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"Reducing Health Disparities Through a Culturally Centered Mentorship Program (CCMP) for Minority Faculty: The Southwest Addictions Research Group (SARG) Experience"

This report, by Vanessa Lopez Viets, PhD, and coworkers, describes a culturally centered mentorship program, the Southwest Addictions Research Group (SARG, 2003–2007), at the University of New Mexico (UNM), which trained a group of minority researchers dedicated to reducing health disparities associated with substance abuse. The program consisted of regular research meetings, collaboration with the Community Advisory Board, monthly symposia with renowned professionals, pilot projects, and conference support. The authors collected data on mentee research productivity as outcomes and conducted separate mentee and mentor focus-group interviews to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the SARG program. The SARG yielded positive outcomes as evidenced by increases in mentees' grant submissions, publications, and professional presentations. Focus-group qualitative data highlighted program and institutional barriers as well as successes that surfaced during the program.

"Strategies for Creating a Faculty Fellowship in Medical Education: Report of a 10-Year Experience"

In this article, Charles J. Hatem, MD, and associates present 10 strategies that have informed three well-established, yearlong medical education fellowships during a 10-year period: (1) defining an operating philosophy, values, and goals, (2) establishing a curriculum that reflects the roles and responsibilities of fellows and faculty, (3) employing a basic approach to adult learning, (4) striving to achieve a balance between stated objectives and openness of discussion, (5) creating optimum learning opportunities for the fellows to acquire and practice skills in the curriculum, (6) fostering interdisciplinary communication, team development, and the creation of a learning community, (7) developing mindfulness and critical self-reflection, (8) systematically reviewing each session, (9) evaluating fellowship outcomes, and (10) planning for the future. The authors also discuss challenges and opportunities related to the strategies.

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"Toward Meeting the Challenge of Physician Competence Assessment: The University of California, San Diego Physician Assessment and Clinical Education (PACE) Program"

Physician competence and performance problems contribute to medical errors and substandard health care quality. William A. Norcross, MD, and colleagues note that although physician competence assessment undoubtedly does take place at the local level, it is difficult to objectively assess a partner, colleague, or friend. Moreover, the methodologies used and the outcomes are necessarily veiled by peer review statutes. The University of California, San Diego (UCSD) Physician Assessment and Clinical Education (PACE) Program was founded at the UCSD School of Medicine to address these issues and provide individual physician competence assessment. Phase I of the PACE program includes two days of multi-level, multimodal testing, and Phase II is a five-day, preceptor-based formative assessment program taking place in the residency program of the physician's specialty.