

Racial Bias within Pre-Health Structures: How Students and Faculty at PWIs Can Address Bias

Abstract

Health disparities among racial groups have remained pervasive within the United States since the founding of the country. While originally attributed to biological differences between races, it is now understood that racial health disparities are due to social inequalities. Health education often perpetuates the problem rather than addressing it, by continuing to teach biased information. The issue of bias has begun to be addressed at post-graduate level education, but at the undergraduate level, efforts remain minimal. The research addresses how predominantly white institutions (PWIs) can address bias earlier in the educational process which aids in the reduction of bias later in the educational process. Students should be educated about systemic racial bias within the United States. Faculty need to look beyond not only their own personal biases but also examine their courses and the curriculum for systematic disparities. Finally, these examinations at the personal, course, and curriculum levels, will assist them in addressing racial bias at the institutional level. This research assisted in the development of a guide that provides individuals, faculty, and administrators, with resources to address these biases; it is particularly aimed at those at PWIs. The resource guide will provide individuals with culturally competent resources to address systemic bias that occurs at the personal and institutional level. The expected impact of the toolkit for students and faculty is that they use the guide as a beginning point, in order to start to understand and identify personal and institutional biases. According to previous research, undergraduate students should also benefit from the toolkit later in post-graduate education and in future career fields.