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During the 2020-2021 academic year, Vanderbilt University School of Nursing has vastly expanded its equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) efforts. All are centered upon a multidimensional EDI strategic plan with an overall goal of enhancing the cultural climate through recruitment, retention and inclusivity. As requested, highlighted VUSN EDI activities and events reflect the Chancellor’s diversity and inclusion foci for Vanderbilt University.

12 2021-2022 VUSN PLAN

Expand and Deepen Dialogue with our Black Community Members and Increase Investment In Programming and Infrastructure Supporting Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

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EXPAND AND DEEPEN DIALOGUE WITH OUR BLACK COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Several initiatives were implemented within VUSN to demonstrate support of Black VUSN community members and to gain a better understanding and appreciation of the experiences of Black Americans.

VUSN FOR BLACK LIVES REMEMBRANCE DAY EVENT

On September 23, 2020, members of the VUSN family demonstrated solidarity for Black lives. A banner reading “VUSN for Black Lives” was placed in front of the VUSN building for a two-week period. This was followed by a solidarity event where small groups of no more than 10 VUSN community members knelt or stood in the VUSN roundabout (with masks and social distancing) for 9 minute intervals. Each community member held individually designed signs declaring, “I STAND for _______ (person, place or thing).” This event demonstrated solidarity for Black lives, especially those that have been lost to social injustices. Monitors within VUSN reflected a clock counting down 8 minutes and 46 seconds for an entire day to remind everyone of the atrocities George Floyd, in particular, encountered.
EXPAND AND DEEPEN DIALOGUE WITH OUR BLACK COMMUNITY MEMBERS

VUSN BLACK FACULTY SUPPORT GROUP

During the 2020-2021 academic year, Dean Rolanda Johnson organized the VUSN Black faculty members in a group that meets monthly. This is a time for faculty to provide social support to one another, collaborate professionally and develop strategies to enhance diversity and inclusion within VUSN.

UNRAVELING SOCIAL INJUSTICE LITERARY GROUP

In the summer semester of 2020, a literary group, Unraveling Social Injustice, Let’s Talk About It, was formed by Dr. Rolanda Johnson. Monthly sessions were held virtually to offer faculty and staff the opportunity to delve deeper into dialogue relevant to racism, diversity and inclusion using podcasts, books and book chapters. These sessions are facilitated by two faculty members and two staff members. To date, eight sessions have been held. The following literary pieces were included this past academic year:

1. *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates
3. *The Fight for a True Democracy* Podcast
4. *How to Be an Anti-Racist* by Ibram X. Kendi — two sessions
5. *Coming Apart* by Alice Walker (pictured above, center top)
6. *The Social Construction of Racial Whiteness in Nursing Education in Historically and Predominantly White Schools of Nursing: Challenges for Black Nurse Faculty* by Freida Outlaw, PhD, RN, APRN, FAAN — two sessions (pictured above, center bottom)

**Episode 4: How the Bad Blood Started**

In the United States, racial health disparities have been as foundational as democracy itself.

Hosted by Nikole Hannah-Jones, produced by Ann Brown and Kelly Prime, with help from Clare Toensmeyer and Austin Mitchell, and edited by Larissa Andersson, Lisa Choe, Wendy Dorr and Lisa Tobi

Transcript
INCREASE INVESTMENT IN PROGRAMMING AND INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORTING EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

INCLUSION BEGINS WITH ME CAMPAIGN

This two-level campaign was designed to encourage faculty and staff to intentionally “get to know” faculty and staff outside of their usual social and work networks. Level I consisted of creating a time of sharing with at least two faculty members and two staff members, carrying out an act promoting a sense of belonging similar to an act of kindness, and participating in a social justice development project over a 6-month period. Level II encourages faculty and staff to implement an innovative project enhancing social justice over a 12-month period. To date, this activity has promoted collegial relationships throughout VUSN and promoted a sense of camaraderie among 63 VUSN faculty and staff members. Incentives such as a “making a difference” lapel pen, lanyards and paperweights were assigned to each level of participation.

