

Implementing Service Learning in the Health Education Curriculum

Authors : Karen Butler

Abstract : Johnson C. Smith University, one of the nation's oldest Historically Black Colleges and Universities, has a strong history of service learning and community service. We first integrated service learning and peer education into health education courses in the spring of 2000. Students enrolled in the classes served as peer educators for the semester. Since then, the program has evolved and expanded but remains an integral part of several courses. The purpose of this session is to describe our program in terms of development, successes, and obstacles, and feedback received. A detailed description of the service learning component in HED 235: Drugs and Drug Education and HED 337: Environmental Health will be provided. These classes are required of our Community Health majors but are also popular electives for students in other disciplines. Three sources of student feedback were used to evaluate and continually modify the component: the SIR II course evaluation, service learning reflection papers, and focus group interviews. Student feedback has been largely positive. When criticism was given, it was thoughtful and constructive - given in the spirit of making it better for the next group. Students consistently agreed that the service learning program increased their awareness of pertinent health issues; that both the service providers and service recipients benefited from the project; and that the goals/issues targeted by the service learning component fit the objectives of the course. Also, evidence of curriculum and learning enhancement was found in the reflection papers and focus group sessions. Service learning sets up a win-win situation. It provides a way to respond to campus and community health needs while enhancing the curriculum, as students learn more by doing things that benefit the health and wellness of others. Service learning is suitable for any health education course and any target audience would welcome the effort.

Keywords : black colleges, community health, health education, service learning

Conference Title : ICERI 2017 : International Conference on Education, Research and Innovation

Conference Location : Prague, Czechia

Conference Dates : March 23-24, 2017