

COPH Diversity Committee Plans to Promote and Sustain Diversity

The COPH's Diversity Plan was developed by the College's Diversity Committee to build upon and supplement the university-wide plans developed by UAMS' Center for Diversity Affairs (CDA) under the leadership of the UAMS Vice-Chancellor for Diversity and Inclusion, Billy Thomas, MD, MPH. The COPH Diversity Plan was developed to articulate with, complement and supplement the CDA plan. It should be noted that while Dr. Thomas' primary academic appointment is in the College of Medicine, he has a secondary appointment in the COPH, and COPH faculty (e.g., Drs. Kate Stewart, Eduard Ochoa and the previous COPH Assistant Dean for Government Relations and Special Projects Willa Sanders, as well as Ms. Sander's replacement, Nancy Dockter, MPH, formerly of the CDA) and several staff members were actively involved in developing the CDA and university plans. So, the CDA plan reflects significant input from individuals with a decidedly public health orientation. The COPH plan also incorporates initiatives previously begun by the College's Office of Student Services, the College's Office of Community-Based Public Health, and the College's NIH-funded Arkansas Center for Health Disparities (ARCHD).

Thus, the COPH Plan benefits from the CDA initiatives, and from past and on-going efforts within the COPH. Utilizing these supplemental initiatives avoids duplication and promotes coordination within the College, with CDA and other UAMS initiatives. This is facilitated by the continued participation of COPH faculty in the Chancellor's Minority Recruitment and Retention Committee (CMRRC) and by CDA Director of Recruitment for Diversity Vivian Flowers, MPS, serving on the COPH's Diversity Committee. Once the Diversity Plan was developed by the College's Diversity Committee, it was reviewed and approved by both the COPH's Dean's Executive Committee (DEC) and by the Dean.

Creating a College Environment to Support and Sustain Diversity

The College's leadership and its Diversity Committee strongly believe that recruitment and retention of diverse faculty, staff and students are facilitated and supported by an environment that demonstrates, as part of its mission, engagement with diverse communities in its research, education and service components of its mission. We believe that this diverse community engagement environment is attractive and supportive of a diverse faculty, staff and students. We strongly believe that this is the reason why the COPH has, since its origins in 2001, had high proportions of racial minority students and staff. Historically, proportions of racial minority faculty have been lower, but consistently at or near the overall racial proportions of Arkansas' population, although the COPH strives to improve with regards to recruitment of a diverse faculty. When ethnic diversity is considered, however, the College has been less successful in attaining similar proportions of Hispanic/Latino faculty, staff and students, the state's second largest racial/ethnic minority population. However, the Arkansas Hispanic/Latino population, while growing 123% from 2000 to 2011 (3.2% in 2000, 6.6% in 2011 according to the U.S. Census data) is young (median age 23.6 for Hispanic/Latino population compared to 41.4 for whites and 30.9 for Blacks – U.S. Census 2010). Many Hispanic/Latino Arkansans thus consist of young families whose children have yet to progress through college to be in a position to

consider graduate education. Nonetheless, the aging of the Hispanic/Latino population will occur along with its growth, and the College understands the necessity in creating an environment for and with Hispanic/Latino faculty and staff as well as a portfolio of research, educational and service programs addressing Hispanic/Latino issues. The College recognizes these steps as vitally important to being an engaged institution that will be attractive in the recruitment and retention of minority students.

Thus, an essential component of the COPH Diversity Plan is to sustain and develop a diverse environment that permeates the college's educational, research and service activities.

