

Final Report on the Leadership Program in Health Policy and Management at the Heller School at Brandeis

I have had many opportunities to think back to my experiences at Brandeis, and reflect on the educational experience. As I am continuing to move into leadership positions, but do not yet have a high level managerial position I believe that I benefited the most from the sessions on management/leadership and high performance health care/issues of relationships.

I have very much focused over the past several months on defining and enhancing my leadership style, and learning how to incorporate the lessons on negotiation into my everyday academic and administrative activities. Over the past 6 months, I have moved into a leadership position on the IRB at the University of Pittsburgh. I have worked to incorporate the education from the program at the Heller School into my work, finding individual team member's strengths and building on those to create a cohesive, energized and productive team. At the same time, I have worked with the negotiation skills I have learned to create a more flexible work environment in my surgical life, to allow me to focus on and develop my skills in this new arena. I have also applied these skills to my work as the leader of the ethics consultation service at the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC. The negotiation skills addressed during the course have been instrumental in my ability to position the ethics consultation work more prominently with both faculty and leadership. This has resulted in an increase in ethics consults requested, and a significant increase in the compensation provided to the ethics consultants. Ethics consultation work has always been grounded in ethical theory, but now more and more requires the incorporation of mediation skills to be effective in the clinical setting, and not merely of academic interest. I have been able to incorporate the teaching from the session on high performance health care, and relatedness in the health care setting into my background in mediation, and I have found this extremely helpful in working on the sometimes difficult issue of physician to physician (rather than physician to family) mediation. I am anxious to use these skills to expand upon the work of the consult service and committee, and help the hospital leadership address issues surrounding professional behavior and development, and how these issues impact on our short term and long term missions. Finally, I am also now having an opportunity to bring these skills to bear on my work as chairperson of the Family and Community Relations Committee for APSA. I feel more comfortable providing leadership to both a diverse group of surgeons, with much of the work and contact happening long distance over email/web, and to the companions/spouses/partners group, a very different group with very different needs.

While I greatly enjoyed my time at Brandeis, I felt that I received less benefit from the summer Joint Surgical Advocacy Conference. As a pediatric surgeon very familiar with the advocacy work of the AAP from my membership on the national Committee on Bioethics for the AAP, where we routinely receive updates from the D.C. liaisons, I felt somewhat removed from the agenda in place for the conference. While I can appreciate that all physicians, even those of us who care for only rare patients covered under Medicare, are touched by the decisions of the CMS, these issues felt fairly removed from

my day to day work and patient interactions. Additionally, I felt that Dr. Maa's presentation at the Leadership Program at Brandeis was more informative and exciting than the presentations provided at the JSAC. I greatly appreciated the opportunity to visit with my representatives, but was somewhat saddened to get a close up view of how much important governmental decision making goes on with little knowledge. I left this experience feeling that I would prefer, and feel my skills are better suited to, working on a smaller scale to improve care and access in my community and region. We had one conference call this winter, which was energizing, but I find these calls a difficult way to actually share information, and would prefer to have had a web based interactive format. I think that this would be a fantastic of extending the teaching provided by the course over the following year, with a set of 3 or 4 web based events, with an agenda and teaching materials based in advance, but kept loose enough to have room to address any changes that come up due to legislation or court decisions.

I have not had an opportunity to interact with my specialty society's leadership, but I look forward to providing any assistance I can, and would like to become more involved in policy decision making. I did have an opportunity to interview for a leadership position with the American Board of Surgery, and certainly used the education I received at the Heller School in outlined my vision for the changes I could see bringing to the activities of the Board if selected for that position.

My scholarship funds were spent entirely on the costs of the course, and my time at JSAC.

Overall, my time at Brandeis was been pivotal in my thinking about both my day to day tasks as a surgeon and a leader, and has refocused me in considering my long term career goals. I am extremely grateful to both APSA and ACS in providing me this opportunity.

Aviva Katz, MD FACS FAAP
2010 ACS/APSA Health Policy Scholar