

Increasing Diversity
NDEP Roundtable Discussions at FNCE
October 22, 2018

Pre-FNCE Questions/Comments/Issues

- What NDEP members view as viable methods to promote diversity within their institutions in order to ultimately promote diversity among those entering professions in dietetics. It has been acknowledged that we have made marginal strides towards increasing diversity in dietetics over the past several decades and I don't believe we are currently looking at demographics beyond gender (binary only) and race/ethnicity in a systematic way. I think it would be useful to discuss more about how we, as educators, collectively and deliberately do to seek to create a more inclusive environment in our classrooms, advising and mentoring relationships, and in our accredited programs through policies, practices, recruitment strategies, etc.
- What actions have educators taken to promote diversity in their ACEND accredited programs?
- Are there specific demographic groups which programs (or your institutions) are deliberately working to decrease barriers for?
-For example, the University of Arizona was just designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution in 2018. This designation makes us eligible to apply for special funding opportunities which can be used to build new programs and improve existing ones. In theory, this is an institutional effort which could have direct impact on improved programming that is particularly supportive of students in dietetics from underrepresented backgrounds (if our department pursues special funding opportunities that are only available to HIS's)
- * I'd like to hear from others regarding diversity issues in dietetic education. For example...
 - a. What are the national averages or percentages of NHW, NHB, Hispanic and Asian RDs? What is the racial/ethnic composition of DPD and Pre-DPD programs?
 - b. Likely we will see limited diversity and if so, what do people believe are the barriers and resolutions for diversifying dietetic education?
 - c. In regard to program priorities, where does diversity fall? Should it be higher or lower?
- I strongly and urgently agree with the recommendation to **prioritize increased diversity in our profession as a topic of importance**. Here at Bastyr University, we are working on that issue, particularly as it applies to our dietetic internship. We have had institutional training that has been critical to my understanding of the issue of diversity and inclusivity, with my ultimate goal as a department chair and internship director now being to support the development of RDNs who look like those they will serve, considering all races, ethnicities, cultures, genders, and sexual orientations. I had the privilege of also working as the dietetic internship director at Sea Mar Community Centers in Seattle prior to my time at Bastyr University, and there supported that same effort.
- * Are there certain policies or best practices folks are implementing, or have heard of others implementing?
There are quite a variety of recruitment and retention strategies presented in the literature but this is a continuous discussion that should never stop

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- What are some ways that NDEP could support a more systematic approach to addressing the lack of diversity in our profession? Are there policy recommendations we have? Is there ANYTHING that could be done, that has not been done before, to increase the diversity of our profession on dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion and age.

- Another topic that often gets dropped from the diversity/inclusion list is **body size diversity and we need to do more to reduce weight stigma/bias in our curriculum.** I've had many students confide in me that they don't feel comfortable in their larger body within their courses or the profession. We can change that, and we must! So it's important to include ALL pieces of the diversity puzzle in these conversations.

Discussion Notes

1. Viable methods to promote diversity and actions that educators are taking to promote diversity
 - * Some are seeing more graduates who are more diverse, but they're not getting internships
 - Need mentors who believe they can finish as many drop out
 - Most internships accept on GPA, which limits pool
 - Recognize issue of diversity and that many times have to work with them on language and written skills
 - Do any internships give additional points for language diversity? (possible VA Tech?)
 - CDPH WIC dietetic internship programs have lowered minimum GPA
 - * has pass rate been impacted?
 - * There is some struggle but may take 1-3 times
 - * CDPH WIC is now in compliance

2. Pipelines – how do we create ways to catch students prior to college/high school
 - Can we promote career paths within STEM in middle school/high school? Start early; look at other models
 - Need mentors of similar language and race (example: past interns as mentors to current interns)
 - Science programs should work together with other allied/health professions
 - Colleges reaching out to local schools (example in Delaware)

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- STEM program: sending Dietetic Interns to present at high schools
 - Diversifying faculty
 - College night/career path options or DPD social club programs
 - Social media: concerted effort appealing to target audience
 - Website needs to be geared towards younger audience
3. CDR 2024 Mandate: won't help with a currently disenfranchised group that is not very diverse
- Need a better way of engaging – we have these practice groups but are we reaching out within those groups? Need to work with other practice groups
 - Idea? A mixer with MIGs; get sponsored by Academy/cross funding to know each other
* Work with others/colleges/categories without actually labeling as diverse
 - CDPH WIC graduates want to be mentors
 - “Financial” challenges cause lack of diversity
 - Diversity “session” not scheduled at FNCE and other meetings at opportune times (for example, scheduled during last session of the last day of the conference/meeting)
 - Have educators be the glue to reach out to MIGs
 - We cannot solve this problem without those that are most impacted
4. How to offer scholarships with lowering qualification of lower GPA or no GPA qualification?
- * Maybe not highest GPA, but driven more by other qualifying factors
 - * Type A = common personality trait but lacking social/professional skills
 - * Faculty/educators need to be more flexible in accepting different applicants
5. Less diverse RDs are not attending diversity sessions, so there's a lack of knowledge/understanding of the issues
6. CA WIC interns more diverse, with different languages welcomed by preceptors for cultural background and language skills

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7. IDEAS?

- a. Start with diversity sessions at conferences
- b. Not reinventing the wheel – work with PR, Nursing (sometimes our best supporters) to attract more diverse groups (cross collaboration)
- c. Interdisciplinary training
- d. “Teaching patients” with exposure to different populations
- e. Ideas for educators to implement
- f. PEDRO has some diversity – need more Motivational Interviewing (MI) techniques

8. What can we ask NDEP to support? What resources are available?

- Resources of what not to do and ways to move ourselves forward ... comes back to working together with other practice groups
- Understanding of cultures and working with different groups
- Emotional awareness and issues in other cultures
- Barriers within different cultures that we cannot solve
- Need more diversity in our leadership!

9. Regional NDEP meetings

- Present survey data at these meetings
- Invite DPG and MIG groups to these meetings
- Consider a virtual summit - start with a survey and build concept from there

10. Recognize that we as a whole are not aware of our barriers and of our own inherent biases – need more training in this!

11. We’re increasingly seeing “mixed race” individuals who don’t fit into any of the boxes on the forms collecting demographic information – need to revise/improve forms for accuracy!

12. Need to identify “road blocks” that are preventing certain groups from obtaining access to dietetic internships (including cost, out-of-pocket expenses, etc.)

13. Need more inclusive, less exclusive language

- Require anti-bias training just like we do ethics training!

14. Need enhancements to cultural competency and include access issues

15. Costs should be listed on ACEND and eatright.org websites

16. Release “the Guide” and put it online

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17. Need workforce development in rural areas
18. Within guidance documents for DI application review, include approaches to consider diverse student applicants
19. CDR: need the RD credentialing exam in other languages; improve style and include inclusive-type questions that address nuances of English, subtleties of cultural differences
20. Diversity initiatives by the Academy **do not support and facilitate diversity and inclusion discussions**
21. **Need investment in high leadership position (aka Chief Diversity Officer) to create a strategic plan with goals, accountability, and authority to lead strategic planning with AND, ACEND, and CDR on increasing diversity and inclusion throughout the organization.**