One Physician Assistant Program’s Dedication to Medically Underserved Communities

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PURPOSE
Northern Arizona University (NAU) PA Program mission:
• Recruit and admit the highest quality students from diverse backgrounds and life experiences.
• Develop a variety of extra-curricular, community-based service activities.
• Develop clinical education opportunities that result in graduates dedicated to serve the medically underserved communities of Arizona.

OUTREACH PARTICIPATION
Participants ranged from elementary school to post-baccalaureate students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Participants</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>734</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1536</td>
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</tbody>
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OUTREACH SATISFACTION

Participants were polled regarding obtaining a better understanding of health professions including the Physician Assistant role.

EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS
Community and educational partnerships were formed providing sustained outreach activities. The SHOW clinic is a student run homeless clinic sponsored by NAU, Arizona State University and the University of Arizona College of Medicine in Phoenix formed in 2014 and initiated by NAU PA program.

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES
Outreach programs consisting of faculty and students were designed to educate potential applicants on a variety of health topics with an emphasis and exposure to the PA profession. Students involved in the didactic-based service activities:
• Oral health education/fluoride varnish application
• Free health care to the homeless
• H&Ps at a rehabilitation facility

DREAMCATCHERS OUTREACH
The presentations and follow up contacts were designed to provide longitudinal mentoring. From these efforts, community and educational partnerships formed and are now providing sustained outreach activities.

CONCLUSION
Developing a new PA program with a concerted focus on recruiting students who not only meet mission criteria, but are qualified applicants, may produce a successful and diverse cohort of practicing PAs. The NAU PA program’s combination of focused recruitment, participation in health related volunteer activities and clinical placements in MUAs resulted in over 50% of the first graduating class accepting positions in rural and MUAs. Continued tracking of this data will determine whether focused recruitment, servant leadership activities and deliberate clinical placements will increase the numbers of graduates helping to meet the workforce needs of underserved Arizona.

CLINICAL PLACEMENTS
Each year, greater than 50% of the total sites assigned for clinical training were in Rural or Medically Underserved Areas.

79.3% of the Class of 2014 and 100% of the Class of 2015 were placed in Rural and Medically Underserved Communities of Arizona for Clinical Training

REFERENCES
Northern Arizona University, Department of Physician Assistant Studies, Admission and Outreach Tracking data.
One Physician Assistant Program’s Dedication to Medically Underserved Communities

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Purpose: The mission of the Northern Arizona University (NAU) PA Program is to recruit individuals of the highest possible quality from diverse backgrounds and life experiences to the profession. The NAU PA Program set an agenda and process to recruit a very diverse applicant pool, develop curriculum consisting of a variety of community service activities during the didactic year, and develop clinical rotations that will result in graduates dedicated to serve the medically underserved communities of Arizona.

Description: Recruitment focused on underrepresented minorities, veterans, economically /educationally disadvantaged, and applicants from medically underserved areas (MUA). To accomplish this goal, outreach programs consisting of faculty and students were designed to educate potential applicants on a variety of health topics with an emphasis and exposure to the PA profession. From these efforts, community and educational partnerships were formed providing sustained outreach activities. Beginning with the first year of the program, students were offered the opportunity to engage in interprofessional service activities such as oral health education and fluoride varnish application, and providing free health care to the homeless and low income communities. In the clinical year, students were assigned rotations in medically underserved sites. Evaluations of all activities were collected and analyzed for program effectiveness.

Results: The NAU PA program participated in outreach events with participants ranging from elementary school to post-baccalaureate students. In 2012, there were 13 events with 231 participants; in 2013, 33 events with 734 participants; and in 2014, 34 events with 1536 participants. Evaluation of the programs was overwhelmingly positive. Sixty-six percent rated the programs as very useful while 27% rated the programs as useful. Among respondents to a follow-up survey, 85% stated the program was useful in helping them to focus on the healthcare program of their choice.

Recruitment success of matriculating NAU PA students was measured by the number of students who met at least one mission category (veteran, underrepresented minority, disadvantaged, rural upbringing) in each class. The percent of students who met at least one mission category for the Class of 2014 was 20%; the Class of 2015, 64%; the Class of 2016, 68%; and the Class of 2017 (matriculating August, 2015), is currently 80%. Success of student rotation placements was measured by designation as a rural or MUA. 79.3% of the Class of 2014 and 100% of the Class of 2015 were placed in Rural and Medically Underserved Communities of Arizona for Clinical Training.

Conclusions: Developing a new PA program with a concerted focus on recruiting students who not only meet mission criteria, but are qualified applicants, may produce a successful and diverse cohort of practicing PAs. The NAU PA program’s combination of focused recruitment, participation in health related volunteer activities and clinical placements in MUAs resulted in over 50% of the first graduating class accepting positions in rural and MUAs. Continued tracking of this data will determine whether focused recruitment, servant leadership activities and deliberate clinical placements will increase the numbers of graduates helping to meet the workforce needs of underserved Arizona.