

Women in Medicine & Science (WIMS) Meeting January 20, 2022

Present: Sue Graham, Nienke Dosa, Ann Botash, Katherine Biessner, Beth Erwin, Alexandra Goodman, Keshia Suhail

1. Women in Residency Life (WiRL) Presentation

The founders of Women in Residency Life (WiRL), Chief Residents Alexandra Goodman and Keshia Suhail attended the meeting and gave a fantastic and thorough presentation on their group.

They reviewed the activities that WiRL hosts in the areas of Community Outreach, Profession & Personal Development, Mentoring & Networking and Life & Wellness. The attached Powerpoint illustrates the multiple activities and events they coordinated. Their most recent campaign was a Feminine Hygiene Collection Drive from January 17-28, 2022.

They also provided a copy of an article that they wrote entitled "Twelve Steps for Starting a Support Group for Women Resident Physicians" (also attached) which appears in the Jan-Feb 2022 American Association for Physician Leadership, Physician Leadership Journal.

For more information, please visit their various social media:

Instagram: @upstate_wirl

Facebook: WiRL Upstate

Twitter: @upstatewirl

Website – <https://upstatewirl.wixsite.com/wirl>

REMINDERS:

WIMS Book Club

The next WIMS book club meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 7, 2022, at 5:30pm via WebEx (see email for link). The book is: **The Book of Longings: A Novel** by Sue Monk Kidd. As a reminder, all WIMS members are invited to attend the Book Club, whether you've read the book or not.

SAVE THE DATE: WIMS / Law Dinner

The WIMS / Law Dinner will return to the Spring and is scheduled for April 7, 2022. It will be held at the former Genesee Grande now known as the Collegian Hotel & Suites at 1060 E. Genesee Street in Syracuse.

The topic for the dinner is "Advocacy for the Elderly". Leah Caldwell will return as moderator for the event. The panel will include:

- Rachel May, NY State Senator;
- Samantha Aguam, Volunteer Lawyers Project of CNY, Inc;
- Nancy Kern-Eaton, United Way of Central New York;
- Sharon Brangman, Chair, Dept of Geriatrics;
- Jenny Ackley, Elder Justice Coalition / Vera House.

More information will be sent via the WIMS list serve as the date gets closer.

The next WIMS Monthly Meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, February 17, 2022 at 8am via Zoom**

Minutes prepared by: Sandy Jarvis

FEMININE HYGIENE Collection Drive

January 17-28, 2022

WIRL and Team Upstate are collecting essential feminine hygiene products to distribute to local charities.

Drop off unopened packaged donations at any of the following locations:

Weiskotten Hall main Lobby

Upstate Cancer Center – 1st Floor Lobby

Upstate Community Hospital – gift shop lobby

Upstate Child Care Center, 650 S. Salina Street

Joslin Diabetes Center

EM-STAT, 550 E. Genesee St., Rm. 200E

Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine, 3rd flr.,
Upstate Health Care Center

Harrison Specialty Services Center, Suite I

More info:

www.upstate.edu/collectiondrive

TEAM
UPSTATE
MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

SCAN HERE or
Text PRODUCTS to
9-1999 to donate



Dr. Suhail and Dr. Goodman with donations (no masks = pre-COVID)



21.3941221UMusk

WIRL
WOMEN IN RESIDENCY LIFE

Women in Residency Life (WiRL)



