

# beyond FLEXNER

Social Mission in Health  
Professions Education

THE BEYOND FLEXNER CONFERENCE

September 19-21, 2016

## 2016 CONFERENCE SUMMARY

September 19-21, 2016

Miami, FL



2016 Conference Co-Hosts:

**FIU**  
Herbert Wertheim  
College of Medicine

**THE GEORGE  
WASHINGTON  
UNIVERSITY**  
WASHINGTON, DC

## History of the Beyond Flexner Conference

The concept of “social mission” in medical or health professions education in the United States was not much used before 2010. Academicians, students and policy leaders did reference ideas such as community oriented primary care, community outreach, minority health and diversity but these issues rarely enjoyed a common label or a sense of defined mission. The term “social accountability” of medical schools was endorsed by the [World Health Organization](#) starting in the 1990’s and has gained some traction in mission statements and policy discussion in Europe and Canada. The term “social mission” first drew broad attention in 2010 when an article entitled [“The Social Mission of Medical Education: Ranking the Schools”](#) (Mullan, Chen, et al, *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 2010;152:804-811) lit up a national debate about social mission in medical education. The study, done by researchers at the [George Washington University](#) (GW) and the [Robert Graham Center](#) and funded by the [Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation](#), measured the “outcome” of the graduates of the nation’s allopathic and osteopathic medical schools of 10 years earlier. It ranked the schools on three core indicators of social mission – what percent of graduates were practicing primary care; what percent were practicing in shortage areas; and what percent were underrepresented minorities. The results indicated that the nation’s three African American schools as well as many rural and public schools far outperformed better known schools with reputations for usually ranked highly by sources such as [US News and World Report](#). That debate catalyzed the concerns of many educators, students, and policy makers about the lack of attention given to social mission in the programs of many medical schools and residency programs.

In the same timeframe as the [“Rankings”](#) paper, case studies funded by [the W. K. Kellogg Foundation](#) on six schools concentrating on social mission in medical education were carried out by the GW team. That work focused on eight aspects of school activity that were judged to be social mission enhancing -- mission statements, pipeline programs, admissions, curriculum, location of clinical experience, tuition management, mentorship, preparation for residency. The studies at the six schools and the unrest created by the [“Rankings”](#) paper led to the convening of the first [“Beyond Flexner: Social Mission in Medical Education”](#) Conference in May of 2012 at the [University of Oklahoma-Tulsa School of Community Medicine](#).

[The first Beyond Flexner Conference](#) was co-hosted by [Gerry Clancy](#), then president of the University of Oklahoma School Of Community Medicine in Tulsa, and [Fitzhugh Mullan](#) of George Washington University. The meeting was keynoted by former [Surgeon General David Satcher](#) and [Jack Geiger](#), who is recognized as the father of the community health center movement and a leader in the field of social medicine. Many of the 200 participants at the meeting held important university positions in areas such as diversity and inclusion, rural health, and primary care but often felt marginalized in their home settings. At the Beyond Flexner conference, the social mission common ground was everywhere and electrifying. The sense of purpose was strong and participants left Tulsa reinforced in their missions with new concepts and new colleagues.

[The second Beyond Flexner Conference](#) took place in Albuquerque, NM in April of 2015 co-hosted by [the University of New Mexico](#). UNM Health Science Center has a rich history of community engagement

dating back to the opening of the medical school in 1965. Conference participants not only deliberated issue of social mission but had the opportunity to take part in one of 12 site visits in and around Albuquerque. These visits were to programs where health professions students and faculty engaged in community based health delivery, agriculture, environment, and information exchange projects, demonstrating the impact a medical school could have on social determinants of health. There were 400 attendees at the New Mexico Conference of whom about 15% were students or residents. The conference was co-hosted by [Arthur Kaufman](#), Vice Chancellor for Family and Community Medicine at UNM and [Fitzhugh Mullan](#) of GW, and keynoted by [Don Berwick](#), founder of the Institute of Health Care Improvement and former CMS administrator.

