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11-17-2003

Cultural Competency: Assessing Organizational Readiness for Change

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Ford, Valda Boyd and Cunningham, Linda, "Cultural Competency: Assessing Organizational Readiness for Change " (2003). *Eighth Annual National Conference, POCPWI (2003)*. Paper 24.
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Cultural Competency: Assessing Organizational Readiness for Change

Abstract

How culturally competent is your organization? This session will illustrate the process the University of Nebraska Medical Center used to improve the organizational climate to support cultural competence and the method that was developed to ensure employee participation in the change process.

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Research Objective:

To determine the readiness of the University of Nebraska Medical Center to improve the organizational climate to support cultural competence and to develop a method of ensuring employee participation in the change process.

Study Design:

The cultural audit began in January of 2002 and was administered through June 2002. A confidential, 55- question survey was administered to 100% of the full-time employees of the UNMC. A person-to- person "champion" approach was used to administer the survey. Respondents were encouraged to give narrative comments. Executive staff were interviewed through the use of open-ended questions by an external consultant.

Population Studied:

One hundred percent of full-time administrators, faculty and staff at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

Principal Findings:

Using this unique approach, 75% of the population studied responded to the questionnaire. Most importantly, a response rate of this magnitude provides the opportunity to develop educational and policy strategies that reflect the opinions of the majority of the UNMC employee population. Overall, the study shows that the University of Nebraska Medical Center has the capacity to fully embrace cultural competence as an integral part of its mission. As an added benefit, the method used to administer the survey -while labor-intensive, sparked an interest in, rather than a disdain for, present and future efforts to develop an organizational culture that resonates cultural competence.

Conclusions:
The use of a person-to-person approach produced a response rate of over 75% on a 55- question questionnaire. Taking the time to make presentations during the instrument administration decreased the anticipated resistance to completing an instrument that took approximately 30 minutes to complete. Employees expressed their belief in the process because of the obvious commitment to the organizational change initiative as evidenced by human and financial resources. Employees expressed a willingness to participate fully in the organizational change process.

Implications for Policy, Delivery or Practice:
The study provides quantifiable evidence ofUNMC's readiness to develop and implement an organizational change process to support cultural competence. The completion rate of75% suggests an ability to effect change through the opinions of the majority of the employees. Narrative responses provide data to support changes in policy, curricula, and benefit structure.

Presenters

Valda Boyd Ford is the Director of Community and Multicultural Affairs for the Community Partnership of University of Nebraska Medical Center and The Nebraska Medical Center. Ms. Ford is also the Executive Director of The Center for Human Diversity(Q, President ofKIBICO Consulting, and a W. K. Kellogg International Health Partners Fellow. Ms Ford is an internationally acclaimed speaker and lecturer on health promotion, entrepreneurship, and cultural diversity. She has lectured at World Health Organization conferences, the Mayo Clinic, and around the world in countries such as Wales, Saudi Arabia, Poland, China, the Caribbean, and Denmark. Ms. Ford is the host and Executive Producer of *Valda's Place,* a cable television show on health and diversity issues. Ms. Ford has successfully started or expanded four health care businesses and a consulting firm. She has received several honors and awards and is very active in a number of professional and community organizations at the state and national level. Valda is dedicated to increasing the awareness of the importance of cultural competence in the delivery of health care, education or clinical services.

Linda M. Cunningham is the Coordinator of Cultural Competence for the office of Community Partnership at the University of Nebraska Medical Center and The Nebraska Medical Center. She has a wealth of knowledge about people as a result of many years of living in various places including Turkey and Guam. As an integral part of the Community Partnership team, Linda has developed the "Life Skills" program for Sudanese refugees and is a key coordinator and developer of the "Foundations for Success" employee enrichment series. Linda was critical to the success of phase I of the organization-wide cultural competence initiative: an organizational assessment survey which yielded a 75% return rate. She co-chairs the Employee Diversity Network, has received numerous awards and serves on several boards and committees. Linda is completing a Master's degree in Public Administration at the University of Nebraska Omaha.