



# Diversity Committee

Efforts to Promote and Maintain Diversity at  
Schools of Public Health/Public Health Programs across the Nation  
Did You Know?

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**In this issue, the APHA Student Assembly Diversity Committee members address how their schools define diversity, any steps taken to increase diversity and/or if their school has been successful in such efforts.**

The **University Texas Medical Branch at Galveston (UTMB)** has a Student Diversity Committee which recognizes diversity and promotes cultural events throughout campus. Frank Lemus shared that UTMB also has an Office of Equal Opportunity & Diversity whose mission is to conduct training regarding issues of diversity. One of the unique programs of this office includes its *Building Competency to Manage Diversity* professional development training, which “reinforces why embracing diversity is a good business practice and gives managers the knowledge they need to build powerful and effective teams that thrive on people’s unique qualities”. For more information, visit the Office of Equal Opportunity & Diversity website at <http://www.utmb.edu/diversity/>.

Rondeen Gordan, a member of the **University of Kentucky (UK)** student affairs committee, states that “there is no formal definition of diversity at the UK, but since Kentucky is predominately White, the College travels to recruit students and faculty to increase the diversity of the College.” They offer assistantships and fellowships to those who display academic excellence in their undergraduate career. Gordan, a Lyman T. Johnson Scholarship recipient, was one of many African American students who display academic excellence. This scholarship covers full tuition and also includes a stipend. The UK has made extraordinary efforts to address disability, race/ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation and socioeconomic status through the President’s Commission on Diversity. Most recently, a diversity plan taskforce was developed and are currently in the process of accepting nominations for the 2005 Presidents Award for Diversity. To review the President’s Commission on Diversity goals, charge for the year and a calendar of diversity related events and resources go to <http://www.uky.edu/PCD/>

The **John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health** has a student Diversity Office which works to increase the number of underrepresented minority students in the school. According to Kesha Roberts, the number of applications received by minority students has increased.

Roberts also states that JHU “offers two full scholarships and stipends for every department in the school of public health to underrepresented minority students or economically disadvantaged students admitted to the doctoral programs”. Particularly important is the Student Diversity Internship Program, which exposes underrepresented minority students and other students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds that have completed two or more years of college to an opportunity to work in biomedical or public health research. This internship and its sponsored Diversity Day are just some of multiple efforts made to promote and instill a sense of diversity on the campus. For more information on these exciting programs, visit [http://www.jhsph.edu/Student\\_Affairs/diversity/index.htm](http://www.jhsph.edu/Student_Affairs/diversity/index.htm)!

Kelly Beckwith, who serves as the chair of the Society of Public Health Education (SOPHE) student group, states that the **University of Minnesota** School of Public Health Student Senate is the “main go-to point for all students in the SPH since its officers address diversity within the school”. She also points out that the advisor to the group serves as the Diversity Recruitment Director. The student senate is involved in the production of several diversity themed events, for more information on these events go to [www.gapsa.umn.edu/sphss](http://www.gapsa.umn.edu/sphss).

Michelle Alvarez recommends that students interested in the diversity efforts of the **University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ)** visit one of two websites: [http://sph.umdny.edu/catalog/SPH\\_Cat.pdf](http://sph.umdny.edu/catalog/SPH_Cat.pdf) or <http://www2.umdny.edu/aeeeoweb/index.htm> to find out how the university supports diversity on and off campus. The latter website includes a multicultural calendar and list of policies on religious observances and related accommodations.

Some of the steps that the **University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC)** has taken to increase diversity include initiatives such as the Minority Health Project, the Minority Health Conference led by the Minority Student Caucus and the Faculty Diversity position. To read more about these initiatives, Dara Hall suggests a visit to one of several websites: [www.minority.unc.edu](http://www.minority.unc.edu), [www.echo.unc.edu](http://www.echo.unc.edu) or [www.sph.unc.edu](http://www.sph.unc.edu).

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The **University of Maryland** has a diversity database, which contains campus, local, national, and international academic material relating to diversity. Peggie Smith found that the University of Maryland was the only university in Maryland ranked among the top 20 producers of minority Ph.D degrees for two 5 year rating periods-- 1986-90 and 1990-94. The University has worked to continue this trend with the services provided by the Office of Graduate Recruitment, Retention, and Diversity (OGRRD). The OGRRD provides administrative and fiscal support aimed at identifying, recruiting, retaining, and graduating a diverse graduate student body. The school has several initiatives in place to address diversity and even more President's Commissions, of which include addressing issues on disability, ethnic minorities, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students and women. For a more detailed description of diversity programs, panels and initiatives, visit <http://www.umd.edu/diversity/>

Mario Browne thought it was important to highlight the **University of Pittsburgh's** Nondiscrimination Policy Statement. It reads "the University of Pittsburgh, as an educational institution and as an employee, values equality of opportunity, human dignity, and racial/ethnic and cultural diversity." This statement comes from the University's Office of Affirmative Action, whose goals of commitment are to "achieve diversity in the racial/ethnic and sex composition of its workforce at all levels; enhance opportunities for enrolling, retaining, and graduating students from underemphasized groups; provide accessibility and accommodation to individuals with disabilities; create a campus environment free of bigotry and harassment; and engage minority- and women-owned businesses as vendors or suppliers." For more information on these statements and related activities such as the Summer Undergraduate Research Program for Minority Students, visit <http://www.hr.pitt.edu/mission.htm>.

Enid Castro admits that she had difficulty finding a diversity statement from **Yale University's** SPH. When asked how her school defines diversity, she stated that "I can say with confidence that the SPH defines diversity not only through the racial/ethnic makeup of the entering classes but also through what each student contributes to the class. Yale SPH is dedicated to enrolling students of a wide variety of backgrounds and to students that contribute different experiences". Yale SPH holds an annual diversity day for high school students to students to encourage their interest in public health and medicine and they hold an annual Multicultural Student reception for accepted SPH students. The admissions committee has also sought personal input from students of color to reaffirm the schools commitment to diversity. Although,

there has been strides made to increase the diversity of the racial/ethnic backgrounds of the student population, Castro believes more work must be made to reflect this difference in the faculty population.

Phyllis George, a student at **George Washington University** found that GWU has no formal department for diversity. There are opportunities for undergraduate students, but nothing for graduate students, which is why in past couple of years minority graduates students have worked to develop the Black Graduate Student Association (BGSA). This organization works to promote cultural events and diversity and works in collaboration with the undergraduate Black Student Union. There is also a Hispanic organization and both organizations work to spread information across campus on diversity issues each month. Here is the diversity report provided by the GW School of Public Health. [http://www.gwumc.edu/sphhs/sphhs\\_handbook/reports/diversity.html](http://www.gwumc.edu/sphhs/sphhs_handbook/reports/diversity.html)

For a detailed explanation on the diversity efforts among the 34 accredited Schools of Public Health visit the Association of Schools of Public Health (ASPH) website at [www.asph.org/diversity](http://www.asph.org/diversity).