Two important decisions were made at that Conference. The first was in response to the group consensus that inter-professional education for health professions students is essential to team building and to quality clinical practice in the future. Based on this view, the conference endorsed a change in the name and identity of the movement to [“Beyond Flexner: Social Mission in Health Professions Education”](#) with a commitment to broaden the agenda and participation of nurses, PAs, community health workers, dentists and others in future Beyond Flexner Conferences. The second decision was to create a formal organization, the Beyond Flexner Alliance (BFA), devoted to promoting social mission in health professions education. The BFA would have core goals of reducing health disparities, enhancing diversity, advancing community engagement, and using health care resources responsibly. The number of organizations with increasing interest in pursuing in social mission (by whatever definition) within health professions education was large and growing. The BFA was envisioned as a common ground that would provide a human and electronic platform for these people, organizations, and institutions as well as an accelerator for their common missions.

In March of 2016 with the assistance of a supportive grant from the [Atlantic Philanthropies](#), 19 leaders from the Beyond Flexner movement met for a weekend in Millwood, VA with special attention given to including representatives from nursing, and physician assistants, and the inter-professional education movement. The meeting resulted in agreement on the BFA vision, mission, and core concepts as well as the establishment of a [12-member Board of directors](#). [Fitzhugh Mullan](#) was elected Board Chair, [Divina Grossman](#), Professor of Nursing and Former Chancellor at the University of Massachusetts - Dartmouth was elected Board Vice-Chair and [Leigh Anne Butler](#) from the GW Health Workforce Institute as Secretary/Treasurer. The agreed work of the Board was to build a communications presence (website, newsletter, blogs, webinars, etc.), a membership strategy and a business plan. Additionally, they were tasked with overseeing Beyond Flexner national meetings, managing the Macy Awards program, creating awareness of and recognizing best practices, and exploring additional sources of support and collaboration for the BFA.

### **The Beyond Flexner 2016 Conference**

[The third Beyond Flexner Conference](#) took place September 19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>, 2016 and was co-hosted by Florida International University in Miami. [Pedro J. Greer, Jr.](#), Associate Dean for Community Engagement and

Professor and Chair, Department of Humanities, Health and Society, served as convener along with [Fitzhugh Mullan](#) and [the BFA Board](#). Television commentator and social critic, Soledad O'Brien, and Massachusetts General Hospital CEO Peter Slavin provided the keynote presentations. Divina Grossman presented on the social mission of nursing education and Mona Hanna-Attisha, pediatrician from Flint, MI invoked the social mission of the health professions in talking about her critical role in the Flint, MI water crisis. In total, there were 355 participants who took part in 2 ½ days of deliberation that included a series of mission-defining plenaries, instructive breakouts, and participation in a community-based experience, the 5th annual Dr. Herbert and Nicole Wertheim Conference in the city of OpaLocka. Beyond Flexner attendees observed over 900 children (grades k-12) learn firsthand about the role of various health professions. Through interactive demonstrations, 70 volunteers demonstrated what it is like to work in a variety of health professions, while providing information on the educational requirements needed for each field.

One of the highlights of the conference was the Student/Resident Poster Presentations recognizing research being done in social mission. First, second and third place winners also received special recognition for their work. As a way to continue to reach out to students and residents, the "Young Flexnerians" group, which was loosely formed in Albuquerque, found more traction in the third conference and has received encouragement from the BFA Board.

[George Thibault](#), [President of the Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation](#) and an early supporter of the Beyond Flexner movement, responded to an idea for recognizing social mission accomplishments by funding the [Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation Awards for Excellence in Social Mission in Health Professions Education](#). The BFA Board oversaw the first cycle of Macy Awards that were presented Morehouse School of Medicine for [institutional excellence](#), University of Florida Putting Families First: An Inter-Professional Family Health Experience for [program excellence](#), and Tom Curtin former Chief Medical Officer of the National Association of Community Health Centers for [individual excellence](#). The awards ceremony climaxed with the presentation of a [lifetime achievement award](#) for accomplishment in social mission to Jack Geiger.



[from L to R: George Thibault, President of the Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation; Fitzhugh Mullan, Chair of the BFA Board and Conference Co-Chair; Jack Geiger, Recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award; and Pedro J. Greer, Jr., Conference Co-Chair]

Sponsors included the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Milbank Memorial Fund, Kaiser Permanente, the University of New Mexico, the Josiah Macy, Jr. Foundation, the George Washington University, the Florida International University, South Miami Hospital – Baptist Health South Florida, St. George’s University, and the Aetna Foundation. Students and residents made up 20.8% of attendees, which was made possible by assistance of our sponsors through scholarship funds. Broad representation from physicians as well as civic leaders, nurses, policy makers, lawyers, teachers, physician assistants, health extenders and many more brought a rich diversity of voices to the conversation.