Presented by:
Dr. Keshia Suhail & Dr. Alexandra Goodman

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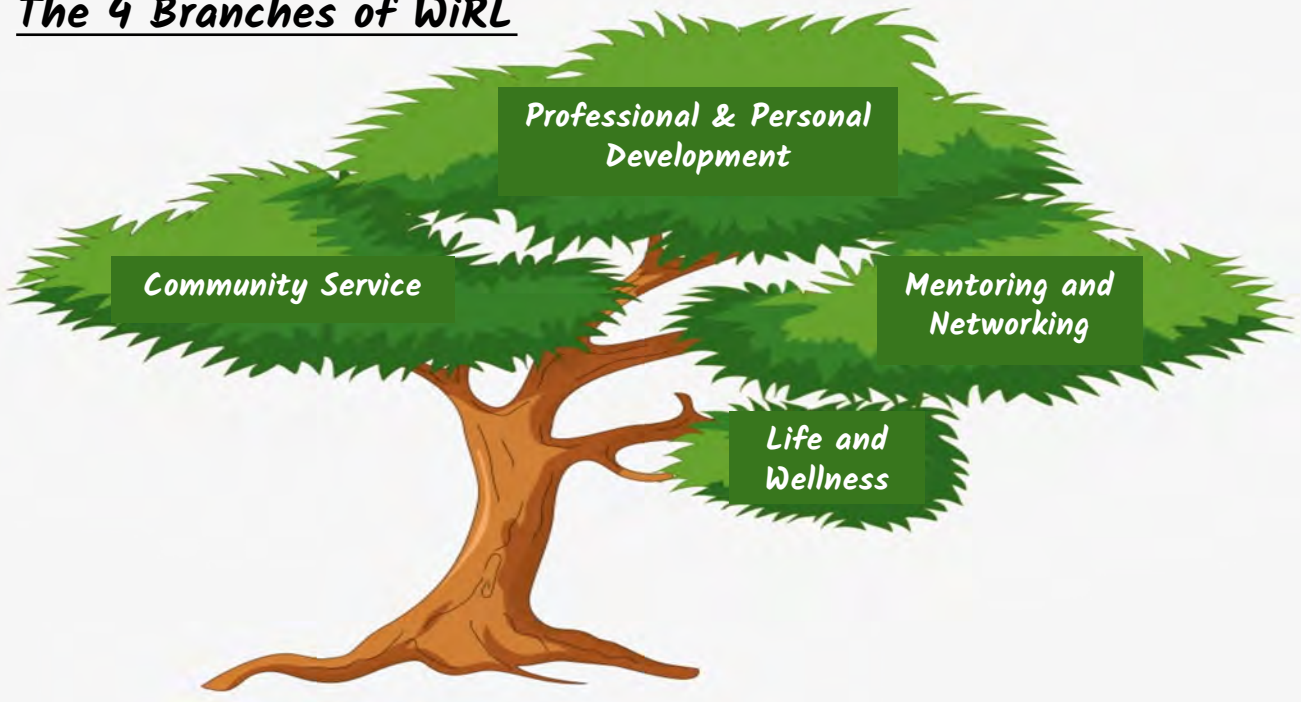
OUR MISSION STATEMENT



We are an *all-inclusive* residency run group designed to promote women's success across all specialties to learn from each other, network with leaders in our field and advance women in medicine. The purpose of WiRL is to support professional development and career advancement of women in residency through *education, advocacy, mentorship and service*.

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The 4 Branches of WiRL



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1. Community Outreach



4

Feminine Hygiene Drive 2019



Spanish Action League • Vera House •
Upstate Health Care Center • Samaritan
Center • Upstate residents lounge

5

Warm Clothing Drive



>250 warm
clothing gear
raised



6

WiRL-Red Cross Blood Drive



45 donations
to 134
patients!!

7

Virtual Coat Drive 2020



Raised \$1000+
and donated
100+ coats!

8

Other Outreach Initiatives



Toiletry & Paper Product Drive

WIRL MARCH 24TH - APRIL 23RD

COLLECTION BOXES LOCATED
INTERNAL MEDICINE LIBRARY, 8TH FLOOR
RESIDENT LOUNGE, UHCC CLINIC OR
VENMO: @ALYSSA-CORTESE-2

All proceeds will be donated to Vera House & Booth House

500+
items
donated!



WiRL Virtual 5K
Help a charity, stay fit
Proceeds will be donated to the
Samaritan Center & The Spanish Action League
Run anytime, anywhere May 23-31st

- 1) Register by emailing upstatewirlboard@gmail.com
- 2) Registration fee \$20: Venmo @Devjani
- 3) Run/Walk 5K (3.1 mi) outside or on a treadmill
- 4) Screenshot results to upstatewirlboard@gmail.com
- 5) Every participant will earn a WIRL mug and pen!

\$880
Raised

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Feminine Hygiene Drive 2022!



FEMININE HYGIENE Collection Drive

January 17-28, 2022
WIRL and Team Upstate are collecting essential feminine hygiene products to distribute to local charities.

Drop off unopened packaged donations at any of the following locations:

- Weiskotten Hall main Lobby
- Upstate Cancer Center – 1st Floor Lobby
- Upstate Community Hospital – gift shop lobby
- Upstate Child Care Center, 650 S. Salina Street
- Joslin Diabetes Center
- EM-STAT, 550 E. Genesee St., Rm. 200E
- Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine, 3rd flr., Upstate Health Care Center
- Harrison Specialty Services Center, Suite 1

