2021

Strategies for Establishing a Diverse Workforce Within a University Health System's Department

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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Walden University
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Abstract

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Department

by

Shanee Morgan

MS, Walden University, 2013

BA, California State University San Bernardino, 2009

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of

the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Psychology in Behavioral Health Leadership

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Abstract

Balanced diversity in health care promotes patient satisfaction and enhances innovation.

Obtaining a culturally balanced workplace requires recruitment strategies that encourage

inclusiveness among team members from various backgrounds. The purpose of this

doctoral study was to explore the issue of lack of diversity in a behavioral health

organization's (BHO's) student intern program and identify strategies for creating greater

diversity in the workplace. The Baldrige excellence framework, the conceptual

framework that guided the research, was designed to help BHOs to improve their overall

business performance to accomplish goals and increase organizational sustainability.

Three themes emerged from the data analysis: diversity training, diversity of clients, and

diversity in the workplace. In particular, this study focused on the workforce aspect of the

Baldrige framework, thereby facilitating the in-depth exploration of the ways that the

BHO built an effective and supportive workplace environment. Data were collected

through quarterly structured virtual interviews with the BHO's behavioral health care

leader. Data analysis was conducted on secondary data sources, including student intern

surveys, postquestionnaires from 69 student interns, strategic plans, program manuals,

and information from the organization's website. The results were validated through data

triangulation. The study's potential social change implications lie in understanding how

BHO leaders can recruit a diverse workforce that reflects the demographics of the

communities being served. This study has the potential to create positive social change by

providing methods to enhance workplace diversity in BHOs.

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Section 1a: The Behavioral Health Organization

Organization X is a federally funded health system organization located in the western region of the United States. According to the behavioral health organization's (BHO's) website, the organization provides services in many areas, including community resources and support, training and technical support, mental health outreach, and resources and support for children and families. This doctoral study focused on the workforce education and training (WET) department of Organization X. Information on the organization's website indicates that WET provides training and technical assistance to community members and partner agencies to enhance their knowledge of mental health services. WET is funded under the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), which was designed to address continuous workforce development needs for public behavioral health. WET's mission, as declared on the organization's website, is to encourage and promote the recruitment and retention of practitioners who serve individuals and their family members, as well as accelerate the practitioners' recovery-oriented practice and training skills. According to the organization's website, the vision of the organization is to lead the transformation of health care, inspire wellness, collaborate with the community, and bring hope and healing to those whom it serves. The values reflect true teamwork, respect, integrity, and excellence.

The annual plan update, which is available on the BHO's website, reported that WET recognizes the need to decrease and remove barriers to individual accomplishments by providing adequate mental health services by professionals who are skilled and knowledgeable in behavioral and mental health care. The website also indicates that to

fulfill its mission, vision, and values, the organization offers programs designed to recruit and train students in the helping professions, enhance their skills and knowledge within the public behavioral health system, and prepare them for work within the organization. WET oversees several internship and residency programs: Graduate Intern Field Training (GIFT), Psychiatric Residency Program, a teaching clinic, and the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselor training program.

I focused this research specifically on WET's GIFT student internship program. WET accepts applications from students in master's of social work, marriage and family therapy, and licensed professional counseling graduate programs. These students are offered clinical training opportunities in areas such as behavioral health screenings, psychological assessments, treatment planning, case management, and therapy. Information obtained from the website indicates that the organization values its ability to recruit, retain, and create a recovery-oriented public mental health workforce comprising current and future mental health employees (Behavioral health leader [BHL], personal communication, July 23, 2020).. The organization provides services and training opportunities for public mental health specialists and external organizations to prepare them with the necessary knowledge and skills to create academic pathways for their current and future mental health professionals. The GIFT program also provides training to emergency and human services personnel, as well as school districts, to prepare them to work with individuals with mental health diagnoses (BHL, personal communication, July 23, 2020).

Practice Problem

According to the organization's BHL, despite the organization's efforts to offer a diversified workplace environment, the lack of diversity in the workplace remains an ongoing issue (personal communication, July 23, 2020). According to the organization's cohort demographics for fiscal years (FY) 2018 to 2020, enrollment in WET's GIFT intern program comprises approximately 75% female and 25% male students. There are concerns about disproportionality and the lack of gender and ethnic diversity in the GIFT program. Therefore, the organization may benefit from developing methods to ensure more balanced gender and ethnic diversity in the GIFT program. The organization's leaders want to recruit and retain individuals from diverse backgrounds to strengthen the workplace environment and develop significant relationships with community members.

To better serve consumers from different cultures, health care leaders must understand the need for diversity among the professionals employed by health care organizations (Fong et al., 2017). The Workforce category of the Baldrige excellence framework was designed to understand how organizations manage, develop, and engage their workforces, as well as to provide organizations with methods to help them to develop and implement goals that yield high performance results (National Institute of Standards and Technology [NIST], 2017). To identify methods to increase gender and ethnic diversity in the GIFT program, it was important to understand the organization's current student recruitment and acceptance processes.

To gain a more in-depth understanding of the organization's recruitment process, it was necessary to collect and analyze data that would provide insight into the roles of

the managers in ensuring that the organization implements policies and practices that promote cultural diversity. It also was important to explore the perspectives of current students relevant to their experience while in the GIFT program. Collecting data from the students helped me to offer solutions for improving the recruitment process and encouraging potential candidates from diverse populations to apply for the GIFT program. Information related to the demand to increase diversity and foster cultural competencies within the behavioral health field has been limited (Fong et al., 2017). Providing additional information that might lead to a balance of diversity in Organization X may be beneficial to other BHOs whose leaders are looking to improve in this area.

Purpose

The general purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the strategies that BHOs use to recruit student interns into their training program while applying the Baldrige excellence framework (NIST, 2017). The specific focus of this study was the WET GIFT program in a large BHO in the western region of the United States. The purpose of this doctoral study was to explore the lack of diversity within the BHO's student intern program and identify strategies for creating greater diversity within the workplace. According to the BHO's website, the organization provides services to more than 1,700 employees and hundreds of partner agency staff; in addition, the organization prides itself on its ability to provide extensive training on various behavioral and mental health topics. The BHL stated that aside from providing training opportunities, the organization offers opportunities to prepare student interns from all cultural backgrounds

to provide quality services to communities that will have a positive impact on the health and well-being of clients (personal communication, October 28, 2020).

The organization's goal is to strengthen gender and ethnic diversity in the GIFT program by increasing the number of male students from various ethnic groups. This change may strengthen relationships within the workplace and help professionals to establish more positive rapport with clients, partner agencies, and community members. The BHL expressed that despite WET's efforts to encourage candidates from diverse populations to apply to the GIFT program, the organization identified the need to establish better methods to strengthen the recruitment process in order to establish a more diverse pool of potential future student interns (personal communication, October 28, 2020). I used concepts from the Baldrige excellence framework related to enhanced workforce practices that could help the organization to manage innovation; enhance leadership skills; improve the ability to integrate and adapt to a changing environment; and serve community members, consumers, and partnering agencies effectively (NIST, 2017).

I collected data on the workplace profile; the organization's strategic plan, recruitment procedures, and retention plan; intern student and volunteer duties; specific services offered; mission, vision, and value statements; organizational chart; and anonymous previously conducted intern interview information, if available. I collected this information by accessing the organization's website and requesting information from the BHL. In reviewing the Baldrige excellence framework, I made note of the organization's significant facilities, technologies, and equipment used to fulfill its duties

(NIST, 2017). The BHO includes multiple facility locations throughout the county that provide specific services to community members. The facility housing WET has sufficient office supplies and technology, including desktop computers, telephones, wireless office printers, and fax machines; cellular devices and laptops for staff mobility; scanners, whiteboards, and projectors; and the electrical capacity and internet access necessary to use the equipment. The office has breakrooms with the essential appliances for staff use. The facility also has adequate office supplies, such as paper, writing instruments, folders, envelopes, Post-Its, notepads, and staplers (BHL, personal communication, January 25, 2021).

The organization operates under the direction of directors, regional managers, and supervisors responsible for ensuring that all team members follow the rules and regulations stipulated by state and local policies and procedures (BHL, personal communication, January 25, 2021). The BHO's directors are responsible for ensuring that a system is in place to address any legal and regulatory concerns expressed by community members and other public entities, and that measures are available to monitor the organization's services and operations (NIST, 2017). The organizational chart identified the key leaders in the organization as the chief executive officer (CEO), directors, deputy directors, regional managers assigned to specific departments, and the staff members on their teams (BHL, personal communication, January 25, 2021).

The organization's occupational health and safety regulations require members to uphold a strict compliance plan and demonstrate responsibility and commitment to honesty, respect, integrity, and quality services to internal and external customers. The

organization has committed itself to follow the Americans with Disabilities Act, Health

Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, Mental Health and Compliance Plan,

Provider Connect, and the Quality Improvement Plan, as set forth by state and local

governments and enforced by the organization's membership team. Organization

members are expected to provide effective, efficient, ethical, and culturally sensitive

services and support to clients. Policies and procedures have been established and

enforced to ensure that government, state, and local regulations are followed (BHL,

personal communication, January 25, 2021).

Significance

The results of the study may benefit behavioral health systems by offering

recommendations to develop recruitment strategies that promote hiring practices that

encourage a better balance of diversity within health care organizations. Such practices

will strengthen overall relationships among workplace team members, community

members, and partnering agencies. This study will help the BHO to explore methods to

implement more effective recruitment practices to find and retain a more diverse group of

behavioral health professionals. Having a better balance of diversity within health care

organizations may strengthen internal and external relationships; increase productivity,

creativity, and innovation; improve team member engagement; and reduce employee

turnover rates. Greater diversity also may mean more sustainability and may promote

better relationships between organizations and other agencies in the community setting.

Completion of this study also may contribute to BHO practices and leadership because

the findings may provide additional research regarding effective methods for increasing

diversity within health care. I explored such methods and provided feedback on incorporating such practices, which may positively impact BHOs in communities, thus affecting the overall health and well-being of community members in various areas worldwide.

The study's potential contribution to social change lies in organizations implementing the methods necessary to create more balanced diversity in the workplace. Although laws are in place to address equal employment opportunities, not all organizational leaders understand their role in ensuring that such opportunities exist in their workplaces (Ng & Sears, 2020). Presenting methods to promote workplace diversity may provide organizations with better resources to build on specific to the need to offer workplace cultures where employees and clients feel a sense of comfort and inclusion. Diversity and inclusion in the workplace promote a community where people feel that they can receive services in an environment where others can relate to them, thus allowing them to feel that they have a better chance of having their needs met. In addition, diversity and inclusiveness foster better relationships and give organizations the ability to develop and acquire community stability (Rubio et al., 2018).

All organizations should offer workplace environments where all employees and clients feel welcome by ensuring a balance of team members from various backgrounds and experiences. Organizations may use this study to implement recruiting practices that promote diversity in the workplace. Such practices will enhance the services provided to clients, community members, and partnering agencies to create a community where feeling comfort and inclusion is a priority, as far as services are concerned. Diversity in

the workforce will encourage future health care professionals to seek employment with organizations that support workplace environments where staff members can relate to their cohorts and provide quality services to clients.

Summary and Transition

Organization X offers the GIFT program through WET to give student interns the opportunity to participate in various training and educational ventures to enhance their ability to prepare for future health care positions. The program accepts applications from students enrolled in master's of social work, marriage and family therapy, and licensed professional counseling graduate programs who desire to strengthen their knowledge and mental health and health care skills. The organizational leaders want to expand its GIFT program by exploring ways to increase the number of male students in the program and increase diversity based on identified gaps in ethnicity, culture, and language spoken among students.

Organization X's leaders want to explore methods to recruit a more diverse student population to ensure that the GIFT program continues to offer opportunities that give students a sense of inclusion, which not only can improve services delivered by the organization, but also can encourage the retention of students when permanent employment opportunities become available in the organization. The organization's mission, vision, and values align with its efforts to provide training and educational opportunities that enhance student interns' knowledge of effective health care practices. However, the need was identified to create a better balance of diversity in the

organization, provide more compelling experiences and build better relationships in the organization, and provide better health care services to clients.

Section 1b presents details about the operational profile and key functions of Organization X, as well as the organization's offerings and services. Also included are explanations of the organization's background and context, including demographics, fiscal resource planning, and information on its management and compliance with health policy and law.

Section 1b: Organizational Profile

Organization X values its ability to have a diverse workforce that reflects the uniqueness of individuals from various backgrounds in the community (Organization website, 2019). According to the website, the organization continues to look for ways to reduce service disparities by enhancing cultural aptitude and encouraging and welcoming members from diverse backgrounds and communities to pursue a career through the GIFT program. The website also indicates that the organization continues to practice the principles identified in its mission, vision, and values statements and that the organization wants to explore methods to create a more diverse work environment, strengthen internal and external relationships, provide better quality services, and enhance the experience of those interested in the GIFT program (Organization website, 2019). The BHL shared that the organization had identified a lack of male student interns in the GIFT program, as 75% of students were female interns, clearly indicating that male students were underrepresented (personal communication, July 23, 2020). The organization also had identified a lack of diversity of gender and racial groups in the GIFT program (BHL, personal communication, July 23, 2020).

I used the Baldrige excellence framework (NIST, 2017) to help the organization to explore possible methods to recruit a more diverse population of student interns to enhance workplace practices and internal and external relationships. The study was guided by several research questions:

1. What are the current practices and procedures to recruit, hire, and train student interns?

2. What methods are taken to prepare student interns to work in a diverse environment with coworkers and community members?

3. What policies and procedures are put in place to ensure that student interns understand cultural diversity and equal employment opportunities?

4. What role do managers play in preparing and implementing practical training to consumers and partners?

5. How will the organization evaluate, assess, and measure the success of training programs, recruitment processes and procedures, and employee retention?

Organizational Profile and Key Factors

Organization X is a component of the MHSA, which was passed by state voters in 2004. The purpose of the act was to provide additional funding for the expansion of mental health services and resources to improve mental stability and community members' overall well-being. The BHO developed a plan to prepare people to work in the public behavioral health field by providing extensive training and educational opportunities to enhance their professional development and knowledge of mental health services in order to serve community members. WET offers comprehensive training to educate future behavioral health professionals and service providers to increase learners' knowledge about assisting with people experiencing trauma and distress. Critical factors of importance for WET are the development and enhancement of actions and strategies to improve services to clients (BHL, personal communication, October 28, 2020).

In addition to stabilizing workforce staffing support, meeting training and technical assistance goals, enhancing career pathways, and improving its financial assistance program, WET leaders intend to explore recruitment methods to increase diversity among student interns to develop a more diverse workplace environment, thus improving cultural and linguistic competencies within the GIFT program. The BHO also wants to enhance the student recruitment and selection processes; use resources to assess targeted, department-specific professional and clinical skills; and improve data collection and assessment and tracking methods. The implemented methods will strengthen marketing techniques to promote and encourage expansion of the GIFT internship program as graduates leave and future participation increases (BHL, personal communication, January 25, 2021).

Organization X offers training and technical assistance to meet the centralized needs of the county's public behavioral health workforce. Training is provided to department employees, academic institutions, and employees in partner agencies to address content relevant to community collaboration, cultural competency, recovery and resilience, client and family services, and other integrated services. Additional training includes family-based training, trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy, dialectical behavioral therapy, illness management and recovery, parent-child interaction therapy, motivational interviewing, and multidimensional family treatment.

Organization X prides itself on its ability to provide training and support to student interns, who can receive hands-on training from a multidisciplinary team of clinicians, therapists, and supervisors, in addition to cultural competence training, in-class

training on various behavioral and mental health aspects, and core competencies. The BHO also provides student interns with incentives that prepare them for leading productive professional careers in the field of behavioral health, such as certifications in various mental and behavioral health areas, mentorships, direct supervision and support, hands-on experiences, certificates of completion, letters of reference, and opportunities to apply for positions with Organization X as they become available.

Along with the treatment offerings and services, Organization X's leaders have identified five components to address as a part of its strategic planning and short-term goals. The focused strategies pertain to the Recovery Skills Development program, evidence-based practices, and advanced treatment. In addition to cultural competency and diversity education, along with professional development for clinical and administrative leaders, the organization offers community resource education and crisis intervention training. The organization has identified the need to improve various aspects of its internship and residency programs. Specifically, the organization's leaders want to recruit more students from various cultural and ethnic backgrounds to have more balance in the number of male and female participants in the GIFT program. They also want to expand its marketing efforts, recruiting process, and training opportunities for potential program candidates (BHL, personal communication, January 25, 2021).

The organization has explored ways to increase current students' desire to remain in WET after completing their internship programs, such as examining methods to promote their interests in applying for available paid positions in WET. The organization's strategic direction aligns with its mission, vision, and values statements.

