New Hampshire
Health & Equity Partnership
www.equitynh.org

Strategies for Recruiting and Retaining Diverse Students:
A Guide for Administrators in Higher Education

New Hampshire is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse, with higher concentrations of diversity in our youth population.[1] Our colleges and universities must prepare for these changes: In the 2011 academic year, 10.9% of K-12 students statewide were racial or ethnic minorities, with Manchester's minority student population at 32.1% and Nashua's at 31.3%.[2] While the state ranks 8th in the nation for adults age 25 and over who have a Bachelor's degree or more,[3] in 2010 only 8.2% of the state's college population in 2010 was from a minority background.[4] Without strategies to increase the recruitment and retention of diverse students, minorities will quickly become increasingly underrepresented in higher education. Education reduces poverty and fosters prosperity. New Hampshire's future depends on how educated our entire population is, and empirical evidence now demonstrates the educational benefits of diverse learning environments.[5]

In recent years, New Hampshire's institutions of higher learning partnered in the Enhancing Inclusive Excellence in New Hampshire Higher Education Learning Communities initiative[6] to foster diversity, equity, and civic preparedness. The "Inclusive Excellence" initiative focuses on preparing New Hampshire's students to meet society's needs in the face of changing demographics, spearheaded by statewide higher education associations, Campus Compact for New Hampshire (CCNH), the New Hampshire College & University Council (NHCUC), and the University of New Hampshire (UNH). While the value of diversity is now increasingly recognized, assuring the success of diverse students requires purposeful policies and practices.

This issue brief outlines strategies to aid New Hampshire higher learning administrators to attract, retain, and support diverse students to graduate and succeed. Strategies are organized into 10 key areas: 1) Pre-College Recruitment; 2) College Recruitment; 3) Retention/Persistence; 4) Faculty Development; 5) Academic Achievement; 6) Campus Climate; 7) Diversity Cognizance; 8) Residential Life; 9) Career and Workforce Development; and 10) Financial Aid. The table on page 2 summarizes the key areas and accompanying strategies. The full document includes descriptions of the strategies, barriers addressed by each of the strategies, and citations to the appropriate reference. Implementing such strategies will result in benefits to New Hampshire residents, academic institutions, and the state's workforce as more students have the opportunity to achieve their full potential and contribute to society.

HPOP
Health Profession
Opportunity Project

[1] "New Hampshire Demographic Trends in the Twenty-First Century", Kenneth M. Johnson, The Carsey Institute, University of New Hampshire, May 2012. Available at www.carseyinstitute.unh.edu
[2] http://nces.ed.gov/. Includes students in public district schools, public academies, and charter schools.
[3] http://www.census.gov/statab/ranks/rank19.html
[4] http://www.postsecondary.org/
[5] Williams, DA, Berger, JB, McClenden, S, 2005. *Toward a Model of Inclusive Excellence and Change in Postsecondary Institutions,* Association of American Colleges and Universities. http://www.aacu.org/inclusive_excellence/documents/williams_et_al.pdf
[6] http://www.nhil.org/

