

**Boston College**  
**William F. Connell School of Nursing**  
**Diversity Advisory Board (DAB) Meeting Notes**

**Date: April 8, 2009 Time: 12p-2:30p**  
**Place: Cushing Hall, Room 411/412**

**Attendees:**

DAB members from outside of Boston College: Linda Battle, Eva Gomez, Rolando Perea, Angelleen Peters-Lewis, Deborah Washington

DAB members from Boston College: Susan Gennaro, Cathy Read, Pat Tabloski, Jean Weyman, Joyce Pulcini, Allyssa Harris, Donna Cullinan, Angela Amar, Michele Mendes, Rita Olivieri, Judi Vessey, Vicky Barges, Kelly Montrym, Joana Maynard, Ariana Chao, Djerica Lamousnery

**Summary:**

Introductions were followed by presentations by C. Read, P. Tabloski, J. Weyman, and A. Amar. The purpose of the presentations was to inform the DAB about current CSON programs and student focus group data. This was followed by an open discussion, where the following themes and ideas emerged:

- Recruitment of undergraduate students is best accomplished with outreach and when the recruiter “looks like” the prospective student. This came up in the context of male nursing students, but was later generalized to students from any minority group.
- Prospective students need to be told the truth about the challenging scientific focus of a nursing education. High school counselors do not always do the best job of this. Students also need to be taught coping skills that will help them to deal with the realities of being from a minority group.
- Special services for mentoring/tutoring are not always taken advantage of by students. We must be aware that “inclusion” can sometimes lead to “exclusion.” As educators, we struggle with the line between effective mentoring and inappropriate enabling. Students may not want to be perceived as needing extra help, and they may experience envy from students who are not receiving the service.
- It is important to be open about the discomforts we have experienced or that might be experienced by a minority stranger coming to Boston College. We need to identify and talk concretely about the stories that surround these discomforts. We should look for information about these problems and talk about how they have been processed.
- Building an inclusive and diverse community is about “readying the environment” and cultivating a process of internal change toward cultural awareness. Becoming culturally aware involves examining one’s own values on the road to “walking the walk” as well as “talking the talk.” This can be fostered by spending time with persons who have actually experienced health disparities, using strategies such as inviting guests to talk with students and faculty, visiting places where health disparities occur, or utilizing media like photography in class projects on health disparities.

- Nurses of color report negative experiences in the workplace and in the educational setting. Examples included a patient assuming that a nurse was a housekeeper, a faculty member assuming that a student would have difficulty in a class, and a new nurse discerning whether a manager's criticism is related to "differences" or lack of job competence. Students need faculty to serve as role models for dealing with these situations. This can be accomplished by open discussion when situations occur, but there is also the need for proactive strategies such as role-playing and storytelling.
- Faculty development programs should ideally be experiential or participative rather than didactic. Ideas for the October 2009 program included the development of vignettes, based on the lived experiences of our colleagues, which illustrate the challenges of the nurse in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. After participation in the program, faculty will have taken another step toward cultural awareness and be better prepared to openly and proactively address issues that new graduate nurses from minority groups may encounter in the workplace.

**Next steps:**

- C. Read will set up a website (Blackboard Vista with guest privileges) where DAB members can engage in a threaded online discussion and post materials that would be relevant to students and faculty. This will also drive the development of the next DAB meeting agenda (Friday October 23, 2009, 12-2:30p) and guide the planning of the Faculty Development Program.
- C. Read will set up a one hour conference call this summer. Participants will include Susan Gennaro, Norma Martinez Rogers, and the five DAB members from outside of Boston College. Participants will be invited to suggest agenda items for the conference call.
- A committee from the Connell School of Nursing will collaborate with our consultant, Norma Martinez Rogers, to plan and implement the Faculty Development Program on October 23, 2009.
- The CSON will host a reception in conjunction with the National Hispanic Nurses Association on the evening of Thursday, October 22, 2009.
- The next DAB meeting will be Friday October 23, 2009, 12-2:30p (following the Faculty Development Program)