

Criterion 4

Faculty, Staff, and Students

4.5 Student Diversity

CEPH Criterion

Stated application, admission, and degree-granting requirements and regulations shall be applied equitably to individual applicants and students regardless of age, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or national origin.

CEPH Required Documentation

- a. Description of policies, procedures and plans to achieve a diverse student population.
 - b. Description of recruitment efforts used to attract a diverse student body, along with information about how these efforts are evaluated and refined over time.
 - c. Quantitative information on the demographic characteristics of the student body, including data on applicants and admissions, for each of the last three years. Data must be presented in table format. See CEPH Data Template L.
 - d. Identification of measures by which the school may evaluate its success in achieving a demographically diverse student body, along with data regarding the school's performance against these measures for each of the last three years.
 - e. Assessment of the extent to which this criterion is met.
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4.5.a. Achieving and Supporting a Diverse Student Body

Required Documentation: *Description of policies, procedures and plans to achieve a diverse student body.*

The premise underlying the school's strategy for increasing student diversity is that a diverse student population enhances the educational environment in several ways:

- Students educated in diverse classrooms learn to think in deeper and more complex ways and are better prepared to become active participants in a pluralistic society;
- A climate of inclusion has positive benefits on educational outcomes; and
- A diverse student body encourages a greater faculty emphasis on racial and gender issues in their research and in the classroom.

A commitment to “recruit and retain a diverse, accomplished student body” is the first of the school's education objectives (Criterion 1.1.c.) and has been affirmed in the school's equal opportunity approach to student recruitment (Criterion 4.4). This is both a broad commitment, as well as a targeted approach to increase race/ethnicity enrollment focusing on African American and Hispanic applicants. Both pools of applicants are relatively small, but the Hispanic pool is *very* small (approximately 40 applicants/year), making this a challenging objective.

It is also important to note that while increasing diversity and eliminating disparities are two different concepts, there is a significant conjunction between the two. Namely, in order to effectively reduce disparities, the school must have more students (and faculty) who represent the communities that experience disproportionate disparities. Therefore, our diversity objectives are directly related to our mission to eliminate health disparities.

Policies

The university defines the scope of diversity to “relate to race, gender, age, class, sexual orientation, culture, nationality, disability, religion, and region.” The dean, department chairs, and all school leaders agree on the priority of matriculating and supporting students from underrepresented minority groups. Underrepresented minority groups are not necessarily racial or ethnic in nature; for some programs, for example, one gender may be underrepresented. Nevertheless, it is clear that in the school and its departments—as with our peer institutions—racial and ethnic diversity continue to be a primary focus.

Critical to the concept of diversity is the need for an atmosphere of inclusion and tolerance, even when this challenges closely held ideas and comfort zones. The school thus strives for a climate of inclusion that will create a sense of community within the school and promote excellence in the learning environment.

The school promotes its commitment to the university's equal opportunity and nondiscrimination policies by posting them to frequently visited web pages (e.g.,

<http://tinyurl.com/sphdiverse> and <http://tinyurl.com/sphcurrent>), and includes them in its program handbooks.

Procedures and Plans

The university's diversity plan for 2006-2010 (<http://tinyurl.com/uncdiverse>; see Criterion 4.3, Introduction) provides context for SPH diversity efforts. The school has established five areas of focus, one of which is students. Two strategic goals specifically address students:

- Increase the number of underrepresented minority students who enroll and successfully graduate from the UNC School of Public Health.
- Train the next generation of public health researchers by ensuring that students at the school are knowledgeable about racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and regional health disparities—including why disparities exist and how that can be addressed and ultimately eliminated.