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Area		Strategy
1.	Pre-College Recruitment	1. Support early intervention programs 2. Provide counseling or training focused on empowerment / self-efficacy 3. Implement academic preparation programs 4. Advise students on high school course selection
2.	College Recruitment	1. Encourage high school navigation assistance 2. Build strategic partnerships 3. Increase visibility of college and career opportunities 4. Translate brochures and informational materials 5. Create appropriate marketing materials 6. Utilize alternative assessment and admission criteria 7. Encourage pre-college orientation programs or bridge programs 8. Employ targeted, innovative recruitment from non-traditional sources 9. Support early intervention and pipeline programs 10. Make Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) policies and commitment to diversity explicit 11. Extend on-campus orientations
3.	Retention / Persistence	1. Offer mentoring programs for students from underrepresented groups 2. Execute articulation agreements to guarantee credit transfer 3. Offer counseling to foster student self-efficacy 4. Offer culturally-appropriate mentorship 5. Encourage social support networks
4.	Faculty Development	1. Transform curriculum 2. Foster classroom diversity 3. Ensure multicultural pedagogy 4. Integrate multicultural content into courses 5. Select diverse course materials 6. Provide comparative culture coursework 7. Employ a pedagogy that is open to diverse students
5.	Academic Achievement	1. Recruit and retain a more diverse faculty 2. Promote diverse, inclusive pedagogy 3. Provide education for faculty about diversity, power, and privilege 4. Examine courses of study that historically exclude minority students 5. Incorporate diversity / inclusiveness indicators in educational quality standards 6. Offer study skills seminars to support students from underrepresented groups 7. Create learning communities targeted at students from underrepresented groups 8. Create tutoring programs geared toward students from underrepresented groups
6.	Campus Climate	1. Collect demographic information about student, faculty, and staff populations 2. Conduct needs assessment and/or analyze current situation 3. Create service learning opportunities for students from underrepresented groups 4. Publicize the institution's commitment to strategic diversity planning 5. Create organizational accountability to strategic diversity goals 6. Hire and maintain proportional representation of minority faculty, staff, and leadership 7. Identify and publicize the benefits of diversity for the institution 8. Develop a diversity plan 9. Create systems of accountability related to strategic diversity efforts 10. Develop and maintain advisory structures on issues of diversity
7.	Diversity Cognizance	1. Provide multi-cultural coursework 2. Provide cross-cultural interaction opportunities
8.	Residential Life	1. Encourage Greek life to delay "rush" periods beyond first semester 2. Integrate social activities for residential and commuting students 3. Offer special living and learning options for students from underrepresented groups 4. Integrate student organizations
9.	Career and Workforce Development	1. Facilitate pre-professional seminars for students from underrepresented groups 2. Hire diverse career counseling staff to develop culturally-appropriate programming 3. Establish articulation agreements and career ladders 4. Offer professional development 5. Provide undergraduate research opportunities
10.	Financial Aid	1. Offer financial aid to attract students from underrepresented groups 2. Provide continued financial aid 3. Encourage academic advancement with continued financial aid/work-study

Area 1: Pre-College Recruitment

1. Support early intervention programs
Description

Reach out to students in middle and secondary school. Support and strengthen the education of minority students at K-12 levels.

Barrier Addressed

Academic Under-Preparedness.[3, 4]

2. Provide counseling or training focused on empowerment and self-efficacy
Description

As a strategy for high school students, self-efficacy is mediated by a person's beliefs or expectations about his/her capacity to accomplish certain tasks successfully or demonstrate certain behaviors.

Barrier Addressed

Discrimination, Academic Under-Preparedness and placement in general tracks that do not foster self-efficacy.[3]

3. Implement academic preparation programs
Description

Prepare students academically early on (high school) to succeed at the college level.

Barrier Addressed

Academic Under-Preparedness.[3, 4]

4. Advise students on high school course selection
Description

Strategic course selection at the high school level can encourage students to pursue higher education in certain areas and prepares them academically for success. Individual counseling in this area can encourage students to register for courses beyond general tracks.

Barrier Addressed

Discrimination, Academic Under-Preparedness and placement in general tracks that do not foster self-efficacy.[4]

Area 2: College Recruitment

1. Encourage high school navigation assistance
Description

Increase students' awareness of the mechanics of preparing for, and applying for college early on (high school).

Barrier Addressed

Lack of knowledge of steps needed to get into college, no precedent of college in family.[3]

2. Build strategic partnerships
Description

School-college partnerships, including those with community-based organizations can work together to prepare students for college and increase awareness of health professions as potential careers.

Barrier Addressed

Silos in education/workforce systems, lack of awareness of professional opportunities.[4]

3. Increase visibility of college and career opportunities
Description

Advertise in minority-oriented media, disseminate materials widely and in many languages.

Barrier Addressed

Lack of knowledge of opportunities.[3]

4. Translate brochures and informational materials

Description

Offer information in top languages in region and in languages of target communities.

Barrier Addressed

Marketing materials, including employment notices offered in a range of languages will increase visibility of your organization in diverse communities. By involving community members in this process, you can ensure that you are providing culturally relevant messages and information.[3, 23, 24]

5. Create appropriate marketing materials

Description

Depict minority individuals as successful graduates and professionals in marketing materials.