More info:
www.upstate.edu/collectiondrive

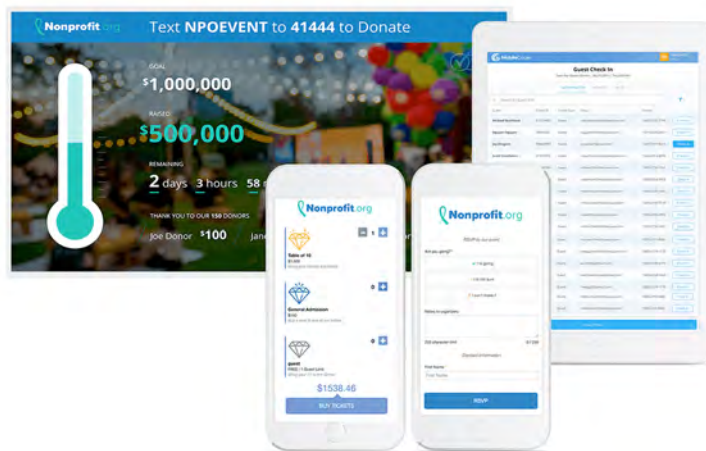
TEAM UPSTATE
MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

SCAN HERE or Text PRODUCTS to 9-1999 to donate

WIRL

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Drive through Upstate Foundation Mobile Cause



Text PRODUCTS to 9-1999 to donate

Or

Donate online:

<https://app.mobilecause.com/form/HxMXQA>

Fundraising thermometer:

<https://app.mobilecause.com/t/ck/3net>

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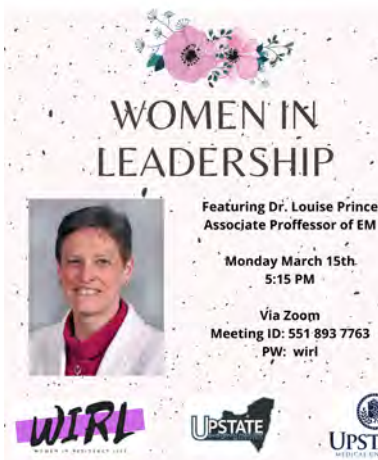
2. Professional & Personal Development

- Taking risks
- Dual Physician families
- Understanding contracts
- Women in fellowship
- U-turn
- Choosing Wisely
- Family planning
- Buying a Home
- Salary Negotiation
- Self-Care



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Professional & Personal Development

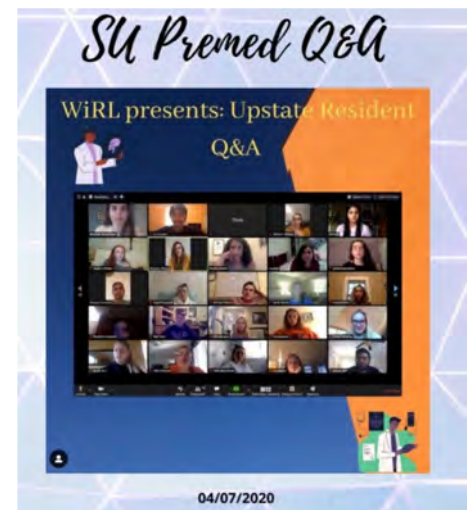


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3. Mentoring & Networking



W.I.G. Women Inspiring Girls



La Liga
Specialty Resident Support Group

S Syracuse University

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Future Networking Events?!



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4. Life & Wellness



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Gratitude Month



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Board of Members



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Board of Members 2021-2022



WiRL Board of Members and Representatives 2021-2022



President
Dr. Ramya Malik
PM&R, PGY2



Vice President
Dr. Amarah Baluchi
Internal Medicine, PGY2



Chief Financial Officer
Dr. Kintopanis Gyawell
Internal Medicine, PGY1



Chief Administrative Officer
Dr. Amanda Elsinger
Internal Medicine, PGY1



Professional Development
Dr. Sindy Murali
Internal Medicine, PGY2



Community Outreach
Dr. Danielle LaFaglia
Internal Medicine, PGY1



Community Outreach
Dr. Dayana Nasr
Internal Medicine, PGY1



Communications & Marketing
Dr. Amara Okoye
General Surgery, PGY2



Events & Wellness
Dr. Stephanie Nforatos
Internal Medicine, PGY1



Medical Student Liaison
Dr. Carina Hernandez
Internal Medicine, PGY1

Emergency Medicine Representative
Dr. Juan Chou
Emergency Medicine, PGY1



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Faculty Advisors



Dr. Caitlin Toomey
Director of
Ambulatory Medicine



Dr. Jennifer Campoli
Associate Professor of
Emergency Medicine



Dr. Catherine White
Associate Program
Director
of Medicine



Dr. Stephen Knohl
Program Director
Internal Medicine



Dr. Harvir Gambhir
Associate Program
Director
of Medicine

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Upstate Foundation

Make an online WiRL donation

1. Go to <https://www.upstatefoundation.org>
2. Click on the red box which says "Donate"
3. Type in the amount you would like to donate
4. Under designation, click the drop down menu and select "other"
5. In the designated "other" area, type in the foundation number 48820
6. Fill out the rest of the page as you desire

Thank you for your generous donation and support!

