



## FOSTERING INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

**F**OR SOME, MOVING FROM SOUTH FLORIDA TO NEW HAMPSHIRE in the middle of winter might be too daunting a challenge to consider. But for Stephanie White, MD, who joined the Dartmouth community in January of 2015, it has been a very good transition, offering both fulfillment and opportunity.

“I experienced my first winter last year, so at least I knew what to expect this time around,” says White (laughing), an assistant professor of pediatrics at Geisel and a general pediatrician at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Clinic. “On the clinical side, I really enjoy taking care of children and families and I love the work/life balance that I’m able to have here as a doctor.”

As a faculty member at Geisel, White recently realized a long-held goal of working in minority affairs when she was named the Geisel Diversity Liaison for Student/Resident Advising. In this new role, she is providing mentoring and guidance to medical and graduate students, as well as residents, during dedicated office hours at Geisel and at other times to accommodate busy schedules.

“I’m quite excited about Dr. White’s new appointment, as it not only represents much needed support for under-represented students, but begins to address our need for likewise under-represented faculty and mentors at Geisel,” says Lovelee Brown, a third-year medical student and one of more than 60 students to sign a letter of appreciation sent to Geisel Interim Dean Duane Compton, PhD, after the announcement.

White’s interest in minority affairs dates back to her medical school days at the University of Pittsburgh, where she saw how beneficial a minority affairs department could be for medical students.

Not long after arriving at Geisel from Jackson Memorial Hospital in Florida, she naturally began reaching out to minority medical students and residents on the Lebanon and Hanover campuses.

Through her involvement in activities like working with minority pre-med students in the Pathways to Medicine program at Dartmouth College, serving

on the Geisel Admissions Committee and caring for patients at Dartmouth-Hitchcock, White quickly became a well-rounded member of the Dartmouth community.

“I was surprised to see how separated the different parts of the organization are, even though Dartmouth is a relatively small place,” she says. “But each entity has resources that the others can benefit from. I could see how having a person in an advisory role to help ‘bridge the gaps’ for minority trainees could help them feel less isolated and more connected.”

Then White and postdoctoral fellow Elaina Melton attended the Association for American Medical Colleges minority faculty development conference in the fall. “It was an amazing experience, and it confirmed for me where I want to devote my time and energy academically in the future,” she says.

“You know, there aren’t that many minority faculty in academic medicine,” adds White. “So getting more medical students interested in teaching, and also supporting the faculty members that are here to make sure they thrive, is essential as we try to provide care that is culturally sensitive to a patient population that will continue to change in the future.”

“It’s so important for students to have faculty mentors who can relate to their background and struggles, remind them they belong in medicine, and show them that the path they are choosing has been achieved by other physicians from under-represented backgrounds,” says Brown.

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