

## **SOCIAL MEDIA TASK FORCE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In early 2022 the Temerty Faculty of Medicine convened a Social Media Task Force (SMTF). This group was asked to provide policy and operational recommendations that can help improve the social media user experience for our community members.

Following a review of internal and external policies, the SMTF sought input from members of the TFoM community. A series of interviews with faculty and learners offered many insights into the social media user experience of our community members.

The expectation that academics maintain a social media presence was a recurring theme in both SMTF meetings as well as the user interviews. Regardless of the pressure a faculty member or learner may feel to use social media, the decision to participate ultimately rests with the individual. As the SMTF was convened to focus primarily on those who are users, further discussion of the merits and drawbacks of participation itself were determined to be beyond the group's scope but may merit further exploration as part of the SMTF's recommended implementation plans.

Approximately one third of the interview participants reported some form of harassment or personal security concerns stemming from their social media use. This includes a range of experiences from relatively mild disagreements with a colleague or follower, to moderate instances where a post is met with racial and/or misogynistic slurs against the user, to a few very serious occurrences of death threats, necessitating the involvement of law enforcement.

Several suggestions were offered for actions that TFoM can take to support community members in their social media use. These will be examined and considered by the SMTF's implementation group.

The Temerty Faculty of Medicine is one of the largest Faculties at the University of Toronto and a key partner within the Toronto Academic Health Science Network. At our core, we are educators, researchers, and learners of science. The pursuit of knowledge and truth will always be our goal. In pursuit of this goal, Temerty Medicine must continue to encourage civility, academic freedom, and healthy debate.

We owe many thanks to those who gave us their time and insights over the past year. The people we were fortunate to interview are all exemplary members of the TFoM community. Their fortitude and commitment to communicating science is inspiring. They carry on, managing the inherent risks, because they know that they play a crucial role in advancing knowledge and standing firm against mis/disinformation. We must embrace these ideals with active and ongoing attention not only to understand the nature of the changes but also to make certain that our decisions as a Faculty meet the moment and address its inherent challenges.