Health science educators within OHSU’s School of Medicine imagined and created a grass-roots, cooperative, collaborative to create a “community of practice”, by educators, for educators. Its aim is to promote educational innovation, enhance scholarly prowess, and provide a space for all levels of faculty educators to be included. This model is in contrast to traditional top-down approaches to “Educators’ Academies” other schools have used to address similar goals.

**Potential Structures**

A community of practice is:
- “a group of skilled practitioners
- who interact regularly
- to learn from and with one another
for the purpose of professional and personal development.

Through in-person and online engagement, they share an understanding of the purpose and develop communal resources to enhance their respective practices.”

In order to create and maintain a community of practice form of professional engagement, OHSU Educators’ Collaborative (EC) members set the group’s priorities and agenda, rather than having them dictated by the school’s leadership.

**Goals of the Collaborative**

Given the culture at OHSU, an inclusive membership policy and faculty-driven approach to goal-setting was preferred over a competitive, highly selective application process toward goals and objectives set by central administration. OHSU’s experiences of undergraduate medical education (UME) curricular transformation had, not unexpectedly, led to some divisiveness among the school’s faculty, and a collaborative, grass-roots organization was seen as one potential way to recapture a sense of unity for the educators. A community of practice model met these requirements.

**The Road to Building the Educators’ Collaborative (EC)**

- **2010**: OHSU School of Medicine (SoM) Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) self-study identifies need for greater support for medical educators.
- **2011**: OHSU SoM begins UME curriculum transformation. Faculty development and core clinical experiences work groups recommend OHSU establish an educators’ academy.
- **2014**: Then-SoM-Dean Richardson endorses concept of a community of practice vs. an “academy” and appoints a director for the EC to begin the process, then steps back to allow faculty to direct the process.
- **2014-15**: An advisory group forms, including faculty from UME, graduate medical education (GME) and Graduate Studies. Several members have formal training in education. Bi-weekly meetings begin to design the structure, application process, and broad goals for the EC.
- **2016**: Applications opened early in 2016. By mid-year 100 enthusiastic new members joined the EC.
- **2017**: Community activities such as education grand rounds, “Petal” meetings, invited speakers, and semi-annual member meetings took place. The EC took over administration of the SoM Education Innovations mini-grants program.
- **2018**: EC continues to refine educator community activities and leads OHSU 2018 Symposium on Educational Excellence in collaboration with OHSU Office of the Provost.

**Citations**


** Lessons Learned **

**Lesson 1**: Know the culture of your school before deciding if a bottom-up, collaborative approach is appropriate for organizing and supporting your community of educators.

**Lesson 2**: Get faculty and institutional buy-in. Enlist the support of respected opinion leaders in education. Gather input from as many stakeholders as necessary to determine the scope and need for such a structure.

**Lesson 3**: Invite an advisory group to lay the foundation for the work of the collaborative.

**Lesson 4**: Create a generous timeline for building the program. Build in time for the advisory group to go through the typical stages of group development: forming, storming, norming, and performing.

**Lesson 5**: Communicate effectively and often with stakeholders. Develop a communication strategy and use it consistently.

**Lesson 6**: Set short- and long-term goals for your organization, and determine how you will assess whether they have been attained.

**Lesson 7**: Keep the momentum going by hosting regular events bringing members together, actively seeking their input and assistance, and publicizing successes.

**Future Directions**

1. Consider expanding membership to include additional schools and stakeholders (staff, trainees, learners) within OHSU.
2. Survey our membership to better understand how they want to contribute to the collaborative.
3. Further refine and develop EC offerings.