

## **Training Program Evaluation Responses**

The 2000 evaluation of the MCHB Training Program included site visits to a number of grantees, in which structured interviews were conducted of project directors and others at these universities. One of the questions that was asked was, “What suggestions would you make to MCHB for recruiting and retaining racially and technically diverse faculty and trainees?” Some of the answers to this question are presented below, grouped into similar categories.

Many people pointed out that, in some fields, the pool of trained academics is extremely limited and there must be successful trainees from diverse backgrounds before there can be diversity among faculty; that is, increasing the number of diverse trainees improves the “pipeline” into academia. Thus, there is some overlap in ideas related to the recruitment and retention of faculty and trainees.

The comments of interviewees included below have been divided into the following categories: Faculty Recruitment and Retention, Trainee Recruitment and Retention, and Suggestions for MCHB.

### **Faculty Recruitment and Retention**

#### *Compensation Issues*

- Racially and ethnically diverse faculty are rare and highly sought after. One strategy for maintaining diverse faculty is to provide them with greater compensation and some longevity. Projects cannot be faced with losing funding every 5 years and still attract diverse faculty.
- A person of color with a PhD is gold and competition for recruiting them is intense. A good person can command an excellent salary. Deans have to be willing to take the heat of compensating a person of color perhaps more than other faculty members.
- This is difficult for some states. Here (Oregon), it’s hard to get minority faculty. We’d have to woo them here for a part-time position and the money is not there; good people have lots of opportunities. We’ve tried hard, with special letters sent to individuals, but without success.

#### *“Pipeline” Issues*

- For faculty, it’s a long-term thing. We have to grow doctoral programs in places like this (AL) where there’s a diverse undergraduate and MPH program. Also, we recruit at historically black colleges. We try to establish good relationships with college placement officers. That kind of thing can be encouraged in MCH grants. There could be a line

item for travel for recruitment.

- There are no African-Americans in our applicant pool (pediatric dentistry). Dental schools in general also have a problem.
- Linkages could be made with HBCUs, Hispanic Serving Institutions, and tribal colleges; you could send young faculty from these institutions to established training programs to be trained and mentored.
- We need to increase the pool of diverse candidates. MCHB is doing this through Ken Jaros' social work program. Perhaps more programs at the PhD level should be supported.

### *Other Ideas*

- Look at why minority groups don't choose to go into particular areas (geographically, disciplines, universities) and try to address those issues.
- MCHB should encourage each program to have a specific strategy to recruit diverse faculty. By providing a better link between activities in the schools of public health, community work, and clinical work, programs might be more successful in recruiting minority faculty. There is a feeling at this university that newly recruited minority faculty want to make a difference in the community. There must be a way to give them opportunities to allow them to build their academic career and meet those academic objectives while making a difference in the community. The disparities are so great and problems are so urgent that minority faculty want to make a difference right now. An academic career is too long term. MCHB should encourage more community-based research, not limited to minorities specifically, but in general.

## **Trainee Recruitment & Retention**

### *Early Interventions*

- You need to start with high school. Here, this university supports a high school for the medical professions. Some professions have a difficult time recruiting. Those go to the high school for health professions to try to recruit. You need to get kids in science.
- This university has a presence in the Valley (largely Hispanic) in which they bring high school students here, most of whom are minority, to get a sense of what we do. You have to give kids a vision of what is possible at an early age. It's a big undertaking.
- Maybe we need to begin recruitment into the field at a different level, earlier in a student's career. Also, we need to recruit at historically black colleges. We don't recruit for the certificate program, so that's not been a way to recruit for diversity.

- We have a collaboration with a local high school whereby students come here to observe and then we hope they develop an early interest in CSHCN. The younger the better for getting interest. Recruiting college students is another way.
- Hit schools early, developing mentoring systems for those in college.
- Start early and don't wait until the kids are in college—sponsor things like career day in middle school and put this on the radar screens of kids while they are young.
- Summer internships, recruiting in high schools and colleges.

