

Evaluating the “Visit Day” as a Tool for Supporting Underrepresented and/or Marginalized Students in Applying to Doctoral Programs

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INTRODUCTION

- Psychology doctoral training programs do not reflect the demographics of the the diversifying population in the United States.
- As one strategy to recruit a more diverse group of future psychologists, doctoral training programs host program “visit days” to disseminate knowledge and connect with underrepresented prospective students
- The current study assessed the experiences of prospective students who attended a doctoral program visit day and current students who assisted with planning and hosting the visit day

METHODS

- 4 clinical psychology doctoral programs hosted visit days from 2018-2019
- 38 prospective students and 35 current students completed electronic surveys about their experiences.
 - *Visitor Post-Visit Survey*. 14 items rated on a 5 point likert scale to measure visitors’ satisfaction and plans to apply to graduate school.
 - *Visitor 1 year Follow up Survey*. Items assessing whether prospective students had applied to graduate school and the outcomes of those applications
 - *Current Graduate Post Visit Survey* 10 Items adapted from the Volunteers function Inventory assessed the benefits of volunteering on a 7 point likert scale. 4 items from the Personal Involvement subscale of the Cultural Competence Self Assessment Questionnaire to assess current graduate students’ experience with people from underrepresented groups (before and after visit day),.

Doctoral program “visit days”: Viewed as positive and beneficial by underrepresented prospective students and current doctoral students

For more information see:

Grassetti, S. N., Meehan, Z. M., Beveridge, R. M., Teachman, B. A., Stanton, A. G., Cooper, P. J., & Daniel, K. E. (2023). Evaluating the “visit day” tool for supporting underrepresented and/or marginalized students in applying to doctoral programs. *Training and Education in Professional Psychology, 17*, 43-52.

RESULTS

- Visitors highly satisfied with the visit overall $M = 4.76$ (out of 5)
- Most satisfying aspects of visit day (in order): Welcoming faculty, Welcoming students, helpful program information
- Visitors reported increased plan to apply to the program they visited from before ($M=3.37$, $SG=1.15$) to after visit day ($M=4.13$, $SD=1.04$); $t(37)=4.37$, $p<.001$.
- Most frequent recommendations for improvements: Making the visit day longer, advanced notice of itinerary
- At one year follow up, 78% of visitors who applied to graduate school received an offer of admission
- Current grad students reported increased
 - Social relations with people of color
 - Discussions about supports and/or challenges faced by people of underrepresented groups
 - attendance at school-based meetings that impact underrepresented groups

NEXT STEPS

- Programs should continue to engage current students in planning and hosting visit days
- Programs should work together to evaluate the impact of visit days including the impact on visitors and current members of the program
- Visit days should be designed with maximum opportunities to build relationships and facilitate connections (rather than providing information)
- Widening the scope to department-wide visit days (rather than clinical only) can help engage the entire department in diversity-focused conversations while providing opportunities for interdisciplinary work
- Consider virtual visit days to improve accessibility
- Programs might consider the potential advantages of defining “underrepresented” generally or offering visit days for specific affinity groups