



CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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HWI FACULTY RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PHASE 2 REPORT



HEALTH WORKFORCE INITIATIVE

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HWI Faculty Recruitment and Retention: Phase 2

Healthcare faculty are increasingly difficult to attract and return to support the growing allied health and nursing programs in California's Community College System. A project was launched in late 2017 to identify and implement new methods for sourcing faculty candidates to support the efforts of all the State's Community College Schools of Allied Health and Nursing in building sufficient faculty resources to meet student demand. Through surveys, interviews, and focus groups, data was collected to assess the reasons that practitioner candidates consider teaching for the community colleges in allied health and nursing and why they continue to teach over time. The first phase of this effort was completed in February 2018 and a report outlining findings on the current state was issued at that time.

Building on the findings from the current state research, the second phase of this project provides a strategy for addressing the gap in available talent. This includes development of potential employee value propositions and benchmarking from outside the education sector so that the colleges may consider what competitors for healthcare professionals are doing to attract and retain talented people.

Employee Value Proposition

What is it and why do we need one?

Every employer has an employment brand and an employee value proposition (EVP). It exists whether the employer acknowledges it or not. The EVP reflect internal and external opinions about the organization as an employer and evolves over time. For the allied health and nursing programs, the employment brand will differ between colleges. From a recruiting standpoint, understanding your EVP makes it easier to define for potential job candidates the opportunities and value they will receive by working in the allied health and nursing program. The EVP can be a way to talk with current and prospective employees about their roles in the organization. Some have referred to it as a "psychological contract" but the EVP represents more than that¹. It reflects the experience of working on your organization and essentially becomes your brand as an employer. It's important to note that a mismatch between the promise of the EVP and reality can significantly reduce employee commitment and trust in the organization, and often leads to increased turnover.

To understand and define the employee value proposition, these steps should be followed (organizations can do this on their own or with outside assistance):

- Establish a clear image of the employment experience in the organization. This is not so much about making employees "happy" as seeking to understand what they desire from their work and their current experience so that you can align what you offer as an employer with what candidates and current employees find fulfilling. (Some initial work has been done as addressed in the Phase 1 report on this project.)
- Describe what it is like to work in your organization, celebrate your achievements as an organization, and show what that looks like through an employee lens.
- Consider following up with unsuccessful candidates for faculty positions - i.e., those who receive a "decline" message - to ask for their impressions as well. Gaining insights from those seeking positions, even when they are not successful, can inform development of the EVP and employment brand.

¹Wagner, R. (January 23, 2017). "An 'Employee Value Proposition' mindset just might fix employee engagement." Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/roddwagner/2017/01/23/an-employee-value-proposition-mindset-just-might-fix-employee-engagement/2/#6be8a14d4d64>

- Develop a long-term, consistent messaging strategy to candidates and employees. Once you know why healthcare practitioners are attracted to teaching roles in your organization and why they stay in those jobs, messages can be developed that speak to their intrinsic motivations.
- Create community awareness around the great things you are doing as an employer (both in terms of your mission and goals and within your community) and how you are achieving success.
- Monitor changes in organizational goals and ongoing feedback. Over time, brands and EVPs can evolve and it is important to learn from and act on the feedback you collect.

Proposed Messaging around Employee Value Proposition

A meaningful finding during Phase 1 was that salaries for healthcare faculty, particularly nurses, significantly lag industry pay levels. This finding should not be ignored. While the colleges seek to address pay levels for faculty, however, it must be recognized that they are not necessarily able to correct this issue on their own. Many factors contribute to faculty salary levels. The state budget and represented workforce considerations at the college level, among other things, are determining influences. Yet in spite of lower-than-industry pay, allied health and nursing programs have attracted faculty members who give their all to the job. There is an opportunity here to change the narrative and get clear on the employee value proposition.

Based on the work completed thus far, the allied health and nursing programs have a positive story to tell of faculty making a difference in healthcare. That story is often muted by a consistent rumble of discontent over salary. Represent the job as it is. The message might look something like this:

Faculty positions with [College name] are a great way to multiply your impact on the future of healthcare. Granted, salaries are below industry; however, there is flexibility in the work schedule that you will not find in a hospital setting. Full time work is only 32-weeks per year, no 12-hour shifts, and the pension and medical benefits are generous. More importantly, the difference you will make in students' lives and your influence on the quality of care that they are able to provide to patients is priceless.

Faculty members in allied health and nursing desire to make a difference in the lives of their students and the patients they touch. Whether it is educating an individual who lives out of their car but possesses the determination to be the first in their family to graduate from college or accompanying an elderly parent to the hospital and having confidence in the care that one of their former students will provide, allied health and nursing faculty are changing lives for the better. From our research findings, several compelling EVPs could be developed that reflect the drive of those who went into healthcare to positively impact others' lives. The opportunity to educate others in their craft has a multiplier effect on the number of patient lives where that difference is manifested. Here are a few possibilities that are intended to generate more ideas.

1. **“You know healthcare. Pass it on.”**
2. **“Everyone’s journey matters. Shape the future of healthcare, one student at a time”**
3. **“Nurturing tomorrow’s healthcare providers.”**
4. **“Healthcare faculty help more. Multiply your effect.”**
5. **“Making a difference in healthcare, one student at a time.”**

Developing a Messaging Strategy

One of the EVPs above may resonate with a particular college. Alternatively, colleges may prefer to draw on what is unique about their programs and define their own EVP. As they select or define the EVP that is most appropriate for their programs, a strategy to support retention and recruitment will be needed. The EVP becomes the lynchpin for how colleges talk about their employee brand. Recruiting efforts, employee outreach, and internal communication efforts can use the EVP as a foundation on which to build. The idea is that being clear on what employees gain from working for a particular allied health and nursing program can help to identify, recruit, and retain practitioners with whom that EVP resonates.

The “best” messaging strategy is a result of conscious effort on the part of the allied health and nursing leadership at each college to maximize the effectiveness of their communication. This includes not simply written and spoken communication but also the actions of leaders that are consistent with the chosen EVP. Colleges should consider the interests of their audience – both prospective (practitioner) and current faculty – and emphasize the themes that highlight the value of a teaching position with the college. Given the feedback in Phase 1 of this project, speaking to the intrinsic motivations of healthcare providers and using appropriate channels to reach that audience will be as important as consistency of message.

Best Practice Data

Recruitment Practices Outside of Education

Recruiting has moved well beyond posting of jobs and waiting for qualified applicants to appear. Employers are proactively building employment brands through the stories they tell (or that are told about them). They are reaching out to passive job seekers – those who are currently employed and not looking for other work – and are training their employees to be ambassadors for the organization, essentially making recruitment everyone’s responsibility.

Social Media Presence. Organizations often create a social media presence to amplify their employment brand into a talent brand, especially as today’s healthcare workers tend to be online and social². The talent brand goes beyond having a website, recognizing that social media creates a real time opportunity for individuals to express their views based on their experience with your organization. It extends to proactively creating a presence on a social media platform. The key is to start small and not take on more than can be handled. Consider the most relevant audience and target messages accordingly.



There are many social media choices in this day and age. Two that are used extensively are Facebook and LinkedIn. Facebook is large and followers are not there solely for employment; however, colleges or departments may already have a Facebook page for students. Creating a connection for alumnae, community partners, and “friends” of allied health and nursing could be a logical next step.

². See Hiers, M. (2014, August 4). “Go Where the Healthcare Candidates are: Mobile, and Social.” Accessible at <http://blog.realmatch.com/trade-publishers/go-healthcare-candidates-mobile-social/>.

LinkedIn is focused on professional networking, allows employers to create a presence through both paid and unpaid means, and has a job posting function that may be useful. Other job boards mentioned by current faculty as places where practitioners look for work include higheredjobs.com and nurse.com. Any of these could be viable options if created and maintained properly. As technology continues to progress, other alternatives may be worth exploring. The goal in any case should be to build a community where jobs can be posted and other information shared.

Social media provides an opportunity to create stories that reflect the experience of serving as an allied health and nursing faculty member, whether adjunct or full time. As Stanford University Marketing Professor Jennifer Aaker has described, stories are meaningful when they are memorable, impactful, and personal³. Data is important to drive decision making, but stories are persuasive. They influence perspective and are more likely to move individuals to action. Whether the length of a tweet, a brief video posted online, or an article on the joys of teaching, extraordinary employee stories have a power to engage hearts and minds in a way that data does not.



Perhaps there is no time or interest in creating unique content. By sharing others' content that would be interesting to the community, organizations can still attract followers. Whether using original content or shared information, most experts recommend posting at least a couple of times a week, especially in the beginning, and "mixing up" the content to not just include job postings but also relevant news about your organization (e.g., photo of a pinning ceremony, employers who volunteered for an event, or the start of a new quarter/semester) or about your industry (e.g., developments in healthcare, news from clinical partners, overall trends or discoveries in medicine).

In best practice organizations, there is a designated individual who manages the social media presence. This person regularly canvases others in the organization for ideas and content to share with followers and also reads trade press and blogs, perhaps keeping a list of links to interesting articles that can be posted when no other content is available. While this is not a requirement, having a single point of contact on social media assures that the message is consistent and in line with the desired EVP. The important thing is to be clear on the message you want to send to your followers and think about how to incorporate it into updates.

Recruitment as an Organization-Wide Responsibility. Seasoned recruiters will tell you that a majority of open positions, regardless of industry, are filled through networking. This means that a tremendous opportunity exists for organizations in which everyone understands that their interactions in the community can serve as a recruiting effort. They are essentially talent ambassadors. From the stories friends are told about the workplace to purposeful actions that connect faculty with potential talent in the clinical setting, every allied health and nursing faculty member has the ability to identify and influence those who might become instructors. Communicating this opportunity, perhaps in the form of story, is also a way of empowering faculty members to help build a strong and caring team with the kind of colleagues they desire. Educate them on the employment brand and perhaps offer modest incentives to motivate them further. It is common in industry to offer employee referral bonuses for candidates who are directed to the organization by an employee, successfully interview, and are hired.

³See Aaker, J. (2013, March 13). Harnessing the Power of Stories. Stanford Graduate School of Business. Accessible at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9X0weDMh9C4>. This video presentation includes steps for creating a compelling story. See also Parker, C.B. (2016, May 16). "Strong 'Signature Stories' Can Shape More Than a Company's Brand." Stanford Graduate School of Business. Accessible at <https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/insights/strong-signature-stories-can-shape-more-companys-brand>.

Hiring in the Current Market. Compensation matters in a highly competitive sellers' market. Talent is difficult to attract and often candidates are considering multiple offers. This makes the overall story told to candidates even more important. For a variety of reasons including budgetary constraints, community colleges are limited in the salaries they can offer to qualified faculty. Rather than debate the competitiveness of salaries, it is recommended that the colleges acknowledge the differential of base pay as mentioned in the prior section and focus instead on quality of life issues supported by the overall compensation package (i.e., attractive medical benefits and pension), scheduling flexibility provided, and the likely reduced number of hours (i.e., 32 weeks per year).

Further, speed is of the essence. Good candidates have options and quickly find other opportunities. Often, if a potential candidate has not been looking for a new opportunity, by reaching out to them the potential employer awakens the candidate not just to the initial opportunity that got their attention but to other options as well. When you have a candidate you are interested in hiring, moving as quickly as the system will allow and providing frequent communication and updates throughout the process is important.

Building the Candidate Pipeline

The need within allied health and nursing, though, is not necessarily for MORE candidates but for more QUALIFIED candidates. Teaching, similar to the healthcare profession, is a calling for many. Educational and credential requirements from certifying boards limit the pool of candidates even further. Through initial research, the “best” source of full time faculty candidates was indicated to be current adjunct faculty. These individuals already know the system and are often eager to move into full time roles. However, they sometimes lack the required credentials to move from clinical oversight to theoretical instruction.



Building the candidate pipeline involves creating awareness of job opportunities with those who are most qualified to fill positions, but it also means grooming those with potential to pursue additional education or experience to meet qualifications. By building qualifications of adjunct faculty members, they are positioned to take full time roles as they become available.

Adjunct faculty tend to be identified through interactions with healthcare partners and occasionally when exceptional students express interest in teaching. All faculty members should understand how they can encourage others to consider “educator” as a career path. Connecting interested healthcare partners and students with appropriate resources to explore an academic career will assist in building the pipeline of talent to fill vacancies as they arise.