According to WET's 2019-2020 annual plan update, WET's mission is to promote the recruitment and retention of employees who dedicate their time to serving community members while advancing the practice skills of those who receive training. The organization's vision is to lead the transformation of health care and inspire wellness in collaboration with communities through an integrated delivery network to bring hope and healing to the communities that it serves. The organization values a diverse workforce that reflects individuals from all cultural backgrounds (BHL, personal communication, July 23, 2020).

Organization X is federally and state funded. The organization is governed by the state and is operated by elected officials, including supervisors and the CEO. WET, a department of Organization X, is managed by two assistant directors and a deputy director, who oversees the department. WET also has a mental health services director who manages aspects of the MHSA and an administrative services manager (BHL) who provides direction and support to WET's five supervising staff team members. The supervising team comprises the supervising office assistant, two staff development officers, the public information specialist, and the behavioral health services supervisor. The supervising team members provide direction and support to the clinical therapists and the clerical staff. There also is a secretary to the BHL (personal communication, January 25, 2021; see Figure 1).

Figure 1

2020 Workforce Education and Training Organizational Chart
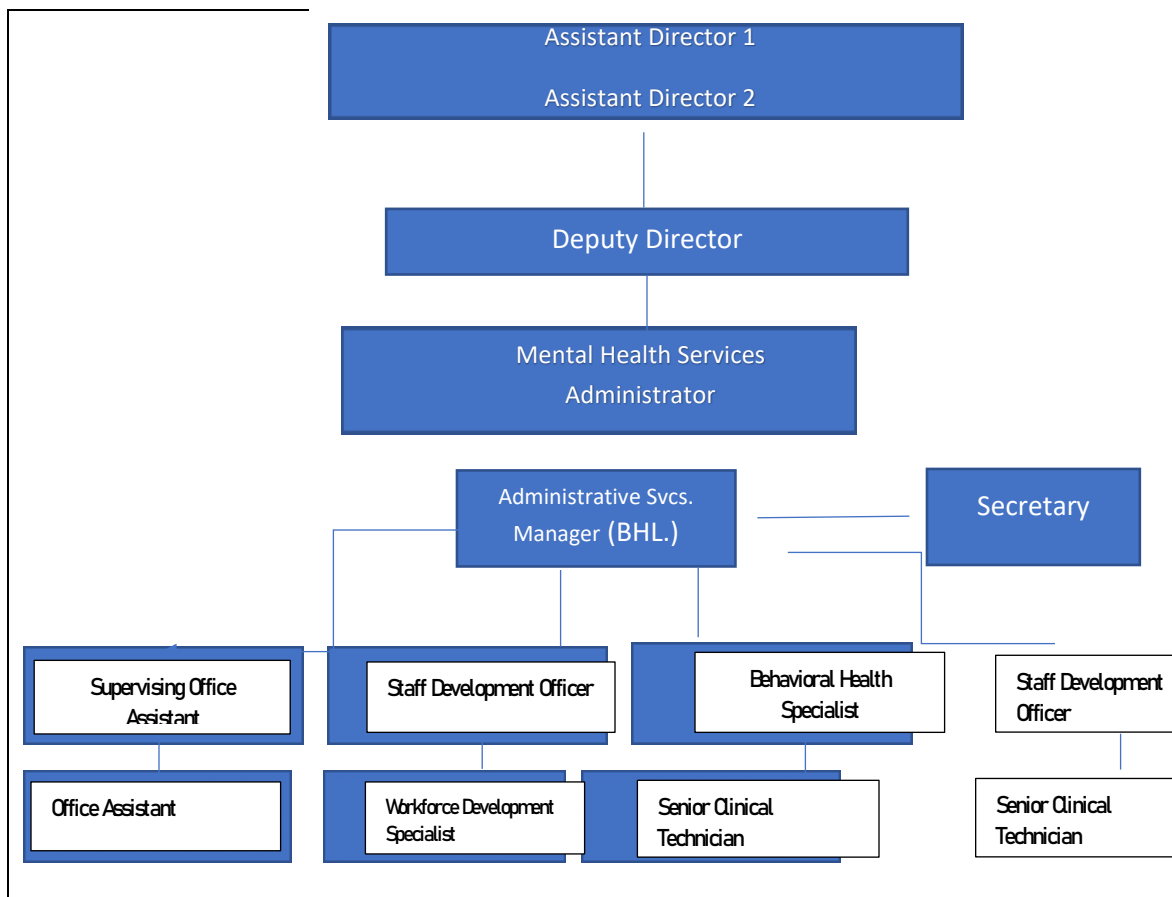
WET supports more than 1,700 employees and several partnering agency staff. Some partnering agencies that WET works with are school districts, colleges and universities, law enforcement agencies, other county WET programs, and various community programs. As mentioned on Organization X's website, WET has successfully maintained its relationships with partner agencies to build new relationships with other agencies and community members. Per the website, the organization is looking forward

to strengthening ongoing support systems and training programs through continued

collaborations and contributions within its workforce and throughout the community.

Organizational Background and Context

Organization X's leaders expecs the GIFT internship program to remain

sustainable and for interns to transition eventually into permanent positions in the

organization. Because of the strategic plan to create a larger pool of job applicants

through the continued recruitment and training of future behavioral health professionals

from well-rounded and diverse backgrounds, Organization X must implement effective

methods to accomplish such goals. Hémet and Malgouyres (2015) suggested that

diversity within the workplace has a positive influence on social peace and economic

performance. Increasing organizational sustainability and enhancing the relationships

between organization workers and community members is vital to organizational success.

The WET GIFT program has provided data indicating that it needs more student intern

participants from diverse backgrounds because it lacks a balance between male and

female participants as well as participants from various cultural backgrounds. WET has

indicated that it is striving to decrease issues of service disparities by enhancing cultural

and linguistic competency by encouraging applicants from diverse communities to apply

to the GIFT program. However, despite ongoing efforts, a gap in diversity in the GIFT

program remains (BHL, personal communication, October 28, 2020).

According to the organization's FY 2019-2020 annual plan update, 37 student

interns were enrolled in the GIFT program. Of the 37 interns, five interns were male

students, and 32 interns were female students. There were three Asians, five Blacks, nine

Whites, 19 Hispanics, and one individual of unknown race and ethnicity. According to

the organization's demographic charts, during FY 2020-2021, the GIFT program had 39

student interns, four of whom were male students, and 35 of whom were female students.

In regard to race and ethnicity, there were three Asians, three Blacks, one Black/Other, 10

Whites, two White/Hispanics, two White/Hispanic/Native Americans, one White/Middle

Eastern/Asian/Black, and 17 Hispanics. Demographics for the past 2 FYs provided clear

evidence of the organization's need to create and implement methods to recruit a more

diverse group of future student intern participants (BHL, personal communication,

October 28, 2020).

Information from the organization's website shows that the organization is located

in the fourth largest county in the state, extending 200 miles from one central county to a

bordering state. The county has 28 cities within it and is surrounded by deserts, forests,

and mountains, having many significant areas of incorporated land and several Native

American tribal entities. The 2017 population estimate accounted for more than 2 million

residents in the county, a 54% increase in the county since 2000, the highest in the state's

population. Of the families in this county, approximately 75% are married couples, and

almost half of the married couples have children under the age of 18 years, which means

that 25% of families are single householders.

There are four major ethnic groups in the county: An estimated 48% are

Hispanic/Latinx, 37% are White, 6% are Asian/Pacific Islanders, and 6% are Black. The

county estimates that less than 1% of the population is Native American and the

remaining 2% is multicultural. The median age of the population is about 34 years, with

25% of residents under the age of 18 years and 20% being older adults. The county has

34 hospitals and more than 175 centers offering mental health services. According to the

organization's annual plan update, the county is regulated and governed by state, federal,

and county policies and procedures (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

2019 Mental Health Services Act Annual Plan Update Demographics
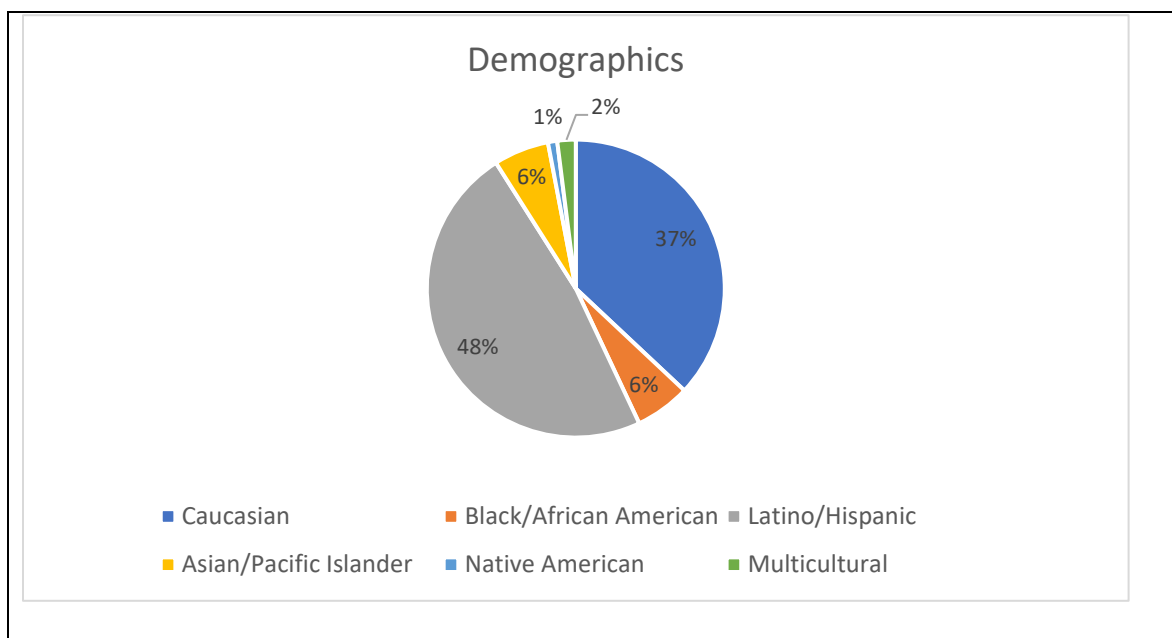
Organization X abides by the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1964, which

was enacted to prohibit workplace discrimination. The act highlights its enforcement

framework to combat unfair employment practices and mitigate issues of

disproportionality among minorities in the workplace, among other associated factors

(Pedriana & Stryker, 2017). The organization's FY 2019-2020 annual plan update

provided specific information regarding its recruitment and hiring processes, stating its

efforts to employ the most qualified candidates from diverse backgrounds who supported

Organization X's mission and vision. The organization affirmed its commitment to comply with all applicable employment laws about recruiting, hiring, and retention.

The website states that the organization abides by state, federal, and county policies and procedures regarding its recruitment process. Its mission is to continue to promote the recruitment and retention of individuals from diverse backgrounds. The website also indicates that the organization is striving to lead the transformation of health care and inspire wellness in collaboration with communities through an integrated delivery network to bring hope and healing to its clients.

Organization X engages in various operational processes necessary to execute business successfully and provide services to community members and partner agencies to develop and sustain suppliers and produce and deliver services (BHL, personal communication, January 25, 2021). The organization's training program was designed to focus on evidence-based practice, which includes professional and clinical expertise to implement practices backed by previous research and evidence of effectiveness. The GIFT program focuses its efforts on ensuring that the training materials include cultural competency and diversified education components, which were designed to ensure that trainees and student interns understand the importance of cultural awareness to professionals working in behavioral health care. WET's GIFT program gives new professionals the opportunity to learn skills by receiving support and supervision from clinical therapists, behavioral health supervisors, and practitioners. Details obtained from the organization's website indicated that the organization's screening practice includes

recruiting individuals who have cultural and linguistic knowledge, as needed, to serve clients from diverse backgrounds in the county.

The organization receives its funding from the MHSA, also referred to as Proposition 63, which was passed in 2004. The MHSA is funded by a 1% tax on personal income that exceeds $1 million annually and is considered federal funding. The purpose of the MHSA is to provide additional funding for services, personnel, and resources as necessary to transform and expand available public mental health services for individuals affected by mental illness. MHSA funding was allocated to support activities associated with the following five components: community services and supports, workforce education and training, prevention and early intervention, capital facilities and technology, and innovation (BHL, personal communication, October 28, 2020).

It is a requirement that programs funded by the MHSA include services for all ages. However, this portion of the funds cannot be used to supplement programs implemented before 2004. Specific to WET, funds were a one-time distribution to last more than 10 years. Once exhausted, WET funding then came from the Community Services and Support Department of Organization X as an approved method to ensure the continued use of services provided by WET (BHL, personal communication, October 28, 2020).

According to the organization's strategic plan update, the organization will continue to use available funding to provide resources and services to eligible clients. The website indicates that the BHO's financial planning process includes its objectives, goals, and interventions based on stakeholders' feedback and state regulations. Every 3 years,

the organization is required to establish a new program plan for the MHSA. The 3-year

program includes detailed information about the programs and services expected to be

included in the funding plan.

The organization also must assess its services to determine performance

outcomes, effectiveness, and the need to modify programs. The organization's most

recent plan expired in FY 2019-2020, so according to the BHL (personal communication,

January 25, 2021), WET plans to update the plan for FY 2020-2021. The ability to be

clear and concise when providing accounts of the budget process, financing and spending

operations, time frames, and regulatory framework is essential in justifying program

needs to funding sources (Onyango-Delewa, 2016).

The MHSA mandates counties to communicate with stakeholders each year to

provide updates on programs and services offered. The BHL explained that the

organization plans to maintain regular communication with stakeholders to receive

feedback regarding their observations about the effectiveness of services offered by the

organization, as well as to encourage stakeholders to provide input on future programs

and services funded by the MHSA (personal communication, January 25, 2021). Per

policy, the organization will give the public access to the annual report for no less than 30

days to encourage community feedback. The organization plans to hold an annual public

hearing to review input received from stakeholders and community members to discuss

the feedback and suggestions, both of which can help the organization to determine

whether there is a need to make changes to the plan before finalization. The

organization's website mentions that the organization is required to submit the fiscal plan

to the county board of supervisors for approval. Once approved, the plan is then submitted to the state's mental health services and accountability commission within 30 days (BHL, personal communication, January 25, 2021).

Within the scope of organizational plan development, WET includes information about improving services and business practices. To develop and implement strategies to enhance recruitment methods to improve the balance of diversity in the workplace, the organization will incorporate better strategies while maintaining the requirement to adhere to the laws regarding equal employment opportunities. The U.S. Department of Labor (n.d.) developed administrative and judicial enforcement of these laws to ensure that organizations remain in compliance, and there are local offices in all central counties in the state. The organization makes specific reference to its practice of abiding by equal employment laws as a part of its recruitment process; however, the organization has not yet established a plan to promote greater diversity in its selection process. The organization continues to look for methods to improve its recruitment process.

Summary and Transition

Organization X has implemented the GIFT program, which offers graduate-level students an internship opportunity to obtain the knowledge and skills necessary to prepare them for behavioral health careers. The program offers extensive training opportunities, including hands-on experience and individual supervision. During FY 2019-2020 and FY 2020-2021, the GIFT program had an overrepresentation of female student interns, clear evidence of an imbalance of diversity related to race and ethnicity in WET. The GIFT

program continues to look for effective methods to create a more balanced workplace by enhancing the diversity of program interns.

Presented in Section 2 are details about the supporting literature and sources of evidence collected, and an explanation of how an analysis of the evidence will address the organization's lack of gender and ethnic diversity in the GIFT program. Section 2 also describes leadership strategies, provides an assessment of the ways that the organization implements strategies to identify key strategic challenges, includes information about the clients and population served, and explains the analytical strategy for conducting this research.

Section 2: Background and Approach—Leadership, Strategy, and Clients

To establish a balance of workplace diversity, Organization X has expressed the need to explore techniques to reduce disparities and disproportionality by enhancing cultural diversity and inclusion in the hiring process. Organization X wants to encourage the recruitment of diverse individuals to pursue careers in the behavioral health sciences. The BHL indicated that despite efforts to enhance diversity in the workplace, the organization had not been as successful as desired in accomplishing this goal (personal communication, October 28, 2020). Organization X wants to begin by focusing on enhancing diversity in its GIFT program. In its mission, vision, and value statements, the organization has indicated that it also wants to strengthen internal and external customer relationships, provide better quality services, and enhance the experience of community members and partner agencies who have a vested interest in the GIFT program. A review of the organization's WET cohort demographic list from 2019 revealed that 75% of interns participating in the GIFT program were female students. The program cohort demographic list also revealed a lack of diversity among racial groups participating in the program. The purpose of this doctoral study was to explore the issue of lack of diversity within the BHO's student intern program and identify strategies for creating greater diversity within the workplace.