Components to ensure an environment to support and sustain diversity include:

- Educational Programs that:
 - Maintain courses which specifically address racial, ethnic, and gender issues
 - Ensure that all courses, when appropriate, incorporate competencies and content that address racial, ethnic, and gender issues
- Research Programs that
 - Maintain a majority of research projects that address health disparities, racial, ethnicity, and gender issues
 - Maintain active involvement of College faculty in leadership roles in the community engagement cores of ARCHD, the Arkansas Prevention Research Center (ARPRC), and TRI (UAMS' Clinical and Translational Sciences Award institute)
- The College's service contributions that support racial, ethnic, and gender issues, particularly in regard to:
 - Providing an expert resource to the Governor, legislature and other elected officials on health matters that relate to racial, ethnic and gender issues
 - Providing an expert resource to the Arkansas Department of Health, Arkansas Minority Health Commission, Arkansas Department of Human Services, and other Arkansas agencies and organizations on health matters that relate to racial, ethnic and gender issues
 - Serving as a resource to community-based organizations that serve racial, ethnic and women's groups through consultation and service learning projects
 - Serving as a resource to community-based organizations through volunteer service projects for students, faculty and staff
 - Serving as an advocate within UAMS on matters that involve racial, ethnic and gender issues

The sections below describe specific efforts that are currently active or planned for faculty, staff and student recruitment and retention efforts to meet COPH Diversity Goals.

Faculty Recruitment and Retention Plans

- **College diversity recruitment and retention policies.** The College has always informally prioritized the recruitment and retention of racial and ethnic minority faculty. These informal policies have traditionally led to proportions of African-American and Asian faculty which are comparable to and even exceed the proportions of these racial groups in

Arkansas' population. However, with the competing continuation award for the ARCHD, the Chancellor committed to returning all indirect costs to the College, providing an opportunity to develop a joint ARCHD/COPH policy to incentivize Chairs to recruit racial and ethnic minority junior faculty, post-doctoral fellows and doctoral students by providing positions and funding to departments which are successful in these recruitment efforts. Consistent with the mission of the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD), the funding agency, eligible trainees/faculty for these funds and the accompanying positions must demonstrate a commitment to health disparities research or research among predominately minority communities. A process has been established for the review of applicants to be supported (see Addendum to this Plan).

- **INSP collaborations to recruit and retain faculty.** The National Institute of Public Health of Mexico (Instituto Nacional de Salud Pública – INSP) is the only accredited school of public health in Mexico. Recognizing that the need to recruit and retain Hispanic/Latino faculty, staff and students needed to be a priority for the COPH to meet its stated mission, the COPH entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to promote faculty and student exchanges. This MOU resulted in limited exchange efforts in the ensuing years. However, the two respective Deans of INSP and the COPH recognized the mutual need to re-energize this effort and met in February 2013 to develop plans to further promote this collaboration. In addition to specific plans to promote faculty and student exchanges, the two schools have agreed to collaborate in two major areas: 1) in developing curricular components at each school which address the awareness of and competencies for the Mexican and U.S. health care systems at each institution; and 2) in the evaluation of the Ventanilla de Salud program in the 52 Mexican Consulates in the United States. Dean Raczynski of the COPH has committed to financially supporting an INSP faculty member as a Visiting Professor at the COPH to assist in the development of the mutual curricular competencies and activities.

Alignment with UAMS diversity efforts. The COPH Diversity Committee is involved in an ongoing review of current recruitment and retention practices in light of the following initiatives by the CMRRC in 2013:

- the report, *Recruitment and Retention of Underrepresented Minority Faculty: Recommendations for Improvement* (see Attachment 2)
- a campus-wide survey of current policies and practices for the recruitment and retention of underrepresented minority faculty
- a review of the scientific literature and best practices nationally for the recruitment and retention of underrepresented minority faculty.

The COPH Diversity Committee has also begun developing resources for minority recruitment and retention across the College that align with CMRRC recommendations and its *Vision for Faculty Diversity for UAMS*, including:

- *Campus Climate – Building Support:* Faculty diversity becomes institutionalized as valued, desirable, and necessary for the accomplishment of the UAMS mission and strategic plan.

- *Recruitment – the Search and Selection Process:* Faculty diversity is a priority in faculty recruitment, and campus-wide policies and procedures governing recruitment are standardized, fair, and effective.
- *Assessment, Monitoring and Reporting:* Systems are in place for centralized, internal monitoring of recruitment efforts, making it possible to ascertain adherence to policy and to obtain measurable outcomes in hiring and retention.
- *Retention of Minority Faculty:* Minority faculty members must be retained and enjoy the same opportunities to advance professionally at UAMS as their majority counterparts.