Trends in Employee Development

Continuous learning is critical for success in today's work environment. This is true in industry as well as academia. Demand for development, coaching, and growth opportunities is fierce among employees who pride themselves on delivering their best. Ninety-four percent (94%) of employees say that they would stay at an organization longer if it invested in their career development⁴. In an effort to build skills that support organizational success, as well as reward and retain employees, many organizations have turned to employee development as a tool for supporting employees' continued growth, delivering "always on" learning and development⁵. Just as businesses partner with colleges to address their talent shortages, allied health and nursing programs could identify skill gaps in their teaching faculty and develop the content that would help to close those gaps. These programs might be offered at regular intervals or recorded and made available using technology for those interested in driving their own development.

A significant trend has developed in employees taking charge of their own learning. Sometimes people are not aware of the skills they need to learn, and in cases such as those a supervisor or experienced mentor can be very helpful in identify areas for growth. At other times, though, employees are thirsty for knowledge and simply need a guide to help them find the information they seek. Healthcare practitioners coming into the field of teaching are used to excelling in their careers. They want to do the same as faculty members and will likely be open to learning when resources are provided.



The form of development will likely differ depending on the specific need. For more and more organizations, training has become a challenge because the workforce is distributed across locations. Operating in a lean environment may also make it difficult for individuals to find time to attend a class or conference when their plates are full at work. The necessity of responding to these challenges has led to the introduction of types of distance learning programs that allow employees to learn when it is convenient for them. Whether a college develops its own programs or identifies resources readily available online, many at no cost, providing faculty members with a clear path to those resources and time to develop specific skills could aid in retention of new hires. Often in industry, online learning modules for new hires are paired with a coaching or mentorship relationship, creating space to discuss ideas and apply them in the employee's setting.

A further trend in continuous learning has come from the establishment of interdisciplinary and cross-functional teams for sharing information and best practices. This has two potential benefits. First, different disciplines may face similar challenges or may have already identified solutions that could be useful to allied health and nursing programs. Having a fresh perspective often brings new thinking to problems, particularly when departments are open to doing things differently than they have been done in the past. Second, participation on a project team by itself can be developmental. Challenging employees to think differently and expand their skill sets is a regular practice in industry that could benefit the allied health and nursing programs.

⁴ See "2018 Workplace Learning Report: The rise and responsibility of talent development in the new labor market." LinkedIn (2018) available at <https://learning.linkedin.com/content/dam/me/learning/en-us/pdfs/linkedin-learning-workplace-learning-report-2018.pdf>

⁵ For more information, see the 2017 Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends report (pp. 29-35), available at <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/human-capital/articles/introduction-human-capital-trends.html>.

⁶ For example, a search on the term "curriculum development" in YouTube.com resulted in over 600,000 matches, some of which might be applicable to Community College faculty learning needs.

Recognizing and Appreciating Talent

A key aspect of building the employment brand, and therefore, increasing the ability to attract and retain good people is assuring that current faculty are appropriately recognized. At a minimum, finding ways to say thank you and acknowledge hard work can go a long way toward cementing the relationship between employer and employees. Bay Area human resources guru Valerie Fredrickson has described ways to keep employees happy without giving them a raise⁷. This includes recognizing employees for their hard work and can be as simple as saying “thanks.”

It is not uncommon in industry for supervisors to write a brief note of thanks to an employee who has gone above and beyond in delivering on an objective. It is human nature to think appreciative thoughts but not necessarily to express them, making supervisors often feel that they are very appreciative when the appreciation only occurs in their minds. As a result, employees do not always feel appreciated for their efforts. People want to know when they are doing well and a simple “thank you” can lift spirits during a long day or challenging project. When appropriate, employee can be singled out for recognition at a staff meeting (assuming the employee would not be embarrassed by the attention). Whether in public or one-on-one, the behavior that is being commended should be clear so that the employee knows what they should continue to do and others can understand what is needed to receive similar accolades.

Culture and Retention

When considering ways to boost retention, it is worth noting that turnover is costly to organization, both on a monetary and psychological level. The costliest turnover for any organization tends to be the turnover that occurs within the first eighteen (18) months after hire because this is after the employer has invested time and resources to train a new employee in their role. Academic institutions are no different in this regard, and for professional schools such as allied health and nursing, often faculty members come from practitioner roles and lack classroom management and curriculum development skills that must be quickly learned in order to succeed. The frustrations of learning to work productively within a very different environment can also cause qualified individuals with strong potential to return to more financially lucrative clinical positions.

