The Need for Diversity: Enhancing the Academic Process and Environment
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The Department of Health Policy and Management (HPM) is committed to training and promoting future leaders in health care management and research by applying “innovative approaches to learning and teaching.” This goal is consistent with the department’s mission “to advance knowledge, translate knowledge into policy and practice, and to educate individuals for leadership roles in health management, policy-making and research that seek to improve health-related quality of life domestically and globally.” Achieving this goal will also require attention to issues of diversity. Experts in multiple settings (e.g., academia, government, and health care organizations) have identified diversity as a critical issue for health care leaders and an integral aspect of a health care workforce that meets the needs of an increasingly diverse nation.

Ultimately, integrating ideals of diversity into Department life will necessitate innovative approaches to learning and teaching brought about by synergistic strategies that will change the culture of the department. Doing so is vital and will enable the Department to build and sustain a faculty and student body equipped to address future challenges in health care policy and management.

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Framing the Issues

An inclusive approach to framing the issues involved in integrating concepts of diversity into Department life is described in Figure 1 and is supported by the literature. Specific areas of emphasis are discussed below, concluding with proposed goals and related questions for further discussion within the Department.

Minority Representation in Health Related Fields

Betancourt and colleagues\textsuperscript{2} describe barriers to culturally competent care including (1) Lack of diversity among health care leaders and in the workforce, (2) Poorly designed systems of care that do not meet the needs of diverse patient populations, and (3) Poor patient-provider communication when a difference in race, ethnicity, or cultural backgrounds exist. While minorities account for 28\% of the U.S. population, minorities are largely underrepresented in health care positions within academia and government. For example, minorities represent 3\% of medical school faculty, 16\% of public health school faculty, and 17\% of city and county health officials in the United States\textsuperscript{3}.

Minority faculty recruitment and retention are critical to successful efforts at developing a more diverse health care workforce. However, once minority faculty enter the academy, they are less likely to receive tenure and promotions\textsuperscript{4,5}. Minority faculty members describe organizational barriers (poor retention efforts, lack of mentorship) that hinder their success and


professional satisfaction\textsuperscript{6}. Minority faculty members also express isolation within the academic community\textsuperscript{7}. Fang and colleagues\textsuperscript{5} found that even though the number of minority faculty increased between 1980 and 1997, they were promoted less frequently than their white counterparts. Consequently, minority faculty members are concentrated at the level of assistant professor\textsuperscript{8}.

Mentoring, long recognized as a catalyst for successful careers, is particularly important to the career development of underrepresented minority faculty\textsuperscript{9}. Compared to those without mentors, faculty members with mentors demonstrate higher levels of research productivity\textsuperscript{10,11} and retention\textsuperscript{12}. The foremost method of retaining minority scholars is through establishing a supportive mentoring relationship. Mentors play a critical role in socializing scholars into the academic environment by providing support, guidance, and information and helping to establish professional ties and social networks. In fact, there is a positive relationship between having a mentor and personal development, professional development (e.g., in areas such as conference participation, teaching, grantsmanship, research, and publishing), scholarly productivity, career satisfaction, and retention\textsuperscript{9,13}. In addition to individual benefits, institutions gain from mentoring.


relationships since they improve work quality, level of experience, and retention rates of junior faculty.\(^{14}\)

Though mentoring is associated with successful outcomes for mentees, most mentors receive little, if any, training in how to develop successful mentor-mentee relationships. Opportunities are often lacking for mentors to discuss challenges and strategies for establishing successful relationships with mentees.

**Goal 1: Meeting the Challenge in Recruitment and Retention**

1. What strategies can be employed to better recruit and retain minority faculty?
2. Are there successful models for recruiting and retaining minority faculty?
3. How can a successful mentoring plan be established to address both general and specific mentoring issues for minority faculty?
4. What resources are needed to recruit and retain minority faculty?
5. How can alumni, community organizations and key stakeholders assist with recruiting and retaining minority faculty?
6. What role can the staff play in recruiting and retaining minority faculty?

**Cultural Competency in Teaching/Curricula**

In addition to recruiting more minority faculty members and students, values that address diversity and cultural competency should be integrated into the curriculum to ensure our students receive appropriate training and education. These issues are central to understanding approaches to addressing health disparities and effective leadership. Multiple methods can be used to support a culture that values diversity, including small- and large-group discussions, special guest lectures, seminars, assignments, and games or simulations pertaining to issues of

diversity\textsuperscript{15,16}. Cultural competency can be measured through attitudes, knowledge, and skills, which can be assessed throughout the learning process\textsuperscript{17}. Alumni can be instrumental in this process by returning to the classroom to discuss their real-world experiences with diversity on the job. Surveys conducted on students enrolled in two Master-level courses (Health Economics for Policy and Management and Health Administration and Planning) during the spring of 2006 indicated that students appreciated having guest lecturers discuss issues of diversity and health disparities. Students also expressed a desire for greater integration of global perspectives, particularly in the health economics course.

