The Learning Societies (LS) at Georgetown University School of Medicine (GUSOM) were established in 2014 with a student-run, faculty-supported organizational model. Their student-run Leadership Structure is unique. At other schools, learning communities are frequently run by faculty and administrators with student representatives. At GUSOM, the Learning Societies are governed predominantly by students with faculty support. The Learning Societies Advisory Committee acts as the governing body of the LS and has a Student Director as well as 7 additional students, 5 Faculty Directors (a new role for 2016-2017 Academic Year), and 3 Deans/Administrators. This provides valuable leadership experience to student leaders ranging from management experience and faculty interaction. However, it also presents challenges such as time management. A primary goal is to examine the current structure and its constituents. A secondary goal is to assess the self-identified advantages and disadvantages from student leaders via an anonymous online survey.

### LS Leadership Structure

**1. Leadership Structure of the Learning Societies**

- **STRAWBERRY SOCIETY**
  - Student Society Director
  - Faculty Director

- **HEMATOLOGY SOCIETY**
  - Student Society Director
  - Faculty Director

- **MUSCLE SOCIETY**
  - Student Society Director
  - Faculty Director

- **NEUROLOGY SOCIETY**
  - Student Society Director
  - Faculty Director

- **FACULTY DIRECTORS (FDs)**
  - Created Faculty Director (FD) role; Selected new faculty
  - Plan and facilitate all LS events (School-wide; Society-wide; and class specific)
  - Implemented an Inter-Society Competition with a Society Cup Trophy
  - M1 Reflection Retreat organized by M2018 student
  - Community service program with possible recognition via transcript/MSPE

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**5. Impact of Adding Faculty Directors**

**6. Highlights from Student Survey on Leadership Structure**

- **Benefits from Student – Run Format:**
  - Having people from all four classes also lets us have a pulse on what each class needs and lets us pass on advice even in informal ways.
  - "Autonomy, innovation, "boots on the ground" perspective"
  - Students gain leadership skills and increase their investment in Georgetown. We feel ownership of the societies.
  - "Students truly know how changes in leadership organizations will directly affect them so they are able to be their own advocates."

- **Challenges of Student – Run Format:**
  - "Time and coordination is the difficult part. The Societies are always an additional thing for students to do as our priority is medical school."
  - "Handoffs between years is challenging."
  - "It can be tough to coordinate across the classes and avoid [scheduling] conflicts."
  - "Planning events early enough to give sufficient notice to faculty."

### Conclusions & Future Directions

**Conclusions:**

- Current student leadership is primarily comprised of M4 students (Fig. 1) as they have greater experience and comfort with faculty interactions. However, fourth year students are less available on campus. Second year students have a more flexible schedule and are based on campus but may feel less comfortable with faculty.

- A student-run structure gives students’ ownership and a “boots on the ground perspective” (Fig. 6) where students have gained valuable skills including communication, leadership, and networking (Fig 7) with an overall satisfaction mean of 4.1/5, “Satisfied” (Fig. 4) with the current leadership structure.

- However, student-identified difficulties include time commitment and continuity across years (Fig. 6). The new Faculty Director role partly addresses this by providing longitudinal support while playing a mentoring rather direct leadership and has had a “Positive” impact, mean of 4.1/5 (Fig. 5), on the Learning Societies at Georgetown.

- Interestingly, there is a strong female predominance among the leadership, with females comprising 72% of student leadership and 100% of Faculty Directors.

**Future Directions:**

- Future research avenues could include a robust comparison of leadership structures across the Learning Communities Institute membership to better assess the interaction between student leadership development and faculty support.

- Additionally, only student leaders were surveyed for this research. In the future, analysis of the entire student body and faculty, particularly the FDs, would be beneficial.

- Lastly, it may be interesting to trend female/male involvement over time to assess if this is a random sampling or if females are more motivated by community development.