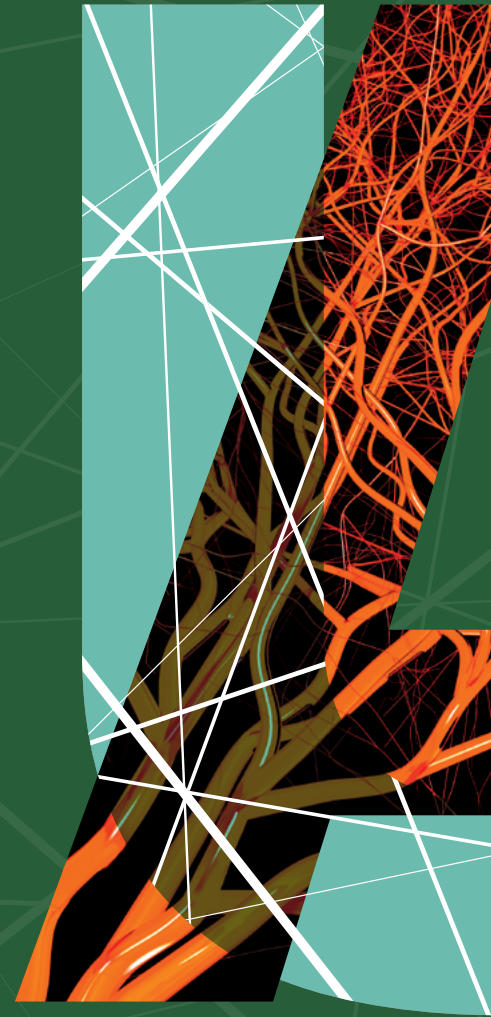




**UNIVERSITY
OF ALBERTA**

Program Overview

Executive Leadership Certificate in Global Surgery & Innovation



Module 1: Reframing Global Surgery: Systems, Equity, and Ethics

Description:

This is a foundational module that provides participants with a comprehensive understanding of the field of global surgery, not only as a challenge in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) but as a universal access issue affecting populations across the globe. By exploring disparities in surgical access across groups such as rural, remote, inner-city and Indigenous communities, participants will critically examine assumptions about global surgery. They will also gain a holistic understanding of health systems and consider the ethical and systemic dimensions that shape the global surgery landscape.

Learning Objectives:

1. Redefine the scope of global surgery by exploring how surgical disparities exist globally, across different populations and contexts including in high-income countries, and understand the universality of access challenges.
2. Challenge dominant narratives, biases and assumptions within global surgery, including the “LMICcentric” perspective and the relationship between the Global North and the Global South.
3. Understand how health systems function and the intersectionality of surgery with other disciplines.
4. Examine the pitfalls and successes of global surgery work and interventions using an ethical framework.

Module 2: Leading Change in Global Surgery: Influence, Power, and Purpose

Description:

This module distinguishes leadership as a practice, not a title, formal position or authority. This is essential for today's global surgery leader. It aims to cultivate leadership that empowers participants to act as a catalyst for change in any context and at any level of engagement. Participants will develop the skills to navigate complex power structures, create influence, communicate strategically and use storytelling to drive sustainable impact in global surgery.

Learning Objectives:

1. Gain the tools to practise leadership that creates strategic influence and leads to tangible change regardless of hierarchy.
2. Learn how to navigate complex power structures, organizational and system dynamics, and strategically engage with influencers to drive change.
3. Communicate effectively and persuasively by adapt messages to diverse audiences, integrating data, narrative and vision.
4. Leverage storytelling to inspire action, align stakeholders and mobilize support for surgical system improvements.
5. Lead for systems change by identifying leverage points, anticipating challenges and designing interventions that promote sustainable impact.

Module 3: From Silos to Synergy: Strategic Partnerships in Global Surgery

Description:

This module equips participants with the skills and frameworks necessary to build, sustain and leverage cross-sectoral partnerships to address inequities in surgical care. Recognizing that improving surgical access and care requires the engagement of multiple actors across the broader health system, participants will explore strategies for aligning diverse perspectives, fostering collaboration and navigating resistance. Participants will develop the capacity to cultivate alliances, facilitate dialogue across differences and create shared visions that drive systemic change.

Learning Objectives:

1. Build collaborative capacity by facilitating conversations that bridge differences, foster trust and strengthen collective problem-solving capabilities among stakeholders.
2. Identify and reconcile the priorities, incentives and expectations of multiple stakeholders to create a shared vision for surgical system improvement.
3. Develop strategies to initiate and sustain collaborations with potential partners across sectors, disciplines and organizations.
4. Be able to recognize and navigate resistance by employing approaches to engage stakeholders constructively and convert challenges into opportunities for alignment.
5. Learn how to move from competition to mutually beneficial partnerships and alliances.

