Cultural Competency and Diversity: Recruiting and Retaining Students of Color to Health Promotion Programming and Peer Education

Shawnté M. Elbert, MA, MCHES, TTS, HWC

Joi Alexander, MA, CHES, RHEd
GOAL
The learner will gain knowledge on why Peer Educators of Color are needed in collegiate health, and strategies to use in recruiting and retaining students.

Learning Objectives

1. List 3 recruiting strategies to increase applicants of color for the Peer Education program.

2. List 3 retaining strategies to retain students of color for the Peer Education program.

3. List the lessons learned (positive and negative) on recruiting and retaining Peer Educators on college campuses.
Shoutouts!!!!

To all the great Advisors, Instructors, Professionals doing the work of ensuring Peer Education is thriving on your campus!
Shawnté’s Background with Peer Education

**East Carolina University**
- Healthy PIRATES
- Department Involvement
  - Course Developer & Instructor
  - Cultural Competency & Diversity
  - Student Engagement & Development
  - Outreach

**UNC Charlotte**
- G.A.M.M.A.
- Wellness Ambassadors
- Department Involvement
  - Course Developer and Instructor
  - Cultural Competency and Diversity
  - Student Engagement and Development
  - Outreach

**IUPUI**
- Health & Wellness Peer Educators
- Department Involvement
  - Course Developer and Instructor
  - Cultural Competency and Diversity
  - Student Engagement and Development
  - Outreach

**Peer Mentors**
- Athletics
- Medical Students
Joi’s Background with Peer Education

- **Florida State University**
  - Department Involvement
    - Cultural Competency and Diversity
    - Student Engagement and Development
    - Outreach

- **University of Florida**
  - Department Involvement
    - Student Development
    - Cultural Competency and Diversity
    - Course developer/Instructor

- **East Carolina University**
  - Healthy Pirate Member
  - Eta Sigma Gamma President
  - Peer Mentor
  - Instructor
Audience Questions

1. What’s your diversity ratio in your Peer Educator group/team?
   a. What components of diversity are you referring to?
2. Are your programs inclusive of your campus population?
3. Does your department have a strategic plan for student development related to diversity and inclusion?

Group Discussions

1. What are your department's’ strategies for recruiting and retaining students of color?
2. During the interview process, what statement does your department make to potential candidates, that displays your inclusivity?
3. Within the interview process, are there any specific questions around diversity and inclusion?
Peer Education in Higher Education

- For 42 years, peer education has played a pivotal role in higher education.
- Peer education has literally become an expectation of any comprehensive campus prevention program.
- Students are effective role models when compared to professional educators, in encouraging their peers to consider, talk authentically, and develop responsible habits, attitudes and lifestyles regarding alcohol and related issues.”

BACCHUS Network Philosophy
Background

• Peer education programs often have recruitment strategies, but lack diversity and cultural competency components.

• Diverse Peer Education groups, require staff to consider socio-cultural, socio-economic and perceptions from students, on why there is a lack of interest in becoming a peer educator.

• Diversity is imperative in Peer Education groups as many minorities represent high risk populations concerning health and well-being.

• Students of Color have various intersecting identities, thus they’re awareness of how their identities (race/ethnicity, age, gender identity, cultural identity, etc.) impacts their student development. This is often seen in their apprehension to join organizations that lack visual diversity.
Why Focus on Recruiting, Retention, Cultural Competency and Diversity

• The number One issue/ question by Advisors and Programmers
  o How do we get more students interested in Peer Education and our offices’ programming?
  o How do we subsequently keep them interested and recruit more students?

• Many discussions, but less development among Best Practices in Higher Education

• There is a deficit in the ability for students to feel comfortable engaging with each other and understand cultural differences among health topics.
Cultural Competency

• In the US it’s estimated that by 2043, nonwhite racial and ethnic populations will compose more than 50% of all Americans. This increased diversity demands that professionals provide culturally competent services for individuals with different sociocultural backgrounds.

• Currently, the health promotion area lacks discipline-specific guidelines that address CC. A peer education program can address this need by taking advantage of the increasingly culturally diverse populations on many campuses, integrating the health promotion knowledge and skills into real-life practice, and facilitating communication between students.

Cultural competence (CC) refers to the ability to understand and integrate differences, to incorporate them into daily care, and to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.
According to Wells (2000), CC includes two phases:

1. The cognitive (*acquisition of knowledge*)- The cognitive phase is characterized by a transition from cultural incompetence (*lack of knowledge*) to cultural knowledge, and then to cultural awareness.

1. The affective (*attitudinal and behavioral changes*)- The affective phase builds on the cognitive phase and includes the development of cultural sensitivity, CC and, finally, cultural proficiency. The affective phase "requires actual experience working with diverse groups" (Wells, 2000, p. 193).

**GUIDED QUESTIONS**

Who are the populations whose health and learning we are supporting?

