

## **POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE ASHA GROUP ON MENTORING**

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### **Brief History of the ASHA Working Group on Mentoring, 1998-1999**

The ASHA Working Group On Mentoring was established in 1998 with part of its activity plan relating to the mentoring of minority students into the professions, particularly the academy. The working group was established to develop a plan and process to provide mentorship to the following: (a) colleagues preparing for submitting grants (thereby increasing visibility in granting agencies); (2) investigators who are making efforts to obtain funding for research; (3) new faculty and doctoral students needing to learn about academic career expectations; and (4) doctoral students from underrepresented populations who could benefit from “coaching.” Item number four from this activity plan relates to the topic presented this year at CAPCSD. The professionals involved in the Working Group on Mentoring (WGM) were: Noma Anderson, Karen Beverly-Ducker, Judith Cooper, Theodore Glatke, Regina Grantham, James Naas, Joan Payne, Ro Scudder, and Michelle Walker. The chair for year one was Arlene Carney and year two was Celia Hooper. The group reviewed the work of the 1997 Working Group on Recruitment, Retention, and Academic Preparation of Researchers and Teacher Scholars. We also reviewed past publications related to the activity plan statement and we reviewed ASHA new member recruitment information. The committee members represented ASHA Special Interest Division 10, Issues In Higher Education; Division 11, Supervision and Administration; Division 14, Communication Disorders and Sciences in Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Populations; National Black Association of Speech, Language and Hearing; The Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders the Council of Academic Accreditation; and NIDCD/NIH, an important concept for continuity of

recommendations after the sunseting of this two-year working group. The presentation today will represent activity plan item four, mentoring doctoral students from underrepresented populations.

### **Who needs to mentor or be mentored?**

The WGM discussed the fact that all underrepresented minorities needed to be mentored, including men. Although it can be argued that historically men have not been a minority in the academy, it is certainly the case that the pool from which doctoral students are chosen is primarily female. And, as Dr. Geffner and Ms. Wright's data reveal, male students of all minority groups are underrepresented. The academy, like the Army, needs a few good men. The WGM felt strongly that the role of mentor needed to be adopted by anyone in ASHA, whether one thinks of himself or herself as underrepresented or not. The group firmly believed that we need "majority" as well as minority mentors. This is true particularly in the academy where a shortage of minority mentors is critical. In short, EVERYONE needs to mentor.

### **Solutions from a variety of sources**

Today we will talk about possible solutions from a variety of sources to get YOU thinking about solutions. The WGM was a task force to spark others to action. Our timeline was finite—two years. During the end of the WGM, the members agreed to take the recommendations to ASHA's Division 10: Issues in Higher Education. Division 10 attempts to connect with all other divisions as they relate to higher education. As a NSSLHA Advisor I think it is important for all NSSLHA advisors to bring these issues to undergraduate and graduate students since they are most affected, have programs related to the topic, etc. Many programs, such as UNC-Chapel Hill, have materials and workshops to target minority students. Some universities have multicultural affairs committees or diversity working groups within their school or department. Targeting our information to program directors is another avenue for communication. Lastly, members of communication sciences and disorders admissions committees may

offer some solutions. Each admissions committee has to decide its own policies, but we encourage admissions committees, or recruitment/retention committees, to be welcoming and aware of any potential minority students (including men) who may be applying to the program or who may be potential students. Recruitment may occur even before they apply. The WGM agreed to disseminate its information in forums such as this one, targeting ASHA members who may be in a position to help carry out our goals. In our discussion period, each of you can share some solutions you may have used to increase your minority recruitment pool.

### **The WGM: Activity Plan**

The WGM agreed that many disparate groups within and outside ASHA need to continue to work together to help achieve the goal of more minorities in the academy. These groups include, but are not limited to, the groups listed above as well as the groups listed on the ASHA web page as “multicultural constituency groups,” and ASHA’s “Office of Multicultural Affairs. Finally there was general group consensus that doctoral students and new faculty needed mentors and models from their own underrepresented minority group as well as those from “the majority.” It is likely that much of this mentoring can and should be done by colleagues both within and outside one’s own institution. Some activities that the WGM supports include the following below.

The WGM encourages the continuation of the ASHA Minority Student Leadership Program, occurring at ASHA convention, with the suggestion that it be given a strong academic focus and research component for at least some of its participants, if this is within the mission of the program. Based on the success of the program thus far, the WGM strongly recommends the continued funding of this program in the future.

The WGM supports the proposed Ph.D. Fellowships (scholarships), however they are funded in the future. The 2000 Legislative Council did not pass

the resolution to fund these through the regular ASHA budget, believing the ASHA Foundation to be the more appropriate vehicle for initial and continuing funding. The WGM suggests, if these scholarships are funded, that there be some requirement for recipients to work in an academic setting and that there be some mechanism in the funding to assist in the minority student shortage in academia.