Staff Recruitment and Retention Plans

INSP collaborations to recruit and retain diverse staff. Although the INSP/COPH collaboration described above is largely focused on faculty and students, the collaboration is also intended to support the recruitment of public health staff. This collaboration has already resulted in the COPH recruiting an INSP MPH graduate to work in the COPH Ventanilla de Salud program in collaboration with the Mexican Consulate in Little Rock. Ventanillas in all 52 Mexican Consulates across the U.S. are supported by the Mexican Ministries of Health and Foreign Affairs with a modest amount of core funding for health education, screening, and referral programs for Hispanic/Latino individuals. These funds must go to support a fiduciary agent for each Ventanilla, which is then charged with implementing the program. The COPH is acknowledged as the only school of public health which serves as the fiduciary agent for a Ventanilla.

Student Recruitment and Retention Plans

College policies. The COPH has approved a policy developed by ARCHD leadership to support and incentivize the recruitment of minority students/trainees as well as faculty. Funding for this initiative is provided by the Chancellor's commitment to return all of the ARCHD indirect costs to ARCHD to enhance racial and ethnic minority recruitment. With representatives from each department, this policy (see the Addendum) structures a college-wide process to use these funds to support the recruitment and funding of 4+1 (BA/MPH or BS/MPH) students from Arkansas' three historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), as well as racial minority doctoral students, post-doctoral fellows and faculty.

ARCHD policies and core unit support. In addition to the ARCHD financial support from the combined ARCHD/COPH policy described above, ARCHD maintains its funded efforts from ARCHD direct costs to further develop the 4+1 (combined BA/MPH or BS/MPH) programs established during the initial funding period in 2007 with Arkansas' three HBCUs: Arkansas Baptist College, Philander Smith College, and the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff. In brief, these programs collaborate with faculty liaisons identified on each campus by college/university leadership with salary support from ARCHD direct costs to encourage promising students, usually in their sophomore years to provisionally apply to the COPH MPH program. If admitted, students are then allowed to begin taking agreed-upon MPH courses identified by the undergraduate institution's leadership that also count towards the student's

undergraduate degree. Agreements with the undergraduate institutions allow between 15 – 18 MPH credit hours to count toward undergraduate degrees. Students can often then graduate with their undergraduate degrees in the typical four years and finish their MPH degrees within one additional year, instead of the normal two years, if they elect to continue pursuing the MPH degree.

These programs are intended to streamline the degree progress of very promising minority undergraduate students and hopefully move some of them either into doctoral programs and eventually faculty/research positions or into strong research staff positions, meeting NIMHD's mission as well as the diversity objectives of the COPH.

Collaboration with INSP to recruit and retain diverse students. As mentioned above in the faculty and staff sections, the collaboration with INSP is intended to also support the recruitment and retention of Hispanic/Latino students. Student exchanges are being planned to establish relationships with and for students on both sides of the border and potentially recruit students for doctoral work both at the COPH and INSP.

Office of Student Affairs initiatives. The Office of Student Affairs (OSA) staff at the COPH is committed to providing information to those who may be interested in pursuing a certificate or advanced graduate degree in public health and can respond to general inquiries. Student retention is addressed college-wide through formal academic advising as well as informal discussions about career paths, coursework, and other student concerns. When students enter the COPH, they often have been introduced to staff within the OSA during their application process, during orientation or upon their arrival on campus, and they are encouraged to seek out the staff for informal guidance at any point in time, providing a "customer-friendly" atmosphere.