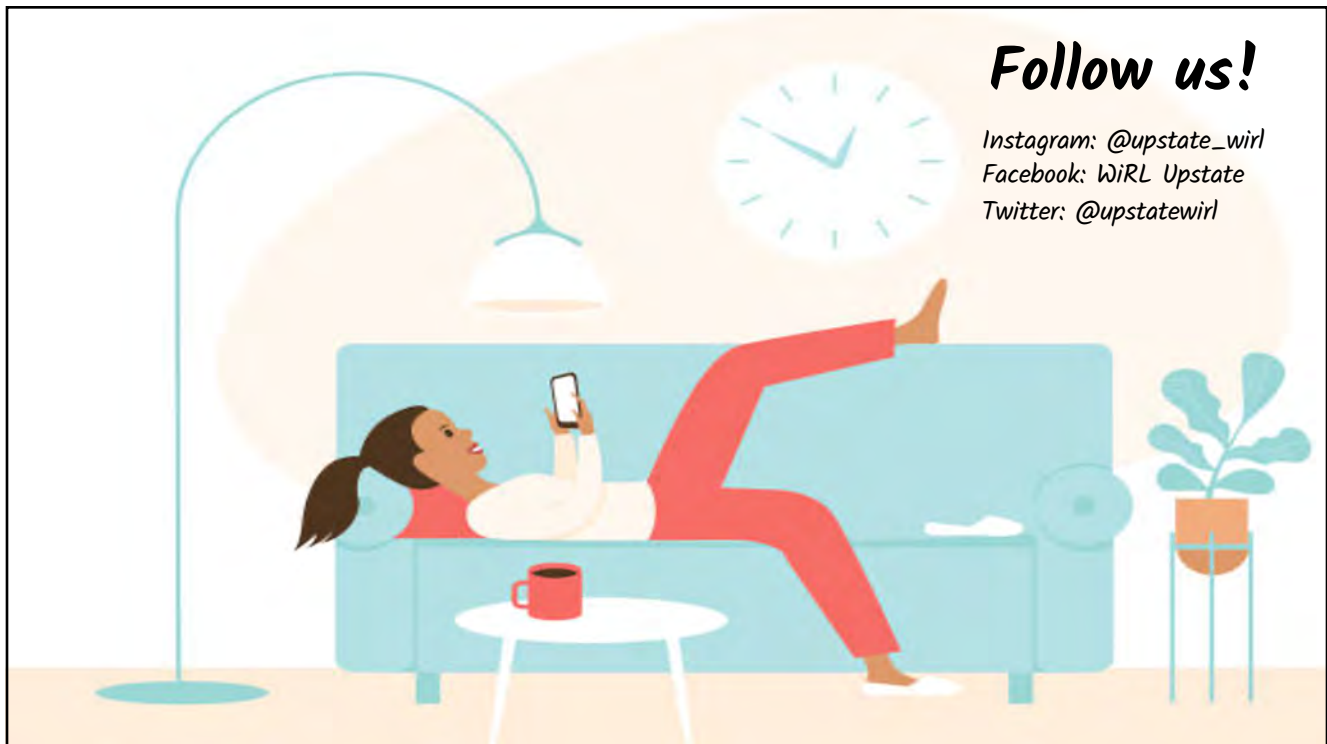
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Website!

<https://upstatewirl.wixsite.com/wirl>



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Thank you.

Thoughts, questions, or comments?



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DISCUSSION ARTICLE

TWELVE STEPS FOR STARTING A SUPPORT GROUP FOR WOMEN RESIDENT PHYSICIANS

■ By Alexandra Goodman, MD; Fathima Keshia Suhail, MD; Devjani Ganesan, MBBS; Michelle Bernshteyn, MD; Alyssa Cortese, MD; Christina Coronado, DO, MS; and Stephen J. Knohl, MD

ABSTRACT: Women's support groups (WSGs) for resident physicians can bolster professional development, career advancement, networking opportunities, and collaboration across specialties. Additionally, WSGs can provide an outlet for women in residency to come together, share unique experiences, and alleviate burn-out. Gender-specific groups have been shown to help women obtain leadership positions, find mentors, and advance in their careers, yet there is limited literature on successfully establishing a formal group. To address this gap, the authors created their own WSG, Women in Residency Life (WiRL). In doing so, they compiled 12 steps for creating a support group for women residents. Those steps serve as a foundational approach to establish a support group for women in residency to mitigate gender disparity.