Additionally, Health Policy and Management students come to the University to gain knowledge and skills that will benefit their future careers, promote leadership within the field, and prepare them for the “real-world.” Efforts to incorporate diversity are moving beyond medical training and into levels of administration and management as health care organizations search for methods to improve quality of care, reduce health disparities, and attract new segments of the market. In San Francisco during the early 1990s, Kaiser Permanente established the “Chinese Initiative” in response to dissatisfaction with quality of health care among Chinese Americans. This initiative led to the creation of a department for multicultural services, which developed a Chinese Call Center, materials in several languages, and staffing of interpreters with the capacity to translate 14 different languages\textsuperscript{2}.

Goal 2: Expanding the Curriculum to Include Diversity

1. Is the focus of diversity only the domain of certain courses?


2. How and where should faculty prepare for integrating diversity into courses?

3. What roles can alumni play in integrating diversity into courses?

4. What are the benefits to faculty and students of integrating diversity into the curriculum?

5. How can existing SPH programs and initiatives support diversity in courses?

**Existing Diversity Initiatives**

Our students will interact with diverse communities as professors, managers, leaders, and researchers, requiring a culturally competent workforce. The Department can prepare students for future careers and opportunities that will promote cultural competency and reduction of health disparities, and the School of Public Health and the University can provide the infrastructure and resources needed to build upon this capacity.

Several programs and opportunities exist within the School of Public Health. Jessie Satia, Special Assistant to the Dean for Diversity, is primarily focused on increasing minority recruitment and retention within the School. Faculty members across the School are conducting various research projects related to health disparities and diversity. Funding opportunities also exist for student and faculty minority populations within the School through NIH funds.

Outreach activities offered by the School include:

- An Annual Summer Public Health Research Videoconference on Minority Health,
- The Minority Health Project to improve quality of data collected on racial/ethnic populations,
- The Annual Minority Health Conference hosted by the Minority Student Caucus,
◊ The Carolina-Shaw Partnership for the Elimination of Health Disparities Center which seeks to eliminate differences in minority health care and status at various levels,

◊ The UNC Program on Ethnicity, Culture, and Health Outcomes which seeks to improve health status and eliminate disparities,

◊ The Kellogg Initiative which supports and promotes sustained efforts at community partnerships for eliminating racial/ethnic health disparities. These programs and initiatives can serve as resources to help HPM faculty and students become more involved diversity related issues and research.

Goal 3: Creating Synergy and Building Capacity

1. How can faculty and students better utilize resources within the SPH to assist with recruiting minority faculty members?

2. How can faculty better utilize the resources within the SPH to assist with integrating diversity into the curriculum?

3. How can HPM collaborate with other departments to recruit minority faculty?

4. How can HPM collaborate with other departments to integrate diversity into the curriculum?

5. How can HPM create linkages with other colleges and universities to help build capacity in diversity initiatives?

6. What value is added to HPM’s diversity initiatives by joining forces with others?

Summary and Conclusion

This discussion will help us identify initial steps for integrating ideas about diversity into Department life and culture and move toward a more inclusive approach to addressing diversity. Most, if not all, functions within the Department must be involved for these efforts to succeed. As depicted in Figure 1, we propose that most, if not all, of the segments of HPM must be involved to infuse and integrate diversity into the department. The recruitment and retention of minority faculty cannot take place without strong leadership and resources. Mentoring relationships and resources are also needed to support recruiting and retaining minority faculty, staff, and students. A culturally competent curriculum can be introduced at all levels (e.g., students, staff, and faculty) in order to better inform and train individuals on how to work in a diverse environment and reduce disparities. Alumni can participate by training and mentoring students and giving lectures on how diversity impacts their jobs. Existing programs within the School of Public Health can be used to promote and support diversity within the department. Finally, existing diversity efforts and initiatives within HPM and in the SPH can be used as a foundation for creating, fostering and sustaining the different aspects of diversity discussed in this paper.
Figure 1: Framework for Integration of Diversity into the Department of Health Policy and Administration (Dilworth-Anderson, Hobbs and Hacker)