Supporting Literature

I researched many databases and search engines to find literature on workplace diversity. Among these data search tools were Walden University Library's EBSCO and PsycARTICLES databases. The following search terms were used to look for relevant

literature: *multidisciplinary*, *behavioral health*, *health policy*, *health care administration*, *public administration*, *public health*, *government management*, and *social and behavioral sciences*. Database types included multidatabase sites, peer-reviewed journals, all books, peer-reviewed articles, and doctoral studies. Scholarly data searches ranged from 2008 to the present. Thoreau yielded various results within Walden Library's database when I selected the "search for everything" and "advanced search" options. Online search engine keywords included *diversity*, *equal employment*, *diversity in behavioral health organizations*, *behavioral health organizations*, *Fair Employment Act*, *the government policy of diversity*, *racial diversity in the workplace*, *men in the health care service organization*, *men in behavioral health science*, *racial disproportionality within behavioral services*, and *inclusion in the workplace*. The following terms also were searched: *diversity*, *race*, *ethnicity*, *gender*, *workplace equality*, *organizational change*, *organizational diversity*, *organizational inclusion*, *racial disproportionality*, *racial disparity*, *human resources*, *retention*, *recruitment*, *employment policy*, and *fair employment*. Walden University Library's EBSCO database provided the most useful sources.

The scope of the literature review focused on how a lack of diversity in the workplace impacts organizations and what methods have been implemented to create better recruitment and retention strategies to hire more individuals from diverse backgrounds. According to Hémet and Malgouyres (2018), previous and extant studies have focused on the impact of diversity on economic performance and social peace. The relevant research areas focused mainly on ways to mitigate the issue of lack of diversity

within a health care organization by enhancing the interviewing and selection process to motivate a larger population of individuals from diverse backgrounds (Hémet & Malgouyres, 2018). As reported by the American College of Healthcare Executives (2016), health care executives should actively promote and recruit candidates from diverse populations to increase gender and racial diversity in health care. This also is the case for recruiting student interns who are interested in careers in behavioral health care. Professionals should strive to develop outreach mechanisms to direct recruitment efforts toward diverse populations at colleges and universities (American College of Healthcare Executives, 2016).

The review of research on diversity in organizations established that having a balance of diversity in organizations results in better services to clients; enhanced sustainability; and better working relationships among team members, community members, and partnering agencies. Workplace diversity can increase mixing of different experiences and perspectives, leading to creativity, innovation, and profitability for organizations (Nielsen & Madsen, 2017). A diverse workplace can mean improved employee performance and well-being, along with sustainability for organizations (Hémet & Malgouyres, 2018).

Evidence has shown that diverse workgroups in behavioral health care organizations generate more ideas and produce more information to make more informed decisions (Rubio et al., 2018). Some research also has identified the need for health care organizations to focus on establishing the type of workplace environment where gender

diversity is encouraged. Popper-Giveon et al. (2015) stressed the significance of having male minorities in health care.

Workplace diversity tends to have a positive influence on group processes and organizational outcomes (Ng & Sears, 2018). However, some research also has identified issues related to the lack of cultural diversity in health care and other organizations. Marques (2019), for example, indicated that studies have identified disparities in the quality of health care received by minorities from health care organizations that do not have diverse groups of health care professionals to provide such services. Health care professionals should make more of an effort to promote cultural sensitivity and diversity in organizations to reduce biases and bridge cultural differences (Conway, 2012). Cultural competencies and training in cultural awareness appear to be needed by organizations that lack diversity. Health care leaders should work toward improving cultural sensitivity and diversity in the workplace to decrease bias and cultural indifference (Conway, 2012).

Pizio (2020) suggested that diversity and inclusiveness in BHOs can enhance the trust between health care professionals and clients. Clients feel comfortable when they share a cultural common ground with their health care providers. It is important for health care providers to build rapport with their clients. Providing sufficient cultural awareness and competency training opportunities may increase professionals' knowledge of diversity and inclusion. Cultural awareness, knowledge, and skills among professionals help to build better patient-staff interactions (Truong et al., 2014). Cultural awareness, compassion, and the ability to understand clients' needs can enhance healthy

relationships and increase client satisfaction. Compelling variance in health care professionals' empathy has been linked to personal demographic and cultural differences between professionals and clients (Elayyan et al., 2018). Cultural diversity in health care organizations has a positive impact on patient satisfaction, which then increases business sustainability. Organizations continue to make efforts to practice cultural awareness and improve relationships between employees and the individuals being served.

Conway (2012) asserted that many BHOs understand the importance of diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Organizations should develop ways to enhance diversity as a strategy to improve business practices (Fong et al., 2017). There are several ways to increase cultural competency within the workplace, such as offering enhanced training, workshops, and programs, to create and sustain the knowledge of health care practitioners and other health care professionals related to cultural awareness and inclusion (Truong et al., 2014).

A critical reason for strengthening diversity in health care is that patients feel more secure when receiving support and services from professionals who are knowledgeable about their individual needs and understand their circumstances. Diversity in health care allows clients to feel a sense of common ground between themselves and their health care professionals. The more often that BHOs can provide an environment where diversity among health care workers is present, the better able they are to assist clients knowledgeably and respectfully (Pizio, 2020). The review of the research supported the consensus among BHOs about the need to improve diversity in health care. The need for more diversity in health care continues to be a strong case made in

considering the impact of diversity and inclusion on moral, economic, and results-based principles (Pizio, 2020).

Sources of Evidence

This qualitative study included four virtual interviews with the BHL, the administrative manager of WET. The interviews took place via the Microsoft Teams virtual platform. According to Karagiozis (2018), qualitative research interviews are shaped by the interrelationship between researchers and participants. My first interview with the BHL was unstructured so that the BHL and I could build rapport and I could ask open-ended questions related to the organization. This interview also gave me the opportunity to explain the responsibilities and expectations of this study. The other three interviews were semistructured. The BHL has many years of experience and tenure with the organization, and she is fully aware of the organization's policies, procedures, and practices (personal communication, January 25, 2021).

Additional sources of information and data that I collected were student intern surveys and feedback, postquestionnaires from 69 student intern participants, strategic plans, program manuals, organizational charts, training information, participant demographics, and information from the organization's website. I anticipated that the collected and analyzed data would provide extensive insight into the GIFT program operations and give me an understanding of the organization's cultural environment and workforce dynamics. In reviewing the data obtained from Organization X, I found it necessary to explore the organization's current cultural demographics and further review current training offered to employees about cultural awareness and understanding of

cultural differences. I analyzed the information to determine what improvements could be made to enhance the recruitment and retention processes to encourage candidates from diverse backgrounds to apply to the GIFT program.

Leadership Strategy and Assessment

Organization X is governed by the state. Elected officials, executives, chief officers, and directors are responsible for ensuring proper business operations. The organization is separated by various departments and regions, which include WET, the department in Organization X that is led by the CEO and the assistant CEO. The executives plan and organize the department's operations, including overseeing the operations of the department's health systems facilities (BHL, personal communication, July 23, 2020).

The five deputy directors manage assigned regions within WET. The deputy directors are responsible for ensuring that administrative policies and procedures are developed appropriately and implemented according to state and federal regulations and mandates. The regional manager assigned to the WET GIFT program manages an assigned group of team members and oversees various programs in her assigned region. The regional manager (BHL) leads by coordinating, planning, organizing, and directing all aspects related to the operations of WET to ensure that the components of the MHSA are met according to policies and guidelines (personal communication, July 23, 2020).

The organization receives funding from the MHSA to cover the cost of specific services for programs offered by WET. The amount provided each fiscal year is based on the state's economy. As a requirement of the MHSA, Organization X must follow

policies and procedures designed to meet the needs of individuals of all ages who are experiencing mental health issues that impede their ability to function effectively in society.

Organization X is required to provide quality services to the public and is mandated to exhibit fair and culturally adequate services to its clients and community partners. Organization X implements strategies by reviewing suggestions and feedback from stakeholders, collaborating with other county and community agencies, and leveraging partnerships to enhance and maximize positive outcomes. The organization has identified key strategic challenges by reviewing and understanding stakeholders' feedback, assessing and evaluating state and federal trends, and reviewing local program analyses to understand how to manage current and future program plans (BHL, personal communication, October 28, 2020).

Clients/Population Served

WET is a department in Organization X that serves public mental health employees, organizations that provide educational and academic services for those in mental health careers, and other organizations that serve mental health consumers (Organization website, 2013). WET educates current and future behavioral health care professionals who want to enhance their knowledge about mental illness and adopt the methods necessary to serve the most vulnerable mental health clients. WET supports more than 1,700 employees and hundreds of partner agency staff in the community setting. The GIFT program, which is operated by WET, provides graduate scholars with extensive training, supervision, and mentoring to prepare them for careers in behavioral

health. WET has an agreement with more than 20 educational institutions to recruit and retain intern scholars. The GIFT program accepts approximately 50 students from various demographic and cultural backgrounds each fiscal year (BHL, personal communication, October 28, 2020).

Among other evidence-based practice areas, WET has developed and continues to support the use of prominent evidence-based practices (Organization website, 2019). WET is dedicated to strengthening community members' well-being through its ability to provide quality mental health services and resources. WET offers current and future professionals throughout the county with education and training opportunities on improving cultural competency in behavioral health. As a component of the MHSA, WET has established a plan to continue to enhance its ability to provide ongoing education and training to employees, scholars, and partner agencies through recruitment, marketing, and collaborative efforts (BHL, personal communication, October 28, 2020).

Analytical Strategy

Role of the Researcher

As a doctoral researcher, my role in the analysis of Organization X was that of scholar-consultant. The goal of the study was to understand the dynamics of the organization's GIFT student intern program. Effective researchers must possess quality interpersonal skills: They must develop truthful relationships with their study participants, and they must respect the individuality of all participants and understand their perspectives (Karagiozis, 2018). Even though I still am an employee of the same county in which the organization operates, there was no conflict of interest or researcher

bias because I was not an employee of WET when the study was being conducted. However, I did remain mindful of the differences in each of the county's departments, specifically those differences related to the recruitment process for student interns.

Prior to collecting any data, I informed the BHL of the purpose of using the information, thus ensuring the understanding that the study would be conducted ethically and that the exchange of communication would be transparent. I received approval from Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB approval #07-22-20-0357881) on July 22, 2020, to collect and analyze data from senior leaders, public data and literature, and internal site documents. I also received written consent from the BHL, who agreed to participate in the study.

I organized the collected data by manually coding the interview transcriptions and other data. Coding allowed me to engage in various analytical processes, such as pattern and trend detection, categorization, and theory building (Wicks, 2017). Data collection began on July 23, 2020, and concluded on January 25, 2021.

Participants

Four 1-hour interviews were conducted with the BHL to collect information about Organization X. Karagiozis (2018) asserted that the engagements among the people involved in studies mediate the outcomes and the construction of knowledge. For this study, I collected data from the BHL, who had years of experience in the organization. She had the authority to manage all aspects of the GIFT program, and she was fully aware of the processes and procedures in WET (BHL, personal communication, July 23, 2020). Over the past few fiscal years, the BHL had noticed a trend in the lack of diversity

among student intern participants in the GIFT program, and she was seeking possible solutions to create positive change in this area (personal communication, July 23, 2020).

The BHL was the primary source of information and the only person whom I interviewed. Virtual interviews were conducted between July 2020 and January 2021 via Microsoft Teams virtual platform. I collected secondary data from student intern surveys, postquestionnaire results from 69 student interns, the organization's website, and other relevant documents. The names of the participants will be excluded before publication of the completed study.

I collected and used only data that did not compromise the privacy or confidentiality of any participants. I made it clear that the study would be conducted ethically and professionally and that my communication with the BHL would be transparent throughout the study. I took care to ensure no harm and deceit to the participants while I was conducting the study (Mohapi, 2019). It was my responsibility to request data in a timely fashion, ensure reasonable and adequate responses, and ensure that sufficient information was provided. Over the course of the four scheduled interviews, I asked the BHL the following questions, two of which came from the Baldrige excellence framework (NIST, 2017):

1. What are the current methods in place to market and promote the GIFT program?

2. How do you recruit, accept, place, and retain students in the GIFT program?

3. What population does GIFT market the program to when recruiting on college campuses?

4. What current recruitment strategies does the program have in place to encourage potential candidates from diverse populations to apply for the program?

5. How many applications are accepted for review?

6. How many applicants are accepted into the program each fiscal year?

7. Who is responsible for screening applications and selecting candidates?

8. What incentives does the program offer student interns?

9. Is it possible to have the position reclassified from non-paid to a paid internship?

10. Are there funding resources in place to provide stipends to student interns?

11. What current policies and procedures are in place to ensure that student interns understand cultural diversity and to promote diversity within the program?

12. How do you support your workforce via services, benefits, and policies?

The BHL's responses to the questions were manually transcribed and coded. These data were entered into a Microsoft Word document and archived to ensure that they were secured and easily accessible for analysis.

Sample Size

I used a combination of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. Convenience sampling, which is applicable to qualitative research, was used because it gave me easy access to the BHL (Etikan et al., 2016). The organization is conveniently located near my residence, and the BHL seemed to be flexible in her ability to participate

in the interviews and provide the requested data. Many of the departmental computer

programs are used by the subject organization and the department where the researcher is

employed, which made data sharing beneficial. I also was aware of the BHL's knowledge

of WET. Purposive sampling allows researchers to select participants based on the

purposes of their studies, with the expectation that the participants will contribute unique,

rich, and valuable information (Etikan et al., 2016). The BHL was selected based on her

experience and role in Organization X, as well as her ability to interpret and explain the

dynamics of the organization.

Ethical Research

In accordance with Walden University's ethical research standards, research

approval was granted, detailed instructions for data collection guidelines were

highlighted, and instructions were followed for the purpose of completing this study. No

data were collected without consent, and the participants' personal identifications

remained anonymous. As such, I ensured that there was no conflict of interest between

myself and the organization and its participants. The data that I collected were relevant to

the practice problem to provide detailed insight into the GIFT program's demographics,

the program's current criteria and recruitment methods, and candidates' feedback about

their experience in the program. The information also was a valuable tool for

understanding program dynamics, treatment and program offerings, department policy

and governance, and strategic planning efforts. I used the information to explore how the

organization recruited and accepted student interns. The data were then analyzed to

discover ways to establish recruitment practices to encourage candidates from various

cultural backgrounds to apply to the GIFT program. The BHL was apprised of the right to withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason. In conducting research, it is important to be increasingly attentive to the importance of research ethics and professional codes of conduct when undertaking studies with human participants (Shaw et al., 2020). Participants should feel safe, respected, and heard (Shaw et al., 2020).

During my initial meeting with the BHL, which took place privately via a virtual platform, I discussed the details and purpose of the study and provided her with time to decide if she would like to participate. Upon agreement, I gave her the consent form to sign and return to me. All follow-up data that were collected were archived and remain stored in a private office. I will shred or electronically delete all data once the study has been approved and published.

Data Collection Process

I collected my data by contacting the BHL through email after receiving IRB approval. The BHL provided timely responses in answering the interview questions regarding organizational practices and providing other data that I requested. Social distancing, a protocol initiated during the COVID-19 pandemic, has restricted formal face-to-face investigations of all kinds (Lobe et al., 2020). Therefore, I held virtual meetings with the BHL via Zoom and Google Meets computer applications. In requesting the data, I asked the BHL to provide (a) a brief description of how WET implements strategies and identify key strategic challenges; (b) information on the client population and how the organization obtains information from clients; and (c) what methods WET uses to engage clients, such as relationship building, and services offered (personal

communication, July 23, 2020). There are many data collection methods in qualitative

research, including interviews and visual analysis (Gill et al., 2008). I also collected

secondary data from surveys and feedback interviews from student intern participants

regarding their input on program experiences, student internship demographic reports,

strategic plans, employee recognition program form, a website search, student internship

applications, recruitment questionnaires, and social media.

I collected information about the organization from the BHL for the past 2 fiscal

years. The BHL also provided information about the GIFT program (personal

communication, July 23, 2020). All data were reviewed and analyzed to determine

relevance and validity as sources of evidence. Websites were cross-referenced to compare

services offered for the experience and training provided to student intern participants.

The BHL gave me access to information necessary to complete the study.

Information that was collected did not breach confidentiality, and no participant names

were included in the interview transcriptions or participant feedback. Demographic

reports included only percentages and numbers. No names of participants were included.

Information on how participants are selected for the GIFT program was shared by the

BHL, who also provided all information not included on the WET website (BHL,

personal communication, October 28, 2020).

Reliability and Validity

In conducting this study, all information was reviewed and analyzed to establish

reliability and validity through the use of triangulation. According to Farquhar et al.

(2020), triangulation is used to ensure the trustworthiness and validity of the findings.

Triangulation allows researchers to use multiple sources of data to better understand the phenomena being investigated. Triangulation is the combination of multiple methodological approaches, theoretical perspectives, data sources, and analysis methods to study the same phenomenon (Hussein, 2015).

