Student-Led Interprofessional Health-Related Projects

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Introduction

Background:

- The Interprofessional Student Alliance (IPSA) is a student-run idea "incubator" that strives to provide opportunity for interprofessional leadership development and technical assistance with student-initiated community service projects.
- IPSA unites the service projects under one name due to a unique feature they all share: each project is run and staffed by interprofessional student volunteers.
- The 8 community service projects involve students from the LSU Health Sciences Center (LSUHSC) Schools of Allied Health, Dentistry, Graduate Studies, Medicine, Nursing, and Public Health. In addition, Tulane School of Medicine and Xavier School of Pharmacy students join the LSUHSC students for certain volunteer events.
- These service projects address health-related topics including how to cook healthier meals using local produce, diabetes control, local emergency department overuse, sex education, medical problem solving through innovation, access to health care and health education, social enrichment for the sensory-impaired, and the importance of healthy eating habits.
- IPSA and its service projects are currently funded by an AOA Service Leadership grant and matching funds provided by each of the six LSUHSC Deans, as well as LSUHSC Foundation donations directed to specific service projects.

Objectives:

1) To define IPSA's role in facilitating development of community service projects
2) To provide exemplars of student-created, student-led health-related projects that benefit underserved populations in New Orleans
3) To analyze and attempt to quantify the impact these projects have made on the New Orleans community
4) To compile recommendations for other health professional institutions wishing to implement interprofessional student-led community service projects

Recommendations

The following recommendations were compiled based on the experiences of IPSA leadership and feedback from the service projects' student volunteers. They should be used as an outline for implementing interprofessional student-run service projects at other health professional institutions around the country, while also taking into account local factors affecting the implementation process.

1) ***Interprofessional student organization*** – an umbrella organization should facilitate interprofessional development and leadership and ensure that service projects have built-in student and faculty support

2) ***Interprofessional development plan*** – part of the project's founding process should be to clearly outline how the project's implementation incorporates interprofessional experiences

3) ***Community needs assessment*** – part of the project's founding process should be to assess specific needs in a targeted population within the community

4) ***Project implementation*** – project leaders should design a curriculum and recruit volunteers

5) ***Project evaluation*** – regular evaluation of the effectiveness of the project should occur through external feedback and internal review

IPSA-affiliated Service Projects

Cooking Matters

DIME Clinic

Hotspotting

NOARHP

NOMI

NOWS Outreach

Sensory Funday

SMART Cafe

Methods & Results

Since IPSA's inception in 2015, there are now 59 leadership roles in 8 service projects, which are staffed by 890 student volunteers from all six LSUHSC schools, Tulane School of Medicine, and Xavier School of Pharmacy. Significant project-specific accomplishments include the following:

Cooking Matters – Cooking Matters' curriculum covers unit pricing, budgeting, nutrition analysis, and healthy food preparation. Twenty four students from the majority of the LSUHSC professional schools work together to lead sessions in the fall and spring semesters. Around 250 students are signed up to receive information about events and volunteer opportunities through the project's email listserv.

DIME Clinic – DIME Clinic held events at Riverdale High School and East Jefferson High School (twice a week) and University Medical Center (UMC) Internal Medicine Clinic (once a week) from September through December 2016. Students from Medicine, Nursing, and Xavier Pharmacy schools coordinate and host events. In addition, DIME has partnered with students from the School of Social Work at Southern University New Orleans to address the social dilemmas their patients face.

Hotspotting – Hotspotting promotes care coordination for patients who over-utilize the emergency room. In 2016, the group recruited more patients and increased their student membership. In addition to the 105 interprofessional meetings held between students and their assigned patients, the project also hosted 16 interprofessional events including team trainings and presented at two national conferences.

NOARHP – New Orleans Adolescent Health Project (NOARHP) taught a sex education curriculum at 20 events held in 3 local high schools over the course of 2016. Their volunteer email listserv now reaches over 300 students across the six schools.

NOMI – New Orleans Medical Innovators (NOMI) is a new local chapter of the medical engineering design incubator called IDEA Labs™ that recently joined IPSA. The aim of this project is to support and promote healthcare students' engagement in solving clinical problems from an entrepreneurial perspective. Its goal is to help bridge the gap between academia and innovation. Interprofessional volunteer teams propose solutions to problems experienced by underserved populations during "Design Days".

NOWS Outreach – New Orleans Women and Children's Shelter (NOWS) Outreach designed and implemented 24 interactive health education sessions for women, 25 hands-on entertaining health activities for children, 10 health clinics, 1 children's summer camp, and 2 health fairs between its inception in May 2015 and December 2016. It also distributed over 189 bottles of women's vitamins and 112 children's vitamins in this time period. Over 200 students from all six LSUHSC schools volunteer with this project.

Sensory Funday – Sensory Funday is a new project that aims to serve an underserved pediatric population with sensory dysfunction in the New Orleans area. Students collaboratively educate parents on strategies to make social family outings more enjoyable for both the parents and their children while offering sensory-rich experiences to address the physical, social, cognitive and emotional needs of the child.

SMART Cafe – Students Mentors Advising Real Time Choices About Food and Eating (SMART CAFÉ) held 23 events during 2016, including volunteer training and nutrition education sessions at St. Michael Special School, Sylvania F. Williams Elementary, and Success Preparatory Academy. SMART CAFÉ also formed a collaborative partnership with NOWS Outreach to provide entertaining games about nutrition for children residing at the shelter.

Conclusion

- The success that has followed our service projects can be contributed to our emphasis on **student-led initiatives** and **interprofessionalism**.
- Healthcare students are in a unique position, as the **future leaders** of tomorrow, to generate new models as ways to solve chronic problems.
- IPSA has provided the forum and the opportunity for students to prepare for real world challenges and invest in **visionary thinking**, benefiting both students and community members.
- From volunteers to project leaders, the value of **interprofessional collaboration** is maintained as the most effective technique to serve underserved populations in the Greater New Orleans Area.