

# DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL MEDICINE WOMEN'S WORLD CAFÉ

University of Utah Health Department of Internal Medicine



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**PROGRESS TO DATE:** Instituted faculty driven task forces to address diversity, equity, career development, and mentoring, and launched a Women's World Café for staff.

**ROADBLOCKS & BARRIERS:** A World Café is a foreign format to most and getting enough attendees proved difficult. Finding a convenient time that did not detract from work or family was also a challenge, but holding an evening event was success.

**VALUABLE LESSONS LEARNED:** Addressing gender-related issues through a World Café can be a unifying experience through opening conversations, increasing awareness, and in bringing individuals of any gender together to identify productive solutions

## PROJECT VISION

Over the last year, the Department of Internal Medicine chose to focus on gender related issues that directly impact resiliency and wellness of female faculty and trainees. Historically, the State of Utah has struggled to break boundaries and address inequity issues for women, earning a rather poor report card with an **F** in **Work & Family**, a **D+** in **Poverty & Opportunity**, a **B** in **Health & Well-Being**, and a **D** in **Employment & Earnings**.

Though one of the largest departments in the School of Medicine, women are the **overwhelming minority, representing only 36% of faculty** in the Department of Internal Medicine. To give these women a voice and safe space to come together, the Department of Internal Medicine chose to hold an event to address and learn about the issues and concerns that directly impact this minority group.

## WORLD CAFÉ METHOD<sup>2</sup> AND PROJECT OVERVIEW

A **World Café** helps to foster calm and deep conversations with less debate and more listening by using **five structured communication techniques**:

- 1. Structuring Innovation:** Invite participants to gather in small groups to discuss shared challenges
- 2. Arranging the Space:** Tables with the advertised topic of conversation, with 5 to 7 seats at each, are assigned a facilitator to keep the discussion on track and conversation flowing
- 3. Distributing Participation:** Everyone is included in the conversations and provided with equal opportunity to contribute
- 4. Configuring Groups:** Table participants are unassigned and diversely comprised of any interested in the topic
- 5. Time Allocation:** Facilitators host the dialogue, encouraging open-ended contributions from all participants in five-minute rounds

Themes focused on:

- **Workplace culture**
- **Bias**
- **Mentoring**
- **Enhanced communication**
- **Work-life balance**
- **Leadership development**
- **Career advancement**



Women's World Café - March 14, 2018

In true "café" style, we hosted a dinner which encouraged socializing and networking prior to discussions. Chairs of other academic departments and senior women leaders from the School of Medicine participated as facilitators. Over 50 faculty and trainees attended.

## BASELINE ANALYSIS

Participants in the **Women's World Café** educated leaders on historical concerns and identified several areas of immediate improvement or focus. As a result, Department leadership launched multiple **task forces** to focus on mentoring, equity, diversity, and career development. Additionally, **administrative initiative groups** were formed to tackle process improvement issues, brought up in the discussions.

## WOMEN'S WORLD CAFÉ FOR STAFF

Because of the event's success, we extended this initiative to staff in the Department of Internal Medicine. Through the faculty event, we learned that certain issues are not gender exclusive and that men indicated a desire to know and understand issues their women colleagues face. Unlike the faculty event, invitations were sent to **all staff**, regardless of gender, to be more inclusive. The **Women's World Café for Staff** will be held December 14, 2018. We look forward to learning how we can further explore resiliency and wellness issues for the entire Department of Internal Medicine.

1. Status of Women in the States: <https://statusofwomensdata.org/wp-content/themes/witsfull/factsheets/economics/factsheet-utah.pdf>  
2. Liberating Structures Conversation Cafe: <http://www.liberatingstructures.com/17-conversation-cafe/>