



BHPOC Work Group on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion in Behavioral Health

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Co-Chairs: Alice Forrester and Selma Ward

Agenda

April 5, 2022 11:00 AM via ZOOM

The BHPOC is committed to creating to an environment that provides equal access to behavioral healthcare in a culturally competent capacity, with particular attention to social and racial justice.

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Yvonne Jones, Kelly Phenix, Alice Forrester, Brenetta Henry, David Kaplan, Marissa Bayerl, Selma Ward, Stephney Springer, Karen Siegel, Sandra Bulmer, Bonni Hopkins, Carmen Teresa Rosario, Mark Vanacore, Bernie Park, Amy Soto, Christine Mazuik, Lois Berkowitz, Jaya Daptardar, Donyale Pina, Janine Sullivan Wiley, Jim Lisher, Sean King, Eminent Abede Gurganus, AlstersDo, Heather Gates, and Rod Winstead

I. Discussion about Potential DEI Workforce Initiatives Related to CT State Colleges- Special guest: Dr. Sandra Bulmer Dean of Health and Human Services –SCSU

Jim Lisher and Bernie Park have been appointed by the Governor's Workforce Alliance to improve the Behavioral Health workforce. Papers have been read and reviewed in terms of the Nebraska model and others and what Dr. Hoagie had reviewed with a larger council. Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Council is a task force looking at diversity, equity and inclusion in particular around behavioral health in the state of Connecticut particular with children and families on Medicaid.

Dr. Sandra Bulmer:

- SCSU students are Pell Grant eligible and have additional barriers to getting an education. Resources to support students are the chief exploration right now.

YNHHS reached out to all the regional Deans to come up with creative ideas for how we would graduate more nurses.

- SCSU will be going into the high schools doing early college work to get prerequisite courses and get them on track focusing on DEI candidates. Getting them into the university system with a year of education already done with no cost to them, then scholarships to get their bachelors in three years then pathways for graduate work where appropriate.
- Second is launching a program for part time people who are working in a dead end career ladder that would provide them a pathway to bachelor degree part time program.
- Third is to invest in existing pathways to bring more candidates in and provide more financial support. SCSU asked for retention staffing, support staffing, case managers to work with students while they are in school; someone who is in the high schools running college programs and helping students to do prerequisite work.

Focus on advanced standing programs.

- Students do bachelors in Social Work and in 1 year they get their MS in Social Work. Popular program is advanced standing Social Work program.
- Do a better job in high school to further increase that pipeline. Senior year put them into placements where they were going to be nurtured and mentored.
- Set up pathways with specific employers. Partner together to run deep meaningful fellowship program where that person is immediately being acculturated, mentored and have case workers who provide advise with financial resources and commitment to employment with that organization post-graduation. Send students out in groups for seminar together once a week.

Started model with Elm City Communities.

- Hired a part time person to fill position to precept 6 students. Run anger management, college readiness, mediation case work, financial support. Students go out in the field to interview. Agency picks who they will precept. Once a week they meet with faculty in pods of 6.

Q&A:

Cultural awareness within the curriculum, particularly around disciplinary practices?

- Model where our partners are working together at looking at the curriculum to be sure those issues are being addressed. Seminar together along with the employer is rich opportunity to bring this up.

Alcohol and Drug counselors are predominantly white. What are we doing to recruit diversity?

- No data on what is being done. Partnership may be answer to needs and understand pathways very clear. Share where these needs are. Diverse faculty, adjuncts bring new perspectives.

Entertained opportunity to bring client perception and input can bring to the curriculum?

- Individual faculty do bring clients perspectives and guests into the classroom. Not formalized. Perhaps rely too heavily on the agencies. Launching a community engagement program for SCSU to hire neighbors to play the role of patient and client for students to practice. Videotaped, reviewed and provided feedback.

Anything that can be done to help students post-graduation to navigate the licensing process as fast as possible would be helpful. It is often a barrier to being fully employed.

- Exploring securing funding to partner with organizations to screen students on front end, support their tuition then have student committed to working there for a period of time while they get over goal line while going through exams.

What is passing rate of the licensing exam? Students of color in particular are not experiencing the same pass rate as their peers. Is there data on this?

- Do not have adequate diversity in the Master's program. The number of diverse students coming into the program and graduating is not adequate. Sandra will do a deep dive and get the data.

There is a lack of people going into the public sector. Consider peer to peer where someone who has been through the process and doing the work for a number of years mentors those coming and in return gets tuition in order to get their Masters?

- SCSU designed co-hort program for people who have full time jobs. Need to replenish funding.

How much of an appetite across the state is there among leaders together to talk or make recommendations from this kind of conversation?

- Don't see that there is a choice. It's an all hands on deck moment. Higher education in New England, the demography is such that fewer kids are graduating from high school so all of our enrollments are declining considerably. There is competition instead of working together to come to a solution. We need to get into the high schools and let students know this is a worthwhile profession.

II. Next Steps

Put together thoughts on and see where we want to in terms of supporting initiative and asking for support from the behavioral partnership.

III. New Business, Announcements, Adjournment

Next Meeting: Tuesday, May 3, 2022 at 11:00 AM via ZOOM