For this study, I cross-referenced my data sources. For example, I verified information contained on the student interns' applications with the BHL, website, and viewing of the actual application. I cross-referenced information located on the organization's website with the BHL, and I also reviewed handbooks and manuals. During the multiple interviews with the BHL, I revisited the interview questions to ensure consistency in the responses.

Summary and Transition

The sources and data collected provided insight into the practice problem about the GIFT student internship program. Data included the recruitment and screening processes for participant acceptance, student intern participants' demographics, and relevant program information necessary to explore the current methods used to recruit participants. In addition to receiving data from the organization's BHL, I searched various databases and search engines to locate relevant research on the lack of diversity in BHOs. To expand the search, various key terms were employed. The use of peer-reviewed articles and journals also was explored. Extant literature was reviewed to identify gaps in research regarding diversity in BHOs. To gain a better understanding of key factors about the organization, I held consultations with the BHL, who provided needed data (personal communication, July 23, 2020). In reviewing the research

literature, it became clear that copious research has been conducted on the lack of diversity in BHOs; however, there has been limited research on ways to deal with the lack of diversity in BHOs. Organization X requires assistance to develop methods to support more diversity in its GIFT program. The results may help future BHOs faced with the same issue because evidence has shown that the lack of diversity in the BHO workplace needs to be resolved (Pizio, 2020). Section 3 explores the organization's workplace environment, management processes, program operations, community engagement, and program assessment and evaluation processes.

Section 3: Workforce, Operations, Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management

Component of the Organization

Organization X's WET has clearly outlined its desire to create and maintain a work environment that includes student intern participants from many cultural backgrounds. WET has established a program application process that welcomes all qualified candidates to apply to its GIFT program. However, despite the organization's efforts to establish a diversified group of student participants, there continues to be a lack of diversity in the program. WET's current GIFT program demographics show that most of the interns in the program are female students and that approximately 75% of the women are of Hispanic origin. The organization has identified the need to develop and implement methods to increase diversity in the GIFT program.

To ensure a more well-rounded program, the organization is dedicated to diversifying its workforce and developing a pipeline of diverse and talented future employees (Pasley, 2017). The organization's leaders want to develop recruitment and retention methods that will encourage individuals from many cultural backgrounds to apply to the GIFT program. The recruitment of more ethnic and cultural minorities is essential in creating a sustainably diverse environment in health care (Vera, 2020).

To assist the organization, I first had to identify its current practices and procedures to recruit, hire, and train student interns. It also was necessary to explore the methods in place to prepare student interns to work in a diverse environment with coworkers and community members, and to review and understand the policies and procedures ensuring that student interns understood cultural diversity and equal

employment opportunities. In addition, it was important to understand the role of managers in preparing and implementing practical training to clients and partner agencies, as well as understand how the organization evaluated, assessed, and measured the success of training programs, recruitment processes and procedures, and employee retention rates.

Analysis of the Organization

To explore the cultural dynamics of the GIFT program, I had to collect additional information from the BHL about the organization's workforce operations and how it measured, analyzed, and assessed the effectiveness of the training programs provided by WET, as well as how the organization developed methods to improve organizational performance. Data were collected from four interviews with the BHL and reviews of policies and procedures, program incentive information, and training site and training materials. The organizational analysis was divided into six areas: workplace environment, management processes, program operations, engagement, program assessment, and evaluation processes.

Workforce Environment

According to the BHL, the organization's WET had developed an effective workforce environment through regular assessments and evaluations of client populations and services (personal communication, October 28, 2020). This information was obtained from staff and client demographics, diagnosis information, and indicators of improvement. WET also provided advanced training to student interns, other staff, and partner agencies. WET had developed a supportive workforce by providing the effective

supervision of staff and by offering employee recognition programs, staff development programs, licensure support/training, and financial incentives such as loan repayment and support with applying to state and federal repayment programs. WET also provided tuition reimbursement for professional growth and promotions. To meet the training needs of student intern participants in the GIFT program, WET ensured that materials and curricula promoted cultural and linguistic competency to help future BHLs improve their ability to respond to clients' needs respectfully. The training provided was designed to increase self-awareness and understanding of clients' cultural identities. Student interns also were provided with weekly individual supervision and mentorship from highly qualified behavioral health professionals (BHL, personal communication, October 28, 2020).

WET's GIFT program is the largest public service formal internship program in the region. The program has affiliated agreements with more than 20 educational institutions and graduate programs that offer a specialty in mental health (Organization website, 2019). As a result of successful completion of the GIFT program, WET continues to hire more than 50% of the graduating student cohorts (Organization website, 2019). Internships provide a multitude of benefits for students and future professionals, and they are beneficial in terms of cost efficiency to organizations (Nghia & Duyen, 2019).

To prepare student interns to apply for full-time positions with the organization, WET ensures that the students receive quality supervision and support, as well as hands-on experience, from licensed professionals. Clinical experiences are considered an

important aspect of nursing education, which is essential for developing clinical judgment and ethical decision-making skills (Mousa et al., 2020). This comprehensive training enhances students' skills and knowledge of behavioral and mental health. WET gathers demographic data from staff and clients, as well as diagnostic information needed to evaluate and assess the effectiveness of WET's programs and services. The data are then analyzed to determine if the organization has met treatment goals.

Workforce Engagement

WET achieved a high-performance workplace environment by developing and implementing an employee recognition program, which was designed to recognize staff achievements contributing to the success of Organization X in meeting its objectives (Organization website, 2019). The program has four categories of recognition: Employee Appreciation Month/Week, Employee Spotlight, Department Historian, and Nurturing Hope. Employees who are recognized receive a letter or certification of congratulations, and their names are mentioned in newsletters, during staff meetings, and so on. Employee recognition programs have been proven to reinforce and motivate higher performance and improve productivity (Saunderson, 2016).

In addition to the employee recognition program, the BHO offers licensure support, which grants employees legal permission to practice specific professions. Providing licensure support helps to enhance employees' skills and increase their opportunities for promotional growth. Organization X also provides financial incentives such as tuition reimbursement, which provides employees with assistance in repaying student loans. The organization offers employees support toward applying for state and

federal loan repayment programs, and it provides advanced training opportunities and staff development programs.

The organization provides the aforementioned specialized programs, training, and educational support and assistance to enhance the effectiveness of WET and encourage the continued interest of student interns in pursuing careers in behavioral health. The goal of the organization is to continue to recruit culturally diverse, qualified individuals into the GIFT program so that they may develop their skills and knowledge sufficiently enough to be hired as permanent employees of Organization X once they have completed the internship program. To meet this goal, WET continues to develop methods to communicate the needs of the interns to its human resources (HR) department by educating HR about the GIFT program, positions available, and positions needed. WET recognizes that student internship programs and opportunities create not only a larger pool of job applicants, but also a larger group of well-rounded, successful, and recovery-oriented partners in transformation (Organization website, 2013).

In addition to providing programs and encouraging student interns to continue to pursue careers in behavioral health, Organization X recruits staff through the organization's website, emails, and indeed.com. The organization offers sign-on bonuses for specific positions with high turnover rates as well as a referral program that provides bonuses for employees who recruit qualified candidates who subsequently are hired. Effective employee referral programs are among the most cost-effective recruitment methods because they generate interest from a great number of high-quality candidates

and can help to increase employee morale and organizational brand recognition (Douglas & Khandaker, 2019).

WET also encourages engagement in the workplace by holding regular staff meetings. Occasionally, meetings are held across the department, and monthly unit meetings and individual meetings with supervisors are scheduled. Meetings give employees the opportunity to share information, present organization and community updates, and offer input and insight into topics on the agendas. Meetings are scheduled via email and calendar invitations. Attendance at meetings may be optional, but more often than not, attendance is mandatory because the subject matter is important enough for everyone to be aware of it immediately. Mitonga-Monga (2019) asserted that fostering ongoing communication among employees increases relationship building and encourages organizational commitment and workplace engagement. Employees who lack organizational commitment tend to be less engaged in their work and more dissatisfied with their jobs (Mitonga-Mongo, 2019).

Workforce Management

As illustrated in Figure 1, WET operates under two administrative directors, a deputy director, a mental health services administrator, and an administrative services manager. The BHL is responsible for maintaining the operations of the department, including ensuring that employment needs are met (personal communication, July 23, 2020). The BHL determines staffing needs by communicating the needs to the deputy director, who seeks approval to hire staff based on the finance and HR department (BHL, personal communication, July 23, 2020).

Once approvals have been granted, the HR recruiting officer/analyst advertises positions as part of the recruitment and hiring processes. Once the recruiting officer/analyst has obtained a pool of qualified applicants, the candidates are screened, and the information is provided to the BHL and supervising staff, who contact the prospective candidates and arrange interviews (BHL, personal communication, July 23, 2020). After candidates are selected, their employment is contingent on their acceptance of the employment offer and their ability to pass the background screening. Once the background screenings have been completed successfully, candidates complete the new employee orientation and paperwork.

They are then assigned to their respective units, and in most cases, they must complete a new employee training/induction class. New employees are then assigned to supervisors who are responsible for assigning duties and assessing their ability to fulfill these duties. All newly hired employees must pass a 1-year probationary period to maintain employment with Organization X. Supervisors maintain evaluations of the staff assigned to them and report on their progress to the BHL on an initial 6-month time frame and yearly thereafter (BHL, personal communication, July 23, 2020).

In addition to the hiring and supervising processes, the BHL reports to the mental health services administrator and deputy directors (BHL, personal communication, October 28, 2020). Each department in Organization X has a similar format; however, the HR department is responsible for managing the recruitment and selection processes, position classification, compensation administration, and benefits administration, and for providing support for employees' labor relation functions. HR personnel meet with

employees and employee groups to discuss grievances, complaints, and issues, and resolve them in cooperation with line management and employee groups consistent with county policies and memoranda of understanding (governmentjobs.com, 2020). The quality assurance department of Organization X is responsible for the development, implementation, monitoring, and annual evaluation of extensive quality assurance/assessment, continuous quality improvement, and the enforcement of policies and procedures (governmentjobs.com).

The organization ensures effective management and operations through oversight of the organizational hierarchy in addition to performance evaluations. All employees, regardless of position and tenure, are required to follow established policies and procedure to meet the organization's mission and vision, which is to encourage and promote the recruitment, retention, and acceleration of the recovery-oriented practice and training skills of those who serve individuals and their family members and lead the transformation of health care, inspire wellness, collaborate with the community, and bring hope and healing to those they serve (Organization website, 2013). The employees' direct supervisors are responsible for conducting performance evaluations by assessing employees' abilities in various domains. The evaluations are used to drive merit-based step increases, as well as determine employees' potential for promotion.

If employees are not meeting the expectations of their positions, additional training and interventions, which may include disciplinary actions, are initiated as needed. However, before any disciplinary actions are taken, employees are entitled to receive verbal and written warnings, as well as participate in corrective measures (BHL,

personal communication, October 28, 2020). Depending on their positions in Organization X, employees are represented by their respective unions. After the first year of employment with the organization, employees are no longer considered at-will employees, so disciplinary action must be completed, allowing the employees to seek union representation. Union representatives are responsible for helping employees to resolve workplace issues, complaints, and grievances, and they also act as bargaining representatives when negotiations are involved (BHL, personal communication, October 28, 2020).

Union representatives work with the organization to determine employee benefit and compensation packages. Unionized employees benefit from having union representatives who can negotiate on their behalf (Castro, 2014). According to the 2019 employee handbook, in addition to merit increases, Organization X offers several other benefits: options for individual and group health and dental insurance, life insurance, state disability insurance, and long-term disability insurance; workers' compensation and deferred compensation; flexible spending plans; retirement plans; leave time that includes paid holidays, vacation, sick, bereavement, military and jury duty; and employee resources and discounts for various services. As mentioned previously, the organization also offers employee recognition programs that showcase employees' achievements and dedication to years of service.

Organization X has measures in place to ensure the safety and well-being of employees while conducting business. As mentioned in the 2019 employee handbook, the organization enforces a hostile-free and zero-tolerance workplace environment. The

organization also supports a drug-free environment and tests employees for drug use randomly or if there is reasonable suspicion of drug use. The organization offers a grievance procedure to mitigate issues between employees and their supervisors and managers, or other employees whom they feel have created an uncomfortable workplace environment for them. The HR department is responsible for monitoring employment-related issues and concerns.

The BHO is responsible for ensuring that state, federal, and county policies and procedures are followed in all practice areas. Employees receive the employee handbook and have access to all of the policies related to departmental operations. The organization ensures compliance by conducting evaluations, assessments, and audits of employees' practices and departmental operations. Staff engagement and input on employees' job satisfaction are assessed through employment satisfaction surveys. This method provides WET with feedback regarding employees' experiences and perceptions of the organization's operations. When completing surveys, employees have the option of remaining anonymous to protect their privacy. Survey results are reviewed and analyzed by the WET management team. Results provide WET with direction for implementing changes that may be necessary to improve organizational practices (BHL, personal communication, October 28, 2020).

Organization X designs, manages, and improves its key services and work processes by continually assessing the needs of WET through the collection of data from organization members and stakeholders. Data are analyzed and reviewed to identify trends and areas needing improvement, and to determine best practices and approaches

for further program implementation and departmental growth. WET collects feedback from the student interns by having them complete anonymous surveys about their experiences in the GIFT program, including field and personal experiences, challenges that they may have faced, quality of the supervision and support received, training received, recommendations for future training, and future employment goals. The survey allows students to share their feelings about and perceptions of the quality of the GIFT program. WET leaders review and analyze the survey responses to determine if there is a need to make changes to the program as well as assess the program's effectiveness. Key processes are reviewed monthly, quarterly, or yearly, depending on the type of review or information needed (BHL, personal communication, January 25, 2021).

Organization X promotes a workplace environment that encourages communication and internal relationship building by conducting regular staff and regional meetings. The dates and times are decided by supervisors, administrators, or directors via an email calendar invitation that is sent to staff. Staff members are informed whether each meeting is mandatory or optional. Some meetings are informational and provide department updates, whereas other meetings may be for the purpose of team building or meet and greets, or to provide information about policies and procedures. In addition to group meetings, the organization also holds individual (one-on-one) meetings between supervisors and employees. Nurturing engaged workers is paramount to fostering workers' performance in the workplace (Rahmadani et al., 2020). Individual meetings may be scheduled to address issues and concerns, answer questions, or discuss personal and developmental goals that employees would like to accomplish. WET also

communicates changes through county and department-wide newsletters and email blasts (BHL, personal communication, January 25, 2021).

Mitonga-Monga (2019) stated that employees who are engaged, confident, and knowledgeable about their duties often are involved, enthusiastic, and psychologically committed to their work and the organizations. To ensure the competence and quality performance of student interns in the GIFT program, the organization requires the students to complete preplacement training, ongoing cultural competence training, and as hands-on weekly supervision and field experience. The training and experience offered were designed to develop student interns and prepare them for careers in behavioral health services. Cultural competency training is available via an online learning system (BHL, personal communication, January 25, 2021). Additional training is offered in the office and through virtual learning platforms. Some training opportunities are self-paced, and others are scheduled for completion on specific dates and times. Ongoing evaluations are conducted to assess the ability of the student interns to understand and implement program policies and practices. Compliance and performance are measured by reviewing reports, which are pulled by the quality assurance department and provided to managers for review with supervisors. Once the student interns have completed the training and supervision, they are encouraged to apply for permanent behavioral health-related positions in WET as the positions become available (BHL, personal communication, January 25, 2021).

In an ongoing effort to ensure that students and staff are aware of policies, procedures, and practices, they all have access to an online county portal that contains all

policy manuals, alerts, and forms, employee handbooks, HR information, management

and support team news, training sites, facilities information, fiscal information, and

program technology information. The portal's Help section and search engine allow team

members easy access to information (BHL, personal communication, October 28, 2020).

Knowledge Management

Organization X measures, analyzes, and improves organizational performance by

accessing data, recognizing trends, communicating with stakeholders, and researching

and implementing best practices and approaches. The organization also conducts regular

performance evaluations of staff and implements staff development techniques, in

addition to requesting feedback from student interns. According to the BHL, the

leadership team in WET are responsible for oversight and supervision, in combination

with evaluations, assessments, and program adjustments as needed (personal

communication, October 28, 2020). The organization ensures effective organizational

performance and business management through its efforts to implement organization

hierarchy and accountability and transparency with the public (Organization website,

2019).

According to the BHL, WET manages organizational knowledge assets,

information, and information technology infrastructure through the organic sharing of

historical and institutional knowledge in the mentorship process (personal

communication, October 28, 2020). The organization has archived its policies and

procedures, and these documents are accessible to all employees and interns. The

information technology administrator in WET is responsible for managing sensitive and

protected information technology infrastructures and platforms that include departmental

applications, security firewalls, internet protection, data servers, building security, and all

other employee technology equipment. Susarla and Mukhopadhyay (2019) suggested that

effective information technology practices resulted in substantial long-term

improvements in operating efficiency, business process capability, and strategic

performance of the clients mentioned in their study. In addition, implementing methods

to foster adequate knowledge regarding the use of systems and programs allows

organizations to operate more efficiently (Susarla & Mukhopadhyay, 2019).

