The Office of Disparities and Community Engagement was established by Dean Hern in Fall 2010 to assist UL School of Nursing faculty, staff and students in the following ways:

- Support teaching/learning, practice, research and service activities focused on ULSON collaboration with populations that experience health and healthcare disparities
- Support teaching/learning, practice, research and service activities focused on ULSON collaboration with community individuals, groups and organizations
- Provide continuing education to the ULSON community regarding community engagement and health disparities
- Support recognition of ULSON faculty, staff and student activities focused on health disparities and community engagement

Resources

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The Office of Disparities has begun development of several resources that may be used by faculty, staff and students. These include:

- Office of Disparities & CE Black Board site - provides a portal for current web sites for standards, position papers, reports, videos and articles focused on health disparities/equity, and community engagement that can be used for teaching, research or practice.

- