

End of Year Report: WCU Innovation in Diversity & Inclusion Grant (2024-2025 AY)
A Sports Medicine Department DEI Initiatives Preparatory Change Project

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Background

The Sports Medicine Department at WCU recently celebrated 50+ years of athletic training education. Historically, the WCU athletic training program was founded on an ideal of inclusivity regarding gender equity, as the first co-educational athletic training program in the country. However, given the lack of diversity within the athletic training profession and as the profession has grown since the program's inception in 1970, the need for an intentional approach for equity has become a priority.

The Sports Medicine Department consists of faculty serving as dual educators and athletic training clinicians and non-classroom athletic trainers. As such, we not only engage with and impact the education of our students but also provide university-wide healthcare services to all collegiate student-athletes at WCU. Despite the historic nature of our program, we have struggled to recruit and maintain diverse faculty within the department and have not yet created intentional assessments and actions around supporting our sports medicine students and student-athletes. With multiple touchpoints, there is a significant need for time and resources focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts across the department's programs and services.

The Department of Sports Medicine developed a DEI committee in the spring 2023 semester to engage in and address DEI efforts intentionally and structurally within the department. The committee spent the 2023-2024 academic year developing an Impact Matrix to examine all areas of potential impact to assess and implement efforts. We identified and connected with an expert on diversity, equity, and inclusion in the athletic training profession, Dr. Karlita Warren, who collaborated with us for this grant and our future strategic objectives. Through this grant, we developed a workshop to explore the vision, values, and impact of implementing programmatic changes and cultural competemility across department members, founded in DEI frameworks.

Cultural competemility is defined as "the synergistic process between cultural humility and cultural competence in which cultural humility permeates the five components of cultural competence: cultural awareness, cultural knowledge, cultural skill, cultural desire, and cultural encounters" (Campinha-Bacote, 2020). Through this program, we engaged in a workshop focused on cultural competemility and departmental culture, facilitated by Dr. Warren and the DEI Committee, and complete pre- and post-workshop assessments.

The WCU Department of Sports Medicine has historically been the largest and oldest athletic training program in the US, as the 5th accredited program in the country. We educate more athletic trainers within the profession than any other university nationwide. We believe we have a responsibility and significant opportunity to address diversity not only within our own program, but across the profession. **This grant provided opportunity to engage with leaders in addressing DEI within the profession, and serve as leaders ourselves through this**

initiative. Our work was recognized in the university-wide 2025 Spotlight on Faculty Research through the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs with [a highlight video that can be viewed here](#).

Project Goals & Outcomes

We met our **project goals and expected outcomes** of engaging in this project, including:

1. Provide cultural competency training for members of the Department of Sports Medicine.

- Sports medicine faculty engaged in a 4-hour DEI Workshop, led by Dr. Karlita Warren, to explore our department's culture and vision around DEI. Prior to the workshop, faculty completed a pre-workshop preliminary tasks, including selecting an artifact to discuss and work on during and after the workshop, watching videos, reading articles, and writing a pre-workshop reflection around cultural competence and humility. A post-workshop reflection (Rose, Bud, Thorn or RBT) was submitted to Dr. Warren within 2 weeks of the workshop for qualitative analyses. Post-workshop, faculty members also worked on updating or developing selected artifacts over a 3 month period (syllabi, policies & procedures, etc.), utilizing a cultural competency lens.

2. Provide educational opportunities for faculty and staff to engage in discussions that promote a greater understanding of inequities and inclusion.

- Faculty members participated in discussions around DEI work leading to a Race Matters Organizational Self-Assessment of our current readiness to change status.
- Faculty members also participated in voluntary biweekly meetings to provide space and time to work on post-workshop artifacts and reflection.

3. Create and enhance opportunities to build self-awareness across the Department.

- Faculty members' IAPCC-HCP scores increased from pre- to post-workshop to heighten departmental consciousness and awareness around DEI efforts.

Data Results

Summary of Race Matters Organizational Self-Assessment

Pre-workshop, participants completed the Race Matters Organizational Self-Assessment developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. A total score of 20.6 was achieved by the department, indicating we are in the early stages of integrating racial equity into departmental operations, as well as faculty and staff competencies. The results indicate an initial awareness of racial equity issues within the department; however, significant opportunities exist to deepen understanding and implementation of equitable practices. This includes enhancing faculty and staff competencies related to recognizing and addressing embedded racial inequities, as well as refining organizational policies and procedures to promote racially equitable outcomes for students and patients. Training and resources to enhance faculty and other academic and athletic stakeholder competencies, and review and revise policies and procedures, are next actionable steps to create a more inclusive and equitable organizational/academic environment within the Department of Sports Medicine.