Although we specifically target Arkansas' three HBCUs (Arkansas Baptist College, Philander Smith College, and the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff) in our recruitment efforts, many minority students attend Arkansas colleges and universities which are not specifically minority serving. The majority of our students have received their undergraduate degree from these non-minority serving institutions; nonetheless, all of our student recruitment efforts emphasize the importance of addressing health disparities in meeting the College's mission. Our full-time student recruiter, Kristy Caldwell, MPH, is responsible for formal recruitment efforts. Specific initiatives of the OSA, led by Ms. Caldwell, are described below:

- Early in her work at COPH, Ms. Caldwell created a 'Public Health Investigators' (PHI) activity, with funding from CDC and Public Health Laboratories through the Association of Schools of Public Health (ASPH). This activity helps prospective students and undergraduate faculty audiences understand the five sciences of public health through a case study. During recent years, she has modified the case study to make the activities timely (public health response to tornado, H1N1 virus, the oil spill in Mayflower, etc.); the PHI activity is always rated highly in participant evaluations and is in great demand.

Below is a listing of other recruitment activities undertaken by Ms. Caldwell:

- Visits and recruits at all public 4-year colleges in the state of Arkansas, particularly Arkansas' three HBCUs
- Visits and recruits at approximately 75% of 4-year private colleges in Arkansas
- Visits the three HBCUs at least twice annually (once in fall and once in spring semesters)
- UAMS Regional Programs (formerly AHECs) – Ms. Caldwell works individually with each of the pre-health recruiters and presents to students either at UAMS or via Interactive Video Network (IVN) to all of the HBCUs
- Works with Regional Programs and their MASH (Medical Application of Sciences for Health) program – travels to locations throughout Arkansas to present public health information. The Regional Programs work with all 75 counties in Arkansas.
- Attends and sets up an information booth at meetings of:
 - Arkansas Public Health Association
 - American Public Health Association
- Works with the HBCUs during the annual HBCU week to provide information on health disparities and COPH
- Participates in the Community Fair for the UAMS 12th Street Health and Wellness Center, serving a predominantly low-income, racial minority community, to ensure information is available regarding COPH
- Participates in the “UAMS Spring into Health Professions” activity that targets students in 8th – 12th grades
- Attends the Arkansas Minority Health Commission annual Health Summit
- Attends Arkansas Governor’s School annually
- Visits Arkansas School for Math, Science and the Arts (ASMSA) high school
- Attends, distributes program brochures and talks about educational and career opportunities in public health with the Arkansas Medical, Dental, & Pharmaceutical Association annual meeting (a group founded in 1893 by a group of African American medical professionals in Arkansas)
- Collaborates with Dr. Kristen Sterba (UAMS Graduate School Assistant Dean and Student Recruiter) to support the Initiative for Maximizing Student Diversity (IMSD) in graduate student programs
- Provides information about COPH to identified African American Sororities
- Serves on the House of Delegates (past-president), providing an opportunity to inform faculty and staff across UAMS about educational programs and career opportunities’ in public health
- Collaborates with the Student Recruiters in all other UAMS Colleges to ensure that COPH materials are available for events the other Colleges attend or sponsor
- Supports the CDA-led “Bridging the Gap” program (8th & 9th grade students).
- Works with the CDA-led Undergraduate Summer Science Enrichment Program (USSEP)

Additional Diversity Initiatives

The COPH's Diversity Committee recognizes that there are many dimensions of diversity which extend well beyond the focus on racial, ethnic, gender, and regional (urban/rural) diversity touched upon by the above aspects of this overall plan and the College's goals/objectives. Prominent in importance among these other dimensions are, the committee believes, disability and sexual minorities. However, the committee also clearly recognizes that at least some individuals may not wish to divulge personal information regarding disabilities and/or sexual orientation/ gender expression. Thus, their privacy must be respected and confidentiality protected by not collecting information systematically on these dimensions of diversity to determine the proportion of faculty, staff and students who fall into certain categories in the same manner, as is often done with diversity in race, ethnicity, and gender. Nonetheless, the committee recognizes that not having information from people regarding disabilities and sexual orientation/gender expression, limits the College's ability to have information about a variety of issues, such as accommodation services and needs for students with disabilities, physical barriers encountered on campus by people with physical disabilities, and other environmental accommodations within the COPH; accommodation and respect for individuals of all sexual orientations/gender expressions, etc. Thus, the Diversity Committee strongly recommends that efforts be implemented to confidentially collect information from individuals regarding disabilities and sexual orientation/gender expression about issues that may help the College implement practices to be more receptive and accommodating to people with disabilities and individuals of all sexual orientations/gender expressions. The following plan is thus recommended:

