

Diversity in Peer Learning Collaborative Participant Reflections on Lessons Learned and Recommendations for Future Diversity Initiatives

May 22, 2012

Team leaders of the 11 teams that participated in either cohort I or cohort II of the Peer Learning Collaborative were invited to talk with Division of Workforce Development (DWD) staff about lessons learned or impact of their participation in the Collaborative and what types of support are needed for MCH Training Programs in the future. On May 22, 2012 via conference call, Altarum facilitated this discussion with 7 collaborative team leads (3 from cohort II and 4 from cohort I), DWD staff and collaborative facilitators from the National Center for Cultural Competence.

Below is a summary of their reflections and recommendations.

Lessons Learned or Impact of Participating in the Diversity Collaborative

Raised Intensity and/or Priority Level of Diversity Efforts

- “What did the Collaborative do? It gave us the impetus to move forward--- intentionality.”
- “The collaborative gave us a reason to enlarge and increase the intensity of our conversation about diversity and empowered our thinking and interactions around diversity that is difficult to imagine happening without the Collaborative.”
- We have a lot of meetings and competing priorities. Since MCHB created accountability and credibility, it moved [diversity] to the top of the list.
- The Dean asked us to start a Committee on Equity and Diversity as part of the accreditation process after the Collaborative. They are taking a serious look at faculty and staff numbers and processes that impact diversity now. The federal investment in diversity was critical.

Deeper Understanding of Colleagues and their views on Diversity

- After the initial meeting in Maryland we were tasked with doing self-reflection among the group—it added depth to the partnership and hearing experiences of others and how they perceive diversity.
- Engaging in reflective discussions on diversity added depth to the partnership and changed how we interact and work with one another.
- Had very deep conversations as part of the Collaborative—had an evolutionary impact on what and how we learn. It’s hard to define. Just getting to know each other as we worked together changed us—finding out about our very different experiences regarding diversity growing up and how that shaped us as individuals, has changed how we work together. Because we were able to have those conversations, our educational conversations went to a deeper level.

New Partnerships and Connections

- It was the impetus for initiating discussions with other LEND programs in the state about starting a collaborative with other MCHB-funded training programs in the state. (UT)

- Established a connection with a collaborative team in another state and have stayed connected to learn about their state collaborative even after the end of the program. (UT)
- We didn't bring the same assets to the table in terms in Institutional structure and diversity of state population. However with the encouragement and support provided by the diversity collaborative, by hearing from others and what they are doing—we went to talk with others and expanded on relationship with the HCOP. Now we're doing events with them. We work more closely with student groups on campus to acquaint them with MCH and recruited them as trainees (Long-term and short-term) and have gained credibility there. (UT)
- Provided exposure to the pipeline programs and to what is going on in other states. (MD)
- It provided the impetus to interact with other MCH programs on campus, form additional relationships at the University (office of equity and diversity). Partnering with them led to them support hiring new minority faculty; and developing a diversity retreat for faculty that will happen in June 2012. (MN)
- Partnering with a local clinic serving Latino community—provided interactive learning seminars on topics the families have asked for.
- Reaching out to Navajo Reservation through dialogue opportunities. (UT)
- Connected with UTN in Knoxville to do a diversity exchange program. Student engagement was important and students have kept in touch with one another since the collaborative. (MD)

New Funding Opportunities

- Obtained an AUCD minority partnership grant to form a partnership with CalState LA (Hispanic serving institution) and through that secured a minority pipeline grants CalState LA has a minority communities and research program going on for over 15 years. Getting them to participate in research for people with developmental disabilities. There are lots of programs and lot to be learned. (*Another collaborative team (UAB) received this grant to partner with Morehouse College.*) (CA)
- Participation resulted in a grant being submitted together from Kennedy Krieger with Morgan State and several other organizations in Baltimore. The collaborative work expanded her network and understanding of program projects and people in Baltimore. It also contributed to the success of Kennedy Krieger in getting a CDC-funded pipeline grant. (MD)

Changes in Program Practices or Activities

- Helping trainees identify one culturally diverse group that they can reach out to as part of their training.
- We need to connect with students earlier—when they are younger. Federal agencies should focus on the pipeline strategies being implemented by programs.
- Added more ways to expose trainees to diverse populations. Added hearing screening at the Indian health clinic and connect them with resources they can access (provides experience for trainees). Ongoing activities added with immigrant program in Salt Lake City.
- Changing how we look at and collect information about diversity—for example, including LGBT on forms.

Recommendations for the next iteration of diversity initiatives supported by the Division of Workforce Development

- Help training programs connect with minority institutions that are trying to expand their MCH work. It can be difficult for minority institutions to establish linkages with larger MCHB-funded programs.
- Every state is becoming more diverse. Consider that every state needs to be working toward to improve diversity in MCH training—not just those programs with institutional resources and larger diverse populations. All programs have diversity-related needs—it is important to acknowledge this.
- Need a plan of action for something intentional – intentionality is key.
- Rethink how MCH Training Programs shape and deliver our curriculum—start thinking about diversity as essential to our educational process. Having support and guidance from MCHB on how to do that would be helpful.
- Publicize findings from the Collaborative—how can we engage a broader audience in learning about what was done?
- How can we expand the impact of having federal impetus or federal authority to work on this? (Since there was not additional funding—what was the key ingredient that MCHB could share with others?)
 - It gave us permission and encouragement to do this work. It said this is something you should pay attention to, but gave us the freedom to identify how to pay attention to it. If the Bureau says it is important, people were willing to engage.
 - Having a competitive process to apply for it gave it credibility.
 - Embed more cultural diversity into the curriculum—reminding us to include it in the curriculum. NCCCC has done seminars in the state on this topic.
 - It is the permission to focus on diversity—that was the secret ingredient (AZ, UT)
- Require diversity reflection to be a part of the annual grantee meetings—require reflection on this during part of the grantee meetings. Use some of the reflection questions that Tawara (Goode) provided in other meetings (*Tawara Goode noted that a discussion guide should accompany it because it can be a difficult conversation to get started*)
- Talk with states like Utah to see what they are doing and we can learn from them. Even if there are limited resource, we can learn from what they are doing.
- It is helpful, if not critical, to have the support of a [outside] team member to work with the teams—crucial for accountability; Altarum staff facilitated a workshop for the team—that provided a coherence and overview as well as outside view on the dynamic of what was going on. (MN)
- Other priorities take priority, but having an outside person coming on the meeting calls made it more important to attend and have an agenda and they gave feedback. It was almost like having a mentor – that was helpful. (AZ)
- AUCD is evaluating the partnerships between UUCEDs and they are doing an evaluation—coordinate with them—there are lessons to be learned from both initiatives.