

2018-19 Pembroke Center Seed Grants



A two-day long symposium--and related activities—devoted to the topic of “Neurodiversity: Science, Politics, Culture,” to be held at Brown in April of 2019. The symposium will serve as an occasion to gather together a diverse group of speakers and participants—from both within and beyond the Brown community—who are addressing some of the complex social, cultural, and political dimensions of neurodiversity from a range of disciplinary perspectives. Neurodiversity is a term originated by autistic self-advocates seeking to de-pathologize autism and other forms of neurological, mental, and cognitive difference. Working in partnership with a number of campus units from across divisions—including (potentially) the Departments of Theatre Arts and Performance Studies and American Studies, the Pembroke Center, the Cogut Center, the Brain Initiative for Brain Science—the symposium will explore the wide-ranging implications of this concept for understanding the science, politics, and culture of neurological disability and difference.

Presented in conjunction with a seminar that Leon J. Hilton (Assistant Professor, TAPS) will be offering as part of his Spring 2019 Cogut Faculty Fellowship, the symposium will provide important opportunities for both graduate and undergraduate students to help with the organization and production of a major academic event. The symposium will also provide a significant opportunity for interdisciplinary collaboration and exchange. While acknowledging the historically complex relationship between biomedical, social scientific, and lay/activist knowledges and practices surrounding these issues, it is our hope that this symposium might provide opportunities for truly inter- and cross-disciplinary exchange, across a range of constituencies and communities. Our list of possible keynote speakers includes Lydia Brown, Steve Silberman, Melanie Yergeau, and Laurent Motttron (see bios, below).

Finally, it is our hope that this symposium might provide a galvanizing event to jump-start future Disability Studies programs and initiatives on campus. With the support of a Pembroke Center Seed Grant, we would hope to explore avenues for publishing the proceedings of the symposium as well as plant the seeds for the formation of a Disability Studies working group that would bring together faculty and students working on issues related to disability and neurodiversity from across the university. Both neurodiversity and disability studies are rapidly growing areas of intellectual inquiry at Brown and indeed nationally; the support of a Pembroke Seed Grant would position Brown to become a leader in this developing field of research.

Faculty Collaborators:

Leon J. Hilton, Theatre Arts and Performance Studies (Project Director)

Nick Ramos, Africana Studies and Cogut Center

Engaging Medical Students to Develop Structural Awareness:



A Program in Experiential Learning

Doctoring in Years 1 and 2 at Alpert Medical School is a two-year, five-course, required pre-clinical program designed to teach the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors of the competent, ethical, and humane physician. In the classroom, students work in small groups with an MD and social and behavioral scientist (SBS) faculty pair, as well as standardized patients to learn medical interviewing, physical examination, oral presentation, written documentation, counseling, and professionalism skills.

Over the last several years, students in the Doctoring Program have begun to explore themes in the classroom related to structural competency. The goal of introducing our students to these themes early in their medical education is to encourage them to recognize how social, economic, and political conditions produce health inequalities, and to recognize the ways that institutions, neighborhoods conditions, market forces, public policies, and health care delivery systems shape symptoms and diseases.

Doctoring faculty and students recognize that classroom discussions on themes such as LGBTQ patient care, interpersonal violence, explanatory models of illness, cross-cultural communication, and social determinants of health, are a crucial part of the Doctoring curriculum. However, what students glean from these discussions is often limited in scope and depth by individual instructor knowledge and time constraints, often resulting in some students having only a superficial understanding of these topics' intersectionality and complexity. In addition, traditional methods of teaching biological science-based curricula do not always translate into effective modalities for teaching social science disciplines.

The project is a result of both faculty and student feedback that student learning in the Doctoring Program would be enhanced by a hands-on experience in the community that highlights the role providers can play in recognizing social justice and meeting the needs of all patients. By offering medical students increased exposure to diverse populations in settings where patients receive services, we aim to have our trainees approach patient care with increased empathy and understanding. Hence, this pilot study aims to answer the following research question: *Do experiential learning opportunities in the community enhance pre-clinical medical students' structural awareness and empathy?*

Ultimately, through knowledge of and exposure to underserved communities in Providence, the aim is to train future physicians who are better prepared to identify and analyze relationships between structural factors and health outcomes, and who are able to demonstrate a higher understanding of structural and cultural competency in their approach to patient care. Once partners are identified and students are oriented to the pilot project, students will choose three out of four experiential sessions in the community including, but not limited to, the following themes: LGBTQ healthcare, interpersonal violence, end-of-life care, immigrant/refugee health, disability, health of incarcerated populations, homelessness and health, etc.. The workshop will give students the opportunity to engage in dialogue on structural awareness topics that they explored during the previous 8 weeks, as well as ask questions to their peers and small group facilitators in a safe learning environment.

Faculty Collaborators:

2018-19 Pembroke Center Seed Grants

Steven Rougas, MD, MS, FACEP (project co-director), Assistant Professor of Emergency Medicine and Medical Science and Director of the Doctoring Program

Julia Noguchi, MA, MPH (project co-director), Assistant Director of the Doctoring Program and an Assistant Professor of Medical Science

Kristina Monteiro, PhD, Director of Assessment and Evaluation in the Office of Medical Education and Assistant Professor of Medical Science

The Reverend Janet M. Cooper Nelson, Chaplain of the University, Director of the Office of Chaplains and Religious Life and faculty member at Brown

Elizabeth Tobin-Tyler, JD, MA, Assistant Professor of Family Medicine at the Alpert Medical School and of Health Services, Policy and Practice