- By January 2014, establish two committees of faculty, staff, and students with a significant contingent of individuals who identify as having disabilities or are of a sexual minority, with the charge of developing survey questionnaires which will provide COPH leadership with information that may allow the College to be more receptive and accommodating to diverse populations.
- By March 2014, complete development of the questionnaires
- By June 2014, implement the survey
- By August 2014, begin implementing the policies and procedures, as recommended by the College's Diversity Committee based upon survey results and approved by the College's DEC and Dean, to allow the College to be more receptive and accommodating to diverse populations regarding disabilities and sexual minorities.

Addendum
Guidelines for Use by the ARCHD Minority Recruitment Committee
Approved by ARCHD Executive Committee and COPH Dean's Executive Committee

The goal of the ARCHD Minority Recruitment Committee is to support the use of ARCHD-related indirect funds to recruit and retain under-represented individuals who will make substantial contributions to the College's research and education programs in minority health and health disparities.

For an individual to be eligible to receive salary/stipend support from ARCHD Minority Recruitment funds, the following minimum criteria must be met:

1. The individual must be an applicant for a doctoral program delivered by the faculty of the College of Public Health, an applicant for a postdoctoral position mentored by a COPH faculty member, or an applicant for a faculty position within the COPH.
2. The individual must be a member of an under-represented or disadvantaged group in need of recruitment and retention to diversify the biomedical, behavioral, clinical, and social sciences workforce, as defined by the NIH (cf, http://grants.nih.gov/training/faq_diversity.htm#867).
3. The individual must demonstrate evidence that he/she has (a) interest in and (b) promise for productivity in research that is prioritized by National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NCMHD), specifically research addressing the health of minority populations or research addressing racial and ethnic disparities in health. This evidence should include a CV that highlights the individual's training and experience in a relevant scientific discipline and research activities and a letter from the program director (in the case of predoctoral trainee candidates) or department chair (in the case of postdoctoral or faculty candidates) that addresses the quality of the individual's training, experience and/or potential for productivity in these areas.
4. The sponsoring program or department must demonstrate a commitment to the candidate. This should include (a) a commitment to match ARCHD Minority Recruitment funds in support of the individual's effort (such funds may come from a variety of sources, including research grants, departmental funds, or other college/university funds) and (b) a letter that addresses how the candidate will complement the program or department's existing faculty and research programs, and how the program or department will ensure appropriate support (mentoring and/or other resources) for the candidate's ongoing development and productivity.

Potential ideas for prioritizing candidates in the case of a surplus of candidates:

1. In general, the Committee recommends giving faculty candidates top priority, then postdoctoral candidates, and then predoctoral candidates.
2. Preference will be given to departments with a high need for increased diversity.
3. Preference will be given to departments who demonstrate exceptional need for research expertise in minority health/health disparities issues.

4. Preference will be given to candidates whose proposed research has the potential for a substantial impact on the health of Arkansans.

Annual Review:

1. The ARCHD Minority Recruitment Committee seeks to support the ongoing development and productivity of supported individuals, and thus will review supported individuals' productivity annually. This will include review of the individual's CV and a summary from the individual's program director or department chair of major milestones (progress in doctoral programs, publications and presentations submitted or published, grant applications submitted or funded, courses taught, service activities).
2. The Committee may engage program directors or department chairs in discussions about any concerns regarding supported individuals' productivity and any resources that may be available to enhance productivity (mentoring, workshops, restructuring workload expectations, etc.).
3. In cases of substantial lack of evidence of productivity, the Committee may recommend to the Dean that ARCHD funds to support an individual be reduced.