## **BFA Breakout Sessions**

The BFA Board took the opportunity to meet with attendees as a form of stakeholder engagement. Feedback from those sessions included encouraging the Board to develop the following resources:

- Development of a virtual network
- Journalism (blog, newsletter, journal someday)
- Skill building (mini-fellowships, pre-conference sessions)
- Policy and advocacy
- Best practices/examples of success
- Curriculum and competencies
- Membership opportunities for individuals and organizations
- Research into Social Mission Metrics

The groups asked for another conference and were polled for places that might be a good site for the next meeting. Groups felt that having 18 months between conferences was an appropriate length of time between meetings. The Board will begin a site selection process within the next few months with the plan to have the next meeting in the Spring of 2018.

The Board presented the following vision, mission and core concepts and principles to the Conference attendees on the final day of the conference for discussion:

### **Vision**

Health professions education in which social mission is present, prominent, and valued to drive health equity and improved health for individuals, communities, and nations.

### **Mission**

The Beyond Flexner Alliance aims to promote social mission in health professions education by networking learners, teachers, community leaders, health policy makers and their organizations to advance equity in education, research, service, policy, and practice.

### **Core Concepts and Principles**

Ways in which we will pursue our vision and achieve our mission are outlined below.

- Promote a culture of accountability in health professions education that values health equity
- Raise public consciousness about social mission
- Impact future leaders' understanding and commitment to social mission
- Create social mission standards and metrics to augment mission awareness at multiple levels
- Serve as repository for strategies that advance social mission
- Support pathways to assure a diverse workforce including leadership
- Engage similar and diverse perspectives
- Be regionally relevant
- Advocate, Question, Disrupt

## Conference Evaluation

Feedback from conference attendees was overwhelmingly positive. Some highlights from both the in-person written questionnaire and the online CME questionnaire are listed below:

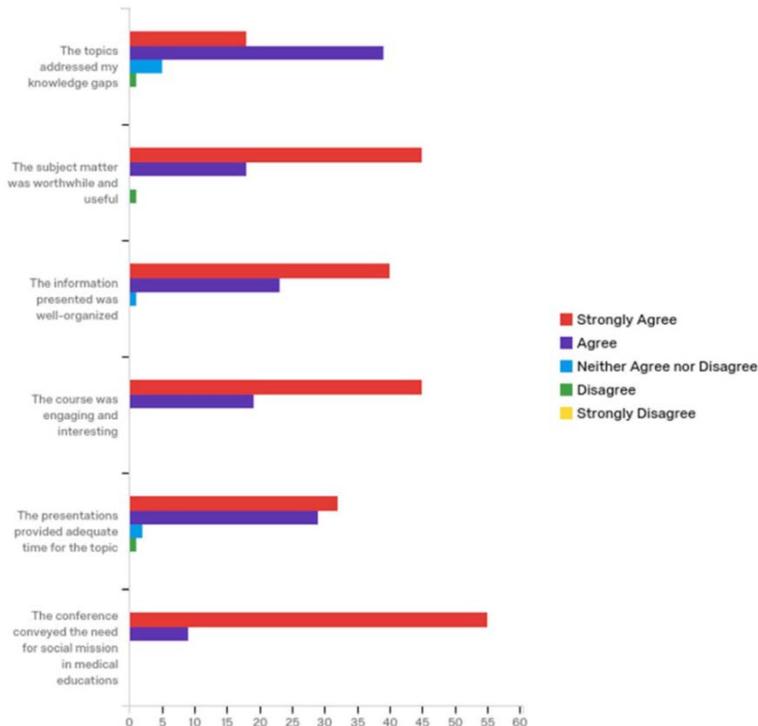
Specific overarching feedback from participants on the **written conference questionnaire** included the following (on a five point rating scale with "5" being the highest possible score). The number of respondents to this form was 81:

*How would you rank this conference in comparison to others you've attended?* 4.70 out of 5

