

BACKGROUND

The American Psychological Association (APA) Commission on Ethnic Minority Recruitment, Retention, and Training in Psychology (CEMRRAT) was a 15-member advisory and governance group. The Commission was established by the APA Board of Directors in 1994 in response to an Association resolution that identified "the recruitment, retention, and training of ethnic minorities in psychology as one of the Association's highest priorities..." Members of CEMRRAT, who were representative experts from federal research and mental health agencies and various domains and levels of postsecondary education including student representatives, were appointed in October 1994 by (then) APA President Ronald E. Fox, PhD. President Fox asked the Commission to assess the status of and barriers to the participation of persons of color in American Psychology, and to develop a 5-year plan to guide the Association's efforts in this area.

The Commission's activities were funded primarily by special allocations from the Contingency Funds of the APA Board of Directors and Council of Representatives. Additional funding was provided by the Association's Public Interest Directorate and by the Center for Mental Health Services (#92-MF-01645701D). Still other support was provided by the 15 organizations and APA governance groups who funded liaisons to attend and contribute to CEMRRAT's meetings.

The Commission's efforts were characterized by processes of inclusion and strategic product development. Mechanisms were developed for encouraging substantive and broad-based comment from the Association's governance boards and committees, staff, and other groups and individuals with vested interests in CEMRRAT's work. For example, the liaisons to CEMRRAT were encouraged to participate fully in the deliberations and other activities of the Commission and its work groups. Strategic product development was the responsibility of the Commission's three work groups on Education and Training, Faculty Recruitment and Retention, and Student Recruitment and Retention.

The Commission sought to promote creative transformation of psychology's educational pipeline (high school through postdoctoral and continuing education studies) in ways that would ensure that, in the very near future, the proportion of psychologists who are people of color (currently 5% to 6%) would significantly increase, and all psychologists would demonstrate at least minimal multicultural competence in training, research, and practice issues. CEMRRAT sunset itself upon APA Council of Representatives' approval of its [Final Report](#) in 1997.

The current CEMRRAT2 Taskforce was established in 1999 by then President Richard M. Suinn to oversee the implementation efforts of the APA CEMRRAT Plan as published in the 1997 Final Report. That plan is guided by five major objectives: (1) Promote & improve multicultural education & training in psychology; (2) Increase ethnic minority faculty recruitment & retention in psychology (3) Increase ethnic minority student recruitment, retention, and graduation in psychology; (4) Provide national leadership for diversity & multiculturalism in education, science, and human services; and (5) Promote data collection, research, and evaluation on ethnic minority recruitment, retention, graduation, and training.

One of the major accomplishments of the CEMRRAT/ CEMRRAT2 Task Force is the "seeding" of the original CEMRRAT members in other APA Governance groups as a strategy for both planting the CEMRRAT vision throughout APA and increasing the participation of ethnic minorities in APA governance. This progressive infusion of the Commission's vision throughout APA has served to represent, affirm, and advance the goals of inclusion, increased diversification across and within sub-disciplines, and promote strategic product development - all of which are paramount to institutionalizing the CEMRRAT vision.

CEMRRAT2 assumed direct responsibility for implementing a few critical APA/CEMRRAT Plan activities – such as the development of surveys, publications, the establishment of the Textbook Initiative Workgroup (TIWG) which sought to diversify the content of introductory psychology textbooks, as well as the administration of the Suinn Minority Achievement Award for Graduate Programs in Psychology and CEMRRAT Implementation Grant Awards which are funded by APA for approximately \$100,000 per year. The CEMRRAT2 Task Force ensures continuous oversight of the overall APA/CEMRRAT Action Plan.