

**Effort to Respond to the Need for a More Diverse
Student Body and Work Force in the Allied Health Professions
University of Cincinnati, College of Allied Health Sciences**

*A Case Study Developed for the Community-Engaged Scholarship for Health Collaborative
February 2006*

1. Summary of the project.

- The College of Allied Health Sciences is relatively new. It was founded in 1998 and composed of four departments: Analytical and Diagnostic Sciences (Clinical Laboratory Sciences and Advanced Medical Imaging Technology), Communication Sciences and disorders (Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology), the Department of Nutritional Science (Dietetics), and the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences (Physical Therapy Assisting and Health Sciences).
- While the College has many strengths, including the quality of the faculty and courses, it was clear that the recruitment of minority and disadvantaged students needed to become a significant focus of the College. Consequently, a grant proposal was written to the Department of Health and Human Services to help support the College's efforts to prepare students who traditionally have been under-represented in the allied health professions. The goal of the program was to provide disadvantaged students with opportunities to develop and achieve personal and career goals relating to the Allied Health Professions.
- More specifically,
 - i. Market the allied health professions to disadvantaged students
 - ii. Provide support for successful entry into an allied health program
 - iii. Support smooth articulation through the pre-professional and professional academic programs leading to graduation and related employment
- The Cincinnati metropolitan area is significantly poorer and less diverse than the surrounding county. More than a third of the city (38%) is African American, with another third of Appalachian descent. Cincinnati has the 12th highest poverty level among the nation's 75 largest cities, higher than Washington, D.C., New York, Los Angeles or Baltimore, and the 9th lowest median household income. In the city of Cincinnati, only 16% of residents over the age of 25 have a four year degree or higher. The metropolitan area of Hamilton County, which includes the city of Cincinnati, is designated as a Health Professions Shortage Area.

2. Brief description of work completed at the point funding was sought.

- In the fall of 2002, the College developed a relationship with Woodward Technical and Career High School (WTCH). This is an inner-city high school dedicated to preparing students for careers in allied health. The school student population is 95% African-American with 58% economically disadvantaged and 28% of the school population has identified special needs.
- In the fall of 2003, the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders installed a sound proof audiological hearing testing booth and hearing testing

equipment within the WTCH. This equipment allowed for the establishment of an on-site clinic providing opportunities for high school students, community college students and college students. In addition, the clinic provides a valuable opportunity for students to develop clinical cultural competency skills.

- Selected students and faculty provided tutoring for high school students and selected faculty were available as guest lecturers when requested.
- A small grant was awarded from the University to help recruit and retain minority students.

3. Description of the project personnel including discipline and experience.

- The project personnel included faculty from each of the departments / programs in the College.

4. How did you identify potential sources of funding? / What funder did you select and why?

- Department of Health and Human Services Health Careers Opportunity Program was identified as a potential funding source. No other funding sources were identified. The recruitment of disadvantaged students into the health professions was a clearly defined funding priority.

5. What were the initial steps?

- Initial telephone contact was made with an Acting Grants Management Officer.
- In addition, two College representatives attended a workshop provided by HHS for potential grantees.

6. Describe the application process required by the funding agency.

- The application format was carefully specified and the grant application was submitted as required.
- The funder provided consultation by phone during the proposal development process.

7. Results

- The proposal was approved, but not funded. The following strengths and weaknesses were identified:
- Strengths:
 - i. There is strong evidence of commitment and support from the institution and participating partners. For example, the match support exceeds the amount requested.
 - ii. A diverse student population is an institutional priority (1 of top 5) and the applicant has hired a dean with the same priority.

- iii. The University offers many programs that target URM / disadvantaged students and 90% of minority students are retained.
 - iv. The need for educating disadvantaged students in the allied professional is demonstrated by the community's low educational attainment and need for health professionals.
 - v. Having a guaranteed admissions policy, as well as strong program activities addressing all seven purposes, will facilitate the accomplishment of stated objectives.
- Weaknesses
 - i. Data indicates that the applicant has a poor track record of attracting and graduating disadvantaged students. This is particularly significant given the local demographics.
 - ii. The Objectives and Methodology of the program lacks organization. For example, descriptions of activities are disconnected from activities, making the “methodology” section disjointed.
 - iii. Activities are mentioned several times before they are described and curricula/courses for structured programs lack details.
 - iv. Cultural competency training would be strengthened by documenting the specific curriculum training content and responsible personnel.

8. Rewriting and Reapplying

- The following year, the grant application was revised, based on the reviewers' comments and resubmitted. Again, it was not funded. As a result, a decision was made to not reapply for a third time, rather to partner with a local community college that had both a track record and funding from HHS as well as a successful track record recruiting, retaining and graduating disadvantaged students.
- This joint application was submitted and funded beginning fall 2005.
- Lessons learned:
 - i. "Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination are omnipotent." -- (John) Calvin Coolidge
 - ii. Working together was more effective than working alone.
 - iii. Even though we were not funded during those years, we continued to maintain our relationship with WTCH. There are still many things one can do without external funding.