The WGM is committed to submitting presentations at a variety of conferences in 2000, 2001 and beyond, if needed. There are currently plans to present at ASHA Convention, this conference (CAPCSD), and NBASLH. Additionally, this information will be shared with organizations and special interest divisions described above.

The WGM, in their concern that future minority student recruitment into the Academy be continued, has asked and received a commitment from Division 10, Issues in Higher Education, that this remain on their mission statement and work plan for the future. At this time, Division 10 has established a mentoring committee to take on this task, through the work of Dr. Jean Blosser, the Division Steering Committee Chair. The WGM suggests that Division 10 work with the other constituent groups already mentioned. We suggest that they consider having something highly visible on their Webpage, such as "opportunities for minority faculty and graduate students," or embed that in a mentoring section. We also suggest that Division 10 assist in the mentoring of research funding, working with other groups in and outside of ASHA toward this goal. The Association has done a good job recently of sponsoring programs at convention on research careers and academic career expectations and we recommend that Division 10 monitor the continuation of this endeavor. Special sessions on mentoring minority students may be appropriate for faculty.

### **When and where should mentoring take place?**

Just as we recommend that EVERYONE mentor, we also recommend that mentoring take place EVERYWHERE. Some of our WGM members suggested that we begin minority student recruitment in elementary schools and some ASHA members have done so. Certainly middle and high schools health careers classes or health interest clubs are a great place to start. Entry level professionals can be recruited at historically black colleges and universities (HBCU), especially focusing on those which do not have a communication sciences and disorders program, i.e., a new student pool. Some universities have set up consortia with HBCU programs with the result being very positive for recruitment and retention of excellent minority graduate students. Mentoring minority students can take place in class, outside of class, at lunch, social functions, workshops...everywhere! As white faculty member I know that new minority graduate students (and probably all new graduate students) in my classes are not likely to “pop into” my office and minority students (i.e., “different” from me) are even less likely to do so. So, I may need to invite all students to stop by to pick up the first assignment, giving me an opportunity to get to know students who may be more reluctant to appear at my door. All faculty members and off campus supervisors can support students who join local or national organizations for their particular minority group, such as NBASLH, and encourage them to attend conferences of these organizations. We have heard at these presentations that some undergraduate and graduate students have not heard of special interest divisions or related organizations that we have already mentioned. Communication Sciences and Disorders programs take a more active role in bringing these opportunities to minority students for more “national mentoring.” They can encourage students to attend local workshops on diversity or consider sponsoring one on the local campus. Encouragement and information does not cost money and ASHA has made it very easy to assist faculty in this mentoring role!

### **Some Practical Actions the WGM has Taken (which you can continue)**

The WGM sent a technical assistance packet to each Program Director in Communication Sciences and Disorders, mailed in early 2000. Every program should have a copy of this. If you are a faculty member who is not a program director, see your director for this...it is somewhere on his/her desk! The packet included a brief cover letter explaining the role of the WGM and our interest in having programs engage in recruitment of students into the academy as early as high school or before. We asked for help from each program, recognizing that this critical issue will take years to address. We sent items in the packet, which included a variety of articles and reports related to mentoring. We also sent a list of Websites from ASHA, which we thought might be of interest to faculty. All of the sites were linked from the ASHA Website or the CAPCSD Website. Some examples of sites included information about the Research in Higher Education Mentoring Program, the Research and Scientific Affairs Committee's Workshop on Grant Writing in Communication Sciences and Disorders, and the ASHA science and research web site. We also sent the Division 10 web site address along with the CAPCSD web site. Since those packets were mailed, I have received many emails and telephone calls requesting more information. Those communications are now sent to Division 10 for follow-up. The WGM believes that each program, with guidance from our national organizations, can develop special minority mentoring programs that are just right for each locale and can take advantage of local opportunities for students. The WGM sponsored ASHA focus groups with student attendees at the 1998 ASHA convention through the work of ASHA staff members (Jeanette O. Janota, author of *Student views of a career in academia and of mentoring*). The results were somewhat chilling. We, the faculty, are not doing a good job of informing or recruiting potential students, minority or otherwise, into the academy. Sometimes this task can take the simple job of telling students, "Why I like my job." No grants are needed.

### **Conclusion**

Our next speaker will continue with the role of mentoring and recruiting, but it is important to remember that recruitment of minority students:

Needs to be sanctioned on an individual and institutional basis to work.

We need to ASK STUDENTS what works. Sometimes talking to currently enrolled minority students gives faculty the best ideas for future planning.

We need to keep thinking about it, working on it, redoing it. The solutions are very complex.

We need to have the desire for change in both our hearts and our brains!