Barrier Addressed

Not being able to visualize success due to a lack of role models.[3, 24]

6. Utilize alternative assessment and admission criteria

Description

Use non-cognitive variables (learned outside the traditional academic setting) such as positive self-concept, realistic self-appraisal, ability to deal with racism, leadership experience, community service, etc. to evaluate minority students' ability to succeed in college.

Barrier Addressed

Traditional admissions tests that measure cognitive variables are inadequate indicators of minority student performance.[3, 4]

7. Encourage pre-college orientation programs or bridge programs

Description

Offer students an orientation to the college experience prior to their application (early high school).

Barrier Addressed

Seeing limited options for future, no precedent of college in family.[3, 4]

8. Employ targeted, innovative recruitment from non-traditional sources

Description

Use minority, community, professional and social groups or organizations, churches and other religious groups, minority fraternities and sororities, minority alumni, minority mailing lists, paraprofessional pools, and potential transfer students from community, junior and technical colleges.

Barrier Addressed

Recruitment strategies that work for white students do not always reach minorities.[4]

9. Support early intervention and pipeline programs

Description

Partner with early intervention and pipeline programs that target students in middle and secondary school. Support and strengthen the education of diverse K-12 students and increase their knowledge of healthcare at an early age. Support post-secondary programs that guide students to academic excellence and provide pre-professional exposure to health professions.

Barrier Addressed

These programs boost the number of racial and ethnic minorities entering the pipeline of well-educated future healthcare workers. At present, racial and ethnic minorities on average receive lower quality education, score lower on tests, and are less likely to graduate from High School.[1, 4,]

10. Make Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) policies and commitment to diversity explicit

Description

Include EEO language in application materials and discuss the school's commitment to developing a diverse student body with all applicants, as part of the standard interview process.

Barrier Addressed

When you make an explicit commitment in writing, you demonstrate that workforce diversity is a priority for your organization, which fosters an inclusive environment.[7, 8]

11. Extend on-campus orientations

Description

Ease adjustment to college, offer orientations to resources on campus, create teams, and encourage collaborative and problem-based learning.

Barrier Addressed

High dropout rate among minority students.[2, 3, 4, 5]

Area 3: Retention / Persistence

1. Offer mentoring programs for students from underrepresented groups

Description

Strong faculty-student relationships and mentoring programs increase retention and graduation.

Barrier Addressed

Social isolation, hostile environment.[2, 3, 4, 5]

2. Execute articulation agreements to guarantee credit transfer

Description

Establish articulation agreements between 2-year colleges, paraprofessional associations, corporations, and 4-year universities.

Barrier Addressed

Minorities have historically been overrepresented in 2-yr schools and paraprofessional jobs compared to 4-yr universities and professional occupations. New agreements are required to encourage academic advancement.[3]

3. Offer counseling to foster student self-efficacy

Description

Counseling opportunities can foster self-efficacy, which is mediated by a person's beliefs or expectations about his/her capacity to accomplish certain tasks successfully or demonstrate certain behaviors.

Barrier Addressed

Due to conscious or subconscious prejudice, some individuals may think minority professionals are less capable. Discrimination can cause internalized self-doubt, powerlessness, or self-invalidation. Increased self-efficacy contributes to greater teamwork and collective potential.[10, 24]

4. Offer culturally-appropriate mentorship

Description

Identify supervisors or mentors committed to working with minority professionals to maintain strong relationships, listen to challenges, problem-solve, and foster career advancement.

Barrier Addressed

Racially hostile or unsupportive work environments will cause diverse employees to seek out support elsewhere. Identifying a positive supervisor or mentor within the organization strengthens relationships at work and encourages continuous development of your workforce.[24, 25]

5. Encourage social support networks

Description

Provide social and cultural activities and organizations that reduce social isolation, encourage peer groups and peer support, promote social integration, promote self-pride and confidence, and encourage networks.

Barrier Addressed

Social isolation, hostile environment, lack of diversity on campus compared to home community, culture shock.[3, 4]

Area 4: Faculty Development

1. Transform Curriculum

Description

Curriculum transformation expands the traditional framework to include other voices that have been silenced and marginalized in scholarship and theory as well as pedagogies, activities and questions that are used to help students understand and investigate assumptions, perspectives, and biases that influence the way in which knowledge is constructed.