DIVERSITY MONTH

One of most impactful VUSN EDI activities is Diversity Month, with Diversity Day always a highlight. Students select cultures of their choice and have a scholarly poster day for faculty, staff and students. This event is co-sponsored by the Black Student Nurses Affinity Group with Sigma Theta Tau, Iota Chapter Nursing Honor Society. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Diversity Day was not held in 2021; Diversity Month, however, was transferred to virtual. Each diversity student affinity group selected a day to sponsor a lecture, panel or activity on a topic of their choice related to EDI. These events have been very informative in that these are topics or issues that students decided should be addressed within VUSN. The following sessions were held in February and March of 2021.
DIVERSITY MONTH SPEAKER SERIES

- “Beyond the Presidency: The Role of Nurses in the Continued Work of Anti-Racism” with Douglas Allen, PhD, Assistant Professor of Geography, Department of Social Sciences, Emporia State University; sponsored by the Alliance Against Racism Student Organization
- “Navigating Implicit Biases Against Asian Americans During COVID-19” with Asian American/Pacific Islander Student Nurses Affinity Group
- “VUSN Pride Shares: A Secret Only God Knows with Tom Christenbery, PhD, RN, CNE, Professor of Nursing, Vanderbilt University
- “The skin you are in: Decolonizing Dermatology” with Aleta N. Simmons, MD, Professor of Dermatology, Vanderbilt University Medical Center; sponsored by Black Student Nurses Affinity Group
- “The Power of Diversity in Nursing and Initiatives to Increase Diversity and Inclusion” a panel discussion sponsored by Doctorate of Nursing Practice Diversity Affinity Group
- “High Stakes: The military and its impact on the family unit” with LTC Ossie Evans, LCSW, Deputy Installation Director of Psychological Health, Ft. Campbell; sponsored by the Veterans and Military Student Affinity Group
- “Breaking Down Barriers in Communication” with Hispanic/Latinx Student Nurses Affinity Group

VUSN ALUMNI SPEAKER SERIES

- “Mental Health and Black America Today: Where are we?” a panel discussion sponsored by VUSN Alumni Association
- “The Evolving Role of Nursing in Transgender Care” sponsored by the VUSN Alumni Association
Two New Awards Recognizing EDI Efforts

VUSN instituted two new awards recognizing EDI efforts. The Diversity Alumni Award, a monetary prize, was created to recognize VUSN’s alumni work in EDI and social justice. The VUSN Nursing Alumni Association selected Dr. Rumay Alexander, EdD, RN, FAAN, as the recipient of the inaugural award, which highlights an alumnus who has made major contributions in the field of diversity and inclusion. Dr. Alexander is a Scholar-In-Residence at the American Nurses Association where she focuses on addressing the persistent problem of systemic racism in the nursing profession. She also has over 30 years of experience focused on diversity and inclusion and social justice.

The VUSN Award for Recognition of Faculty Achievement in Social Justice Award was established in 2020 by Dean Emerita Linda Norman. This award recognizes faculty achievement in fostering social justice by advocating for equal rights and opportunities for all people. These efforts may be visible among VUSN faculty, staff and students or in marginalized communities, environments and populations. This year’s recipient is Dr. Carol Ziegler, a professor of nursing within the School of Nursing and a Family Nurse Practitioner at the Meharry Family Clinic. Her current focus is on identifying and mitigating local health impacts related to climate change, educating health care providers and community members about climate change and climate solutions, decreasing the contribution of the health care sector to carbon emissions, and promoting climate reparations for at-risk communities. 

(Left): Dr. Rumay Alexander was named recipient of the inaugural Diversity Alumni Award. 
(Bottom): Dr. Carol Ziegler received the VUSN Award for Recognition of Faculty Achievement in Social Justice Award.
ENHANCE SCHOLARSHIP AND EDUCATION

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS AND HEALTH CARE FOR UNDERREPRESENTED AREAS

The school also sought and received federal funding to expand educational programs that would both support students from disadvantaged populations and which would equip students to serve disadvantaged programs upon graduation.

In 2020, VUSN was awarded a nearly $4 million Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grant over 4 years for “Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students.” The grant is being used exclusively for tuition scholarships for students from underrepresented ethnic/racial groups who are economically disadvantaged and enrolled in the family nurse practitioner and/or the nurse-midwifery specialties. VUSN also has received two awards totaling more than $5 million from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration to increase the number of nurse practitioners (NP) working in rural and underserved areas.