To ensure that staff and interns understand how to use programs and equipment

safely and securely, Organization X provides them with access to information about

policies and procedures. The organization has a specific policy on confidentiality related

to the handling of sensitive, personally identifiable information. The organization has

another policy on how to encrypt and secure email correspondence, report suspicious

activity, and identify potentially dangerous program threats. Included in the policy

information is the statement informing staff that office equipment is to be used for

business purposes only. As per Department Policy 13-016 (2018), WET staff are

prohibited from using department-issued equipment to complete non-job-related duties.

Employees may not use personal equipment for work duties, other than to

participate in virtual training. Staff are not allowed to download any programs or

software. In addition, computers, office phones, email accounts, and program accounts

require employees to enter passwords to gain access. Clients do not have access to the

same software as employees, but they are able to access client portals, which also are

managed and maintained by the information technology department at Organization X (BHL, personal communication, January 25, 2021). The organization requires all staff members to complete training on personal identifiable information, information/privacy security, and asset assignments and tracking. These training sessions must be completed yearly. Email reminders to complete the training are sent to employees and their supervisors at least 2 months prior to the due date.

The organization controls costs through budget oversight and regular review at all levels. According to the BHL, the organization also leverages opportunities for collaboration and shared responsibilities, in addition to applying for grants through funding streams when available (BHL, personal communication, January 25, 2020). The organization manages its work with third-party vendors for purchasing supplies and material through transparent and comprehensive procurement and material management process. The organization's auditor-controller office handles transactions made with contracted vendors by ensuring adherence to state and federal rules for securing vendors.

Summary and Transition

Section 3 provided insight into the process at Organization X for building an effective and supportive workplace environment. Section 3 also explored how the organization engages staff to ensure a high-performance work environment, and how the organization has designed, managed, and improved key services and work processes. The organization implements regular assessments and observations of programs to ensure their effectiveness and identify any need for modifications. The organization also provides staff with extensive training opportunities, including supervision, support, and

mentorship, to ensure their understanding of the organization and the duties required of the positions that they hold.

To ensure effective communication and engagement, the organization holds regular staff meetings. Some of the meetings are mandatory; others are optional. However, all meetings are informative and give staff the opportunity to provide feedback. The organization also conducts staff performance evaluations to ensure that individuals understand their roles and duties in the organization. WET ensures a safe and efficient work environment by providing a system that gives team members easy access to information about policies and procedures that provide details about the requirements and expectations of team members, as well as what can be expected of the organization. In addition, the organization offers a secured method for accessing and sharing sensitive and personal information, and team members are required to remain compliant when sending and receiving correspondence.

The Baldrige excellence framework was used to explore and analyze methods for strengthening cultural diversity in the organization's GIFT program. The study focused on practices implemented by the organization to improve the focus on core values and concepts. As such, the Baldrige excellence framework was applied to help the BHO to achieve success and maintain sustainability (NIST, 2017).

Section 4: Results: Analysis, Implications, and Preparation of Findings

The purpose of this doctoral study was to explore the issue of lack of diversity within an organization's student intern program and identify strategies for creating greater diversity within the workplace. During the past 2 years, the organization's GIFT program has been composed of approximately 75% female and 25% male student interns. The majority of the participants have been of Latino/Hispanic origin. A review of the organization's 2019-2020 GIFT program cohort demographic report indicated the following percentages of program participants: 47% Latinx/Hispanic, 28% White, 8% Asia/Pacific Islander, 8% Black/African American, 6% Multicultural, and 3% Native American. The GIFT program is under the auspices of WET and was a favorable organization for this study because the BHL had identified a lack of diversity in the GIFT program as an issue needing remediation. The BHL recognized the lack of diversity as having a potentially negative impact on the sustainability of the GIFT program, as well as being a barrier to program retention (personal communication, January 25, 2021). The GIFT program has been providing extensive mental health training to student interns, employees, and staff of partner agencies for several years. According to the organization's website, new programs continue to be adopted and implemented through WET, which values a diverse work environment that supports team members and individuals from various cultural backgrounds. The goal of the department is to promote cultural competence and awareness, as indicated on the organization's website.

In recognizing the need to increase diversity in behavioral health care, a part of the training that WET offers focuses on diversity education. Marques (2019) remarked

that increasing diversity requires looking at current approaches more closely to find solutions for change. Organization X identified the need for a more practical method to recruit and accept a more diverse group of students into the GIFT program. Pizio (2020) suggested that enhancing workplace diversity may promote and encourage the development of a culturally rich work environment that gives team members a sense of inclusiveness and makes clients more comfortable, knowing that their needs will be met.

In conducting this research, it was necessary to collect and review pertinent research literature related to diversity in the workplace that focused mainly on BHOs. It also was essential to review topics pertaining to the effect of the lack of cultural diversity in health care, methods to increase cultural diversity in the workplace, and ways that leadership influence business sustainability. I held ongoing interviews with the BHL to obtain vital information about the overall functioning of the organization. Demographic information on the student interns as well as information about the program recruitment process and application format was collected. I also collected information from the student feedback surveys, the organizational chart, and the FY 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 strategic plans; services offered; the mission, vision, and values statements; public websites; and other pertinent sources. The data provided by the BHL were obtained through email correspondence, personal communication, and the organization's website. Presented in Section 4 are a review and analysis of the research results and implications for the organization's GIFT program as well as future studies.

Analysis, Results, and Implications

Organization X's WET offers five programs: workforce staffing support, training and technical assistance, mental health career pathways, financial incentives for workforce development, and a residency and internship program that consists of the GIFT program. The GIFT program was designed to provide extensive training to prepare students for careers in the behavioral health sciences. According to the organization's website, students in the GIFT program receive 90 hours of preplacement training and weekly individual hands-on field experience. A review of the organization's website indicated that to be eligible to join the GIFT program, students must be enrolled in a postgraduate program such as a master' of social work, marriage and family therapy, or professional clinical counseling program. Candidates also must complete an online application. Candidates who are accepted into the program are offered various training opportunities (see Table 1).

Table 1

Training/Services Offered to GIFT Student Interns

General training	Cultural competency for behavioral health professionals	Supervision/Field experience
Orientation/program overview	Introduction to linguistic competency	Supervised field experience (90 hrs)
Recovery and service Delivery structure	Increasing self-awareness	
Psychosocial assessment	Increasing awareness of your client's cultural identity	
Differential diagnosis for adults and children	Culturally and linguistically appropriate interventions & services	
Nonviolent crisis Intervention		
Mental health risk Awareness		
Electronic management of records		

The BHL indicated during the interviews that WET continues to enhance its GIFT program and identify ways to add more enrichment services. As students complete their training and field experience, they are encouraged to apply for positions in WET. According to the BHL, the department hires more than 50% of the graduates of the GIFT program.

Client-Focused Results

Organization X prides itself on providing exceptional services to the student interns, employees, and staff of partnering agencies. To ensure engagement and communication between the organization and community members, WET uses social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat. The organization's annual plan update for FY 2019 indicated that the use of social media had produced positive results. During FY 2018, the organization received 258,551 impressions; in FY 2017, the number of impressions received was 161,823 (see Figure 3). Data were analyzed by comparing the number of impressions from 2017 to 2018 to determine whether there was an increase in social media engagement. The results yielded a 59% increase in impressions, the number of times that posts from the organization's webpage were shared on feeds. The organization also had a tremendous increase in fan followers and video views. During FY 2018-2019, the organization received more than 7,000 "likes" and "shares," which was approximately a 13% increase from the prior year.

Figure 3

Social Media Impression Chart

Social Media Impressions
2017/2018 Fiscal Year
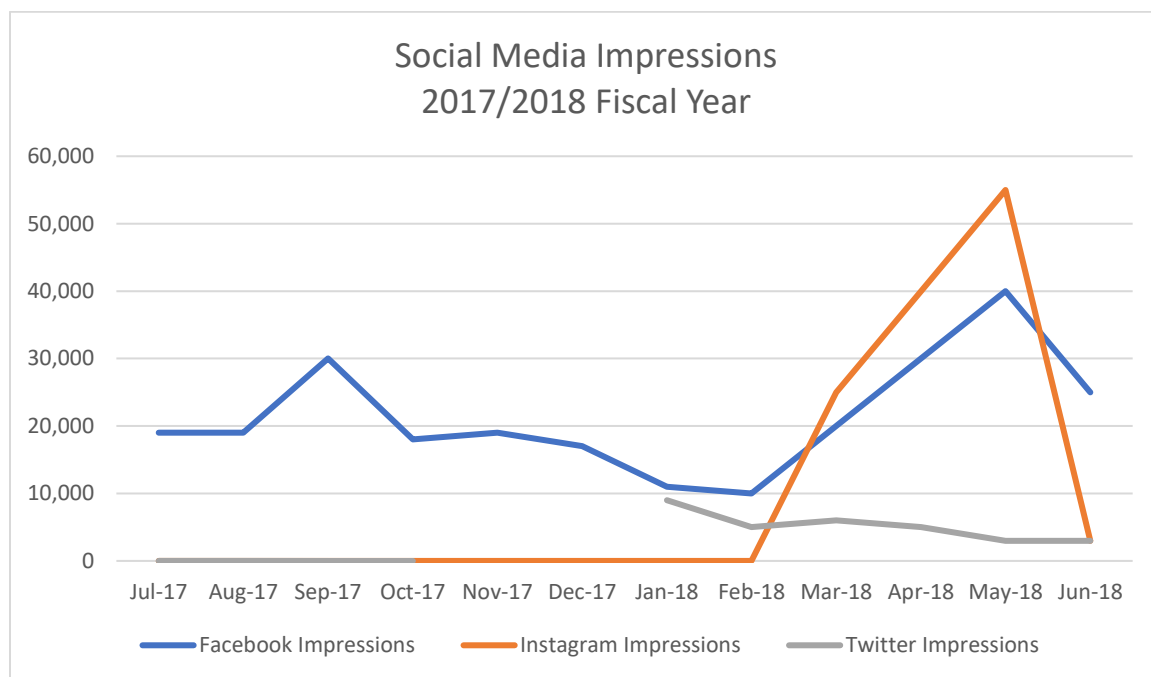
WET wants to continue to increase its social media engagement to attract more clients. The department plans to enhance its community resource offerings, such as training and technical support, and mental health outreach, and its ability to offer additional resources to children and families. WET wants to refine the GIFT program by improving the student recruitment and selection processes, enhancing social media marketing strategies, increasing cultural competency training opportunities, and improving tools to evaluate clinical and professional skills. WET also wants to improve its methods for collecting and accessing data, as indicated on the organization's website.

Student surveys and postquestionnaires help the organization to understand program feedback and then determine the need to modify the GIFT program for

improvement purposes. The surveys and postquestionnaires capture students' feedback regarding individual feelings toward GIFT program satisfaction and challenges. The surveys and postquestionnaires also capture students' feelings about areas needing improvement, the quality of the field experience and supervision received, the effectiveness of training, recommendation of the program to future interns, and the likelihood that the students will apply for positions in WET once they graduate from the program.

The results of the surveys are reviewed by the leadership team, including the BHL. The overall results have indicated that students are satisfied with the program and that they would recommend the program to future students. However, students also have made several suggestions, including the need for more cultural humility training, more diverse field experience locations, and more opportunities to receive group supervision. Students also expressed a desire for paid internship positions.

According to the BHL, student satisfaction/feedback surveys are provided to the student interns in paper format or via email during the students' final meeting with key team members. The survey results are reviewed by key team members. The internship coordinator reviews all qualitative responses to identify evident or emergent trends. The research assistant is then responsible for helping managers to scale the responses. For FY 2018-2019, 36 students completed the 10-question student satisfaction survey, and for FY 2019-2020, 33 students completed the survey. The open-ended survey questions gave the student interns the opportunity to elaborate on their responses. The results of the survey are represented in Table 2.

Table 2

Student Satisfaction/Feedback Survey Questions and Common Responses, 2018-2019

Survey questions	Frequent responses
1. What did you like about your field experience?	• The range of experience • Diversity of clients • Training and supervision offered
2. What did you find more challenging about your placement experience?	• Electronic medical records • Documentation • Managing my time
3. How can we improve our agency's field experience for future students?	• Provide more training opportunities • Provide more group experience • Allow students to attend outside trainings
4. How would you rate the quality of supervision you were provided?	• Supervision was great • 10 out of 10 • Empowering, honest, and compassionate feedback and training
5. How can we improve the quality of our supervision?	• Have more group supervision • No complaints • Provide supervisors more training
6. How are the student trainings useful to you (orientations, workshops, etc.)?	• Extremely helpful • Trainings helped me with my clients • They armed with skills and understanding of techniques/theories
7. What additional training would you recommend?	• More trainings • Trainings on therapeutic approaches • Trainings on demographics, law & ethics, sexual assault, and cultural humility
8. Would you recommend a placement with the GIFT program to future students?	• All students said "Yes"
9. Will you be applying for a position with the organization once you graduate?	• Most students said "Yes"
10. Do you feel prepared to accept an entry-level position within the organization?	• Most students said "Yes"

The student surveys were analyzed by reviewing the questions that were asked for FY 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 to determine if questions for both years were the same. Each student's response to each question was reviewed. Coding was used to convert the answers into short phrases to represent fundamental attributes that were categorized into groups based on similarities. Coding helped to determine the most frequent responses provided for each question, based on how many students provided the same or similar responses. The three most commonly stated responses were selected from all of the survey questions. Most students expressed satisfaction with their experience in the GIFT program. Many of the students also indicated that they would recommend the program to future students. However, many of the students recommended changes to the training that was offered, specifically suggesting that the program offer more training on cultural demographics, law and ethics, and cultural humility. The organization makes changes to the GIFT program based on the students' responses. The BHL noted that in some cases, the organization implements problem-solving methods to remedy particular concerns and improve identified aspects of the program. The survey questions are related to the students' overall experience while in the GIFT program.

Workforce-Focused Results

Student satisfaction surveys and feedback are requested from students upon their completion of the GIFT internship program. I reviewed the survey questions and student responses to determine the organization's ability to incorporate diversity-related practices into the GIFT program. I used code structuring to identify emerging themes, such as diversity training, diversity of clients, and diversity in the workplace. An analysis of the

FY 2018-2019 student satisfaction survey showed that no specific survey questions were relevant to culture and diversity. However, based on student responses to the question that asked about recommendations for additional training, most students recommended that the program implement more training related to cultural awareness. In addition, the WET website indicated that the GIFT program aims to enhance the cultural awareness of student interns to prepare them to work with people from various cultural backgrounds. Pizio (2020) suggested that organizations strive to address barriers and create a diverse and inclusive workplace environment by enhancing the cultural awareness of employees.

According to the BHL, the GIFT program wants to provide future student interns with more cultural diversity training opportunities. The department's website indicates that WET wants to enhance the cultural awareness of the student interns to prepare them to work with people from various cultural backgrounds. The BHL also explained during the interview that WET wants to provide future student interns with more training opportunities in cultural diversity.

After reviewing the students' responses, it became evident to me that many students were satisfied with the range of experience, training, and supervision offered by the organization. Overall, many students expressed satisfaction with the program, indicating that they felt that their skills and knowledge regarding health care systems had been enhanced as a result of their participation in the GIFT program. Most students replied "yes" when asked if they would recommend the program to future students. I did not receive the results of the FY 2019-2020 student intern survey because the organization was still in the review process at the time of the study. Continuing to

implement the survey and analyze the results of the data is important because it gives students the opportunity to recommended upgrades to the program for future students. This information also is useful for understanding student engagement in and satisfaction with the GIFT program.

In addition to completing the student satisfaction feedback survey, the student interns responded to a 40-question postquestionnaire that covered various aspects of the interns' training experience. The Likert rating scale offered five choices to answer each question that ranged from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 5 (*strongly disagree*). In FY 2018-2019 and FY 2019-2020, most of the responses recorded were *strongly agree* or *agree*, indicating that many of the students felt an overall sense of competency in basic therapeutic skills development after completing the GIFT program. In reviewing the results of the postquestionnaire from FY 2018-2019, 36 students were asked 40 questions, five of which were relevant to culture and diversity (see Figure 4).

