

Summary of HDS Equity & Diversity Practicum Findings

Spring 2021

The Human Developmental Sciences Major at UCSD is committed to pushing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) to the forefront of the major. This has especially become a theme among the 2020-2021 academic school year. In response to the tragic events that have faced the world during these times, the HDS major has implemented classes like HDS 160 that focus on combating injustices through education and collective action. Through this class format, students have the opportunity to suggest positive reforms to the major. In fact, during the Spring Quarter of 2021, a class of 18 students focused on the possible reform of establishing a DEI student advisory board, by answering a research question about what a DEI student advisory board position would look like for the HDS major.

The HDS major knows the importance of being thorough when answering research questions, so the class was organized into four different assignments, to keep all 18 students on track. The four assignments were titled “Problem Posing,” “Literature Review,” “Coding and Data Analysis,” and “Research Findings”. For the first half of the class, each student was tasked to individually answer the assignments on their own, meaning there were 18 different responses to each of the four assignments. Once all students had the opportunity to answer the research question themselves, the HDS 160 Instructors, Ramon Stephens and Katie Ishizuka, split the class into four separate groups, each responsible for one of the four assignments. Each group was given a new task to analyze the 18 separate papers, and condense them into the most important and key information. After spending several weeks pruning the data for the most useful information, the four groups came together and presented their combined findings, answering the research question: “What duties and responsibilities would encompass an HDS Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Student Advisory Board/position?”

The first task for this class was to “Identify The Problem”. Each student in the class researched potential problems that could arise if the HDS major does not implement a student advisory board position in the future. After a group collaborative effort and extensive research, the class was able to narrow down their work into six main problems. The students saw a problem with (1) pairing concerns with action, (2) needing increased support, (3) a lack of campus diversity, (4) going beyond the campus’ DEI course requirements, (5) increasing access for open discussion, and (6) maintaining accountability and support. The first problem, “pairing concerns with action,” is about how effectively the HDS major could fix the concerns mentioned by the students if there is no DEI board. The second problem, “needing increased support,” is referring to the minority students on campus who need more support because, as the third problem states there is, “a lack of campus diversity”. The fourth problem is that without the implementation of a DEI board, the major would not need to, “go beyond the campus’ DEI course requirements”. The fifth problem refers to students needing “increased access to open discussions,” and being able effectively to report their feelings and concerns. Lastly, number six is that the DEI board will keep the major accountable while also providing support to the major as a resource. The students declared that these six projected problems were enough for a call to action, because they can be solved through the incorporation of a DEI council with powerful student voices.

The next task was the “Review of Literature”. This is where students were assigned to read scholarly research papers and journal articles about what a student advisory position would look like. After pruning the class data and looking at pre-existing models from other college campuses, students narrowed down the key findings, and concluded with a six step model to emulate when creating a DEI student advisory board for HDS. These six steps go as followed: (1) Start with a focus on leadership and support, (2) recruit across multiple disciplines (HDS students interested in different career paths), (3) appoint self motivated members, (4) create long and short term goals, (5) promote collaborative events within the department, and

(6) evaluate further areas that need improvement. Based on prior literature these steps will help ensure that the advisory board will make a lasting impact.

The third task was “Coding and Data Analysis”, where students worked with first person interviews, videos, and websites. After analyzing these first person accounts of DEI boards, students then coded the data by drawing out key points and themes that they saw consistently throughout the different interviews. The students concluded with three emergent themes. Theme 1 was “Environment”. A common theme among the interviews was students wanting a safe campus environment where they feel supported with an advisory board. HDS students are desiring an environment where they feel a sense of allyship, connectivity, and community. The second theme was a “Call for Action”. Through the interviews it was found that students are desiring a change around campus, and in order to fulfill these needs, action toward the creation of this board must be implemented. The last theme was “Academic” since students are directly affected by what is taught in the classroom. The interviews showed a desire for more student voices in the classrooms and the HDS department as a whole.

Lastly, the fourth task was “Research Findings”, where students took all the information from the previous tasks, and pulled out the main results from the research. After condensing all of the class’s data, students were able to draw out key findings for recruitment strategies, and key duties that the advisory position would be responsible for. For the recruitment strategy, it was found that selective recruitment, moral authenticity, allyship, active learning, and generalized trust are all needed for the formation of this advisory board. For the key duties of the position, students concluded that responsibilities fell into the “support” and “connect” categories. For example, they have the duty of supporting students’ mental health, cultures, communities, academics, and more. They also have the duty to connect the students to the community, whether that be through fostering interpersonal relationships, creating mentorship opportunities, or connecting faculty and students.

Altogether, these four tasks answer fully the research question: “What duties and responsibilities would encompass an HDS Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Student Advisory Board/position?”

Overall, the HDS 160 course in Spring 2021 allowed students the opportunity to really get involved and make a difference with their major. The tasks and assignments in this class proved just how important and critical student voices are to the campus community. The HDS 160 class acts as a great example of what happens when student voices are utilized in order to enact positive change. The Human Developmental Sciences major looks forward to implementing the findings of this course into the process of starting our own HDS Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Student Advisory Board.

Written By: Marissa Ray

Message From the Author:

I had the privilege of being a student in this SP21 HDS 160 course. Being a Black minority student myself, classes like HDS 160 are a great reassurance that I chose the right major. The Human Development major does so much to make sure their students feel heard and supported, and I definitely feel their support first hand. I am excited for what the future holds with the creation of this HDS DEI board, and will continue to work closely with the major.