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Doctoral Dissertation Defense
Of

Shari Snyder Pollack
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Major: Higher Education Administration

**AN INTERPRETATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL
ANALYSIS STUDY OF HOW BLACK MEDICAL
STUDENTS WHO IDENTIFY AS WOMEN
EXPERIENCE HIDDEN CURRICULUM DURING
THEIR PRECLINICAL YEARS OF MEDICAL
EDUCATION**

Monday, May 15, 2023
3:00 PM

SLIS Kent 352

Shari Snyder Pollack

B.S., Northern Arizona University, 1992

M.A., Cleveland State University, 2014

Shari Snyder Pollack is an experienced leader in medical and health education. She serves as the operations lead for multiple grants at University Hospitals focusing on disaster management in pediatric populations. Shari is extremely proud of her work with national and international leaders in this field and for developing policies, processes, and programs for one of our most vulnerable populations. Before her role at University Hospitals, Shari was the Director of Operations for the Northeast Ohio Medical University/Cleveland State University's Partnership for Urban Health – a program designed to recruit, educate, train, and retain underrepresented minorities to increase a diverse physician workforce. The work with the students within the Partnership for Urban Health sparked Shari's interest in breaking down barriers associated with the hidden curriculum for underrepresented minority students in medical school. Shari also served as a research manager at Case Western Reserve University for an NIH-funded grant that explored the relationship between race and gender associated with the treatment of colon cancer.

Shari's education and career trajectory across four industries led her to coach and help medical students navigate the medical school system. Her research interests further her commitment to working with underrepresented medical students, residents, and physicians as they navigate their careers.

Abstract

The Flexner Report (1910) established the assessment that provided the standards of medical education. Although the American Association of Medical Colleges (AAMC) has updated standards to increase the diversity of medical students throughout the years, the percentage of Black medical students identifying as women has not increased as expected. There is an underlying culture, known as hidden curriculum, in medical schools that is not known to all students but is visible in institutional policy, assessment and evaluation, funding, and institutional verbiage.

During the summer 2022, five Black medical students who identified as women participated in this Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) study that explored how Black medical students who identify as women experience hidden curriculum during their pre-clinical years of medical education. The research questions focused on how this student population made meaning of their experiences and how it impacted them in their pre-clinical years of medical school.

The results indicated that hidden curriculum is similarly experienced by the students even though their individual experiences vary. Data analysis produced six themes, including (1) the whole ecosystem that impacts a student's perceptions, (2) the real pressure on students resulting from the minority tax, (3) fear of ramifications associated with being vulnerable, (4) cultural influence on the student's pursuit of medical education, (5) semantics and actions used to communicate, and (6) the uniqueness/specialness of working on behalf of all Black medical students who identify as women.