Another HRSA funded program involves a federal effort to meet the demands of the increasing need for primary care providers in rural and underserved areas. In response, faculty at Vanderbilt University School of Nursing developed the Collaborative Academic-Practice (CAP) program. Students in this program take advantage of curricular enhancements including competency-based, interactive, innovative learning activities that address social determinants of health, telehealth and behavioral health for primary care. The CAP program enriches and strengthens the capacity of the overall FNP program to graduate nurse practitioners who are prepared to deliver safe, high-quality, culturally appropriate primary care in rural and underserved communities. The CAP program recruits 12 – 15 trainees annually. In addition to one longitudinal clinical experience in rural or underserved area, they must also complete two courses of behavioral health content for primary care that culminates with a comprehensive telesimulated experience. To date, two cohorts of trainees have successfully completed the CAP Program with a total of 27 trainees. Trainee testimonials may be found on the CAP program website: https://nursing.vanderbilt.edu/projects/cap/student.php.
CONFRONT RACISM IN VANDERBILT’S OWN PAST

Several initiatives have been implemented to decrease disparities within nursing along ethnic racial lines. In schools of nursing across the United States, a disparity exists within nursing institutions of higher learning where it is estimated that only 16% of all full-time educators are from underrepresented ethnic and racial groups (AACN, 2019). Wanting to increase and advance the number of faculty of color in leadership, Dean Emerita Linda Norman elevated the Assistant Dean for Diversity and Inclusion to that of Associate Dean for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion; the office is held by Dr. Rolanda Johnson, who is African American. This past academic year, Dean Emerita Norman also created an administrative faculty position, Assistant Dean for Student Affairs. Dr. Tamika Hudson, an African American female, was promoted to serve as the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, which is vital to the success of all VUSN students. In the early days of her new role at the helm of VUSN, Dean Pam Jeffries has added equity, diversity, and inclusion to the executive level by making the Associate Dean for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion a member of the Dean’s Leadership Team; this gives EDI greater presence, voice and prominence within VUSN.

The profession of nursing also needs to confront racism in its past. VUSN instituted several activities, including a specific anti-racism statement and educational support materials.

VUSN’S UPDATED DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY AND ANTI-RACISM STATEMENT

In an effort to promote inclusivity and to underscore a core school of nursing value of antiracism, VUSN revised its diversity and inclusivity statement in January 2021. The revised statement now incorporates the following italicized paragraph:

At Vanderbilt University School of Nursing (VUSN), we are intentional about and assume accountability for fostering advancement and respect for equity, diversity and inclusion for all students, faculty and staff. We support our efforts with respect for the inherent dignity, worth and unique attributes of every person. To bring to life our vision of inclusive excellence, we seek to recruit, admit, hire, retain, promote and support diverse and underrepresented groups of students, staff and faculty. We value social justice and human rights. We embrace the plurality of humanity that composes our community including, but not limited to, age, race, ethnic origin, gender identity, sexual orientation and religion.

We reject racism of any kind, be it systemic, institutional, or individual. We acknowledge the painful histories related to racism even within the nursing discipline, including education, practice and research. We pledge to not let an unjust past continue to determine the future. We will enact practices which promote anti-racism and social justice across all entities within VUSN.

We affirm the inherent worth of each individual in order to protect, promote and optimize the health and abilities of all people. As educators of advanced practice nurses, nurse scholars, nurse leaders and nurse faculty, we accept the responsibility to foster and graduate highly educated, culturally sensitive health care professionals who provide holistic, culturally appropriate care and mirror the diverse populations they serve.
EDI TEACHING SUPPLEMENTS—
VUSN FACULTY QUICK-GUIDE:
INCLUSIVE PRACTICES IN NURSING EDUCATION

A quick guide for developing inclusive lectures and promoting inclusive dialogue with students was developed by Drs. Carol Ziegler and Jannyse Tapp. This quick guide was designed to give faculty brief guidance on optimizing inclusive practices in the classroom and clinical area. It provides historical information on students’ perceptions in academic and clinical settings. It also offers strategies to promote an inclusive learning environment and additional resources for faculty development that may broaden and improve understanding of diversity and inclusion in education.