IN 2017, FOR THE FIRST TIME, MATRICULATING females accounted for more than half of all students entering medical school.¹ At SUNY Upstate Medical University, females make up about 41% of house staff across all resident specialties; the 2021 Internal Medicine roster is composed of 44% women residents.

Even with the increase in female medical students and residents, gender disparities within medicine remain. Women are under-represented in leadership positions, journal authorships, and speaker invitations, and are less likely than men to become full professors, despite taking into account age, experience, specialty, and independent measures of research and clinical productivity.¹

Choo *et al.*, describe best-practice recommendations and the core strategies of mentorship and networking to support the recruitment, retention, and promotion of women within academic emergency medicine.² Gender-specific groups can help women advance within academia by providing resources for mentorship and by creating opportunities for women in medicine to hold leadership positions early in their careers.

In 2019, we established Women in Residency Life (WiRL), a resident women's support group (WSG) at SUNY Upstate Medical University in Syracuse, New York. Starting an empowering WSG takes commitment, effective communication, open discussion, and the ability to translate ideas into actions through a collaborative effort requiring considerable time and energy outside of clinical work hours. We hope to significantly minimize this work for others by offering these 12 steps and providing documents that will serve as a starting resource.

STEP 1: RECOGNIZE THE GENDER DISPARITY IN MEDICINE.

While women have made great gains in medical education during the last decade, challenges remain. A 2020 report by the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources revealed that women hold the least number of senior executive positions and are among the lowest paid highly educated administrators.³ Studies investigating past and ongoing pay and leadership disparities suggest lack of mentors/sponsors, increased rates of burnout, and concerns for adequate work-life balance as possible factors.⁴

The introduction of WSGs has been shown to increase productivity, collaboration, and camaraderie, and to expand a

FIGURE 1: TWELVE STEPS FOR STARTING A SUPPORT GROUP FOR WOMEN RESIDENTS

1. Get inspired and recognize there is a gender disparity in medicine.
2. Establish a core team of leaders.
3. Obtain approval and support from your institution and program.
4. Adopt a mission statement.
5. Hold an interest meeting to gain active members.
6. Encourage diversity and include multiple specialties.
7. Recruit faculty advisers and mentors.
8. Host networking and social events.
9. Create community service projects and educational workshops that support the mission.
10. Elect an executive board.
11. Utilize a common storage facility to collaboratively edit documents, presentations, and forms.
12. Establish a fund to manage finances.

professional network.⁵ Creating a WSG in residency can foster mentor-mentee relationships, provide opportunities to discuss the unique challenges women face, and empower women who want to advance within their careers. WiRL proved that providing a judgment-free space to discuss gender issues offers support and diversified networking opportunities with senior faculty.

STEP 2: ESTABLISH A CORE TEAM OF LEADERS.

Spearheading a successful residency WSG requires dedicated time outside the allotted residency requirements and the collaboration of two or more motivated and passionate residents who have the readiness and drive to create a group aimed at positively impacting their female colleagues, the hospital community, and themselves.

The involvement of faculty members and chief residents can help the core team solidify the successful implementation of a WSG. Faculty support and chief residents who advocated for our cause were paramount to our success.

STEP 3: OBTAIN APPROVAL AND SUPPORT FROM THE INSTITUTION AND PROGRAM.

Because residency training takes between three and seven years, turnover is high. To ensure the longevity of the group, it is essential that the residency program director (PD), associate program directors (APDs), and designated institutional officer (DIO) support the program.

The program proposal presented to the PD, APDs, and DIO should include the mission statement, personnel involved, group structure, and both short-term (three to six months) and long-term (two to three years) goals. The PD and/or APDs may direct the group to other administrators for further guidance if needed; specialty PDs and APDs can encourage their residents to join the group and can recruit faculty mentors. These relationships also can help the group find solutions to unexpected problems and ensure measures are consistent with hospital policy.

Fortunately, we had no difficulty engaging our PD, but we acknowledge that this may not always be the case. It is important to express to administrators the positive impact and benefits this type of group can have on the program, particularly during recruitment season. With both program and hospital support, the residency WSG should last beyond the founding team members' graduation.

STEP 4: ADOPT A MISSION STATEMENT.

The mission statement is a formal, succinct description of an organization's purpose, practices, and core values. WSGs provide women residents with an outlet for mental, emotional, and professional support as they advance in their careers. A successful mission statement takes these attributes into consideration and adopts an inspirational tone that encourages members to work toward a common goal. The statement may be edited multiple times as the organization evolves.

WiRL's mission statement is: "WiRL is an all-inclusive residency-run group designed to promote women's success across all specialties, to learn from each other, network and advance women in medicine. The purpose of WiRL is to support professional development and career advancement of women in residency through education, advocacy, community outreach, mentorship, and service."