To increase retention, it is key for leaders of the California Community Colleges’ Allied Health and Nursing Schools to consider actions that engage new hires early and connect them with the reasons they pursued instructional positions in the first place. Culture will be unique to every college but building a positive culture could be the greatest legacy of all those leading allied health and nursing programs across the state⁸. Even those colleges that already conduct on-boarding sessions and strive for continuous improvement can benefit from engaging faculty in discussions about their work and inviting them to be part of solving challenges that they encounter. Because giving back and doing interesting work are reasons faculty gave for pursuing positions in the first place, ensuring that there is room for such work and highlighting how faculty members are giving back can reinforce the wisdom of the decision to work for the college. It should be noted that part of this Succession Planning project is the development of a statewide New Allied Health and Nursing Faculty Bootcamp.

⁷ “3 Ways to Keep Your Employees Happy Without Giving Them a Raise.” (February 2018). Frederickson Pribula Li – HR Executive Search & Consulting [blog]. <http://www.fplpartners.com/newsroom/blog/3-ways-to-keep-your-employees-happy-without-giving-them-a-raise.php>

⁸ Utley, T. (2017, December 31). 3 Ways Social Entrepreneurs Can Influence Workplace Culture This Year. Forbes. Accessible at <https://www.forbes.com/sites/toriutley/2017/12/31/3-ways-social-entrepreneurs-can-influence-workplace-culture-this-year/#5d4caa0a2be6>

Culture tends to look backward – what happened, what worked. Employees create culture by telling stories about leadership – the rules of survival and emotional prosperity. (Emotional prosperity being another way to describe happiness.) Leaders often do not understand the culture because they are not telling the story, they are the story. By virtue of position, the leadership experience within an organization is different than most employees. This is why it is so important for leaders to listen and ask questions to understand, particularly when what they are hearing is something they do not personally see or experience.

Best-practice organizations regularly seek employee input to get insights. The key is listening to what is said so that, over time, the employer can act on trends. One means of collecting this information is the “stay interview” (sometimes also referred as “new hire” or “anniversary” interviews). In industry, these interviews are typically conducted by a member of Human Resources or a department leader and might occur at intervals such as 90 days and nine (9) months for new hires and on the third and fifth anniversary of hire for other employees.

Further, reducing frustrations that are inevitable in any new job can go a long way to retaining high performing faculty. Frustrations impact the emotional connection and long-term commitment to professional’s work. This is what individuals feel when they care about their reputation, when they care about doing things thoroughly and to the best of their ability, and they care enough about what they do to embark upon a personal pursuit of excellence. This comes through continuous learning, reflecting on what they do and how they do it and continually asking themselves how they could do it better. The three-month, nine-month, and anniversary interviews are a means to encourage introspection and show that the organization cares enough to identify frustrations that impact that connection and commitment. Frustrations can then be addressed, not on a one-off basis, but more holistically to continually improve the employee experience.

Next Steps

The California Community College System has a reputation for delivering a high-quality education in allied health and nursing, in large part because of the dedication of faculty and administration to make a positive difference in the field of healthcare. Continuing to look for innovative ways to address compensation while shifting the conversation to the larger impact that faculty have on students and their community could help with recruitment of new instructional talent.

Allied health and nursing faculty largely embrace their service to students with the desire to give back to their communities and multiple their positive impact on both students and the patients they serve. Using industry approaches to hiring and engagement, colleges can speak to the intrinsic motivators that drive healthcare practitioners to tell a compelling story that attracts those with the skill and calling to teach others. Thinking about the employment brand from a culture perspective could have far reaching implications for both attraction and retention of faculty for years to come.

The third and final phase of this project will develop tools to aid implementation of the recommendations in this report. Step-by-step guidelines for employment branding and messaging for recruitment will be outlined so that colleges can create relevant materials to attract healthcare practitioners to faculty positions. The recruiting guidelines and other tools will be packaged as an online toolkit for potential application by allied health and nursing programs statewide.



Health Workforce Initiative

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