Augusta University as Part of the Solution

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Recruitment

• The consolidation of two different universities have affected recruiting students at the undergraduate level.
• There was a decline in 2015, but it showed slight increase in 2016 and it is expected that it will continue increasing in future years.
• New students are expected to show a higher academic profile than before.
• Recruitment will be increased in the Augusta area to prevent local students from going away to other colleges or universities.
• Recruiting will be targeted during earlier years of high school.
The first two years of college may prepare and influence students into becoming knowledge seekers, or instead, workforce members.

It becomes the responsibility of educators to inform and guide students during their following two years of college about what they may pursue after graduation.
Assumptions of dental hygiene faculty, based on previous experiences:

- Students may not be aware of shortage of educators.
- Students seeking a DH degree may give greater importance to science than to reading and writing skills.
- Lack of preparation in general education may prevent graduates from seeking progression into graduate education.
- Fear of not doing well in graduate school pre-admission exams.
- Financial need – may not want to get in more debt.
Changes after MDFD program

• Minority faculty informs students about the opportunities ahead
• There has been an increase in mentorship and motivation about career advancement
• Continuing collaboration with A.R. Johnson Health Science and Engineering High School Dental Science program - their students rotate through our clinics to learn about dental hygiene and dentistry, about 90% African American students
Career Advancement - Bachelor of Science Degree-Completion Program

designed for dental hygiene graduates of accredited associate's degree programs wishing to complete a four year degree. It is 100% online, and is intended for off-campus students or students who may work full time.

Delivered through D2L learning management system
As of Fall 2016 semester, the fully online degree-completion program has accepted students from 26 different cities/towns and 21 different counties in Georgia in addition to a few students from South Carolina. Sixteen percent of degree-completion students have been minorities.
Reasons that motivate minority students into advancing their education through online programs.

- “to broaden my scope of practice I would like to pursue a Masters degree in Health Administration”
- “to provide myself with the best educational opportunities possible”
Education

“Teaching will give me the opportunity to challenge the minds and lives of those who want to spend their career time making a difference in preventive dentistry. I am excited about touching those who want to pursue a career in dental hygiene just as my professors did for me.”

Public Health

• “I chose public health to continue to aid in protecting and improving the health of families and communities through promotion of healthy lifestyles.
• “to explore the educator, advocacy and public health side of dental hygiene”
Clinical re-entry program

Another area in which the department of dental hygiene at AU is contributing to career advancement is by offering a clinical re-entry program. Faculty have learned that for many different reasons, including raising a family, illness, and changes in marital status, it has been necessary for a number of dental hygienists to put on hold their careers. This program has aided numerous dental hygienists in their return to the workforce.
Involvement with the community in outreach programs

- Collaboration with the College of Nursing during their annual Women’s Health Clinic event
- Hispanic Health Fair
- Outreach at Elementary Schools
- Give Kids A Smile
- Department of Pediatric Dentistry
- Christ Community Clinic
Lessons Learned

• Not all plans are successful; for example, the outcomes of the Minority Students’ Organization originally formed during the grant period did not result as expected.

• Unrealistic expectations, students were not always interested in becoming part of a minority organization or meeting with faculty after hours

• Students not having enough free time to participate in additional activities

• No guarantee that other faculty was going to take the responsibility of the tasks at hand if minority faculty were not available
Faculty continues nurturing prospect students to guide them and to advise them so they become strong applicants when the time comes. In addition, mentorship of enrolled minority dental hygiene students will continue to occur, even without the students noticing that by their interactions with minority faculty they learn to appreciate their profession and how they also can advance in their careers.
Future Plans

• career advancement of current educators through leadership training programs in addition to faculty plans for advancing education in order to participate in more research and scholarly activities which in turn will aid in the pursue of promotion opportunities.

• Plans to continue with recruiting efforts to increase minority dental hygiene students and to inspire dental hygiene professionals interested in career advancement into becoming educators.
Future Plans

Plans to increase outreach to underserved populations placing additional value to the community activities in which students participate. A new elementary school will be targeted each successive year for hygiene students to provide dental health education and to offer dental sealants and fluoride treatments to as many children as possible. While students offer dental health education, the department continues utilizing the coloring and activity book that was created during the grant period. Hundreds of coloring books and dental kits with toothbrush and floss have been distributed and will continue being distributed every year.
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