Efforts supporting student diversity efforts over the past three years, many of which are ongoing, include:

- Dedicated office space for the Minority Student Caucus
- Faculty advisors for student organizations that address diversity issues, such as the Minority Student Caucus, the Student Global Health Committee, and the Health Sciences Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) Alliance
- A meeting each term with the dean, senior school leadership, and leadership of the Minority Student Caucus to identify student issues of concern
- The Annual Minority Health Conference (<http://minority.unc.edu/sph/minconf/2009>), the nation's oldest minority health conference, and the largest student-led conference in the U.S. is supported by the school and is a special focus for the school's Office of Student Affairs (OSA)
- A class to introduce international public health students to American university life and resources (EPID 689: Resources for International Students; <http://tinyurl.com/epid689>)
- Department-based initiatives, such as HPM's diversity plan and their faculty-student Diversity Committee
- Involvement of school faculty and staff in policy initiatives to ensure that students are treated fairly. For example, all of the OSA staff (and some faculty and other staff throughout the school) are Safe Zone Allies, a network of people working to make the university community a safe and supportive place for people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions (<http://tinyurl.com/sphsafe>).
- A schoolwide diversity orientation that welcomes new students and connects them to resources. In addition, we focus attention on ethnic/minority diversity and sexual orientation
- Input from school leadership and students to the school annual diversity plan reports; (Appendix 4.3). For example, in spring 2007, the assistant dean for students met with each department chair, faculty involved with admissions, and students to discuss student diversity issues and recruitment. Also, each year, the school's special

assistant to the dean for diversity works with the assistant dean for students to identify activities for the next academic year that will address those goals

- Participation in the Initiative for Maximizing Student Diversity at UNC-Chapel Hill—an educational training grant to increase the number of underrepresented students that attain PhDs in biomedical research and biostatistics

Most recently (February 2009), the following outcomes were reported to the Provost's Office:

- OSA staff participated in 12 recruiting events, with more than 800 minority contacts, and 13 UNC-CH summer programs, with 279 contacts.
- Fall 2008 saw 212 minority applications to the school's graduate programs, with 80 applicants admitted and 47 enrolled. In total, 12% of the school's student body were underrepresented minorities in 2007-08.
- With \$93,000 from the Provost's Office to increase student diversity, two students were funded to attend the BIOS Summer Undergraduate Research Experience in 2009, new targeted recruitment materials were developed, and the school began to put infrastructure in place for "pipeline" development collaborations. In summer 2009, the school began planning a new program to reach out to diverse undergraduates as another strategy to increase diversity by strengthening the pipeline. This included a special Biostatistics Summer Undergraduate Research and Education (BSURE) Program for minority students, also supported by the provost's funding (<http://tinyurl.com/biosbsure>).
- The school's Public Health Traineeship funds provided \$48,500 for support to 33 minority students.
- A new minority scholarship (Donald and Jennifer Holzworth Merit Scholarship) was launched.
- The third annual schoolwide orientation for diverse students (including LGBTQ students) was held, as part of a broader orientation for new students, to send the message that the school welcomes students from all backgrounds. Participants included the dean of the school, the vice-chancellor for diversity, and representatives from UNC's Office of Diversity Affairs.
- The school provided administrative assistance and \$10,000 to the Minority Student Caucus to support the 30th Annual Minority Health Conference.
- Students were surveyed on their satisfaction with student body diversity (spring 2009; 63% of self-identified underrepresented minority students were very satisfied or satisfied, as compared to 74% of the remaining students).
- A comprehensive review of syllabi of all core/required SPH courses was undertaken to identify courses that included content related to health disparities, and to establish benchmarks and targets for future evaluation.
- A climate survey was administered to all students in April 2009; (see Resource File.)

The February 2009 diversity report to the provost projected more than two dozen activities for 2009-10 to continue these efforts. The school also developed a proposal for an eight-week residential summer program on the UNC-Chapel Hill campus (Summer Public Health Fellowship [SPHF] program), designed in conjunction with NCIPH and department faculty

and staff and targeted to disadvantaged and minority high school graduates and college students with academic potential to pursue careers in public health. The assistant dean for students collaborated with faculty and staff at UNC-CH's medical and dental schools to include SPHF in UNC's Health Careers Opportunities Program (HCOP). The UNC HCOP proposal was approved by HRSA but was not funded; the school continues to seek funding to implement this program.

