

At the Department of Psychiatry, we believe that fostering a culture of Inclusive Excellence, one that creates role models, broadens perspectives, combats negative stereotyping, and optimizes our ability to provide world-class mental health care for all, is imperative. We strive to innovate behavioral health treatment through applied scientific research, rigorous education and training, responsive community outreach, and compassionate service that is inclusive, equitable, anti-racist, and dedicated to social justice. We are committed to serve Southern Arizona’s diverse patient populations and beyond, and have demonstrated our focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion in many of our innovative programs and services at the departmental, institutional, and community level. Below, please find highlights reflecting these efforts, although this is by no means an exhaustive list of all the Department’s DEI-related initiatives.

I. Department

a. Search Committee

Early last year, the Department launched an initiative to review our policies and practice of faculty recruitment and found room for improvement. Specifically, we focused on formalizing and establishing membership rules, following best practice guidelines, be more attentive towards issues of diversity and inclusion, and ensuring all members receive, at minimum, annual training in implicit bias for search committees.

b. UA Website, Social Media Presence, and Monthly Newsletter

With the assistance of the department’s communications coordinator, all relevant media content has been reviewed with a focus on its concordance with the Department’s mission and vision of an inclusive, equitable and just stance in our teaching, research, and service. Our website explicitly states our commitment to [anti-racism](#), [diversity, equity, and inclusion](#), and regularly features posts reflecting on current events tied to these topics. Additionally, our [monthly newsletter](#) includes the [Diversity Corner](#), where we share information on upcoming meetings, diversity trainings, awareness dates and topical articles.

c. Residency Training

Within our educational division, we have significantly enhanced the residency DEI educational requirements, developing a cultural psychiatry series for PGY-2’s and adding LGBTQ health and transgender health lectures into the series. Additionally, an LGBT elective at one of our community rotations was added for PGY-4’s. Additionally, Psychiatry continues to have a very strong presence within the GME Spanish track and the GME health care disparities track.

d. Clinic Service

The department of psychiatry provides outpatient services at the Behavioral Health Pavilion as well as at the Whole Health Clinic. Clinic Intake forms have been updated to be inclusive and all our internal bathrooms are non-gendered. Additionally, regular safe zone trainings are provided for all staff and residents.

e. Strategic Planning

A group comprised of faculty and staff recently completed the DEI goals of the department’s 3-year strategic plan. Several of their recommendations are currently in the implementation stage, including creating a departmental retention plan and strengthening the existing mentoring plan with the goal of achieving URiM faculty rates similar to those of the population of Arizona.

To continue to expand our current community outreach to underserved communities, we have compiled a faculty roster of those who regularly present information to communities in a culturally-informed and competent manner and are in the process of developing a Behavioral Health Speakers Bureau. Longer-term goals include working across the academic and clinical departments of COM-T to reduce stigma associated with mental illness, which disproportionately affects members of racial, ethnic, and gender minorities. Additionally, upon review of the department’s disproportionate attrition of female faculty, we will focus on

addressing the unique challenges affecting women working in academic medical settings in efforts to improve quality of life and improve retention.

f. Psychiatry Diversity Advisory Committee (PsyDAC)

The goal of this committee is to address mental healthcare disparities in Southern Arizona and achieve excellence by fostering an environment that values diversity, equity, and inclusion for our workforce and those we have a responsibility to serve. The committee, which meets monthly, includes staff, faculty, and trainees and is leading the implementation of the recently completed departmental 3-year strategic plan. This committee is chaired by the Department's Vice Chair for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and is regularly attended by both the Department Chair and the Department Administrator.

g. Grand Rounds

The department remains committed to bringing thought leaders to our Grand Rounds, sharing their reflections on health and mental health disparities with our faculty and the COM-T community. This past Spring, we were honored to have Altha Stewart, MD as a guest speaker. Dr. Stewart is the past president (and the first African American woman president) of the American Psychiatric Association, and she presented an interactive lecture entitled: "Structural Racism, Academic Psychiatry, and Lifelong Learning - The Path Forward for American Psychiatry." Her Grand Rounds presentation was attended by more than 200 individuals from the department, the region, COM-T, COM-P, and the rest of the university. During the upcoming academic year, we look forward to hosting Francis Lu, MD in his presentation titled, "DSM-5 Outline for Cultural Formulation and Cultural Formulation Interview: Tools for Culturally Competent Care." Dr. Lu is the Kim Professor in Cultural Psychiatry, Emeritus, UC Davis, and in 2021, the American College of Psychiatrists awarded him its Distinguished Service Award.

Additionally, the grand rounds planning committee has very deliberately incorporated multiple DEI specific presentations throughout the academic year, ensuring that faculty, residents, and staff have ample opportunity to obtain required training units.