STEP 5: HOLD AN INTEREST MEETING.

The next step is to create awareness about the group. Schedule an interest meeting, choosing a date and time that works with most residents' schedules. Create a flyer to share with residents by email and on social media, and display hard copies in resident lounges and work areas.

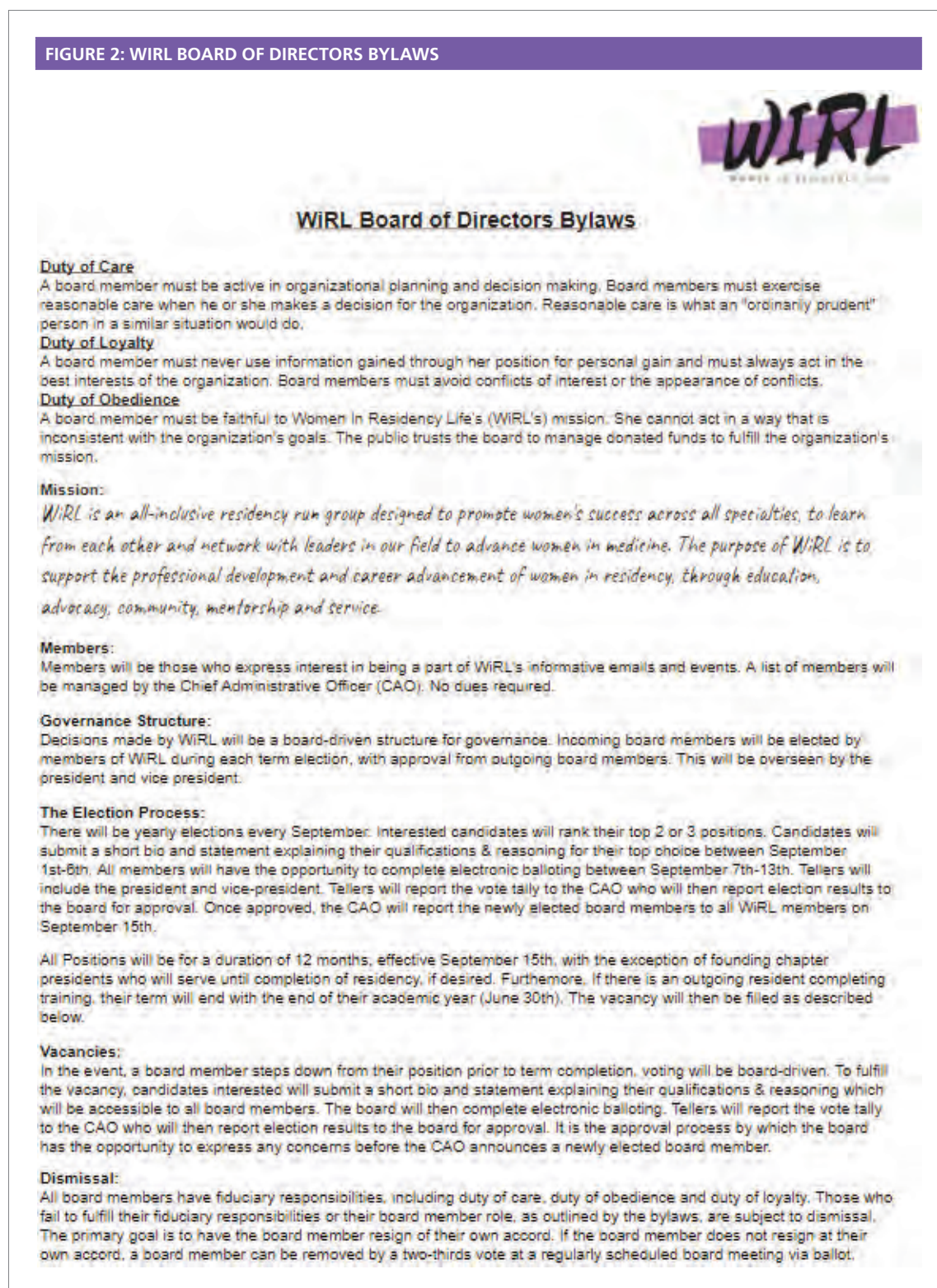
The agenda for the first interest meeting should include information regarding the purpose of the group, its structure of board members and election process, and group goals for the upcoming year.

One of the challenges we faced was residents' time constraints during training and during the pandemic. In response, we gave members an opportunity to join virtually and provided recorded sessions for those who were unable to attend.

STEP 6: ENCOURAGE DIVERSITY AND INCLUDE MULTIPLE SPECIALTIES.

