

BRIEF REPORT, JANUARY 2015: Cultural Sensitivity

The FAIMER Professional Development Portfolio asks current and graduated Fellows **“Please suggest ways in which the FAIMER experience can become more culturally sensitive”**. During the past two years (2013 and 2014), 77 fellows responded to this Portfolio question. These included fellows from Brazil FRI (N=15), CMB-CMU FRI (N=10), CMCL FRI (N=10), GSMC FRI (N=9), FAIMER Institute (N=19), PSG FRI (N=8), and SAFRI (N=6). Respondents were from class years ranging from 2003 to 2014. Due to the very small number of fellows who responded during the past two years, these findings should not be considered as representative of all fellows. However, the qualitative data allows us to explore insights into cultural sensitivity and the FAIMER fellowship experience.¹

Content analysis was performed to look for recurring themes. Themes endorsed by more than two respondents are included in this report; programs with at least one respondent endorsing a given theme are shown in parentheses. Some respondents felt that cultural sensitivity was a program strength and/or had no suggestions for improvements. The following summarizes the feedback from respondents who did have suggestions for improvements. Suggestions included ideas for program activities and discussions, diversity of program participants, and connections to institutions and communities.

Exchange of experiences and backgrounds

(Brazil, CMB-CMU, CMCL, Institute, SAFRI). Specific ideas for discussion and exchange included:

- Discuss application of skills within own contexts
- Engage around topics regarding health professions education in own contexts (e.g., discuss how to make the learning environment more student friendly in our country, how to engage people in education in our country);
- “Open a [online] forum to exchange the traditions in each country. Also, we can encourage fellows & faculty to write about the national occasions in their countries and to describe people behaviors during these occasions”.
- “At the very beginning every fellow can write a summary of the important parts of their culture while they are introducing themselves.”
- Ask fellows to identify areas where FAIMER “clashes with and aligns with their cultural experience through informal discussions”.

¹ This report is based on the most recent response of each fellow during the past two years. Only Fellows who consented to participate in the evaluation and successfully completed the Fellowship or were expected to do so are included in the analysis in this report. Regional Institute Fellows were asked to consent to participation in the FAIMER evaluation starting with the 2007 classes.

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Program activities (classroom and social)

(Brazil, CMB-CMU, GSMC, Institute, PSG). Specific suggestions for activities included:

- Address local culture in classroom activities (e.g., discuss local culture of the issue being taught including personal experiences; create more case studies of varied cultural issues)
- Social activity during which fellows/faculty share their local cultures (food, music, movies, stories, traditions, etc.) – e.g., gala culture night, games
- Reflective/questioning activities to contribute to an increased sensitivity to cultural aspects
- Meals for the FAIMER Institute that represent and respect diverse cultural backgrounds of fellows

Diversity in faculty and fellows

(Institute, PSG, SAFRI). Strategies mentioned for more diversity included:

- More faculty from other countries
- Invite former fellows other than only those from the previous year
- Globally balanced representation in FAIMER Institute (e.g., balanced representation of Latin America, Asia, Africa)

More connection with and between fellows' institutions and communities

(Brazil, GSMC, Institute, CMCL) such as through:

- Visits to home institutions by international faculty
- Conversations between FAIMER and respective institutions
- Integration of projects from different institutions
- More community-based projects and projects that involve health department
- More participation of rural/community-oriented medical schools
- Workshops and meetings in other parts of country/globe where there are program fellows
- Feedback from faculty and students of the program region(s)

Have you used your online Portfolio? Fill it up & keep it up!

The FAIMER Professional Development Portfolio is a place for Fellows to record their accomplishments in health professions education and reflect on the impact of their FAIMER experience. The Portfolio is available online to all current and graduated Fellows. **The greater the number of Fellows using the Portfolio and updating it on a regular basis, the more accurate and representative aggregate information from the Portfolio will be.** If you haven't used your Portfolio yet, try filling it up! And if you have used it, remember to keep it up to date!

To access Portfolio, go to <https://fellows.faimer.org/login.aspx> and enter your username and password. If you have any questions about how to access the Portfolio, please contact Stacey (sfriedman@faimer.org) or Shiyao (syuan@faimer.org) at FAIMER.