Figure 4

Questions and Responses Relevant to Culture and Diversity for FY 2018-2019
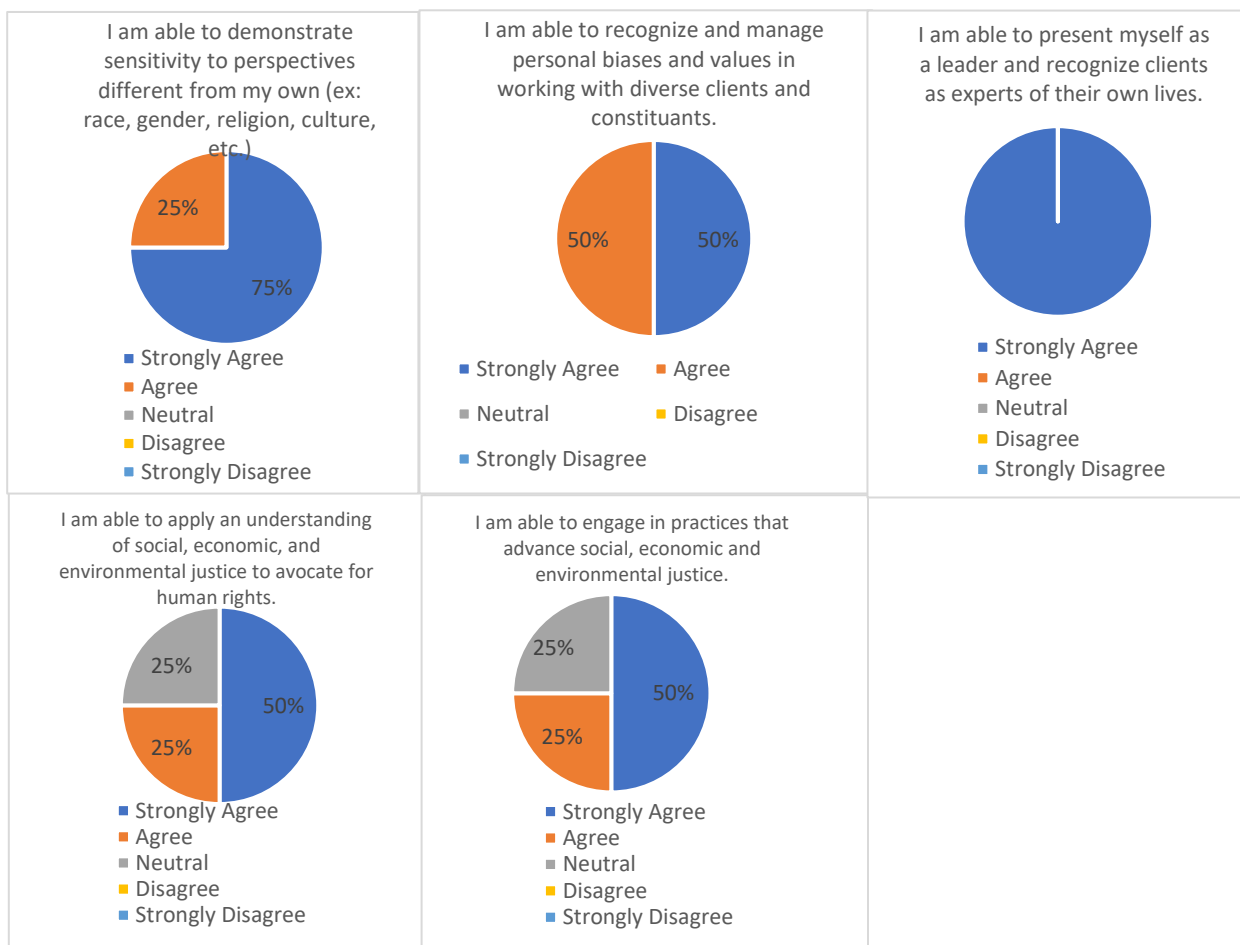
A review of the postquestionnaire questions for FY 2019-2020 showed the responses from 33 students, who were asked 40 questions. Of the 40 questions asked, six were related to culture and diversity (see Figure 5).

Figure 5

Questions and Responses Relevant to Culture and Diversity for FY 2019-2020
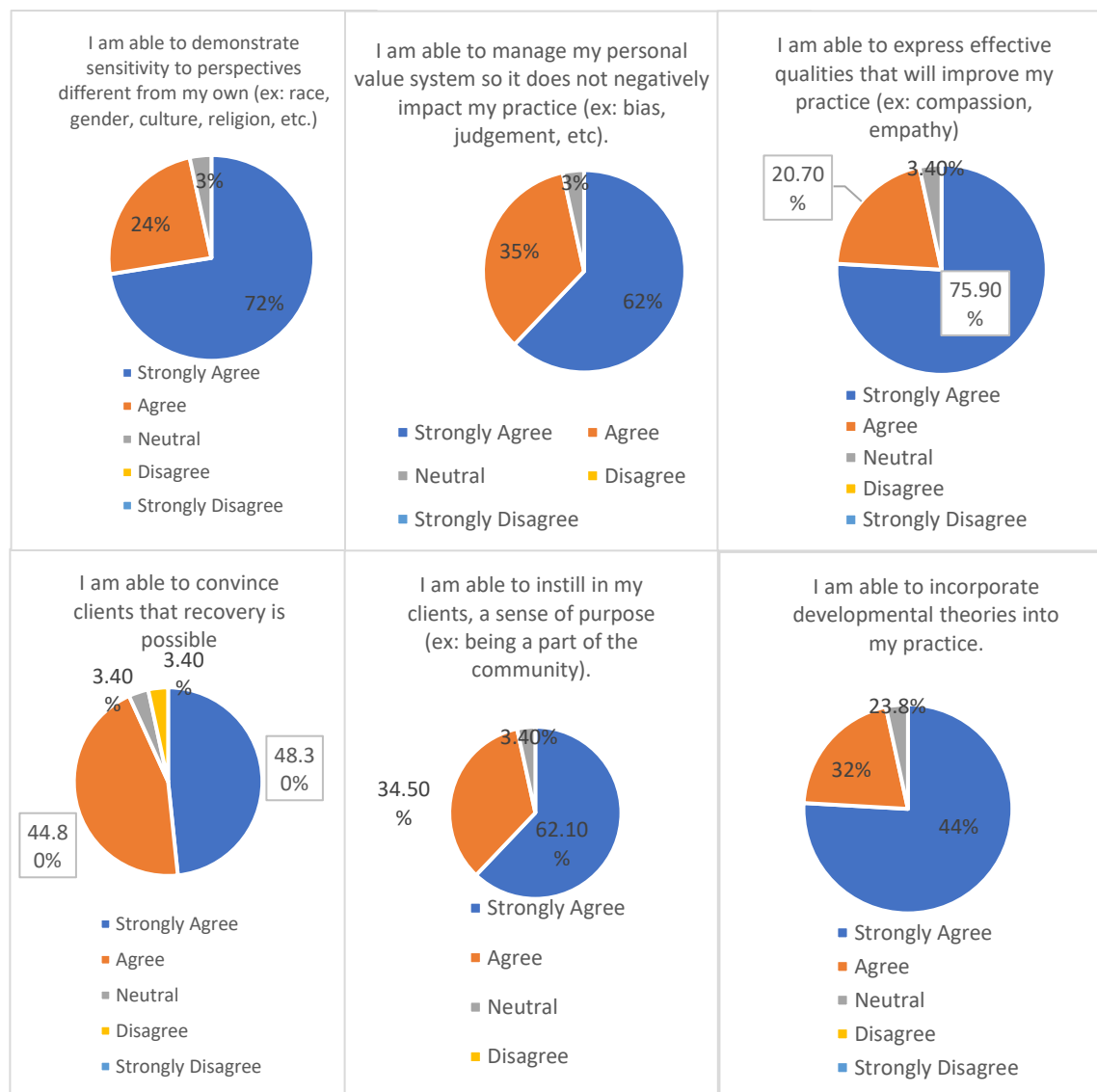
The data were analyzed by reviewing the questionnaires for FY 2018-2019 and

FY 2019-2020 and then applying reoccurring coding to identify themes related to culture

and diversity. These themes included personal biases and values, race, religion, gender,

culture, social justice, and human rights. Questions were pulled from each year's

questionnaires to identify those relevant to the themes. Five questions were compiled into

pie charts for FY 2018-2019, and six questions were compiled into pie charts for FY

2019-2020. Developing pie charts allowed me to focus on the student responses related to

diversity to determine the students' perspectives on how the organization prepared them

to work with diverse populations of clients.

During FY 2018-2019 and FY 2019-2020, the organization included questions

related to culture and diversity on the surveys. However, there was a change in the

wording of some questions. According to the results of the most recent postquestionnaire

responses, it appears that the organization may have improved in some areas, as

evidenced by an increase in the number of student interns who indicated that they were

able to manage their personal value systems appropriately to avoid bias and judgment

when working with diverse clients. Regarding that question, on the FY 2018-2019

survey, 50% of students responded with *strongly agree*; 62% of students responded with

strongly agree on the FY 2019-2020 survey. However, the FY 2019/2020 survey showed

a very small decrease in the percentage of students who responded with *strongly agree* to

the question about their ability to demonstrate sensitivity to perspectives different from

their own. In this case, on the FY 2018-2019 survey, 75% percent of students responded

strongly agree, in comparison to 72% of students who responded *strongly agree* on the

FY 2019-2020 survey.

In addition, there were no neutral responses on the FY 2018-2019 survey, but on

the FY 2019-2020 survey, 3% of students responded with *neutral* for this question. As for

the remaining questions, there was no way to compare the students' responses from one fiscal year to the other because the wording of some of the questions had changed. However, the results of the postquestionnaires did show the organization's efforts to address the importance of students having the ability to work with people from various cultural backgrounds. The student intern surveys indicated that many of the students recommended that more opportunities be made available to work with clients from different cultural backgrounds. In addition, the organization's strategic plan highlighted the desire of WET to support to address culturally informed practices and expand training opportunities that would prepare student to work in various cultural capacities. A review and analysis of the information relevant to student feedback on culture and diversity was useful in facilitating my exploration of the organization's cultural diversity practices.

However, the results of the postquestionnaire supported the organization's efforts to address the importance of students having the ability to work with people from various cultural backgrounds. The surveys completed by the student interns held the recommendation to make more opportunities to work with clients from different cultural backgrounds available. The strategic plan highlighted the intention of WET to support culturally informed practices and expand training opportunities to prepare the students to work in various cultural capacities. The review and analysis of the information relevant to student feedback on culture and diversity were useful in exploring the organization's cultural diversity practices.

Leadership and Governance Results

In addition to reviewing student surveys and postquestionnaires to identify areas that may need remediation, the organization engages in strategic planning. According to the BHL, the organization has been developing strategic plans since 2005. The organization develops 3-year plans that are reviewed each fiscal year to track progress. The review of the organization's strategic plan for FY review 2018-2019 and FY 2020-2021 was analyzed for this study. The data that I received also included the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 GIFT program cohort demographic information on gender identity, ages, languages, and race and ethnicity; the 2018-2019 and 2019/2020 MHSA annual plan updates and county accountability certification; the MHSA WET plan and strategies for FY 2018-2019 and FY 2020-2021; community demographics and setting; and the regulatory environment, including the organization's governance.

The data were analyzed by applying triangulation to ensure trustworthiness. The BHL indicated that the management team identified a plan to address fives areas needing improvement within the department (BHL, personal communication, July 23, 2020). Strategic plan information was also located on the organization's website, as well as provided in the organization's MHSA annual plan update. The strategic plan was reviewed to identify areas that address culture and diversity, to determine its desire to enhance diversity and cultural awareness within the WET department. Embedding cultural competency practices in organizational plans are more likely to result in sustained change within the organization (Truong et al., 2014).

In reviewing WET's strategic plan for 2018-2019, the organization identified five plans and their corresponding goals:

Plan 1: Workforce Staffing Support

- Hire a coordinator, a staff development officer of training, and a staff development officer of education to provide staffing structure to support the function of WET.

Plan 2: Training and Technical Assistance

- Implement additional training opportunities focused on evidence-based practices, advanced training, and recovery skills, in addition to funding other relevant training functions.

- Implement a new employee welcome orientation designed to give new employees an overview of the organization's service delivery system.

- Implement additional training designed to meet the performance needs of administrative supervisors and clinical development supervisors.

- Provide funding, planning, and support to address culturally informed practices, as well as a goal to collaborate with local law enforcement agencies and first responders to provide them with behavioral health training.

- Expand awareness of and access to resources using social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Snapchat.

Plan 3: Career Pathways

- Continue to provide planning, funding, and support to address the assimilation and development of peer support staff in the organization.

- Implement staff support programs to assist prelicensed clinical therapists in the areas of professional and clinical skills development, as needed, for staff to pass state licensure exams.

- Promote mental health careers for students at the junior high school, high school, and community college levels.

- Enhance the volunteer services program.

Plan 4: Internship and Residency Programs

- Continue to provide internship programs for local students from various culturally diverse capacities who are seeking advanced degrees in the behavioral sciences.

- Enhance the recruitment of individuals from various backgrounds to increase gender and cultural diversity in the organization.

- Provide additional planning and support for psychiatric resident placement and training to encourage careers in behavioral health.

- Provide additional training for student practitioners to enhance their skills and prepare them to serve public behavioral health clients.

- Implement additional internship programs for local substance abuse counseling students.

Plan 5: Financial Incentive Programs

- Provide and promote financial incentives and support to staff to encourage career development and retention in the organization.

- Continue to enhance the organization's 20/20 program, which provides educational support and financial assistance to organization members.

According to the organization's strategic plan, WET's actions and strategies are separated by the funding categories designed by the MHSA. Each of the five categories highlights areas that need to be improved based on WET's mission. The strategic plan is implemented by WET's leadership team and stakeholder steering committee. According to the organization's website, the stakeholder steering committee include representatives from academic institutions, health care organizations, experienced practitioners from consumer affairs, parent support members, and family advocates. Members meet on a regular basis, whose schedule is determined by time and availability of members.

The review of the strategic plan results from FY 2018-2019 indicated that the organization was able to address the strategic plan regarding staffing support because WET was successful in hiring two needed staff development officers and an office assistant. The organization also was able to address the plan to provide additional training, support, and technical assistance by offering more than 40 advanced training opportunities. The BHL explained that WET continues to collaborate with partner agencies to bring in additional support to address the continued need for training in various areas. WET's strategic plan also indicated that the organization collaborated with local agencies to complete a cultural competency assessment across the entire department

that included a focus group and a survey. In addition, an annual mandatory cultural competency training requirement was established in 2020.

WET established monthly workgroups for administrative supervisor development and bimonthly trainings to support clinical supervisor development. In addition, the department's social media engagement increased in traffic by 450%. The organization also held 13 community events, which attracted 1,500 attendees. In regard to the volunteer program, 33% of the volunteers obtained employment with Organization X. WET's strategic plan identified the need to enhance the recruitment of individuals from various culturally diverse backgrounds. According to the BHL and the organization's website, the organization continues to strive for improvement in this area. The organization's website states that WET recently established the strategic plan for FY 2020-2021. This 3-year plan was designed to extend through FY 2022-2023.

Plan 1: Workforce Staffing Support

- Adequately staff the WET team by filling empty positions.

- Reduce employee turnover rates.

Plan 2: Training and Technical Assistance

- Increase advanced trainings that address developing client needs, including online and hybrid training options.

Plan 3: Career Pathways

- Leverage community partnerships.

- Use newly issued WET funding to expand regional projects.

Plan 4: Internship and Residency Programs

- Increase diversity and retention of student graduates.

Plan 5: Financial Incentive Programs

- Identify and increase financial incentive options.

- Increase marketing and advertisement.

- Build retention strategies wherever possible.

The goals of the new strategic plan will be implemented by specific leadership team members, and program effectiveness and progress toward goal accomplishment will be evaluated and assessed by the leadership team under the direction of the BHL. A complete analysis of the organization's client-focused and workforce-focused data offered sufficient findings to justify the need for recommendations regarding the organization's recruitment process. Recommendations include methods to reduce the lack of diversity in the GIFT program.

To summarize the findings, WET has evaluated and continues to evaluate student interns' performance and engagement by having them complete student satisfaction and postquestionnaires. The organization uses student satisfaction surveys to evaluate student input and feedback, and postquestionnaires provide the organization with insight into the effectiveness of training and experience offered. The student satisfaction and postquestionnaires are distributed and collected at the end of the students' internship in the GIFT program. The results are analyzed by the internship coordinator and other key members of the organization.

The results of the FY 2018-2019 and FY 2019-2020 student surveys indicated that many student interns were satisfied with the program offerings. Questionnaire and survey results showed that most students felt that the GIFT program offered many necessary training opportunities and adequate experience to prepare them for a career in behavioral health care. Some students suggested that the program offer additional training in demographics, law and ethics, sexual assault, and cultural humility. The postquestionnaire results indicated that very few survey questions pertained specifically to cultural diversity. However, application for acceptance into the GIFT program included specific questions related to demographics and diversity.

In regard to the workforce-focused data, the organization is involved in strategic planning. The results of the FY 2018-2019 strategic plan highlighted the success of the organization in accomplishing most of its goals for the year. The organization's website indicates that the organization was able to increase staffing, offer more trainings, continue to offer current services, maintain relationships with partner agencies, and increase program awareness through social media and the hosting of community events. The organization continues to develop and implement strategic planning. The latest 3-year strategic plan will remain in place until 2023.