A WSG that includes multiple specialties allows for interdisciplinary dialogue while fostering better working relationships and increased employee satisfaction and better patient care.

FIGURE 2: WIRL BOARD OF DIRECTORS BYLAWS




WIRL uses social media platforms and recruits the help of the DIO and PDs to invite members across all 19 specialties at SUNY Upstate. Additionally, WIRL encourages and welcomes male support and membership. Of our member list of 120 residents, males constitute 18% of membership.

STEP 7: RECRUIT FACULTY ADVISORS AND MENTORS.

The mentor-mentee relationship is a catalyst for success in facilitating career selection, advancement, and productivity. Studies have shown that fewer than 50% of medical students

FIGURE 2: (CONTINUED)


President Duties: Runs all meetings, provides strategic and operational management, oversees and serves as a teller for all elections. Provides leadership to the board of directors. Helps guide and mediate board actions with respect to organizational priorities and governance concerns. Monitors financial planning and financial reports. Plays a leading role in fundraising activities. Directly supervises the Chief Financial Officer and Chief Administrative officer.
Vice President Duties: Assumes the position of the president(s) in her/their absence. Directly involved in strategic planning and serves as a teller, alongside the president(s), for all elections. Works alongside the president(s) to help oversee the board. Directly supervises the Chief Community Relations Officer, Events and Wellness Chair, Chief Marketing Officer and Professional Development Chair.
Chief Financial Officer Duties: Responsible for managing the finances and making financial reports to be presented at monthly board meetings. Assists in developing budgets for community outreach initiatives, social events, and professional development workshops. Assists in fundraising projects for the organization and community outreach programs.
Chief Administrative Officer Duties: Will maintain and manage WiRL member list. Reports election results to the board for approval and announces newly elected board members to all WiRL members, for all elections. Takes minutes at meetings and submits those for a report. Will help oversee WiRL email accounts and will provide members with updates on events.
Chief Community Relations Officer Duties: Responsible for direct communication with the community outreach programs established by the board. Works cohesively with members to develop efforts to ensure overall coordination of all community outreach and charitable fundraising events. Recruits task force to assist in the on-going community projects. Works with the Chief Financial Officer to develop a budget for community outreach initiatives and charitable fundraisers.
Events and Wellness Chair Duties: Responsible for overseeing planning logistics for all events. Recruits volunteers to assist in developing and executing the event. Works alongside Chief Community Relations Officer to establish fundraising goals and expectations. Works with the Chief Financial Officer to discuss the budget for each event.
Chief Marketing Officer Duties: Ensures the quality and content of all communications and marketing is to the standard of hospital institution policies and WiRL's mission. Ensures appropriate outreach to professionals, through various means of communication: marketing, and social media. Responsible for event promotion through social media and flyers. Will manage the WiRL website.
Professional Development Chair Duties: Identifies, recommends, and helps organize professional development workshops, orientations and other educational programs. Helps to coordinate research projects to contribute to the professional development of WiRL members. Will coordinate all mentorship programs.
All board members will be required to attend all monthly board meetings, with the exception of house officer duties, illness and family emergencies. Notification is required to vice president if she is unable to attend a board meeting.
Chapters/Founding Presidents SUNY Upstate - July 2019: Alexandra Goodman, MD and Fathima Suhail, MD Allegheny - January 2020: Chelsea Ledgerwood, DO and Ivana Deyl, MD

and fewer than 20% of faculty members have a mentor.⁶ Women have a more challenging time finding mentors as compared to their male counterparts.⁷

It is important to identify and actively recruit faculty advisors who are genuinely interested in mentoring. The qualities to look for in a faculty mentor include altruism, honesty, trustworthiness, patience, and active listening.

WSGs give residents an opportunity to speak directly to attendings on a personal level; this initial connection helps residents feel more comfortable approaching superiors regarding letters of recommendation and career advice/aspirations.

WiRL has recruited 40 faculty members, both male and female, including attending physicians from Internal Medicine,

Emergency Medicine, Otolaryngology, Family Medicine, Anesthesia, and Pediatrics.

STEP 8: HOST NETWORKING AND SOCIAL EVENTS.

Networking and collaboration positively impact working relationships, employee satisfaction, and patient outcomes.⁸ Additionally, networking provides support for residents and opens the door for employment opportunities.

Williams, *et al.*, describe a speed networking workshop between business students and alumni that helped students connect with their superiors and peers.⁹ WiRL's multiple fundraising events and workshops, geared toward professional and personal development, have made connecting with colleagues easy and fun. Social events can promote resident wellness and combat burnout. Social events also are an effective way to promote fundraising and community service. For example, WiRL combined a holiday sweater party with a warm clothing drive, where attendees were asked to donate at the door.

