

## UW Medicine Affinity Group Charge

### Purpose

Affinity groups at UW Medicine are formalized, supportive spaces to talk, be heard, grieve and celebrate in community within our work environment. They will also support UW Medicine as an organization to advance our equity, diversity, inclusion and health justice goals by providing a standing resource for staff and leaders to acknowledge, discuss and dismantle oppressive systems from within by providing a space for difficult conversations about these issues. Anonymous feedback from these groups may also provide leadership with information about how diverse groups are experiencing our working, teaching, learning and healing environment. For individual members, these groups provide:

- A supportive and protected space for marginalized groups to discuss issues affecting them, and stand in their own identities and experiences, without the need to educate or explain themselves to others and without having to navigate others' reactions.
- A space for community strengthening and education from within the group without external influence.

Beginning in this month, the UW Medicine Office of Healthcare Equity will sponsor four separate affinity groups for Black, LatinX, Asian and Pacific Islanders and LGBTQIA colleagues. These specific groups were selected based on requests from colleagues who identify with these groups and other groups may be formed in the future. Groups are also being offered for our White colleagues who want to stand in solidarity with our Black, indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) colleagues above; these are discussed separately as their needs require a different charge and plan of action.

Staff who wish to participate in an affinity group are asked join the group that they identify with. Each group will have co-chairs and virtual breakout rooms will be used for discussions, depending on the size of group. While notes will be taken, no one will be identified and the gatherings will not be recorded. The co-chairs of the groups will meet monthly initially, then quarterly to share themes and discuss how to address common issues.

### Objectives

- Serve as an employee support system facilitating opportunities for interpersonal connections and relationship building, healthy coping with ongoing events, education, personal growth, information, and idea sharing;
- Serve as a resource to the Office of Healthcare Equity and organizational leadership in the advancement of equity, diversity and inclusion throughout the system;
- Share knowledge and experiences of inequities within our organization and suggest interventions;
- Support diversity recruitment and retention;
- Support managerial effectiveness, leadership development, and communication with employees
- Serve as a connection to external communities and help to strengthen UW Medicine's presence in community;
- Share best practices and learnings with other affinity groups

## **Reporting**

The co-chairs of the affinity groups will meet regularly together to share common themes and report activities, concerns and recommendations to the Office of Healthcare Equity.

### **Affinity groups must comply with all policies, rules and regulations of UW Medicine and may not:**

- Engage in any activity that is inconsistent with UW Medicine’s mission or values;
- Promote political, religious, or ideological views, agendas or causes;
- Engage in political activities, make political or legislative endorsements, or promote candidates for public office. (Individuals can pursue political activities outside of the organization);
- Engage in fundraising activities, either internally or externally;
- Make direct charitable donations.

## **Membership**

Affinity group membership is voluntary and open to all UW Medicine staff, faculty, students and trainees.

### **Co-chairs**

- Black Affinity Group- Paula Houston and Martine Pierre-Louis
- LatinX Affinity Group- Dr. Leo Morales (co-chair TBD)
- Asian American and Pacific Islander – Dr. Frederick Chen and Tracy Hirai
- LGBTQIA – Sean Johnson (co-chair TBD)

Co-chairs will request volunteer facilitators for each meeting.

### **Meeting frequency**

Each affinity group will meet at least quarterly.

### **Funding**

The Office of Healthcare Equity will provide annual funding to each affinity group to be used to cover the costs for meeting space, food or other items as requested and approved by the Office of Healthcare Equity.