

BEYOND THE PREREQUISITES: STRATEGIES TO INCREASE CULTURAL COMPETENCY IN PRE-HEALTH STUDENTS

AN INTERACTIVE PRESENTATION

Caroline Bentley, University of Central Oklahoma
Nicole Warehime, University of Central Oklahoma
Lauren Gibson, University of Central Oklahoma
Mina Iyaye, University of Central Oklahoma
Folasade Olowe, University of Central Oklahoma

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Diversity, inclusion, and cultural competency are the topics of curriculum initiatives at many university campuses and workplace environments in the U.S., including health care. Cultural competency in medical education is defined as the “knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary for care providers to effectively interact with culturally and ethnically diverse patient populations.”¹ Some studies have examined cultural competency in the medical curriculum, but few can be found that are focused on cultural competency at the undergraduate level, especially with pre-health students.^{1, 2, 3} Consequently, the goal of this project is to determine the level of cultural competency among University of Central Oklahoma (UCO) biology students via a competency assessment given to sophomores and seniors each semester. In addition, resources are being compiled that list UCO courses, activities, organizations, as well as volunteer opportunities that can help promote cultural competency. Workshops are also being held on the topics of diversity, gender bias, and inclusivity. Lastly, information is being compiled from regional medical programs on the topic of how the professional schools assess cultural competency in their applicants and promote it in their current student population. At this time, 278 surveys have been collected which included 183 sophomore and 95 senior students. Based on the results from that group, there was no difference in self-perceived cultural competency between the two populations. However, 32% of the sophomore students and 45% of the senior students indicated a desire to increase their cultural competency. The goal of this project to help pre-health students evaluate and develop their own cultural competency at the undergraduate level as they prepare for professional school and eventually working in the health professions field.

SELECT REFERENCES

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For further information: contact the lead presenter:
Caroline Bentley
Associate Professor of Biology and Health Professions Advisor
University of Central Oklahoma
100 N. University Drive
Edmond, OK 73034
Phone: (405)975-5733
Email: cbentley3@uco.edu