STEP 9: CREATE COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECTS AND EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS TO SUPPORT THE MISSION.

Fundraisers and educational events are targeted toward a particular cause. WiRL hosted a virtual 5K, a feminine hygiene supply drive, a virtual coat drive, a warm clothing drive, and a toilet paper drive. Proceeds were distributed among community agencies that represent the underserved.

Educational workshops are an integral part of WSGs. WiRL has hosted workshops on understanding contracts, salary negotiation, navigating dual-physician families, family planning, fellowships, conflict resolution within the work setting, and fertility preservation. These types of workshops, typically not provided in medical school or residency, expand residents' knowledge base. Members also participate in workshops to educate medical students, college students, and the youth within the community.

WiRL, in conjunction with the local Spanish Action League, pioneered the Women Inspiring Girls (WIG) program, a youth mentorship program that provided workshops on self-confidence, pursuing a career in medicine, body positivity, and career goals and aspirations. Additionally, we coordinated a pre-medical mentoring session with Syracuse University students.

STEP 10: ELECT AN EXECUTIVE BOARD.

An executive board provides female residents an opportunity to hold a leadership position early in their careers. Board members should support the mission statement and have effective communication and organizational skills.⁷ Recruiting interns to the executive board contributes to the sustainability of the group.

The purpose of the board is to effectively collaborate and distribute responsibilities when organizing workshops, community service, and networking events. The roles and expectations of each board member should be clearly defined. WiRL achieved this by creating bylaws (see *Figure 2*).

STEP 11: USE A COMMON WORKSPACE TO STORE AND EDIT DOCUMENTS.

Determine how information will be stored and shared in a secure manner but easily accessed from separate locations at the same time. Shared documents include the bylaws, meeting minutes, fundraising details, donor lists, project proposals, power point presentations, and budget spreadsheet. WiRL utilizes Google Workspace with Gmail, Docs, Slides, and Sheets to facilitate these workflows.

STEP 12: ESTABLISH A FUND TO MANAGE FINANCES.

Marketing the purpose and the mission of the group is paramount to establishing funding sources, which include grants, organizations, and group and individual donations. WiRL has had remarkable success with targeted fundraising events such as a t-shirt sale.

WiRL established a centralized account for donations with the SUNY Upstate Foundation, a not-for-profit organization that manages multiple funds that support the institution and the local community. Alternate options to receive funds include PayPal, Venmo, Digit Savings, or Go-Fund-Me. These accounts are overseen by the WiRL president and chief financial officer (CFO) who create a quarterly budget and oversee operational costs.

CONCLUSION

While these 12 steps provide guidance for resident physicians wishing to implement a WSG at their institution, we acknowledge that the successful establishment of such a group can be challenging. It requires a coordinated and deliberate effort from board members, faculty mentors, sponsors, and program administration.

A WSG based on the 12 foundational steps described above can create a unique opportunity for women in residency to come together, mobilize and empower one another toward achieving greater job satisfaction, decreased rates of burnout, and mitigation of gender disparity.



Alexandra Goodman, MD, is chief resident of quality and patient safety for the Department of Internal Medicine at SUNY Upstate Medical University, Syracuse, New York. She is the president and co-founder of Women in Residency Life alongside Dr. Suhail.

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Fathima Keshia Suhail, MD, is chief resident for the Department of Internal Medicine at SUNY Upstate Medical University, Syracuse, New York. She is the president and co-founder of Women in Residency Life alongside Dr. Goodman.

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Devjani Ganesan, MBBS, is pursuing a Pulmonary and Critical Care Fellowship with the Department of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine at SUNY Upstate Medical University, Syracuse, New York. She served as the chief financial officer and vice president of Women in Residency Life.

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Michelle Bernshteyn, MD, is a chief resident in quality and patient safety at the Syracuse Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Syracuse, New York. She serves as the professional development chair of Women in Residency Life.

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Alyssa Cortese, MD, is a chief resident in quality and patient safety for the Department of Internal Medicine at the Syracuse Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Syracuse, New York. She served as vice president and finance director of Women in Residency Life.

cortesea@upstate.edu



Christina Coronado, DO, MS, attending emergency medicine physician at Madera Community Hospital in Madera, California, served as chief administrative officer of Women in Residency Life.

christina.coronado110@gmail.com



Stephen J. Knohl, MD, faculty member at SUNY Upstate Medical University in Syracuse, New York, is a professor of medicine in the Division of Nephrology (where he also served as interim chief), residency program director, and vice-chair for education in the Department of Medicine.

knohls@upstate.edu

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