

Objective and Background

The objective was to create and develop strategic activities to promote diversity and inclusion at the UMSOP. Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) have been the center of many institutions' focus over the last few years. The combination of DEI intertwined into the systematic makeup of an organization plus commitment from the leadership usually produces culture change that comes with an inclusivity that others may not have. At the University of Mississippi School of Pharmacy (UMSOP), there was a desire to show this commitment from the leadership with the creation of a Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Task Force which has now led to a standing committee. The UMSOP Commitment to DEI focuses on institutional change within the school of pharmacy is transformative as it ensures the building of a foundation to engage multiple stakeholders and shared accountability.

Methods

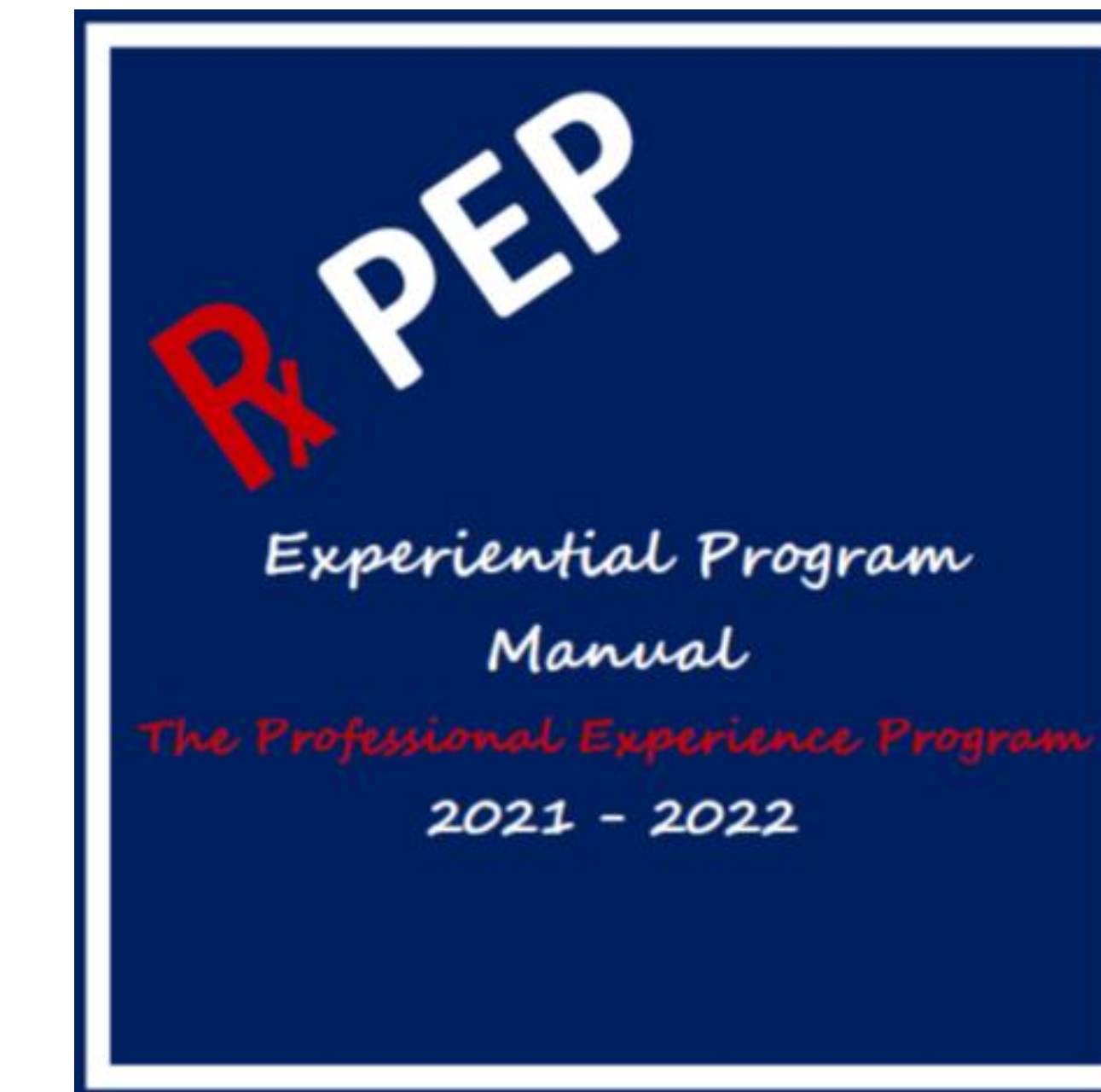
In April 2018, the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force was created by the Dean to ensure that DEI was included in the mission, vision and strategic plan of the UMSOP. From that, it was determined a permanent standing committee was needed in order to continue the work of the task force, and the faculty voted to add this committee in December 2020. The committee is strategically composed of representation from student pharmacists, graduate students, research scientists, faculty, staff, administration, and preceptors/stakeholders. Simultaneously, there was work being done to host the inaugural EDI Institute in January 2021. The UMSOP partnered with AACP in the planning, logistics and execution of the Institute. The major task during the first year of the standing committee was working on the Equity In Action (EIA) Plan as directed by The UM Division of Diversity and Community Engagement and developing charges as recommendations to the Dean for each standing committee related to DEI. Some charges are less specific, which encourages creativity in the execution and committees are given autonomy on which ones they will address first. Lastly, additional efforts were identified for education and professional development, experiential education, climate assessment, and recruitment.

EIA Committee Charges and Alignment



Results

The EIA plan for the School of Pharmacy was submitted to the University April 2021. The D&I Committee sent the Dean recommendations for committee charges May 2021. The first EIA report for calendar year 2021 was submitted February 2022. Among the 11 SOP Committees, 10 received charges related to the EIA plan August 2021, with a median of 2 charges each, some of which require collaboration between committees. Assignment of these charges with recommendation from the D&I Committee, reflects achievement of one of the EIA goals. Two strategy areas reflect the SOP's commitment to prepare students to care for diverse populations and ensure pharmacy practice experiences provide optimal environments for student learning and support. With the work of the Curriculum Committee and Office of Experiential Programs and Experiential Affairs, we have had several charges achieved. The Curriculum Committee is now assessing course inclusion of DEI and health disparities topics within courses which will allow us to identify gaps in the curricular map. As gaps are identified, course directors and the Assessment and Curriculum Committees can identify opportunities to address gaps.



The Experiential Affairs manual has been updated to provide additional resources and clearer guidance of expectations, and changes were reviewed with preceptors during the 2022 Preceptors Conference.

Conclusions and Next Steps

Dissemination of EIA-aligned charges has assisted the UM SOP with ensuring that our efforts are integrated and pervasive throughout the SOP's governing structure. This institutionalized model bridges responsibilities among committees, administrators and faculty. The UM SOP began Strategic Planning spring 2022, with plans to further align the SOP Strategic Plan with the SOP's EIA Plan. We anticipate some adjustments to the EIA Plan through this process. The University's strategic plan (pictured below) has Pathways to Equity cross-cutting. The D&I Committee will be reviewing progress in the EIA annual report as well as 2021-2022 committee charges to continue to transform education and practice.

The University's Strategic Plan

