Melanie Brown, MD (Department of Pediatrics)
Bucksbaum Institute Senior Faculty Scholar
Elective Course: Healer’s Art

The Healers’ Art is an elective course that is designed to help students and faculty reaffirm their commitment to the values that brought them to medicine, connect in a respectful way with each other, and find meaning in their work.

The course consists of 5 required sessions + additional sessions that focus on physician wellness:
1. Discovering and Nurturing Your Wholeness
2. Sharing Grief and Honoring Loss I
3. Sharing Grief and Honoring Loss II
4. Beyond Analysis: Allowing Awe in Medicine
5. The Care of the Soul: Service as a Way of Life

Each three hour session involves both large and small group settings. Small groups include one physician and generally five students, and the membership of the groups are the same throughout all sessions in order for deep and genuine relationship to develop. The course accommodates up to 30 students and usually is fully subscribed.

The Healer’s Art course encourages students to:
• Identify, strengthen and cultivate the human dimensions of the practice of medicine
• Recognize the commonality of personal concerns among peers and gain support for personal development from peers and faculty
• Accept the universality of loss and pain
• Recognize grief as a self-care strategy for physicians, and identify strategies and tools of grieving
• Recognize the importance of community for the healing of grief
• Trust the power of listening and presence to heal others
• Recognize that who they are is as important to their patients as what they know
• Strengthen and clarify a personal commitment to medicine as a life’s work
• Develop an expanded definition of death
• Recognize the legitimacy of awe in medicine, and develop the capacity for awe

Additional course objectives afford student the opportunity to:
• Make an active commitment to strengthening and preserving their humanity
• Experience the power of listening and being listened to
• Experience healing relationships with other students
• Experience tools of self-remembering and stress reduction
• Learn skills of grieving loss
• Recognize personal meaning as a protection against burnout
• Expand ideas about the physician’s role in the area of death
• Recognize the power of death to clarify life values
• Recognize their experiences of service
• Discover their innate altruism/generosity