Barrier Addressed

Who faculty is and what they choose to incorporate into curriculum plays an important role in the knowledge that gets conveyed. Faculty with a monocultural life experience risk conveying limited worldview in curriculum offerings.[31, 32, 33, 34]

2. Foster classroom diversity

Description

An important form of diversity experience includes learning about diverse people (content knowledge) and gaining experience with diverse peers in the classroom, or *classroom diversity.*

Barrier Addressed

Multi-cultural events on campus are important but are insufficient for transforming college campuses for a sustained, systematic and inclusive learning experience that prepares students for responsible and rewarding citizenship in multi-cultural society.[28]

3. Ensure multicultural pedagogy

Description

Offering multicultural educational opportunities to current faculty and as a pre-service to teaching enhances the likelihood of raising diversity consciousness and life experience.

Barrier Addressed

Traditional schooling has not prepared faculty to respond to diversity challenges in higher education.[34, 35, 36]

4. Integrate multicultural content into courses

Description

A deliberate effort to integrate content about diverse groups throughout a course.

Barrier Addressed

Balances monocultural content to include other worldviews and content from underrepresented groups in scholarship and theory. [32, 34]

5. Select diverse course materials

Description

Knowledge is a social construction and leads educators and students to conduct critical thinking about issues from multiple perspectives. Most importantly is the discussion of biases omissions or distortions. Uses texts and materials that provide divergent perspectives.

Barrier Addressed

Balances monocultural perspective to include other worldviews and content underrepresented in scholarship and theory.[3]

6. Provide comparative culture coursework

Description

Paradigms, theories, and concepts are studied to explore the beliefs, values, and biases cue to cultural socializations and social positions.

Barrier Addressed

Balances monocultural perspective to include other worldviews and content underrepresented in scholarship and theory.[32]

7. Employ a pedagogy that is open to diverse students

Description

Teaching strategies, methods of delivering knowledge, interaction styles, communication and assessment activities employed in the process of teaching and learning.

Barrier Addressed

Personal learning styles present barriers to knowledge attainment if instructional techniques are inflexible.[32]

Area 5: Academic Achievement

1. Recruit and retain a more diverse faculty

Description

Entrenched academic culture questions the place of faculty of color in the academy, devalues their scholarly work, and sets up structural barriers to tenure and promotion.

Barrier Addressed

Studies have shown that minority students are attracted and identify with diverse faculty bodies.[30]

2. Promote diverse, inclusive pedagogy

Description

Use of a wide range of instructional techniques that support learning for all students taking into consideration culture and learning styles.

Barrier Addressed

Instructional needs to mesh with students' culture and learning style.[4]

3. Provide education for faculty about diversity, power, and privilege

Description

Provide ongoing, mandatory education to faculty encouraging them to better understand the effects of power and privilege in context of primarily white institutions (PWIs) of higher education. Faculty should be able to incorporate new pedagogical strategies and techniques based on these modules.

Barrier Addressed

Discrimination or ignorance of faculty.[4]

4. Examine courses of study that historically exclude minority students

Description

Review and revise current practices that exclude students from certain courses of study upon entrance in college (Ex: "gatekeeper" courses that are extremely competitive and selective).

Barrier Addressed

Exclusivity of certain courses of study, institutional racism.[4]

5. Incorporate diversity / inclusiveness indicators in educational quality standards

Description

Integrate and link diversity initiatives with the concept of quality education rather than addressing these issues separately (inclusive excellence).

Barrier Addressed

Increases the incentive and commitment to further study.[2]

6. Offer study skills seminars to support students from underrepresented groups

Description

Assist students in identifying skills they will need to develop in order to succeed. These study skills seminars should be introduced in initial orientations to the university/college and specific academic schools and departments.

Barrier Addressed

High dropout rate among minority students.[2]

7. Create learning communities targeted at students from underrepresented groups

Description

Intentionally link courses for students, weed out courses with high failure rates, encourage faculty to integrate their curriculum within the learning community.