Summary of IAPCC-HCP Quantitative Outcomes:

The process of cultural competemility in athletic training faculty and clinicians was assessed using the Inventory for Assessing the Process of Cultural Competemility Among Healthcare Professionals (IAPCC-HCP) before and after the 4-hour professional development workshop and post-workshop artifact work throughout the spring semester. Findings showed a marginal increase in cultural competemility ($t_{13} = 1.78$; $P = .05$). The mean increase in cultural competemility from pre- to post-intervention was 0.182 (SD = 0.383), and the effect size, Cohen's $d = 0.38$ (95% CI, -0.09 to 1.02), suggests a small to moderate effect. This modest but promising improvement suggests the professional development was impactful. Moreover, there is justification for continued professional development.

Summary of Post-Workshop RBT Reflections (Qualitative Outcomes)

Participants in the Cultural Competemility in Healthcare: A Lifelong Practice for AT Faculty and Clinicians professional development shared postworkshop reflections through a Rose-Bud-Thorn (RBT) activity, offering insight into current strengths, emerging opportunities, and ongoing challenges in their practice. Responses revealed strong engagement with culturally responsive teaching and clinical applications, along with a collective desire to enhance inclusive curricula and address institutional barriers. The themes emerged and are organized into three broad categories to guide future action (Instructional Practices, Equity & Inclusion, and Institutional Challenges), and are described in Table 1.

Table 1. RBT Qualitative Thematic Results

1. Instructional Practices
<i>Themes Identified:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Positive engagement with patient-centered learning strategies.• Active student participation in clinical and classroom environments.• Desire to integrate more representative cases into coursework.
<i>Actionable Next Steps:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue leveraging active learning and patient-centered instruction.• Develop a repository of diverse clinical case studies for faculty.• Encourage peer sharing of instructional innovations.
2. Equity & Inclusion
<i>Themes Identified:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interest in deepening DEIA integration across curriculum.• Efforts to become more culturally competent as educators.• Recognition of gaps in addressing diverse student identities.

<i>Actionable Next Steps:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host a curriculum audit to assess DEIA representation. • Offer professional development focused on cultural humility and inclusive pedagogy. • Create feedback loops with students from underrepresented backgrounds.
3. Institutional Challenges
<i>Themes Identified:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confusion or frustration with policies (e.g., attire, marijuana use). • Concerns about time constraints, burnout, and work-life balance. • Barriers to innovation due to unclear or outdated institutional structures.
<i>Actionable Next Steps:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate listening sessions with administrators to clarify or revise key policies. • Advocate for protected time for innovation and reflection. • Establish a task force to review institutional practices through an equity lens.

Budget Report

This grant, with support from the Department of Sports Medicine and the College of Health Sciences, enabled us to collaborate with a leading expert in the athletic training field, Dr. Karlita Warren by funding honoraria for workshop development and hosting, and pre- and post-workshop evaluations. We were also able to engage a WCU graduate assistant in data collection and collaboration with Dr. Warren.

Final Realized Budget

Project Budget	Requested Grant Amount	Departmental / College Support	Totals
1. Personnel			
Dr. Karlita Warren Honoraria	\$5,000		\$5,000
Graduate Assistant Student DEI Committee Member Pay (100 hrs @ \$12/hr)		\$1,200	\$1,200
2. Operating Expenses			
IAPCC-HCP Tool Purchase (\$8 x 15 x 2 pre/post)		\$240	\$240
Workshop lunch (\$15x16)		\$240	\$240
Total Project Amount	\$5,000	\$1,680	\$6,680

Next Steps

We plan to present our results at the 2026 WCU Research Day, as well as to the College of Health Sciences as a potential framework for other departments within the health sciences disciplines. We also plan to submit a manuscript to the *Journal of Athletic Training – Education and Practice*.

Finally, this grant and project led to a second round of funding through the Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance, to expand our efforts to clinical preceptors working with our graduate athletic training students through their clinical experiences, as well as our master's in athletic training students, for the 2025-2026 academic year. Based on the successful collaboration with Dr. Karlita Warren and our results, we will be hosting a preceptor workshop and student workshop with Dr. Warren, and assessing cultural competency in both groups during the 2025-2026 academic year. We are grateful for the opportunity for financial support to continue our departmental efforts.