

# The University of Cincinnati: Recruiting Local Students to Achieve Diversity Goals

*The University of Cincinnati's Academic Health Center found a significant gap in enrollment of Black/African American students in its health professions programs compared to the local population in Hamilton County, OH. Working together, the health professions schools established new measures to track progress toward their goal of increasing local enrollment and student body diversity.*

## CHALLENGE

### *Improve educational opportunity for Black/African American students in health careers*

Hamilton County, Ohio is home to nearly 1 million people, 26 percent of which are Black/African American (compared to 13 percent in the U.S. population nationally).<sup>1</sup> The demographics of the University's health professions programs, however, looked quite different: only 4.8 percent of medical students, 8.4 percent of nursing students, 5.5 percent of pharmacy students, and 9.4 percent of allied health students were Black/African American.<sup>2</sup> These demographics did not align with the [Academic Health Center's](#) mission, which states:

*"The University of Cincinnati will increase the educational opportunity for talented and diverse students to be recruited in order to graduate a health care workforce that reflects the diversity of the population in the local urban community."*

## SOLUTION

### *Recruit locally*

Working with [Health Landscape](#), UC created a comprehensive community profile for Hamilton County to identify barriers to educational attainment and opportunities for addressing these gaps. Based on the report's findings, the team decided to target potential students in the local area and connect them with culturally-relevant information about navigating higher education and pursuing careers in the health professions. Highlights of this effort included:

- Top leadership involvement (president level)
- Alignment with the AHC mission
- Collaboration across all four AHC colleges (medicine, nursing, pharmacy, allied health)
- Established metrics for tracking progress toward the goal, including an [institutional dashboard](#)

## RESULTS

### *New metrics for tracking enrollment from target local communities*

In order to track the desired outcomes, UC developed metrics and a data collection mechanism for local enrollment. Starting in Fall 2016, the university began collecting data on enrolled students from 15 target counties in Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky that the university considers "local" —including Hamilton County, OH. In addition, the AHC will continue to monitor the diversity of enrolled students to evaluate progress toward diversity goals.

## KEY RESULTS

- New data collection mechanism for tracking enrollment of local students from 15 surrounding counties in Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana.
- In Fall 2016, 23% of enrolled students in the AHC were from Hamilton County, OH, where the University of Cincinnati is located.
- The College of Medicine enrolled a diverse class in fall 2016, including a 20% increase in enrollment of African American students (a target demographic for Hamilton County)
- The College of Nursing's 2017-2018 freshman class was 22% male (men are underrepresented in nursing)

## LESSONS LEARNED

- Recruiting locally from diverse communities is one strategy for improving student diversity in health professions programs
- Collaboration across all Academic Health Center colleges allowed the university to pool resources and establish shared metrics for tracking progress
- The university used these metrics to create an institution-specific dashboard for tracking progress toward key health workforce goals, including diversity

## **ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI**

The University of Cincinnati (UC) is a premier, public, urban research university dedicated to undergraduate, graduate, and professional education, experience-based learning, and research. The UC Academic Health Center (AHC) consists of the colleges of Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy and Allied Health Sciences. As a major source of health care in Greater Cincinnati and the major institution preparing the regional health work force, the AHC has a strong commitment to improving health and reducing disparities in the communities it serves.

To learn more about the University of Cincinnati's efforts to recruit local students to achieve diversity goals, contact Tammy Mentzel at [mentzetk@ucmail.uc.edu](mailto:mentzetk@ucmail.uc.edu).

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Source: United States Census Bureau, 2010 Regional Healthcare Workforce Profile, <http://urbanuniversitiesforhealth.org/media/documents/regional-healthcare-workforce-profile.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Source: UC Academic Health Center Enrollment, 2012, [http://urbanuniversitiesforhealth.org/media/documents/HPIO\\_Handout\\_Julia\\_Michaels\\_Presentation.pdf](http://urbanuniversitiesforhealth.org/media/documents/HPIO_Handout_Julia_Michaels_Presentation.pdf)