In addition to direct recruitment and retention activities, there are indirect factors that influence decisions to come to and remain at Carolina. These are activities that reflect the dedication of the school and those who comprise the school to issues of primary concern to diverse populations. One of these activities is the Minority Health Project (MHP) to eliminate health disparities, and its Annual Summer Public Health Research Institute and Videoconference (<http://www.minority.unc.edu/>). Founded at UNC in 1999, the MHP focuses on filling gaps in minority health research literature and data. Based in EPID, there have been a multitude of UNC-based and other cosponsors over the years, including, for example, Center for Health Disparities Solutions (Morgan State University), National Center for Infectious Diseases, Office of Minority and Women's Health; National Institute for Drug Abuse; GlaxoSmithKline; and Quintiles Transnational Corporation.

4.5.b. Recruitment

Required Documentation: *Description of recruitment efforts used to attract a diverse student body, along with information about how these efforts are evaluated and refined over time.*

For the majority of the school's degree programs, OSA takes the lead on formal recruiting. The assistant dean for students and OSA staff coordinate with department student services staff, faculty, and students to implement a variety of diversity-related initiatives, including a number of specific minority recruitment initiatives on and off campus. Two OSA web pages describe these activities: <http://tinyurl.com/sphdiverse> and <http://tinyurl.com/sphosa>, and include:

- Participating in programs and fairs sponsored by the HBCUs and universities with significant minority student populations (e.g., Morehouse School of Medicine, North Carolina Central University)
- Identifying and communicating with qualified minority students and practitioners at meetings and conferences (e.g., American Public Health Association annual meeting, Minority Student Caucus's Minority Health Conference, Truman Scholars Leadership Week, Public Health Awareness Conference)
- Providing public health experiences, information sessions, and advice for the university's enrichment programs for minority students (e.g., the Health Professions Partnership Initiative, North Carolina Health Careers Access Program, Summer Pre-Graduate Research Experience, Saturday Science Program, Carolina Contact)
- Conducting on-site recruitment programs targeting minority students (e.g., REACH—Recruitment Event Affecting Change)

- Providing funding and administrative support for student-led diversity initiatives (e.g., Minority Student Caucus Prospective Student Day, ESE Student Organization), including the Annual Minority Health Conference
- Providing funding and administrative support for department diversity initiatives (e.g., BIOS Summer Undergraduate Research Experience)

4.5.c. Student Body Demographics

Required Documentation: Quantitative information on the demographic characteristics of the student body, including data on applicants and admission, for each of the last three years.

The demographic characteristics of the school’s student body are provided in table 4.5.c. (Template L).

Table 4.5.c. Demographic Characteristics of Student Body, Including Data on Applicants and Admissions, 2006-2008							
Race/Ethnicity		Fall 2006		Fall 2007		Fall 2008	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
African American	Applied	44	138	44	157	33	151
	Accepted	21	51	15	63	11	52
	Enrolled	20	43	11	36	9	33
Caucasian	Applied	228	643	206	676	259	720
	Accepted	138	356	130	374	150	384
	Enrolled	96	230	84	237	101	246
Hispanic/Latino	Applied	10	34	13	34	15	29
	Accepted	2	19	4	11	8	16
	Enrolled	2	12	4	6	4	11
Asian/Pacific Islander	Applied	48	113	46	89	48	117
	Accepted	18	54	28	45	20	60
	Enrolled	8	29	17	24	16	30
Native American/Alaska Native	Applied	2	5	5	6	0	5
	Accepted	1	2	3	2	0	3
	Enrolled	1	1	2	2	0	1
Unknown/Other	Applied	17	61	28	45	27	63
	Accepted	7	32	19	25	16	27
	Enrolled	1	15	11	14	11	13
International	Applied	182	267	168	291	206	267
	Accepted	19	42	32	44	49	72
	Enrolled	6	25	17	22	23	22
TOTAL Students	Applied	531	1261	510	1298	588	1352
	Accepted	206	556	231	564	254	614
	Enrolled	134	355	146	341	164	356

4.5.d. Evaluation of Student Diversity

Required Documentation: *Identification of measures by which the school may evaluate its success in achieving a demographically diverse student body, along with data regarding the school's performance against these measures for each of the last three years.*