Barrier Addressed

High drop-out rate among minority students - lack of social capital.[2]

8. Create tutoring programs geared toward students from underrepresented groups

Description

Individualized academic tutoring that is easily available and affordable can increase retention.

Barrier Addressed

Social isolation, academic under-preparedness.[4]

Area 6: Campus Climate

1. Collect demographic information about student, faculty, and staff populations

Description

Collect data about the current and projected demographics of the community you serve, and identify trends to plan for the future.

Barrier Addressed

The United States is becoming increasingly diverse, and minorities are underrepresented in many health professions. A workforce reflective of the patient population reduces health disparities.[13, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25]

2. Conduct needs assessment and/or analyze current situation

Description

Assess the status and effectiveness of current strategies for inclusion.

Barrier Addressed

Racially hostile or unsupportive climate.[4]

3. Create service-learning opportunities for students from underrepresented groups

Description

Provide supervised experiential education opportunities with opportunities for structured reflection. Has shown to positively impact academic and civic outcomes.

Barrier Addressed

Lack of guidance on next steps.[2]

4. Publicize the institution's commitment to strategic diversity planning

Description

Make all members of the college/university community equally aware of the institution's strategic diversity planning efforts.

Barrier Addressed

Leadership must intentionally create equitable systems and transparent policies so that unequal opportunities for advancement do not persist.[16, 17]

5. Create organizational accountability to strategic diversity goals

Description

A system that monitors, and includes rewards and penalties for, the extent to which departments/divisions have implemented best practices

Barrier Addressed

Commitment at some levels but no follow-through on behalf of organization.[1, 2, 4]

6. Hire and maintain proportional representation of minority faculty, staff, and leadership

Description

Employment of proportionate number of minorities across all levels of organization. Presence of minorities in leadership positions to serve as role models.

Barrier Addressed

Lack of contact with positive role models.[1, 2, 3, 4]

7. Identify and publicize the benefits of diversity for the institution

Description

Frame diversity as an asset rather than a burden to your institution and teach people about the benefits to the college or university.

Barrier Addressed

A diverse student body results in improved access to care, patient satisfaction, patient-provider communication, and competition.[6, 10, 21]

8. Develop a diversity plan

Description

Based on the results of the diversity needs assessment, create a Diversity Plan addressing goals, policies, practices, strategies, management accountability and oversight, expected outcomes, and evaluation. Link diversity to your organization's mission; incorporate it into your overall strategic plan.

Barrier Addressed

A Diversity Plan acts as a roadmap for organizations to actively improve policies and practices regarding diversity, and outlines the steps your organization is taking to comply with federal mandates and guidelines. A systems change approach (rather than an isolated diversity program) is necessary to dismantle racism and discrimination present in policies, procedures and practices.[8, 15, 23]

9. Create systems of accountability related to strategic diversity efforts

Description

Create a system that includes ongoing monitoring or auditing, and assigns rewards and penalties based on the extent to which departments/divisions have implemented best practices.

Rationale

Commitment to change requires consistent implementation throughout the different and departments/divisions. Rewards and penalties can motivate members of your organization to comply with internal changes.[4, 5, 8, 15, 18]

10. Develop and maintain advisory structures on issues of diversity

Rationale

Establishment of a diversity committee and/or staff member to implement strategy. Commitment of resources and buy-in towards goals.

Barrier Addressed

Racially hostile or unsupportive climate.[1]

Area 7: Diversity Cognizance

1. Provide multi-cultural coursework

Description

College-aged minorities often feel a responsibility to teach their White counterparts about racial inequality and the burdens society places on minorities.

Barrier Addressed

Native English speakers and able-bodied students should have the opportunity to engage diversity through coursework and structured discussion led by professors, rather than placing the burden of education on those minorities themselves. Classroom education presents an environment where students' preconceived notions can be disrupted while maintaining the abstract focus on a lesson plan, rather than opening the door to personal attacks on beliefs.[27]

2. Provide cross-cultural interaction opportunities

Description

Many whites students become aware of their racial identity through initial interactions with people of color, leading to understanding not only the realities of minorities but their own racial backgrounds as well.