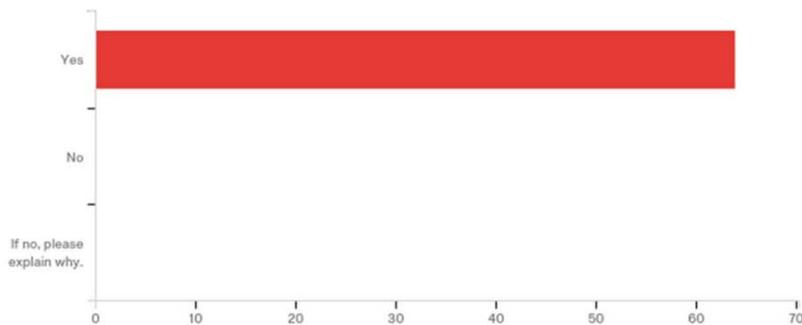
*Overall, were the speakers informative, prepared and understandable?* 4.83 out of 5

The online CME questionnaire had 64 respondents and included the following responses:

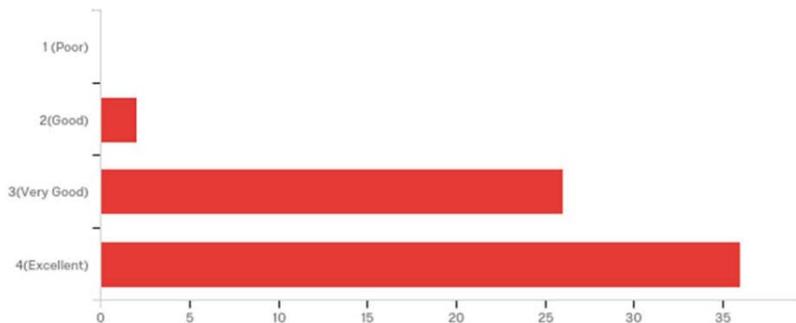
**Q6 - Please rate the educational components below:**



**Q9 - Do you feel the activity was fair-balanced, evidence-based, scientifically valid, and free of commercial bias\*?\*Commercial bias is defined as a personal judgement in favor of a specific product or service of a commercial interest.**



**Q34 - On a scale of 1 to 4 (1 = Poor, 4 = Excellent), how well did the content of the activity address the learning objectives stated above?**



Selected comments from both feedback forms included the following:

“Wonderful conference.” “Very engaging and energizing. Felt there was a large slant toward medicine and medical schools, but understand why this is. Continue to reach across the table to other professionals-- pharmacy, social work, nursing, PA/PT etc.” “A very inspirational conference with many superb speakers.” “Excellent conference - my 2nd year.” “Great conference. Keep them coming.” “The conference was excellent and should be held every year.” “Keep the flame alive, please .... and do not forget to expand your experiences to other countries in the Region of the Americas.” “The docket of speakers was absolutely phenomenal.” “Particularly enjoyed the opportunity to see youth exploring the possibilities for their future in our visit to Opa-Locka.” “I truly enjoyed attending the conference and hope there will be a 4th conference soon.” “Wonderful conference. Thank you. Memorable awards and awardees, too.” “Enjoyed my time learning and interacting with people of like mind.” “Overall, the conference was very well done and provided an important opportunity for learning and networking with other likeminded people.” “It is great to know there is at least a small core of people who understand where we need to go.” “Reignited and re-inspired my own personal and professional commitment to public service and social missions of health professions programs-particularly those established as public

higher educational institutions (like the University of California system!).” “Inspired to look for creative ways to leverage existing resources, students/trainees to create local initiatives for social determinants of health.” “Posters were great opportunity to share work. Great job excellent energy moving forward!!!” “This is such an important movement in the healthcare domain and especially in the education process. The purpose of all healthcare partners should be explicitly to address society's needs in this regard, whether local or global anywhere.” “Thank you! We need conferences and alliances like "Beyond Flexner" if we are to continue positively changing our worlds.” “Very impressive and inspiring speakers.” “Networking was phenomenal, posters were a great addition, total recharge of my social mission desire for our organization.”

### Next Steps

The fourth Beyond Flexner Conference will take place in the spring of 2018. In the meantime, the BFA Board in conjunction with other social mission activists will be reaching out to promote collaborations, events, and research to further the social mission of health professions education.

[www.beyondflexner.org](http://www.beyondflexner.org)

### With Thanks to our 2016 Sponsors