Interviews

I conducted four semistructured interviews with the same BHL between July 2020 and January 2021. The BHL was chosen based on her role in the organization as well as her experience and tenure with WET. I asked the BHL questions about the ways that the organization promotes, encourages, and practices diversity and cultural awareness. I also

examined the student interns' responses to diversity-related questions on the

postquestionnaire that they completed at the end of the GIFT program. I manually

transcribed and coded their responses into a Microsoft Word document. Codes were

established based on the responses of the BHL, using thematic analysis. This process

allowed me to label and organize the data to identify patterns and trends. According to

Williams and Moser (2019), coding in qualitative research refers to the process of

assembling, categorizing, and thematically sorting the collected data into an organized

platform to construct meaning. The following coding words and phrases were used in the

thematic analysis: universities and programs, cultural training, diversity and inclusion,

recruitment and selection, program incentives, and role of managers. Each of these terms

is discussed next.

Universities and Programs

Codes related to universities and programs indicated subcategories of academics,

requirements, and criteria. For example, the BHL indicated that candidates who applied

to be in the GIFT program had to be enrolled in a qualifying university program related to

the behavioral health services. The BHL stated, "GIFT accepts student applicants who are

enrolled in a university to pursue marriage and family therapy, master's of social work, or

licensed professional counseling." This information was validated by reviewing the

online candidate application and the program's program handbook.

Cultural Training

According to the BHL, current policies ensured that student interns in the GIFT

program understood the importance of cultural diversity. Codes that materialized from

cultural training were related to awareness, competencies, processes, and procedures. The

BHL explained that the student interns were required to complete cultural diversity and

various training related to cultural competency. The BHL stated that the program has

made an effort to address the lack of diversity in the GIFT program by adding training

related to cultural competence. The review of the student surveys and feedback showed

that many of the students expressed the need for the organization to implement more

training related to cultural humility and awareness.

Diversity and Inclusion

Codes related to diversity and inclusion were language, race and ethnicity, gender,

population, and demographics. The BHL commented that the online student application

to apply to the GIFT program asks demographic questions pertaining to the applicants'

cultural backgrounds. My review of the GIFT online application found that students are

asked to provide information about name, demographic location, language spoken, age,

race/ethnicity, gender identity, and sexual orientation. The BHL stated that answering

these questions was optional and did not determine acceptance into the GIFT program.

I asked the BHL about recruitment strategies used to encourage potential

candidates from diverse populations to apply to the GIFT program.

The BHL stated:

Well, on our website, we express the need for diverse individuals to obtain a

career in the field of behavioral health services. We also state the program's

position regarding making efforts to create a diverse workplace, but I do not think

we have anything in place that specifically targets students from diverse

populations to apply for the program. We have not yet figured out how we can

recruit more males from diverse backgrounds to apply.

I also found that in the results of the postquestionnaire, 50% of the student interns

felt that they were able to recognize and manage personal biases and values in working

with diverse clients and constituents following completion of the GIFT program; 72% of

the students agreed that upon completion of the GIFT student internship program, they

felt that they were able to demonstrate sensitivity to cultural perspectives different from

their own.

Recruitment and Selection

I reviewed the organization's website regarding the recruitment and selection

processes. According to the website, WET contracts with local schools to recruit student

interns. The website also states that WET advertises its program offerings on various

social media sites (Organization website, 2019).

In addition, I asked the BHL about the methods used to market the GIFT program,

as well as the organization's recruitment and acceptance processes:

> The GIFT program markets through advertising to various universities we have
>
> contracts with. GIFT only sends the invitation to apply for our program to a
>
> certain group of students on these campuses. We only market to those individuals
>
> who are enrolled in the marriage and family therapy program, the master's of
>
> social work program, or the licensed professional counseling program. We do not
>
> extend the program to those students who we know will not qualify.

The BHL stated that all potential candidates had to complete the online application in order to be considered. The BHL explained that "the applications are screened and reviewed by me and other selected supervisory team members." I asked the BHL how many applications were accepted for review and, of those applications, how many candidates were accepted into the program each year. The BHL stated, "We review all of the applications that are submitted, which is approximately 100 or a little more each year. We only accept about 40 students each fiscal year."

Program Incentives

I reviewed the organization's FY 2018-2019 and FY 2019-2020 Mental Health Services Expenditure Plan. I used structured coding to establish a list of codes, and then I matched the data to the identified codes related to program incentives. Codes related to program incentives became evident in the subcategories of funding, budget, resources, salary, and benefits. In addition to reviewing the Mental Health Services Expenditure Plan, I asked the BHL about the incentives that the program offered to students. She explained that the GIFT program offered various training opportunities and supervision. According to the BHL, the program provided students with support obtaining licensure and letters of recommendation, and having the opportunity to complete the requisite number of internship hours as part of the academic requirement. This information was also highlighted in the survey responses from the student interns, who indicated that the program offers a range of experience and training. The BHL also stated that students who completed the program were encouraged to apply for paid positions with the organization.

I asked the BHL if there was any possibility that the student intern position could be reclassified as a paid position. The BHL shared that the GIFT program could not be reclassified because the classification was not managed through the organization's HR department, meaning that no current budgetary item had been allocated to pay a salary for the position, which is why it offered so many other incentives and benefits. She clarified that the program's funding comes from the MHSA. In addition, a review of the organization's website indicated that the student intern position is a nonpaid one. The department's MHSA plan update states that the GIFT program is a nonpaid formal internship program, which is funded by the MHSA. I asked the BHL if any funding resources were available to provide students with stipends. According to the BHL, there was a time when one-time stipends were given to student interns. However, because the budget changed yearly, it was never guaranteed that funding would be available to provide stipends. The BHL stated that for several years, the budget had not allowed funding to be set aside for WET to offer students stipends.

Role of Managers

Codes related to the roles of managers fell into the categories of supervision, evaluations, and policies and procedures. The BHL was asked how WET supported programs and services and enforced policies and procedures.

The BHL responded:

Besides offering training related to organizational policies and procedures, the organization provides supervision, which offer students hands-on instruction and support to help students learn how to fulfill job related assignments and duties.

The organization engages students by offering meetings and evaluations and assessments, to ensure that students are learning the duties related to being effective behavioral health professionals. We also serve as a support for assisting students with the fulfillment of licensure requirements.

Information about the training and supervision offered to student interns is located in the GIFT program handbook and was listed in Table 1. The department's website also lists trainings offered to student interns. A review of the MHSA plan update indicated that the GIFT program offers students 90 hours of preplacement training and weekly individual supervision of hands-on experience.

Summary of Findings

In exploring and analyzing the results of the client-focused data, I found substantial findings to support the recommendations offered in Section 5. According to the data, Organization X used student intern surveys, as well as postquestionnaires, to obtain students' perspectives about the effectiveness of the GIFT program. These tools also were used to measure performance and engagement. Since implementation of the GIFT program, the organization has distributed and collected student surveys and postquestionnaires toward the end of each student's internship assignment. The results of the surveys and postquestionnaires are then analyzed by selected management staff members to identify parts of the program that may benefit from remediation. Following my examination of the survey responses, the need for the organization to make more of an effort to promote diversity in the GIFT program became obvious. This was evident in

the responses from many students suggesting that more training related to cultural awareness and diversity be offered.

The workforce data analysis also provided me with considerable information to support the need for improvement. Interviews with the BHL and the review of documents relevant to strategic plans provided insight into the department's goals for improvement, which stated the need to increase diversity and retention in the GIFT program.

The BHL also stated that there was no current method to encourage potential candidates from diverse populations to apply to the GIFT program. The BHL specifically identified the need for more male students who wanted to pursue careers in the behavioral health services. She stated that WET had not yet established a method to increase the number of male student interns in the GIFT program. Because of the organization's need to increase diversity in the GIFT program, I offer detailed recommendations in Section 5.

Organizational Financial and Marketplace Performance Results

Financial and marketplace results were not heavily reviewed for this study because the information was not germane to the practice problem. However, I did inquire into the organization's financial ability to provide stipends or hourly wages to student interns. According to the MHSA plan update, the organization is a federally funded nonprofit under the MHSA. Funding is allocated to target specific program needs and is provided for staffing support, training and technical assistance, educational assistance and workforce development, mental health career pathways, and the residency and internship program. The funding includes the amount needed to operate the GIFT program. The organization's funding contract is subject to change that is based on the yearly budget and

areas of need. Financial changes are made based on the results of the yearly analysis and may fluctuate depending on the state's economy (Organization website, 2013).

According to the organization's MHSA expenditure funding summary, during FY 2018-2019, WET had an estimated budget of $4,685,822, of which $2,337,174 was used. WET had approximately $2,348,684 of unspent funds and an additional transfer in the amount $2,000,000 (Organization website, 2019). For FY 2019-2020, WET had an available budget of approximately $4,033,926. Based on WET's yearly budget and total yearly expenditures, the department has remained within budget, which has allowed WET to maintain its programs and services (see Table 3).

Table 3

FY 2018-2019 and FY 2019-2020 Mental Health Services Expenditure Plan Funding

Funding descriptions	MHSA funding for WET
Estimated FY 2018/2019 Funding	
1. Estimated unspent funds from prior FY	$2,348,648
2. Estimated new FY 2018-2019 funding	$0
3. Transfer in FY 2018-2019	$2,000,000
4. Access local prudent reserve in FY 2018-2019	$0
5. Estimated available funding for FY 2018-2019	$4,348,648
Estimated FY 2018-2019 MHSA expenditures	$2,814,722
Estimated FY 2019-2020 Funding	
1. Estimated unspent funds from prior FY	$1,533,926
2. Estimated new FY 2019-2020 funding	$0
3. Transfer in FY 2019-2020	$2,500,000
4. Access local prudent reserve in FY 2019-2020	$0
5. Estimated available funding for FY 2019-2020	$4,033,926
Estimated FY 2019-2020 MHSA expenditures	$2,917,348
Estimated FY 2019-2020 unspent fund balance	$1,116,578

Organization X updates the funding summary for expenditure plan summary annually to assess the budget and evaluate program needs and services. The information is analyzed to determine the next year's estimated available funding.

Implications of the Findings

The implications of the findings illustrate WET's continued dedication to providing services and support to internal and external clients and partner agencies. According to the review and analysis of the programs and services provided over the past 2 fiscal years, WET has maintained its ability to provide extensive training and support to GIFT student interns to prepare them for careers in the behavioral health services. To improve the GIFT program, WET implemented additional training opportunities for FY 2019-2020.

The GIFT program has been successful in providing student interns with extensive and advanced training opportunities, licensure support, and hands-on experience and supervision. The program also provides students with letters of recommendation upon their completion of the program and encourages students to apply for permanent positions in the department. The incentives offered to student interns provide them with sufficient skills and knowledge to apply for many employment opportunities in the behavioral health care and mental health fields.

Organization X also is committed to building an effective and supportive workplace environment by conducting regular assessments and evaluations of the services offered to clients to determine where modifications are needed. The review of the organization's website indicated that WET has attempted to promote diversity and inclusion in the department through its dedication to enhancing and increasing programs for the underserved ethnic population (Organization website, 2019), as well as being

committed to increasing gender and cultural diversity among students accepted into the GIFT program.

Despite the organization's efforts to increase gender and cultural diversity among student interns, the results suggested the need for more innovative methods and practices to improve the GIFT program's recruitment and acceptance processes. The review of the organization's recruitment process indicated that more can be done to market the GIFT program in ways that encourage more individuals to apply for the program and increase the candidate selection process. Balancing gender and racial diversity in the workplace can help to improve employee relationships and customer satisfaction, both of which will enhance the ability of WET to provide value and quality services, and will contribute to organizational sustainability and social change. Evidence has suggested that clients often have gender preferences when deciding whom to seek services or care from (Budu et al., 2019).

The results of this study may assist the organization in developing more methods for use in the recruitment process to potentially increase the number of male candidates from various cultural backgrounds. The results may raise the awareness of other BHOs that have struggled to find and adopt ways to increase diversity in their own workplaces. In regard to management and performance, this study may help leadership teams to have a stronger and more positive impact on team members and the clients they serve, and improve the organization's ability to build effective and supportive workplace environments (NIST, 2017).

Potential Implications for Positive Social Change

The organization has committed to creating a workplace environment that welcomes candidates from diverse cultural backgrounds by offering training opportunities specifically designed to enhance the cultural awareness of student interns in the GIFT program. The organization has recognized the need to have a more culturally diverse workplace as a way to improve internal and external relationships among team members, customers/clients, and partner agencies. Exploring methods to increase diversity in health care organizations is one of the most vital aspects of promoting health and wellness in the community setting while helping community members to feel comfortable with the services that they receive (Conway, 2012).

Implementing the Baldrige excellence framework should encourage the organization to focus on its core values to strengthen its leadership skills, workforce strategies, organizational operations, and evaluation and assessment processes to stimulate positive social change (NIST, 2017). This framework helps organizations to create workplace environments that value team members and clients being served. As such, the Baldrige excellence framework also encourages visionary leadership and consumer-focused merit. The framework aims to help organizations establish a systems perspective of value, ethics, and transparency. The Baldrige framework uses a systems approach to evaluate organizational processes, leadership, and operations.

The Baldrige excellence framework, in combination with other best workplace practices, may serve as an effective tool for organizations to learn more appropriate and creative methods to develop and implement practices that will strengthen organizational

processes and yield greater workplace results. Wagner (2015) suggested that health care organizations require an effective leadership focus and infrastructures that include process improvement. This qualitative study is a valuable addition to the limited research available on ways to promote more diversity in health care organizations.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

Strengths

I collected data from WET to explore and analyze the organization's workforce. Conducting the study gave me the opportunity to take a phenomenological approach to contemporary situation in the behavioral health system. I followed a qualitative approach that allowed me to collect and review multiple types of information and to explore the views, beliefs, and experiences of individuals in specific situations (Gill et al., 2008). Data sources included interviews with the BHL; the FY 2018-2019 and FY 2019-2020 GIFT program cohort demographics on gender identity, ages, languages, and race and ethnicity; and FY 2018-2019 student feedback on their experience in the GIFT program based on anonymous participant surveys. Other data were obtained from student intern postquestionnaire results for FY 2018-2019 and FY 2019-2020; the FY 2019-2020 MHSA annual plan update and county accountability certification; the MHSA WET plan and strategies for FY 2018-2019; the organizational chart; community compliance and policy forms, and answers to specific questions about the organizational profile. Additional information was garnered about treatment offerings and services, program structure, community demographics and setting, regulatory environment, and the organization's governance structure.

In reviewing the multiple sources of data that I collected, it became apparent that the organization has successfully provided a multitude of behavioral services and training opportunities to the student interns as well as other employees and partner agencies. Based on the information provided, the organization seems to be quite sustainable. The BHL was flexible in her ability to be available to participate in the quarterly interviews. The BHL also was very efficient in providing me with timely data relevant to the practice problem that gave me extensive insight into the department's operations.

Limitations

The study had some limitations. One limitation was that some of the data were obtained from secondary sources and contained personal perspectives and opinions, such as the student intern surveys. Some student data were collected from the BHL, who had the advantage of providing customer feedback from selected individuals. Another limitation with the sample size of only one participant, namely, the BHL. In addition, only the BHL was interviewed. No student interns were interviewed; however, their perspectives about the program were provided as secondary sources.

Though these aforementioned limitations did not have an adverse influence on the results, having a larger sample and interviewing more individuals might have lent more substance to the study. Small sample sizes may skew research results because of the limited number of individual perspectives and opinions (Grady et al., 2020). Another limitation was that I collected data only for the past 2 fiscal years. Obtaining and studying information from several years may have yielded more stable results and trends.

Despite these few limitations, the study provided me with sufficient information and substance to recommend some ways to stimulate social change. I received all of the requested data from the BHL in a timely manner. In addition, the BHL was very flexible and supportive in making herself available for the interviews.

Unanticipated Outcomes and Potential Impact on Findings

Organization X had identified an issue regarding the lack of gender and racial diversity in the GIFT program that was evident in reviewing the demographics of the student interns for the past 2 fiscal years. Analysis of the data showed that Hispanic female students comprised the majority of enrollees in the GIFT program. The results of this study may provide Organization X with opportunities to increase diversity in the GIFT program as a way to strengthen internal and external relationships among behavioral health professionals and the community members whom they served. The process of this study did not pose many unanticipated outcomes. However, the student interns' responses to the survey questions pointed to the need for more cultural diversity training. I later discovered that the organization included additional diversity training during the current fiscal year based on feedback from the FY 2018-2019 survey. Despite the inclusion of new diversity training, the issue of lack of diversity remains.