PARTNER WITH THE CITY OF NASHVILLE TO ADDRESS RACIAL INEQUITIES

Ashton Lee gets her Covid 19 shot while her family looks on during a Vanderbilt mobile medical event in the Cayce Homes area in East Nashville. Vanderbilt’s Bonnie Pilon administered the vaccination.
PARTNER WITH THE CITY OF NASHVILLE TO ADDRESS RACIAL INEQUALITIES

COVID PARTNERSHIPS WITHIN NASHVILLE

People of color and ethnic populations have been impacted by COVID-19 disproportionately. Black people have died from COVID-19 at 1.4 times the rate of white people. Today, Black and Hispanic people are less likely to receive a vaccine, leaving them at increased risk.

As soon as COVID-19 vaccines were available, faculty from the Vanderbilt University School of Nursing paired with Vanderbilt University Medical Center to launch a mobile vaccination program to bring COVID-19 vaccines to the underrepresented, uninsured and vaccine hesitant.

Assistant Professor Carrie Plummer recruited and planned with community groups to pair with, while Assistant Professor Christian Ketel focused on going door to door. The result: More than 2,000 people in the Hispanic, Somali, Kurdish, homeless and low-income communities have been vaccinated. The School of Nursing/VUMC are also doing pop-up events with faith-based Hispanic communities at Catholic churches on Sundays and other area churches. A good area of outreach has been partnering with Metropolitan Development and Housing Authority low-income housing communities, where we find a great deal of success with education about the vaccine’s safety and benefits. Volunteers helping with the VUSN/VUMC Mobile Vaccine Program include VUSN students and faculty, VUSN alumni, VUSM students and faculty, VUMC staff and faculty and students from other area universities.
2021-2022

VUSN PLAN
EXPAND AND DEEPEN DIALOGUE WITH OUR BLACK COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND INCREASE INVESTMENT IN PROGRAMMING AND INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORTING EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Activities and events for the next academic year will build upon previous education and training. This year’s theme for EDI emphasizes action. It is not enough for faculty and staff to attend trainings but must be proactive to create change. This year’s theme is “VUSN ’Dores Act.” VUSN ’Dores will be encouraged to actively engage and expand equity and inclusion throughout VUSN and the community it serves.

As we begin another academic year, Vanderbilt University School of Nursing has also begun a year full of diversity, equity and inclusion activities and events. Summarized below are a few new initiatives planned for 2021-2022.

EDI COMMITMENT KICK-OFF CELEBRATION

During the first week of classes, VUSN faculty, staff and students will join together to reconnect and commit to equity, diversity and inclusion as a community. Each VUSN community member will be asked to trace the palm of one hand on a vinyl banner stating what they commit to do to support EDI. For example, “I commit to respect my peers.” This banner will be used as a reminder intermittently throughout the school year denoting the importance of EDI and personal commitment within VUSN.

SOLIDARITY FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

On September 7, 2021, the School of Nursing faculty, staff and students will stand to demonstrate their dedication to social justice. The community will convene in the VUSN roundabout acknowledging their commitment or recommitment to certain causes relevant to social justice for a 10-minute period. Dean Pam Jeffries will provide introductory remarks.
ADVANCING TO INCLUSIVITY IN NURSING USING SIMULATION

This is a project which builds upon current methods of instruction using simulated, evidence-based scenarios to explore verbal and non-verbal responses to various classroom, seminar and clinical scenarios. The overall purpose of this project is to promote a more culturally inclusive learning environment within Vanderbilt University School of Nursing by:

1. Developing and implementing virtual simulations grounded in key equity, diversity and inclusion concepts such as implicit bias, racism, empathy and humility.
2. Actively engaging in dialogue and exploring internal and external perceptions of responses within simulated lectures, clinicals, seminars and daily interactions.
3. Creating a plan to apply culturally inclusive principles across all VUSN nursing programs.

This project should result in the following deliverables for students and faculty:

- Video simulation depiction of core positive and negative aspects of inclusion which may occur within academic settings.
- Promotion of a sense of cultural humility by exploring different perceptions of depicted situations as assessed by a post simulation survey.
- Decreased faculty apprehension and fears when confronting difficult diversity and inclusivity topics and issues as assessed by a post simulation survey.
- A plan to implement school-wide inclusivity strategies.

NARRATIVE 4 STORYTELLING EVENT

This year’s storytelling events will focus on “Stories of Us.” Stories will focus on the recalling specific moments through stories that will help build team building within VUSN. Storytelling will focus on cultural humility and empathy.

The VUSN/VUMC Mobile Vaccine Program in support of underrepresented communities will continue in AY2021-22.