

Social justice and health equity in the teaching & learning environment: Shared perspectives of academic leaders in health professional education programs

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Health professional education programs need to prepare their graduates to champion social justice and health equity (SJ/HE) within and beyond the healthcare system (Andermann, 2016; Sharma et al., 2018; Sivashanker & Ghandi, 2020). However, a gap exists about the TLE promotes SJ/HE, particularly from an academic leadership perspective. Research question: What are individual and shared visions of academic leaders of a Canadian health professional faculty that promote the actualization of a teaching and learning environment (TLE) that embraces social justice and health equity?

Method: Qualitative descriptive approach

- Purposive sampling of academic leaders from Rady Faculty of Health Sciences Colleges of Medicine, Nursing, Dentistry/Dental Hygiene, Pharmacy, & Rehabilitation Sciences
- Semi-structured interviews (N=14)
- Inductive thematic analysis

Results

- Humility expressed re: progress & optimism for future
- Overarching theme emerged, "We Need to Walk the Talk"
 - "...we need to start taking a few steps & stop worrying about is it the right step because doing nothing is just letting the status quo rule."
 - "There's got to be that buy-in from the top and then there has to be that commitment to sustain the information and going out to each college."

Subthemes	Exemplar Quote
Understanding of SJ/HE	<i>SJ is kind of a means or process (e.g., policy, framework, values) to help achieve HE (the outcome)</i>
Current strategies to create a SJ/HE TLE	<i>We need to do a better job of having both stand-alone and integrated teaching around things like SJ, Indigenous Health, and HE...</i>
Facilitators and barriers	<i>I think that a lot of folks are well-meaning and want to do this but are nervous because we don't have the cultural background or expertise.</i>
Actions to further develop a TLE promoting SJ/HE	<i>Rather than the siloed approach to professional education, we have seen that having people work together with their strengths and abilities, and expertise, really makes it better for the people we serve.</i>

Discussion

- Collaborative leadership versus a siloed approach builds on diverse strengths and abilities.
- Shared policies and values must be explicit.

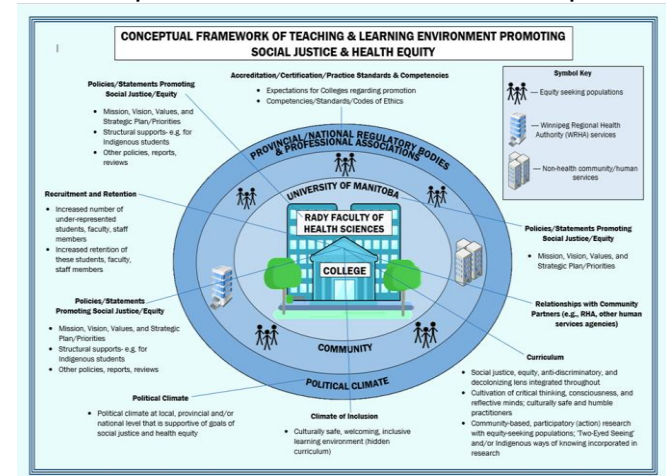


Figure 1. Emerging conceptual framework

Conclusion and curiosities

There is a need for collaborative leadership in a shared vision of the required TLE enabling entry-to-practice health professionals to champion SJ/HE. Further, a conceptual framework is needed to inform the process, evaluate the outcome, and thus be accountable to SJ/HE. Collaboration perpetuates sustained curiosity and conceptual ideation.

References

Andermann, A. (2016). Taking action on the social determinants of health in clinical practice: a framework for health professionals. *Canadian medical association journal*, 188(17-18), E474-E483. <https://doi.org/10.1503/cmaj.160177>
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