

Introduction

Nationally, every year, numerous students begin their journey in higher education by enrolling in pre-licensure and advanced nursing programs. Increasingly, health inequities are being addressed by diversifying the nursing workforce to better represent the populations served. Despite slow improvements, the diversity of the nursing workforce falls short as related to the diversity of the United States. Inclusive educational policies, procedures, and teaching practices should be adopted to attract, recruit and retain the next generation of diverse faculty and students.

This poster details initiatives of how the University of Mississippi Medical Center School of Nursing focused on recruiting faculty and students from rural, underrepresented, and otherwise disadvantaged backgrounds as a pathway for success to build a more inclusive population that represents the state of Mississippi.

UMMC SON

The mission of the SON is to develop nursing leaders and improve health within and beyond Mississippi through excellence in education, research, practice, and service. The SON is the largest of seven schools on campus, with 70 full-time faculty, 24 part-time faculty, numerous affiliate faculty, 4 staff nurses, and 32 staff to support faculty and students.



Methods / Process

A multifaceted approach to recruiting underrepresented students through diversity, equity inclusion strategies, faculty affairs initiatives, tailored clinical experiences within the community, and student success initiatives.

Results

- At UMMC SON the majority of faculty describe themselves as White (76%) and 24.2% identify underrepresented backgrounds [**5% higher than national data**].
- Black or African American faculty at the SON **increased by 5.5%** over a five-year period, and the number of male faculty has increased to 12.6%.
- The Black or African American student demographic **increased by 7%**.
- The enrollment of **male students, which currently is at 11.4%, was increased by 2%**.

Table 1. UMMC SON Student Demographics

Demographic	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
American Indian or Alaska Native	-	1%	1%	-	1%
Asian	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Black or African American	16%	16%	19%	22%	23%
Hispanic	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%
Not Reported	3%	2%	4%	1%	1%
White	78%	77%	74%	74%	72%



Table 2. UMMC SON Faculty Demographic

Demographic & Gender	2022 Faculty
American Indian or Alaska Native	-
Asian	2.0%
Black or African American	21.1%
Hispanic	1.1%
White	75.8%
Male	12.6%
Female	87.4%

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

- Implemented Holistic Admissions (ACT Removal)
- Identified barriers to entry (Pre-Req Analysis and GRE elimination)
- Strengthened current and established new partnerships, particularly with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)
- Established an American Association Men in Nursing Local Chapter
- Established a Male Nursing Scholarship
- Implemented a focused marketing Plan
- Provided Safe Zone Training for all Faculty and Staff
- Created SON Diversity Book Club and Library
- Utilized Pipeline feeders (Community outreach)
- Established a partnership with a Mississippi Native American High School to offer annual visits to the SON as a career pipeline



Tailored Clinical Experiences

Clinical experiences were used to transform and expand the nursing workforce by enhancing education and immersing students in interprofessional, team-based care delivery to high-risk populations in rural and medically underserved areas (MUAs).

- Increased diverse enrollment with student success initiatives enabled these students to utilize student-led collaborative learning communities.

This component increases the number and diversity of trained nurses entering the workforce prepared to provide high-quality team-based care. Experiential training tailored to focus on interprofessional team-based care in the underserved regions of Jackson City, Issaquena County, and Sharkey County both of which are in the nearby Mississippi Delta region. A high percentage of residents in these regions report themselves as being Black or African American. Sharkey County is the highest at 74.6% compared to Mississippi at 37.7% and in the U.S. 12.7%.



Conclusion

There is still a lack of diversity among registered nurses within the US. Nursing's student enrollment lack of diversity is the foundational cause of limited diversity in the nursing workforce. A multifaceted approach to recruiting underrepresented students will aid in recruitment efforts. The UMMC SON utilized this approach by increasing student demographic and continuing to analyze and remove structural barriers that lead to inequities in nursing education.