- Demographics
- Cultural, social, economic, political characteristics
- Best and informed practices
Program Structures

• Peer Education
  • Academic Course
  • Formal Program (Paid or Unpaid)
  • Informal Program (Paid or Unpaid)
  • Registered Student Organization
  • Student Affairs Department
  • Internship/Practicum

• Programming
  • Possess and ability to sense, monitor and react to change
  • Frequently and carefully evaluated
  • Exhibits awareness of and responsiveness to the diversity of learning styles among students and their focus on visual learning
Best and Informed Practices

- Ability to teach and engage students’ diverse learning styles
- Displays commitment to inclusive learning
- Possesses flexibility
- Focuses on effective marketing for maximum visibility
- Does not recruit during RUSH/Orientation/etc.
- Target individuals not groups
- Application and interviews to weed out
- Keep content gender neutral
- Recruit from a wide variety of sources-students
- Start in other roles within health promotion departments
Best and Informed Practices

- Ongoing recruitment at every opportunity especially relevant majors, organizations, high-profile groups
- Recruitment “Challenges” for current Peer Educators
- Desire and ability to sense, monitor and react to change
- Frequently and carefully evaluated (qualitative and quantitative)
- Skilled in matching talents, skills, and preparation to the most appropriate tasks, activities, and programs
- Ability to recruit students with specific talents that match the program’s needs
- Recruitment incorporates representation of the campus’ diversity of students and marketing tactics (*social media, website, handout, etc.*)
Common Stereotypes

Programming
1. Our programs are diverse enough, we have catchy titles.
2. Bad location
3. Not interested in topic

Peer Education
1. One is enough...
2. “They” don’t like health promotion.
3. I thought we were diverse enough
4. What are the stereotypes about your peer program?
   a. Are they true?

What are the stereotypes about your programming/peer education groups?

Are they true?
Common Barriers

**Peer Education**

- Interview bias
- Large numbers = Success
- Your strongest students leave/graduate.
- Recruitment competition
- Does your Peer Education program look homogenous?
- Why aren’t they coming to the table?
- What is causing them to leave the table?
- Lack of culturally competent programming and training.
- Peer Educators are overly involved
- To recruit diverse students:
  - a. staff have to be aware of what environmental factors
  - b. Staff have to be aware of the time, energy and resources needed to invest in students
Common Barriers

Programming

- Out of the Box programming
- “We’ve ALWAYS done it this way programming
- Large numbers = Success
- Does your programming look homogenous?
- Why aren’t they attending?
- Lack of culturally competent programming and training.
- “We got it”
- The strongest/most talented student leaves/graduates
- Duplication of programming efforts
Common Recruitment Strategies

**Programming**
- Partner with other student orgs/departments
- Social Media (Facebook, IG, Twitter, Snapchat, etc.)
- Word of mouth
- Flyer distribution
  - Residence Halls
  - Union
  - Televisions
  - Listservs

**Peer Education Process**
- Holding a kickoff event and having a presence at campus-wide events
- Incentivize your group to potential peer educators with a reward system
- Application posted on department’s website
- HR posting
- Social Media
- Specific department postings/listservs
- Internal
- Gathering information on cultural customs
Common Retention Strategies

**Programming**
- Partner with other student orgs/departments
- Students should feel connected in interactions with departmental students and staff (Engaging)
- Enjoyable environment that’s fun, relaxed, welcoming and inclusive

**Peer Education Process**
- Continuously show that “We Care” (By their Appreciation Language)
- Full Time staff weekly meetings
- Mentorship
- Students working with ALL departmental staff
- Addressing issues and concerns quickly
- Social Events
- Continuous Recognition and Celebrations
- Mid-term and End-of-Year Evaluations
- Exit Interviews
- Continuing education
- Attending BACCHUS General Assembly and Regional Meetings
- “Get to Know You Form”
Our Successes

RECRUITMENT
- Recruiting in academic and professional settings
- Reaching out to professionals of color to share job opportunities with their networks
- Take a personal approach to recruitment, commit to training hiring personnel on best practices on holistic searches

RETAINING
- Create or participate in a mentoring program,
- Upward mobility,
- Opportunities for professional development and ongoing verbal support,
- Build a community of diverse students, not a string of individual recruits;
- Provide a diverse set of role models and mentors.
Why is this important for Peer Education?

Why?

Peer Educator
Information
Understanding
Perception
Student
Reflection

Questions for you to reflect on as a Professional:

- What do you think are some barriers and challenges that students of color would experience to not be interested in attending your programs/events or becoming a Peer Educator?
- What are some challenges that you might experience when working with students of color in College Health Promotion?
- What have been your experiences when working with students of color in College Health Promotion?
- What can you do to advocate for additional students of color in your programs/events/or in becoming a Peer Educator?
What Can YOU Do? What’s Next?

Best or Informed Practices for as a Professional:

• Partner with other Peer Education/Leader programs
• Don’t let the conversation stop here.
  • Make an action item, of what you can realistically accomplish this summer, fall, and spring semester
• Don’t be afraid to speak up
  • If you look around the room and everyone looks similar, identify gaps and methods to problem solve
• Finding a support network, on and off campus.
• Develop allies on campus (student groups, departments, etc.)
• Find a mentor, to assist you in your professional endeavors.
• Self-Care
ANY QUESTIONS?

COMMENTS/FEEDBACK?

IDEAS?
References

- Improving Female Recruitment, Participation, and Retention Among Peer Educators in the Geração BIZ Program in Mozambique – [LINK](#)
- The BACCHUS Network: Peer Educator Recruitment Strategies - [LINK](#)
Cultural Competency and Diversity:
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Shawnté M. Elbert, MA, MCHES, TTS, HWC
smelbert@iupui.edu

Joi Alexander, MA, CHES, TTS
jdalexander@fsu.edu