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April 1997

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McClain, John; Gray, Aletha J.; and Wilson-Ramirez, Gina, "Enhancing the Capacity of the University of Nebraska Medical Center to Effectively Integrate with the Realities of 21st Century America" (1997). *Different Perspectives on Majority Rules (1997)*. 13.
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Enhancing the Capacity of the University of Nebraska Medical Center to Effectively Integrate with the Realities of 21st Century America

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Introduction

As the University of Nebraska Medical Center continues to enhance its world class capacity as a Midwestern health science education center, its faculty, students, and staff must reflect the increasing realities of a racially and ethnically diverse nation and world. This will require a campus climate which values all persons engaged in fulfilling the mission of UNMC.

Beyond a commitment from senior-level policy makers, specific problematic activity must be undertaken. This session will describe a range of initiatives, either planned or implemented, which will position UNMC to fulfill its commitment to world-class excellence.

Specific activities to be presented

Community Academy

The community academy will systematically bring diverse students from fourth through twelfth grades onto the UNMC campus for after-school and weekend exposure to UNMC's health science education programs. The program will also include enrichment in the basic sciences and math and will provide cultural awareness to academy participants.

Recruitment of Community-Based Minority Professionals

A program has been initiated with leadership provided by the UNMC College of Medicine to recruit minority health care professionals, practicing in the community, as members of the volunteer faculty. The broad intent is to engage these individuals as recruiters and mentors. It is envisioned that all UNMC colleges and the School for Allied Health will adopt this model.

Native American House

In collaboration with Creighton University, UNMC is exploring the establishment of a Native American House in order to strengthen the retention of Native American students. The Native American House, beyond providing living accommodations, will serve as an informal cultural center promoting the values of native people.

Student Alliance for Global Health

SAGH is a campus-wide student organization. The group's mission is "to promote local awareness of cultural and linguistic health issues, to provide more sensitive

health services within Nebraska, to educate and inform students from all UNMC programs about global health issues, and to promote and facilitate placement of students on international rotations and exchanges." SAGH is in its third year as a recognized campus organization and has provided instrumental grass-roots support from UNMC's student population for expanding international linkage, providing educational opportunities, medical aid, and health electives for medical profession students. The UNMC Office of International Affairs serves as the advising body for this organization.

UNMC International Participants' Welcome Guidebook

The guidebook is an orientation and acculturation tool designed for the international students and scholars at UNMC. Its purpose is to assist international participants in transitioning to UNMC, Omaha, and American culture. The UNMC Office of International Affairs is exploring the production of the guidebooks in a variety of languages which reflect the international composition of the UNMC campus community. The guidebooks will initially be produced in Chinese, Japanese, Russian, Farsi (Arabic), and Spanish. By producing these guidebooks, UNMC expresses its commitment to the global village that our world has become. UNMC's international population of students, scholars, researchers, visitors, and their families, whether here or in their home country, will experience the institution's dedication to diversity with the availability of multilingual resources.

Conclusion

We are optimistic that these and other acts will help UNMC evolve into the culturally diverse health science center which it must become as it projects its excellence throughout the nation and the world.

PRESENTERS

John McClain is the Associate Vice Chancellor/Chief Student Affairs Officer at the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha, Neb. Prior to assuming this position, McClain was the Director of Health Policy and Planning for Meyer Rehabilitation Institute (UNMC), where he designed and implemented national projects in the field of disability.

From 1993-1994, McClain was a Kennedy Policy Fellow and served as a staff member in the U.S. House of Representatives. In that capacity, he played a significant role in formulating disability policy legislation. He is an adviser to the Commissioner of the Federal Administration of Developmental Disabilities and an adviser to the President's Committee on Mental Retardation.

Aletha J. Gray is the Director of the Office of Multicultural Affairs for the University of Nebraska Medical Center. Her professional and community involvements span social service, local government work, and corporate experience. She has more than 10 years' in developing and implementing programs that focus on youth career development with emphasis on higher education and positive lifestyles.

Before joining UNMC in September 1996, Gray was Vice President of the Urban League

of Nebraska for five years. Prior to that, she worked as an equal employment opportunity specialist and then as an EEO director for an international natural gas/petrochemical company. Other experience includes work as the Affirmative Action Manager for the City of Omaha, Neb.

Gina Wilson-Ramirez is a third-year medical student at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. She attended UCLA and received a B.A. in Spanish language and literature, an M.A. in Latin American studies, and an M.P.H. in international population and family health. Wilson-Ramirez is a 1997-1998 National Medical Fellowship-W.C. Kellogg Fellow in community-based training. She and another student founded the Student Alliance for Global Health and the Nicaragua Student Health Project as first-year students. In the future, she plans to teach community medicine and work with underserved populations in the United States and abroad.