

A Pathway of Distinction in Global Health – A Professional Development Model to Prepare Medical Students as Future Global Health Leaders

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Background: Medical student evaluation and assessment both within the medical school institution and at the national licensing level continues to evolve. The first step of the United States Medical Licensing Examination will become a pass-fail examination in January 2022, and medical schools are adapting assessment tools to evaluate the potential of their learners. Students likewise wish to differentiate themselves among their peers as future clinicians and explore career opportunities earlier in training, particularly topics outside of the traditional undergraduate medical education curriculum. The University of Toledo College of Medicine and Life Sciences (UTCOMLS) launched a Professional Development Initiative to optimize student wellness and personal identify formation. This initiative examined strategies for the creation of pathways of distinction within the longitudinal curriculum. We present the initial plans for a Pathway of Distinction in Global Health at UTCOMLS.

Methods: The UTCOMLS convened a Global Health Curriculum Working Group to develop a course for pre-clinical medical students and to design a distinction track in Global Health. The initial Pathway of Distinction in Global Health at the UTCOMLS consists of three foundational requirements for medical students.

- Completion of a “Global Health and Human Rights” course, a once-weekly one-hour seminar convened over 32 weeks throughout the first and second-year of medical school;
- Completion of a fourth-year Global Health elective at an approved affiliate partner site at UTCOMLS;
- Completion of a capstone experience in Global Health. Medical students that complete all three requirements will be awarded a “Distinction in Global Health” upon graduation. Students will

also be counseled regarding post-graduation residency programs and career opportunities with an emphasis in global health.

Results: An initial cohort of 22 first- and second-year medical students has enrolled in our Global Health and Human Rights course, with the intention of proceeding in the Distinction Track in Global Health. This builds on a tradition of sending between 15-20 students yearly to our eleven international partner sites in China, Jordan, Lebanon, India, Ethiopia, the Philippines, Nepal, and Pakistan. Our next phase is to develop a database of capstone opportunities and to identify advisors with whom students can collaborate as they complete their capstone projects.

Discussion: The Pathway of Distinction in Global Health offers an opportunity for medical students to distinguish themselves as future global health professionals. As the assessment and evaluation of medical students evolves, universities should consider formal pathways to cultivate the career prospects of their students most committed to global health.