### *Attitudinal Issues*

- Attitude is the key. We actively go out and recruit minorities. It's not in our brochure or in any written materials. It's dangerous to be formulaic. But our attitude is to get minority students and we have been successful.
- We have diverse students because we have diverse faculty. Cultural diversity is a primary emphasis here. The students are mentored by someone knowledgeable about the issues that a minority student might face.
- Diversity is influenced by the whole context within the university. More money for financial aid would certainly benefit minority students. However, I see the real issue as class diversity in students and faculty (i.e., socioeconomic status).

### *Compensation Issues*

- This is not a field that attracts minorities. The money is low given the extended training time.
- It's hard to attract minority students into health care professions now because of money. We have a fully employed society now. It's too expensive to live in this city. It's very expensive to have fellows—we have to pay \$15K to \$20K extra. They can't live on the stipend. We have had some turn it down.
- Trainees make less in this field after training than before. That's not a selling point.
- In the professions, it's harder. For nursing, there's no financial advantage to them in having an MPH.

### *Providing Financial Support*

- The minority fellowship provides one way for us to interest minorities in the field.
- By partnering with NIDA, we've had 3 minority students for research training.
- The SPIRE program at NIH provides an opportunity for externships at the University, so that students can become more comfortable
- Provide for extra resources, e.g., minority scholarships, loan forgiveness. We can't compete with money from other places.
- In this state, we have a new referendum stating that we cannot provide preferential treatment to any group of students. I don't think that under the referendum that we can do things like have a minority fellowship slot.
- Someone needs to fund minority fellowships. The education for minorities in this state is poor, so they do not get the tools they need to be competitive.

#### *Relationships with HBCUs, HSIs, Tribal Serving Institutions*

- We've run sports medicine programs at a state HBCU and as a result have brought some students back here to the medical center.
- We make connections with local HBCUs.

#### *Other Ideas*

- Public health programs must have an emphasis on recruitment and outreach right out of college. This university has changed its absolute 2-year experience requirement in order to recruit minority students.
- Universities should show strategies for recruitment such as going to high schools, workshops on how to fill out applications, changes in the admissions criteria, and examination of how applications are processed.
- It is critical for minority trainees to have someone mentor them and set the bar high for them. MCHB should force projects to continue to attend to this goal.
- Develop minority recruitment as a faculty conclave topic.
- There should be more distance education—we need to figure out a way to meet the needs of those who can't leave their jobs and/or families and those who are in rural areas.
- Develop certificate programs.

## **Suggestions for MCHB**

### *Funding*

- MCHB should make this a priority that is more specific, not general. They should focus some funding to develop models.
- MCHB could provide more money for recruitment.

### *Increased Accountability*

- It must be a priority and there also has to be accountability (i.e., having a performance measure that looks at how well training grants have done in this area).
- Universities that receive funding from MCHB should be required to provide evidence that they are actively recruiting for diverse faculty and trainees. These measures need to go beyond the quantitative measures such as the number of applicants from diverse groups.
- MCHB needs to apply and sustain pressure so that universities show objective evidence of how they recruit at their schools.

### *Marketing*

- There should be marketing aimed at professional audiences.
- Could there be some advertising about the training programs through the block grant? Perhaps MCHB could suggest more coordination and collaboration.
- Develop a national clearinghouse for training opportunities.
- MCHB should provide assistance and guidance to grantees about how to market themselves to more diverse populations. MCHB should require a marketing line on the budget. This marketing has to start earlier than at the undergraduate level.

### *Other Ideas*

- MCHB should develop a network among all training programs to facilitate linkages with HBCUs, HSIs, and tribal colleges.
- One must interest kids in a health career. It takes a long time and a concerted effort. MCHB can't take this on alone. BHPPr could be the lead.

- MCHB should have diverse groups of people go out as site visitors to show their commitment to diversity.