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Assessment

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Take a Bite Out of Health Disparities

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Lunch & Learn Survey results

BACKGROUND

Dr. Betty Dennis, Director of the College of Health and Human Services Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, received a grant to conduct additional assessment of our 2023 Lunch & Learn series.

The Lunch & Learn series, entitled “take a bite out of health disparities” was offered in Spring of 2023 and held both in the Student Engagement Center and streamed live on the CHHS YouTube channel. These programs were offered from 12-1pm once a month, with the exception of April when 2 events were offered for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Awareness Month.

During the inaugural semester of this series, we covered the following topics:

- Anti-fat bias presented by WMU professor, Virginia Gracen;
- Neurodiversity presented by WMU students, Karli VanRyswyk and Kelli Pierce;
- Substance Use Stigma presented by local expert, Dr. Dennis Means;
- Navigating the world as a deaf person presented by WMU professor Sherri Gagnon;
- Diversity within the deaf community presented by WMU professor Tanya Timmerman

Pizza was provided for attendees at each event as was a resource sheet with QR codes to learn more about the topic. We also provided CEUs for some professions and had a QR code for a survey.

POST EVENT SURVEY RESULTS

100% of respondents who completed the survey after the event on the Diversity with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community said that the event was excellent (10/10). Respondents strongly agreed that the presenter was knowledgeable and informative, I learned something new from the information presented, I will be able to use the information I learned in my personal and professional life.

PLANNING AND EXECUTING THIS ASSESSMENT

Dr. Dennis contacted the Institutional Research Board and was informed that we did not need approval for this type of assessment.

A Microsoft word form was created to ask the following open-ended questions:

1. What are your thoughts or feelings about any of the topics covered?
2. What are your thoughts or feelings about these topics and their impact on diversity, equity, and inclusion in CHHS?
3. How could we improve this series? What other speakers or topics would you like to see in this series?
4. What is needed to make it easier for you to encourage our students to attend?
5. What are good days and times (during the week) for you to attend presentations in fall and spring? The series was previously held on 3rd Wednesday at noon.

We sent the survey link to 18 faculty and staff who had attended at least one event in the series. We offered a \$5 gift card to a local coffee shop as an incentive to complete the survey.

We initially received 5 responses and sent a reminder to those who had not yet completed the survey. 5 more folks completed the survey for a sample size of 10 people.

THEMES

The themes that emerged from the survey were as follows:

- Advance notice and advertisement for the series
 - Respondents mentioned:
 - “Encouraging college leadership to attend”
 - “Encouraging professors to offer extra credit for students to attend”
 - “Informing the college (leadership, faculty and staff) of the details of the series by August 1 to be included in the fall syllabi.”
 - “It would be great if first year UG and Grad students were required to attend events throughout campus related to DEI and required to present/reflect on their experience individually or as a group.”
 - “We need a CHHS calendar so that we know when other learning opportunities may impact attendance. If there is anything we can do to lessen the conflict the better.”
 - “Know the agenda and more details about the topic that is planned to discuss instead of just the title.”
 - “More reminders, I think the timing was good, but we just need to frequently remind students about it and also help them see the importance of it.”
- Including race, racism and anti-racism as a topic each semester
 - This was mentioned by 4 respondents
- Overall positive feedback and experiences
 - “I appreciated the resource sheets and shared those with others”
 - “I loved every session that I attended. I was not able to attend the anti-fat bias, but I heard that it was amazing. Each of the sessions were engaging and interesting. I always walked away with a new understanding of the topic.”
 - “I think that these topics have a real impact on DEI in CHHS. I always thought differently after each section and acted differently after most. I had conversations with colleagues and students within CHHS about them as well as friends and colleagues outside of CHHS.”

IDEAS FOR FUTURE TOPICS

Suggestions for additional topics included

- immigration
- refugee status
- various religions (especially Islam),
- poverty
- incarceration
- self-care
- blindness and low vision community
- role-playing
- ageism
- xenophobia
- health literacy
- inclusion for international students

Specific speakers were suggested:

- Melinda McCormick and Elissa Allen on non-binary individuals and access to healthcare
- Hope Gerlach on technology and disability diversity
- Valarie Cunningham (The Synergy Health Center) on Black Teen Mental Health

IDEAS FOR TIMING

- Mondays or Wednesdays; noon is good
- Hold sessions in accord with the WMU course matrix. Have them start at 11:00 am or 12:30 p.m.
- Anything after 3:15pm on Mondays and Wednesdays. Or 12:30pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

CONCLUSION

This assessment of the lunch & learn series, entitled “Take a bite out of health disparities” suggests that the series should continue. The topics and the time for the series were seen as positive, so incorporating similar topics during the lunch hour should also continue. The recommendations for speakers and topics will be used to build the selections for the upcoming year.