The university's Diversity Plan for 2006-2010 (<http://www.unc.edu/diversity/plan/index.html>) states the university's, school's, and individual departments' clear and unequivocal commitment to the goal of diversity in the student body at all levels, in all academic units. Because diversity enriches the learning environment and strengthens our commitment to nondiscrimination, increasing the proportion of underrepresented minority students in our student body is, therefore critical. However, the factors that influence this growth are many, and growth can be slow, so it is equally important not to lose traction in this area. Therefore, the school focuses on several measures to assess progress towards meeting its goals of recruiting and retaining a diverse and accomplished student body. Two of these are reflected in table 4.5.d., with the school's primary diversity recruitment goal being to maintain or increase the proportion of underrepresented minority students in the student body, viz., Black/Non-Hispanic, Hispanic, and American Indian/Alaskan Native students. Overall, in most cases, our proportions of minority students have changed little over the last three years despite a number of efforts that we have employed to increase diversity. We have compared our proportions to our peer institutions, and have met our goal in the undergraduate and master's student populations; diversity increased from 12% to 18% among undergraduates and stayed at about 14% for master's students. At the doctoral level, the proportion of underrepresented minority students has dropped slightly over the past three years, from 15% in fall 2006 to 11% in fall 2008; we aim to increase future cohorts to 2006 levels or higher.

At the same time, just increasing the number of minority students is a necessary but not sufficient measure of the more significant outcome of producing a more diverse and well-educated work force. Therefore, a second student diversity goal is for the degree completion rates of underrepresented minority students to equal (or exceed) that of the entire student body. The school's overall goal is for 95 percent of students to graduate within the university's designated time to degree. The school's results for this measure are mixed (table 4.5.d.). In the first and third years of this report, all underrepresented minority students who enrolled in the school's undergraduate programs completed their degrees within the designated time period, exceeding the 95% target and also exceeding the completion rate for students as a whole. Completion rates for underrepresented minority doctoral students initially were well below both the target and the rate for all students, but improved to equal to the rate for all students in the final year of this report.

Outcome Measures/Metrics	Targets	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
The matriculation rate for qualified underrepresented minority students	70%	UG = 100% Mas = 75% Doc = 70%	UG = 92% Mas = 69% Doc = 9%	UG = 100% Mas = 62% Doc = 32%
Degree completion rates*	95%	UG = 92% Mas = 90% Doc = 74%	UG = 90% Mas = 89% Doc = 72%	UG = 89% Mas = 92% Doc = 83%
Degree completion rates for underrepresented minority students*	95%	UG = 100% Mas = 88% Doc = 60%	UG = 89% Mas = 85% Doc = 69%	UG = 100% Mas = 79% Doc = 83%
Proportion of the following demographics in the student body**		UG = 12% Mas = 14% Doc = 15%	UG = 17% Mas = 15% Doc = 13%	UG = 18% Mas = 14% Doc = 11%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underrepresented minority students International students NC residents (at matriculation) 	Maintain or improve proportions	UG = 1% Mas = 6% Doc = 21% UG = 89% Mas = 57% Doc = 36%	UG = 0% Mas = 5% Doc = 20% UG = 89% Mas = 67% Doc = 29%	UG = <1% Mas = 5% Doc = 21% UG = 80% Mas = 51% Doc = 32%

* Time -to-completion calculation is detailed in Criterion 2.7.b. Each academic year comprises three graduation dates—August, December, and May.

** At matriculation

The school recently examined ways to engage more of its stakeholders in monitoring and evaluating diversity outcomes and, starting in 2009-2010, student recruitment and retention advisory committees will take primary responsibility for evaluating student diversity. This mechanism will enable faculty and staff from each department, along with student representatives, to assess student diversity outcomes and make recommendations. The school is also considering means of involving other stakeholders in this process, such as alumni and community members.

