

NASP Position Statement on Minority Recruitment

One of the purposes of the National Association of School Psychologists is to serve the mental health and educational interests of all youth. In order to effectively accomplish this task, NASP resolves to work actively to increase the number of culturally and linguistically diverse school psychologists who work directly with children and who are trainers in school psychology programs. NASP believes that efforts to recruit culturally and linguistically diverse school psychologists can take many forms, and is a challenging task. Essential actions include but are not limited to the use of established recruitment procedures that are known to be successful, membership assistance in recruiting culturally and linguistically diverse individuals into the profession, the development of training programs in geographically relevant areas, and the use of research to develop more effective recruitment strategies.

Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Among the School-Age Population

Underscoring the need to recruit culturally and linguistically diverse school psychologists is the rate at which the culturally and linguistically diverse school-age population is growing. Through natural population growth and immigration, the overall U.S. population is forecast to increase by almost 50% by the year 2050. The Caucasian (White Not of Hispanic Origin) population will experience the smallest proportional increase. This is in sharp contrast to the large proportional increase forecast for the African-American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, and Native American populations during the same time period.

Recent immigration patterns alone provide an example of the diverse student population served through the public schools. During the past decade, more people have immigrated to the United States than any other time since the turn of the century. In addition to the cultural diversity and unique life experiences common to individuals entering the United States from other parts of the world, the vast majority of children are from home countries which have a primary language other than English. This combination of cultural and linguistic diversity necessitates unique skills on the part of school psychologists, which are developed by participating in appropriate training programs.

Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Among School Psychologists

There are disproportionately few culturally and linguistically diverse school psychologists available to serve both regular and special education students. In order to provide appropriate psycho-educational services to such a heterogeneous population, it is critical that a greater number of culturally and linguistically representative school psychologists be recruited to work with children and serve as trainers in school psychology programs. As the proportion of culturally and linguistically diverse students in the total school population increases, the need for representative school psychology service delivery will be increasingly magnified. NASP, therefore, remains committed to the recruitment of members from culturally and linguistically diverse groups and recommends the implementation of the following strategies:

Strategies for Increasing Minority Recruitment

NASP advocates for the use of established recruitment procedures related to enrollment in training programs that are known to be successful, including:

Flexible admission standards. Flexible multifaceted admission standards provide greater strength to the admission process than single, rigid criteria. Flexibility during the admission process may include strategies such as the recognition of various professional and life experiences prior to the pursuit of an advanced degree as a complement to entrance examination requirements and/or grade point average requirements.

Flexible training options. Training programs may endeavor to meet the needs of working students by offering part-time training opportunities for some of the student's graduate education. In addition, some key coursework may be offered in the evenings or during the summer. This may serve to encourage individuals who would be qualified candidates, such as teachers currently working in the schools, to consider re-training in the field of school psychology.

Financial support. Comprehensive financial support may take the form of waived or reduced application fees, the availability of special financial aid including grants, fellowships, and/or loans, and the use of special scholarships for eligible culturally and linguistically diverse students (e.g., NASP Minority Scholarship).

Active outreach efforts. Outreach efforts targeting culturally and linguistically diverse populations may include the use of special brochures, media advertisements, personal contacts, and the use of current and past student ambassadors.

NASP encourages its membership to assist school psychology training programs in recruiting culturally and linguistically diverse group members into the profession through:

Mentoring. NASP members may serve as mentors for students interested in pursuing careers in education and psychology. Through this grass roots effort, many talented high-school and undergraduate students may become informed about the profession of school psychology and the various duties and requirements involved.

Nominating. NASP members are encouraged to nominate talented students to regional and national school psychology training programs.

Advocating. NASP members may choose to serve as advocates for talented students throughout the application and admission process. This may be accomplished through letters of recommendation, a willingness to provide information regarding various application procedures, and ongoing support and encouragement.

NASP supports the development of school psychology training programs in geographically relevant areas. In order to increase the total recruitment pool and provide

educational opportunities for a greater number of individuals, cities and states with a sufficiently diverse population are encouraged to develop training programs which focus on the recruitment and training of culturally and linguistically diverse students.

NASP also encourages school psychology training programs to conduct research and develop the most appropriate strategies to recruit, train, and graduate greater numbers of culturally and linguistically diverse individuals from their programs.

Summary

NASP is firmly committed to the recruitment of greater numbers of culturally and linguistically diverse individuals. Culturally and linguistically diverse school psychologists are needed to serve the mental health and educational interests of all youth and to train the practitioners of tomorrow. NASP believes that the application of recruitment strategies which remove barriers from the path of prospective students and involve both association members and school psychology training institutions are those which will prove most effective.

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