II. Institution

a. DEI Leadership

As the only COM-T department to have named a Vice Chair of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, the Department of Psychiatry has demonstrated its strong commitment to incorporating DEI principles and actions into its culture. The VC develops and monitors departmental diversity initiatives and participates in the department's efforts to foster a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment, and a shared sense of belonging for staff, faculty, and trainees. The VC further provides guidance about and supports policy development, faculty and trainee recruitment and retention, and outreach and interdepartmental communication. As part of this role, the VC serves as our Diversity Champion, representing the department in other diversity efforts and programs within the College of Medicine – Tucson, UAHS, and the larger community.

b. Service

- i. Over the past 4 years, the Department has had active representation on the Admissions Committee, participating in the significant responsibility of the selection of a diverse and strong pool of future physicians. Participation on the Admissions Committee has been and will continue to be provided by the Departmental VC for DEI.
- ii. Psychiatry faculty have continued the tradition of service engagement by holding leadership positions in a variety of COM-T and Banner initiatives, including the Faculty Diversity Advisory Committee (FDAC) and more recently Antiracism in Medicine (ARiM) committees focused on faculty, resident, and student recruitment and retention. A faculty member is also serving as a

diversity champion for LGBTQIA efforts through Banner, as well as a member of the American Association of Directors of Psychiatric Residency Training (AADPRT) DEI committee.

c. Workforce Development

- i. Responding to the paucity of mental health services and the high rates of mental illness, substance use, and adverse childhood experiences in Southern Arizona, the Department of Psychiatry, in collaboration with the College of Nursing, successfully obtained a BWHET HRSA grant to develop an integrated workforce expansion terminal training program for advanced practice psychiatric nurses and PhD psychologists that will result in four cohorts of highly-trained clinicians who are prepared to deliver mental health care using a team-based approach in six areas of concentration: 1) Rural/Underserved/Native American populations; 2) Severe Mental Illness (SMI); 3) Child Mental Health; 4) Behavioral Health (e.g., sleep, pain, smoking, working in primary care); 5) Substance Use; and 6) Late-Life Mental Health. Starting in the fall of 2021, this fully funded innovative best practice initiative aims to reduce stigma, reduce barriers to collaboration among different provider specialties, and meet specific training needs for optimal delivery of services to underserved, culturally, and linguistically diverse communities.
- ii. Faculty are closely involved in border health projects, including the Focus Research on the Border Area (FRONTERA), a summer program which exposes undergraduate and graduate students to explore public health disparities in the U.S.-Mexico Border Region. A department faculty member is the PI for a number of state-wide projects to support the competitiveness of a diverse pipeline of students for health professions (Arizona HOPE) and an NIH-NHLBI grant to enhance the research skill and career advancement of early-career faculty from diverse backgrounds who seek to improve health equity.

III. Community

a. Whole Health Clinic (WHC)

In 2016, the Whole Health Clinic was developed in collaboration with the Department of Family and Community Medicine, to provide an integrated care setting where an interdisciplinary team approach provides best practice treatment for all, regardless of severity and complexity of needs.

Serving primarily low income and underinsured individuals, the Whole Health Clinic is a safe and welcoming space, where patients come to have their mental and physical health issues addressed. A highly diverse, multi-lingual, multi-racial, and multi-ethnic staff provide clinical and wrap-around services that best meet the patients' needs.

As the only fully integrated behavioral and physical health clinic within the Banner Health system, it truly stands out as a place where underrepresented, under-insured individuals struggling with mental illness can receive state-of-the-art interventions. As it continues to grow exponentially, and also serves as a training site for students, residents, fellows, and doctoral-level psychology students, the WHC recently required space expansion to accommodate the high demand.

The Whole Health Clinic received the 2020 Distinguished Service Award from the Arizona Medical Association and in 2019 received a national award from the American Psychiatric Association.

b. Early Psychosis Intervention Center (EPICenter)

The Early Psychosis Intervention Center (EPICenter) is a 5-year comprehensive program, housed within the integrated care setting of the Whole Health Clinic. It provides intensive, stage-specific early intervention services as well as access to physical health treatment for 15 – 35-year-old program participants in the early stages of a psychotic illness. As the only full-service early psychosis intervention program in Arizona, we

have provided services to individuals who travel from hundreds of miles away, even across state lines, in hopes of obtaining this specialized treatment. It was also the primary training site for our APA accredited Psychology Internship Program, providing research and clinical training opportunities in an effort to increase the number of clinicians trained to work with individuals in the early stages of a psychotic illness and their families.

Funded through an annually-renewable State Block grant, the EPICenter provides affordable treatment options to underserved, under-insured youth and young adults, offering a wide array of clinical and social support services to them and their families.

In an effort to continue to reach individuals and families impacted by this insidious disease despite service limitations imposed by COVID-19, faculty and students from EPICenter developed several informational videos, which will be translated into Spanish later this year. (<https://psychiatry.arizona.edu/patient-care/epicenter/epicenter-educational-videos-early-psychosis>)

c. Asylum Clinic

Since 2017, the Integrative Psychiatry program has collaborated with the UA-COM-T CUP Asylum clinic, the Arizona Asylum Network, the International Rescue Committee, as well as the Florence Immigration and Refugee Rights Project. To date, 45 adult and 3 child/adolescent asylum case evaluations have been performed through the integrative psychiatry program, serving asylum seekers from the Congo, Nigeria, South Africa, Guatemala, Colombia, Mexico, and other countries.

