessional and multi-disciplinary representation and collaboration to advance DEI-W initiatives.

LESSONS LEARNED

Active leadership engagement, investment and accountability are critical to integrating DEI-W in our department. Relying solely on a “grassroots” approach is insufficient.

Celebrating and communicating short-term wins are critical to maintaining momentum.

Transforming culture around DEI-W is complex, requiring sustained engagement over time.

Incorporating change initiatives into the fabric and daily life of the department by aligning policies, processes, rewards, and incentives promotes sustainability.

REFERENCES