<div align="center">Summary and Transition</div>

Section 4 provided an evaluation of the organization's client programs, services, and initiatives, as well as its workforce-focused and client-focused results. This section also provided details about Organization X's leadership and governance as well as financial and marketplace performance. Lastly, Section 4 presented a discussion of the

results, potential implications for social change, strengths and limitations of the study,

and unanticipated outcomes. Included in Section 5 are an overview of the process of

conducting qualitative research, implications for social change, and recommendations for

future topics of investigation.

Section 5: Recommendations and Conclusion

Overview

Conducting this qualitative study of Organization X included the collection and analysis of data provided to me by the organization. I also conducted four semistructured interviews with the organization's BHL to obtain information and insight regarding the dynamics of the organization's GIFT student internship program. Data collection began in July 2020 and ended in January 2021. The goal of the study was to explore the lack of diversity in the GIFT program and develop more strategies to increase diversity in the workplace. The data analysis revealed compelling findings relevant to the practice problem and provided the evidence necessary to develop recommendations.

Recommendations

Marketing and Advertising

Technological advancements have continued to lead employers and job seekers to online platforms such as social media sites and employment websites (Oikarinen & Söderlund, 2016). Many organizations have developed social media profiles on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to advertise and promote their businesses. Social media platforms have been instrumental in offering the most convenient way to learn about particular businesses, their services and offerings, current events, and upcoming affairs. Online recruitment campaigns have generated thousands of applications (Oikarinen & Söderlund, 2016). However, creating and posting flyers in desired locations such as university and college campuses also remains an effective method to recruit interns for employment and training opportunities.

During one interview with the BHL, I asked several questions pertaining to recruitment and advertisement: What are the current methods in place to market and promote the GIFT program? What population does WET market the GIFT program to when recruiting on college campuses? What current recruitment strategies are in place to encourage potential candidates from diverse populations to apply for the program?

The BHL stated, "We have contracted with local universities who assist in identifying qualified candidates for our program." The BHL also told me that WET only targets students who qualify to enroll in the GIFT program. According to the BHL, WET's target audience includes students currently enrolled in one of the qualifying programs. Therefore, the department receives a list of those students and sends correspondence only to them. WET does not advertise to other students on college and university campuses.

According to the FY 2020-2021 strategic plan update, Organization X wants to increase its marketing and advertisement strategies. To enhance the ability of WET to obtain a larger number of diverse candidates, I recommend that the department develop an advisory workgroup whose members would be responsible for creating marketing strategies to attract students from diverse populations to apply to the GIFT program. I also recommend that the workgroup members expand their advertisement efforts across various local college campuses, not just to specific students attending specific programs. Some possible new areas for advertising are food courts, campus and local libraries, campus quads and patio areas, local coffee shops and eateries near college campuses, and local malls that college students are known to frequent. This measure may contribute to

attracting the interest of future candidates. Morrison (2014) argued that the best

recruitment successes come from aggressive student interns who search far in advance of

the application deadline. According to the organization's updated strategic plan, it wants

to continue to increase the diversity and retention of student graduates. The organization

should consider not only current needs, but also future endeavors based on the strategic

objectives (NIST, 2017).

WET also may attract the interest of future candidates by creating and posting

video advertisements and testimonials from previous GIFT program participants. These

types of advertisements could be posted on social media sites and the organization's

website. The review of data collected from the organization indicated that using social

media platforms and maintaining community partnerships have improved the ability of

Organization X to recruit student intern candidates for the GIFT program. However,

further methods are necessary to expand the candidate pool to increase ethnic and gender

diversity in the program.

Sufficient Staffing Levels for Additional Candidate Acceptance

The BHL explained that WET has annual application and interview processes that

are open for students to apply to the GIFT program between January and March.

According to the BHL, selected WET staff review all applications and accept

approximately 40 candidates each year. However, selecting such a small number of

candidates only once a year dramatically limits the likelihood of increasing the number of

diverse students in the program. To increase the number of student interns accepted,

WET must have adequate workforce capacity available to train and assess students'

ability to meet the program requirements. The organization must be able to provide WET with sufficient staffing levels (NIST, 2017).

The organization's FY 2020-2021 strategic plan states that it wants to increase the diversity and retention of student graduates. To provide the opportunity to increase gender diversity in the organization, I recommend that WET identify a method to ensure workforce capacity. One method might be to increase the ratio of supervisors to student interns, if possible, or determine if other supervisors in WET might be interested in supervising student interns. This recommendation would allow the organization to increase the number of student interns accepted into the GIFT program for the upcoming fiscal year.

I also recommend that WET extend the application acceptance time frame to increase the candidate pool, which would mean having more potential male student interns from more diverse populations. According to Livingston (2006), job search methods and what they consider a good time of year to apply for work may be different for men and women. Even though the organization accepts students only once a year, this method may present the opportunity to engage potential future candidates by developing a recruitment list to be used for a 6-month period leading up to the recruitment time.

Partner With Human Resources

The management team members in WET are responsible for recruiting and screening the applications of potential GIFT student internship candidates. According to the BHL, selected program team members also are responsible for conducting interviews

and choosing candidates to join the program. Once candidates are selected, they are required to complete administrative paperwork with Organization X's HR department.

Although the organization's HR department is responsible for developing and implementing the classification and recruitment processes for most student intern positions, for other departments, HR personnel are responsible only for providing and assisting WET with the completion of student intern administrative paperwork. In addition, HR personnel may represent WET at job fairs and other career recruitment events. According to the BHL, "The [HR] department does not know enough about the GIFT program to adequately represent the program at career fairs. They are only able to provide general program information."

If sufficient information is not shared to promote the GIFT program, the result may prohibit WET from attracting the interest of potential student intern candidates. To represent WET and promote the GIFT program, HR recruitment analysts must understand all components of the GIFT program, including the criteria for acceptance into the program, placement requirements, and duties and expectations of student interns. Two of the most important key functions of HR personnel in Organization X are to understand the dynamics of the organization and recruit the most eligible candidates for positions (Mayhew, 2018). However, because the HR department does not handle the recruitment process for the GIFT program, HR personnel are not as familiar with the program dynamics as they should be. Lack of knowledge about the GIFT program resulting from the program being presented poorly or inaccurately by the HR department

at job fairs and other career recruitment events could prevent WET from attracting the interest of qualified candidates.

As indicated in the FY 2020-2021 strategic plan, Organization X wants to work toward leveraging community partnerships. I recommend that WET develop a partnership with HR personnel to educate them about the GIFT student internship program. WET managers could select team members who are knowledgeable about the GIFT program and who are willing to work with HR analysts to ensure that they understand the characteristics of the workplace environment (NIST, 2017).

Selected WET team members could provide HR analysts with background information about the GIFT program and its benefits. WET staff members also could provide HR analysts with detailed information about the student intern position, examples of essential duties and responsibilities, and qualification criteria. WET staff members could inform HR analysts of any necessary supplemental information, such as the recruitment process and time frames, and agency contact information. The HR department must have the ability to promote open positions in the organization (Mayhew, 2018). Providing HR personnel with detailed information about WET's GIFT program may be beneficial in preparing them to represent Organization X adequately when necessary.

Blind Résumés and Applications

During one interview with the BHL, I asked how applications are reviewed and accepted. The BHL explained that "applications go through a screening process and are reviewed by myself and other selected staff." While discussing this process, the BHL

indicated that she hoped that unconscious bias did not blind her to accepting good candidates. According to Smith and Smith (2019), everyone has unconscious bias, something that may have a negative impact on how they retain talent. Employers must refrain from engaging in implicit bias when screening potential candidates for positions. Candidates should not be overlooked or refused interviews based on race or gender (Smith & Smith, 2019). Many employers have been found to exhibit behaviors synonymous to résumé bias when reviewing demographic information on résumés, such as race and other diversity dimensions including gender, religion, ethnicity, and geographic locale (Smith & Smith, 2019). The review of the GIFT application that student interns submit for consideration showed that demographic information on name, demographic location, language spoken, age, race/ethnicity, gender identity, and sexual orientation is requested.

Résumé screening may be highly susceptible to cognitive bias (Derous et al., 2015). To prevent employers from practicing unconscious bias during the application screening process, I recommend that WET review blind résumés and applications submitted by potential student intern candidates. This process will ensure that the department selects from a diverse pool of candidates who can contribute innovative skills and creativity to the department (Smith & Smith, 2019). The blind résumé process should include removing all unnecessary demographic information (i.e., race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, and religious affiliation) from the application form, even if such information is provided voluntarily.

An applicant's name and address also should be removed from the application form prior to the screening process. Ethnic-sounding names have been proven to be a direct antecedent of employment discrimination (Derous et al., 2017). Though some demographic information is necessary to complete the hiring process, knowledge of this information is not necessary during the initial phrase of candidate selection (Derous et al., 2017). One way to implement this blind selection practice would be to select a staff member who has no involvement in the hiring process as being responsible to redact all demographic information from the application from prior to giving the form to hiring staff for review.

Set Specific Diversity Goals

As an effective way to build a successful and sustainable workplace environment, it is important that organizations develop strategic goals designed to ensure that the workplace represents the diverse ideas, cultures, and thinking of team members and the community (NIST, 2017). Organizations experience growth and sustainability when managers are held accountable for setting diversity goals (Ng & Sears, 2018). Ng and Sears (2018) asserted that organizations can achieve growth and sustainability by actively demonstrating behaviors such as outlining the benefits of workforce diversity, endorsing the strategic hiring of minority candidates, and initiating diversity training. WET has maintained a strategic plan consistently and has made progress toward achieving its goals each fiscal year. The organization's current strategic plan update report provided detailed information about progress made as well as modifications and updates to current and future goals. According to WET's FY 2020-2021 strategic plan, Organization X want to

continue to make progress toward increasing diversity in the student intern GIFT program

and strengthening cultural awareness in the whole organization. Diversity in

organizations refers to understanding personal differences among members of the

workforce that enrich the workplace environment and are representative of the

organization's hiring protocol (NIST, 2017). WET's current strategic plan does not

include specific information on how the department plans to increase diversity in the

GIFT program or increase cultural awareness in the workplace.

I recommend that Organization X develop and implement specific diversity goals

based on the SMART (i.e., Specific, Measurable, Attainable, and Relevant) goal method

(MacLeod, 2012). The organization's strategic plan states that it wants to increase

advanced training that addresses clients' needs. The organization also should consider

offering more cultural diversity training.

Examples of a SMART goal regarding training are as follows:

- WET will develop at least one new or modified cultural diversity training

  opportunity according to each 3-year planning period that will be offered to

  student interns to enhance their knowledge about working with diverse

  populations.

- At least once a year, WET will offer training to supervisory staff specifically

  related to diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

- WET will schedule one-on-one meetings between student interns and

  management team members at least once a month. Discussions should

promote social engagement and encourage student interns to have open conversations.

- WET will include at least one (i.e., agree/disagree) item specifically related to cultural diversity on the student feedback survey by the next recruitment period. Examples of this survey item are as follows:

  (a) There is cultural diversity among students in the GIFT program,

  (b) the GIFT program offers sufficient training related to cultural diversity and inclusion, and (c) leadership promote and support values of diversity and inclusion.

Explore Funding and Incentives

GIFT's student intern positions offer no remuneration to the interns. In one of the interviews with the BHL, I asked if it was possible to have the GIFT student internship position reclassified from a nonpaid internship to a paid internship. The BHL stated that because the GIFT student internship position is funded through the MHSA, it is not managed by the organization's HR department and cannot be reclassified.

I also asked the BHL if there any funding resources were in place to provide stipends to student interns. The BHL stated, "There was a time that we offered one-time stipends to student interns. However, that did not last long because the budget changes each fiscal year." The BHL further explained that funding from the MHSA is allocated for specific resources, programs, and services, so no funding was currently available to offer stipends to student interns. The BHL expressed that even though the department

was continuing to look for ways to provide financial compensation to students, there was no way to know when or if this would happen any time soon.

Cain (2016) suggested that unpaid internships may offer more opportunities for immersion and socialization in the interns' chosen fields, whereas paid internships enhance professional skill development and often give students more opportunities to manipulate the external environment. According to Dholakia (2019), student interns who are dependent are most likely financially supported, but most independent college students must work, so they are more likely to select paid internship opportunities. Cain indicated that male students are more likely to pursue paid internships. Although WET offers incentives such as extensive and advance training opportunities, supervisory support, letters of recommendation, and support and assistance to help prepare students to obtain licensure, the department currently does not have any funding sources to offer monetary compensation to student interns. This barrier could deter qualified candidates from diverse populations from applying to the program.

WET's current 3-year strategic plan for FY 2020-2023 states that the program would like to identify and increase financial incentive options. According to the organization's MHSA expenditure plan funding summary, for FY 2018-2019, WET had a surplus of $2,348,648 in unspent funding from the previous fiscal year. As such, WET had $1,533,926 in unspent funding from FY 2018-2019 that rolled over into the FY 2019-2020 budget.

Based on WET's updated strategic plan goals and available funding, I recommend that the department reassess and reevaluate its current available funding to determine

whether money can be made available to provide a one-time stipend to student interns. Another recommendation is for WET to establish a referral program for current interns to earn money. I also recommend that WET consider hosting fundraisers to raise money to cover the cost of incentives such as gift cards, which can be distributed to student interns in recognition of their accomplishments during internship assignments.

Although WET is dedicated to providing student interns with quality training and supervision opportunities that may benefit them financially in the future, many students cannot afford the loss in income if they accept unpaid internships (Westerberg & Wickersham, 2011). Offering incentives is an alternative way to compensate student interns for their time and work. Offering financial compensation also may be encourage more students to apply to the GIFT program. According to Edwards (2019), by offering unpaid internships, organizations are excluding some of the hardest working university students who need to work to pay for school. Establishing a form of compensation, in addition to the training and experience offered to students in the GIFT program, may improve diversity in the program by possibly increasing the number of candidates who apply.

Implications for Future Research

As evident in the review of the literature, there are sufficient data available regarding the lack of diversity in health care and ways that the issue affects organizations. Many health care organizations continue to lack diversity, despite evidence demonstrating the advantages of diverse teams in workplaces to support creativity and innovation (Rubio et al., 2018). However, a gap in the literature related to developing and

implementing methods to mitigate this issue remains. According to Ng and Sears (2018), not much has been done to explore and establish solutions to promote diversity management initiatives in the workplace environment. The gap in literature may be the result of too few researchers investigating ways to mitigate the lack of diversity in health care. Future researchers may have the opportunity to investigate this lack of diversity and develop solutions to increase diversity in BHOs. Maintaining the practice of creating a pool of candidates from diverse backgrounds requires that BHOs develop more effective recruitment strategies and possibly retain well-rounded students from various cultural backgrounds to ensure that BHOs can fulfill their mission, vision, and values. Holding CEOs accountable for promoting and encouraging the implementation of cultural awareness and diversity training also will ensure that employees are prepared to provide fair and adequate services to clients.

Summary

I explored the lack of diversity in a large health care organization located in the western region of the United States. Despite the dedication of WET to create a culturally diverse workplace environment, the need to increase diversity in the organization's GIFT student internship program is an ongoing issue. Evidence of the issue was seen in the analysis of the GIFT program's student intern demographics for the past 2 fiscal years indicating that that 75% of the interns in the program approximately are Hispanic female students. The other interns were either male or female students from various other races and ethnicities.

Based on the results of the research, I identified opportunities to remediate the lack of diversity in the GIFT program. Recommendations included expanding marketing and advertising, ensuring sufficient staffing levels for additional candidate acceptance, partnering with HR personnel, implementing a blind résumé and application process, setting specific diversity goals, and exploring funding sources and incentives.

Expanding marketing and advertisement efforts may increase awareness about the program and attract the interest of future potential candidates. Ensuring sufficient staffing levels may result in the organization being able to accept more candidates. This recommendation also should include extending the application process to give candidates more time to apply. It also may increase the pool of male candidates. Partnering with HR personnel to educate them about the dynamics of the GIFT program may increase awareness about the program, especially when information is presented at career events and employment fairs. Implementing a blind résumé and application process may increase diversity in the GIFT program by eliminating unconscious bias by review staff during the application screening process. Setting specific diversity goals is necessary to remain focused on increasing diversity throughout the organization. When goals are clear and specific, staff members may find it easier to remain focused and motivated to achieve success in their jobs. Developing and implementing funding and incentives for student interns may gain the interest of more candidates and increase the retention of current student interns. Adopting effective methods to improve diversity within the GIFT student internship program is likely to lead to the continued success and business sustainability of Organization X.

The literature review identified copious research on the lack of cultural diversity in BHOs. However, research on methods to improve cultural diversity in BHOs has been scant. The results of this study may be beneficial to other BHOs in providing them with methods and ideas to increase diversity in their workplaces, particularly in student internship programs. Increasing diversity in student internship programs offered by BHOs is important because student internship programs are foundational to the development of future behavioral health professionals.

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