Nine UA Psychiatry residents and fellows, 11 medical students, 5 community observers, and 5 International observers have participated in the evaluations supervised by psychiatry department faculty. Integrative Psychiatry principles incorporating cultural humility, trauma-informed care, and mind-body-spirit holistic awareness and support of the asylum seekers are actively taught and incorporated into the evaluation process.

d. MIND Clinic

As part of the COM-T Commitment to Underserved People (CUP) Clinics program, the Mental Illness and Neuropsychiatric Disorder (MIND) Clinic offers psychiatric assessment and management to children and adults suffering from anxiety, depression, OCD, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and other mental illnesses to patients without insurance. Seven psychiatry department faculty volunteer year-round to support this weekly medical student run clinic.

e. Nogales Cardiometabolic Health and Sleep (NoCHeS) Study

This 5-year study, under the leadership of psychiatry faculty, is funded by the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities of the National Institutes of Health. It aims to understand sleep health at the US-Mexico border, the social, behavioral, and environmental factors that play a role in sleep health in this region, and the impacts of sleep on risk for cardiovascular disease and diabetes. While on hold during 2020 due to COVID-19, this study has resumed and will continue to enroll about 1,100 people from the Nogales, AZ area. It is being conducted in partnership with the Mariposa Community Health Centers and the Promotoras de Salud program.

Of the 435 individuals from all walks of life who have completed the study thus far, 423 identified as Hispanic, 409 specifically identifying as Mexican. Feedback from early study participants is universally positive, expressing appreciation for the health focus and education, given that they live in a small border community and state that “we often feel forgotten.” While the program was paused, a decision was made to pivot the focus to assessing the impact of COVID-19 on this community. Since the resumption of the original study, a waitlist of 181 eager study participants has formed.

f. Tribal Services

The Department of Psychiatry has collaborated with numerous American Indian tribal communities over the past decade. In conjunction with The Center for Mind-Body Medicine, we have been involved in building community-based interventions to address the youth suicide epidemic, depression, anxiety, substance-use related disorders, and trauma-spectrum conditions. Our approach is holistic, collaborative, culturally-informed, trauma-informed, and strength-based. The Department has established an elective for fourth year psychiatry residents to spend a month working at the Tuba City Regional Health Care Corporation, a joint commission-accredited health center providing services to a 6,000 square mile area and serving as a referral center for the western part of the Navajo and Hopi Reservations.

Communities that we are working with include Tohono O’odham, Hualapai, Havasupai, Navajo, Pascua Yaqui, Lakota (Pine Ridge, Rosebud, Cheyenne River, Standing Rock), and others. In collaboration with the University of Arizona Department of Family and Community Medicine, we also work with the American Indian Youth Wellness Camp program. The camp is designed to address youth obesity and diabetes utilizing a multi-modal approach to education, nutrition and physical activity intervention, cultural enrichment, and mind-body skills training to support emotion regulation and self-care for the youth and their caregivers. Medical students, residents, and fellows are commonly included in these initiatives to help expand their cultural awareness training and provide inspiration for their continued involvement in working with diverse, indigenous, and underserved communities.

In collaboration with the Arizona Telemedicine Program, department faculty have addressed the need for behavioral health services in rural areas. Specifically, faculty have provided tele-mental health services to adolescents and their families on the Navajo Reservation using a wireless telecommunications system with direct connections into the two high school clinics in Tuba City, Arizona. Mental health services are provided without the students leaving their schools and services include diagnosis, assessment, individual and family psychotherapy, and consultation.

As a Robert Wood Johnson Culture of Health Leaders participant, one of our faculty will help liaison and support individuals and organizations representing and/or serving American Indian tribal communities in Arizona to enhance wellbeing and supplement educational and healthcare resources through a train-the-trainer model of professional training in mind-body medicine. Trainees will include residents, medical students, teachers, school counselors, community leaders, and mental health clinicians serving Arizona's indigenous communities. Cultural advisors will guide the implementation of culturally relevant programming.

To address American Indian health and mental health during the pandemic, one member of the department served as co-investigator on a NIMH grant last year. The goal of the “American Indian Youth Wellness Camp in a Box” was to engage, educate, and empower families to improve their health and overall well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic. Camp in a Box was a 9-week program, inclusive of a 1-week intensive camp component followed by an 8-week booster component with content focused on nutrition, mental health, and physical activity education. The Camp in a Box is a Tribal/Urban Indian-University partnership, and materials were developed to replace an existing weeklong residential camp and to comply with social distancing guidelines. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fsoc.2021.611972/full>

g. Community Outreach and Education

Department faculty have actively pursued community outreach and education opportunities, especially focusing on historically underserved populations, to reduce stigma, increase mental health awareness, and encourage treatment access. Although challenged by restrictions due to COVID-19, numerous presentations have been provided to various communities at the local, state, national, and international level over the past year and a half. Several DEI-relevant media appearances by faculty have further sought to increase the visibility and underscore the relevance of mental health to a large and diverse audience.