Evaluation of Student Recruitment Efforts

Two formal processes provide regular opportunities for the school to evaluate and refine its student diversity recruitment efforts. First, each February, the university requires the school to submit a diversity report and plan for the upcoming year (Criterion 4.5.a.). As discussed in Criterion 1.1.d., we have made student recruitment a major issue across the entire school. All departments and units are to become actively involved in the issue and to be accountable for results. The school’s 2008-2009 budget included a highest priority request to enhance diversity under the leadership of our Office of Student Affairs. Subsequent funding enabled us to create special materials aimed at diverse students and to plan more targeted outreach. In addition, during the spring 2009 recruitment season, departments identified minority applicants they really wanted to recruit to the school but who lacked adequate funds, and the dean and the school’s External Affairs Office made special efforts to find funds for them.

Second, at the end of each academic year, OSA presents a report of student diversity recruitment activities to school leadership and the Minority Student Caucus. However, over the last couple of years, we have realized that this is not sufficient for purposes of quality control and quality improvement, and are working to integrate self-improvement processes more fully into our operations. Consideration of diversity and the need to enhance diversity is to become part of a data-driven, continuous process of self-improvement, and not merely perfunctory.

At the June 2009 meeting of the Dean's Council, data on minority recruitment trends for the last year were reviewed, with consideration given to what we could do to improve the proportion of minority applicants and students. Chairs agreed that they would each regularly review minority data, making recommendations within their own departments, and monitoring the status of their efforts. They were also asked to raise the issue at their next department faculty meetings and come back with interpretations of their data and suggestions about what they could do to enhance minority student recruitment. A substantial part of the August 2009 Dean's Council meeting was devoted to consideration of these issues, including descriptions of experiments occurring within different departments. For example, associate professor Lloyd Edwards (BIOS) works with PhD students in the Initiative for Maximizing Student Diversity (IMSD) at UNC-Chapel Hill who are interested in pursuing a PhD in biostatistics; the primary goal of the IMSD is to increase the number of underrepresented students who attain PhDs in biomedical research and biostatistics (http://www.sph.unc.edu/bios/imsd_8379.html and <http://imsd.unc.edu/>). HPM telephoned minority applicants with incomplete applications to explore their intentions, and this resulted in an increase in their minority applicants.

Each year, we have sought and obtained more scholarships, but each year, there is more competition for students from other schools of public health. We have concluded that part of the challenge is to increase the size of the pool rather than merely for schools to compete for the same relatively small pool of applicants. But the issue is multi-factorial and involves a focus on each stage of recruitment from application through matriculation, and then attention to students once they are here. Financial support is necessary but not sufficient; nevertheless, we believe it is a major rate-limiting step. Because of that, we have made our top fundraising priority to attract more scholarships, including scholarships for minority students.

At the fall 2009 Faculty and Staff meeting, Dean Rimer provided an overall summary of our minority student data and urged everyone to try harder and smarter to increase the school's diversity. She committed that we will stay focused on this issue until, and then after, our proportions of minority students improve. In the current economic environment, more applicants require financial assistance; this is providing additional challenges to our success in enhancing diversity. However, we believe that with more timely data, more scholarships, and a schoolwide focus on the goal of enhancing minority enrollment, we will increase diversity in our study body.

4.5.e. Assessment of Student Diversity

Required Documentation: *Assessment of the extent to which this criterion is met.*

Strengths

- Multifaceted approaches by school and departments for recruiting and retaining a diverse student body
- University and school financial and other support for diversity recruitment and retention efforts
- High quality of matriculated students in diverse subgroups
- New programs to reach diverse students under development in school's Office of Students Affairs, and in Biostatistics
- New programmatic materials for use in recruitment
- Use of recruitment data to identify points in the student recruitment process where we fall short so that we can identify strategies for improvement

Challenges

- Attracting highly "targeted" minority students (e.g., African American and Hispanic) who are being heavily recruited by other schools and programs
- Providing sufficient resources (including improved financial aid packages) to recruit and retain highly qualified underrepresented minority students
- Increasing engagement of various stakeholders in monitoring and evaluating outcomes, and developing follow-up activities

Future Directions

- Continue to enhance and expand diversity recruitment pipelines and materials
- Improve feedback mechanisms related to recruiting and retaining a diverse student population, and institutionalize means of following up on this feedback
- Fully implement a broad outcomes assessment process
- Secure resources to increase financial aid packages for targeted underrepresented minorities

This Criterion is met.
