The Case for Diversity and Inclusive Learning

A Diverse Nursing Workforce Contributes to Health Equity

- Health inequities persist in underserved communities where access to care is limited and where social determinants impact health outcomes. These areas tend to be poorer and more diverse than communities that are well-served [1].
- Minority providers currently care for the bulk of minority patients in the United States and play a larger role than non-minority providers in treating patients in poor health [2-5]. Language and cultural barriers limit providers' ability to serve the needs of minority patients in ways that are linguistically and culturally relevant [6].
- Nursing students should possess the background, qualities and skills to provide culturally-effective care and meet the needs of a rapidly diversifying patient population. These skills cannot be detected from grades and test scores alone.

An Inclusive Learning Environment Benefits All Students

- Educating students in environments that value diversity and inclusion produces graduates better prepared to practice in underserved communities and whose understanding of the cultural needs of patients improves patient satisfaction and trust [7]. This is beneficial for *all* students – not just those who are underrepresented.
- While diversity is an important first step in enhancing the educational environment [8], it should not be viewed as the end goal – but rather an important means toward achieving key educational and workforce goals as defined by the school in its mission [9-14].
- When framed in the context of holistic review, diversity is student-specific and multidimensional. Diversity does not exclusively refer to race, ethnicity and gender. Rather, diversity encompasses multiple dimensions. Examples include socioeconomic status, life experiences, sexual orientation, languages spoken, and personal characteristics among others.

Diversity is Essential for Excellence

- Diversity is an essential tool for achieving a school's mission and core educational goals. When well-conceived and intentionally fostered, diversity can act as a catalyst for institutional excellence with the end goals of student success, quality patient care, and improved community health.

Endnotes

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