Washington State Nursing Student Diversity Survey
Executive Summary

April 2017

Nursing leaders recognize the connection between a diverse nursing workforce and the ability to provide quality, culturally competent care. In 2012, according to the Governor’s Interagency Council on Health Disparities; Washington State Budget and Policy Center, 29% of the population of Washington State were people of color. In the 2015 National Nursing Workforce Survey (National Council of State Boards of Nursing and the National Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers), only 17% of the Washington RN sample identified with ethnic/racial minority groups. Currently 32% of RN to BSN students; 27% of ADN students; 25% of BSN pre-licensure students; and less than 20% of students in nursing graduate programs are from under-represented racial/ethnic groups. It is essential that the nursing workforce to continue efforts to grow in diversity in order to address health needs of the people of our state and to correct existing health disparities. This report defines diversity broadly to include gender identity; veteran status; sexuality; English as a first language; or first generation in the family to get a college degree in addition to race and ethnicity.

The purpose of this survey was to hear the voices of nursing students in Washington State regarding their experiences with diversity and inclusion and strategies that promote recruitment and retention of diverse students in our state’s pre-registered nurse licensure and graduate nursing programs. Survey findings are intended to inform the further development of strategies for the recruitment, retention, graduation & leadership development of diverse students from underrepresented groups.

This survey asks students about seven areas that support diversity:

- Recruitment into the nursing profession
- Financial support and opportunity
- Emotional and moral support
- Mentoring
- Academic advising
- Technical and academic support
- Professional socialization, or the values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge pertaining to the nursing as a profession.
Recommendations

1. Increase students from underrepresented groups in graduate nursing education to increase the pool of diverse nursing faculty.
2. Promote outreach and recruitment to families of underrepresented students. Face to face interactions are more important to underrepresented students than white non-Hispanic students when it comes to choosing a nursing program.
3. Minimize student debt by providing access to scholarships, financial aid, and debt forgiveness. In addition, ensure student and family are made fully aware of financial aid opportunities.
4. Promote and provide professional development for faculty, staff, and academic advisors to increase cultural awareness, sensitivity & inclusion and the skills to address institutionalized racism.
5. Increase visibility of a school’s commitment to diversity such as adopting a diversity mission statement.
6. Provide social support to build community among students, faculty, staff, students and their families to enhance student success.
7. Collaborate with diverse professional nursing associations to provide role models for students.
8. Provide a “safe space” for students to promote the sharing and expression of diverse points of view and experiences.
9. Provide a variety of formal and informal mentorship opportunities, such as faculty-to-student, peer-to-peer, practicing nurse-to-student, and others.
10. Prioritize relevant, accessible, and timely academic and technical support.

To read the full report, please visit: http://bit.ly/2oMkWOu