Module 4: The Politics of Change: Diplomacy and Advocacy in Global Surgery

Description:

This module equips emerging leaders in global surgery with the skills to navigate complex power structures, build influence and communicate strategically across diverse cultural, institutional and political contexts. Participants will explore the complementary roles of advocacy and diplomacy in advancing equitable surgical care, examining how negotiation, coalition-building and storytelling can be harnessed to drive sustainable systems change. Learners will practise techniques in diplomatic engagement, persuasive communication and narrative framing. By the end of the module, learners will understand how to balance principled advocacy with the diplomatic agility required to work with governments, health systems, professional associations and community stakeholders in both local and global arenas.

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand how health systems operate, interpreting policy levers and designing strategies for systemic impact.
2. Be able to navigate formal and informal power structures in health systems through relationship building and strategies to manage relationships across cultural, institutional and political boundaries.
3. Develop clear, targeted and compelling messages tailored to policymakers, funders, practitioners and community audiences.
4. Harness storytelling for change by developing compelling tailored messaging for different audiences to engage stakeholders, create urgency and mobilize action around a shared vision.
5. Distinguish between diplomatic and advocacy approaches and demonstrate how both can be used together to create influence with decision makers.

Module 5: From Vision to Impact: Turning Ideas into Systems Change

Description:

This module equips leaders with the skills to move from vision to action by designing, implementing and managing sustainable programs in global surgery. Participants will critically examine the gap between innovation and implementation, exploring why promising ideas often fail to translate into scalable and longlasting impact. While traditional quality improvement initiatives may often demonstrate success in small, controlled environments they fail to transition to system-wide scale-up. By applying the principles of implementation science, change management and systems thinking, learners will be empowered to build interventions that align with health system priorities, policy frameworks and community needs.

Learning Objectives:

1. Identify barriers and opportunities in surgical system strengthening, distinguishing between short-term improvements and scalable, sustainable interventions.
2. Apply frameworks of program design and implementation science to develop initiatives that are aligned with local needs, evidence based and sustainable.
3. Develop strategies to bridge the gap between novel ideas and effective implementation within health systems.
4. Apply principles of project management, monitoring and evaluation, and adaptive leadership to ensure programs scale and endure beyond initial funding cycles.
5. Use tools such as stakeholder mapping, policy alignment and resource mobilization to embed surgical programs into broader health systems.
6. Demonstrate leadership approaches that motivate teams, engage policymakers and foster ownership among community and institutional stakeholders.

Elective 1: Rural Surgery as Global Surgery: Bridging Local and Global Gaps

Description:

This module reframes global surgery as a shared pursuit of equity that transcends geography. It challenges the notion that global health work is defined by travel or low-resource settings, highlighting instead the common barriers faced by rural and remote populations in both high- and low-income countries. Participants will explore how isolation, workforce shortages, health system design and social determinants intersect to shape access to surgical and obstetrical care worldwide. Through comparative case studies, this module will invite reflection on what “global surgery” means in context, whether in the Canadian North, the rural American Midwest, the Kenyan highlands or Pacific Island communities – and how local innovations can inform global strategies for surgical system strengthening. Ultimately, this module is a call to action: to recognize that global surgery starts in our own communities, and that sustainable change requires linking global solidarity with local leadership.

Learning Objectives:

1. Recognize that disparities in surgical access exist across all health systems, from low- and middle-income to high-income countries.
2. Compare and contrast the challenges faced by rural, remote and underserved populations globally, including barriers related to workforce, infrastructure and geography.
3. Challenge assumptions that global surgery is only international work, and articulate a broader, systems-based understanding of global surgery as a universal equity effort.
4. Analyze case studies from both LMIC and HIC rural contexts to identify scalable models of innovation, collaboration and system adaptation.
5. Apply systems thinking to design strategies that strengthen surgical care delivery in resource-constrained rural and remote settings.

Elective 2: Indigenous Health and Surgery: Reconciliation in Practice

Description:

This module explores the intersection of Indigenous health, surgery and systems equity, inviting participants to critically reflect on the historical and structural factors shaping access to surgical care for Indigenous Peoples. Participants will develop the cultural competence and leadership capacity required to promote culturally safe, patient-centered surgical practice. Through an examination of Indigenous worldviews, values and approaches to health, learners will deepen their understanding of what equitable surgical care means in practice – both within Indigenous communities and across the broader health system. The module highlights the importance of partnership, advocacy and self-reflection as core competencies for surgeons and health-care leaders committed to reconciliation and health equity.

Learning Objectives:

1. Develop cultural competence and humility by understanding Indigenous worldviews, values and health-care perspectives relevant to surgical practice.
2. Analyze systemic inequities affecting Indigenous access to surgical and perioperative care, considering historical, political and social determinants of health.
3. Apply leadership principles to promote equity and cultural safety within surgical systems, addressing bias, discrimination and institutional barriers.
4. Explore collaborative models of care that integrate Indigenous knowledge, community leadership and biomedical practice to improve surgical outcomes and patient experiences.
5. Examine ethical considerations unique to surgical care in Indigenous contexts, including autonomy, informed consent and respect for traditional healing practices.
6. Advocate for policy and systems change that embeds cultural safety and equity principles into surgical education, institutional frameworks and health policy.