Barrier Addressed

White students who have no opportunity to interact with people of color may have no sense of how racial distinction changes people's daily lives. Likewise, many students have few opportunities to develop prolonged relationships with people of color, prior to enrolling in college.[27]

Area 8: Residential Life

1. Encourage Greek life to delay "rush" periods beyond first semester

Description

Historically white Greek fraternities and sororities create homogenous environments for social interaction and living facilities. Moreover, students are ""rushed"" earlier in their academic careers, often reducing the likelihood that those Greek students will interact with students with diverse cultural backgrounds."

Barrier Addressed

Homogeneous residential life. [26]

2. Integrate social activities for residential and commuting students

Description

Rather than commuter-specific student lounges, labs, or activity centers, institutions should reform residential programs to allow for participation of commuters. Discounted meal plans could be offered to commuters to encourage them to eat their meals in a residential dining facilities; a portion of commuters' student activities fees could be directed toward residential programming so that all events are open to commuters as well as residents.

Barrier Addressed

Segregating residential and commuting students.[26]

3. Offer special living and learning options for students from underrepresented groups

Description

Having roommates and floor-mates of similar cultural, ethnic, and/or economic backgrounds and academic excellence can dramatically improve students' social integration and academic performance. Despite the special living option, minority students' housing should not be segregated from other student housing buildings.

Barrier Addressed

Social/cultural isolation, residential comfort, peer support, cross-cultural residential conflicts. [27]

4. Integrate student organizations

Rationale

Student organizations can encourage a handful of similarly-minded students to spend vast amounts of time together, creating the same situations found in sororities and fraternities. Administrators should encourage the development of these organizations while establishing norms for cross-culture cooperation and learning. Activity funds can be earmarked for collaborative events or projects undertaken by organizations partnering with ethnic student organizations.

Rationale

Cultural, social segregation / self-segregation; Perceived or confirmed lack of acceptance.[26]

Area 9: Career and Workforce Development

1. Facilitate pre-professional seminars for students from underrepresented groups

Description

Offer content specific seminars that link academic work to future professions to encourage motivation and assist students in identifying the courses they will need to take to succeed in that field.

Barrier Addressed

High dropout rate among minority students.[2]

2. Hire diverse career counseling staff to develop culturally appropriate programming

Description

Provide advisors committed to working with minority students who follow up and maintain strong relationships throughout educational experience, encourage students to link current study to career goals.

Barrier Addressed

Minorities nervous to seek out support, Racially hostile or unsupportive school/work environments.[3, 4]

3. Establish articulation agreements and career ladders

Description

Establish articulation agreements between 2-yr colleges, paraprofessional associations, business associations, employers, and 4-yr universities to clarify opportunities for advancement.

Barrier Addressed

Minorities have historically been overrepresented in 2-yr schools and paraprofessional jobs compared to 4-yr universities and professional occupations. New agreements are required to encourage advancement and establish career ladders.[6, 13, 24]

4. Offer professional development

Description

Provide ongoing, mandatory professional development to staff. Staff is more likely to implement new diversity strategies if offered ongoing support.

Barrier Addressed

Discriminatory systems take time to change.[10, 18]

5. Provide undergraduate research opportunities

Description

Provide research opportunities for undergraduates with faculty mentoring. Encourage real life applications. Contributes to the number of students who pursue graduate studies.

Barrier Addressed

No connection between study and real world applications.[2, 4]

Area 10: Financial Aid

1. Offer financial aid to attract students from underrepresented groups

Description

Provide grants, scholarships, and loans. Loans are sometimes a deterrent for minority students who do not want to incur large debts.

Barrier Addressed

Financial difficulties of minority students.[3, 4]

2. Provide continued financial aid

Description

Continued financial aid throughout educational program, including work-study, allows students to focus on their education and reduce financial stress

Barrier Addressed

Need for students to work while in school. [3, 4, 5]

3. Encourage academic advancement with continued financial aid / work-study

Description

Continued financial aid for higher levels of education and training, including work-study, allows students to focus on advancing their career while reducing financial stress.

Barrier Addressed

Many workers aspire to advance, but few can afford to study full-time without working. You can support career advancement and retain workers by offering tuition reimbursement or work-study. [4, 5, 14]

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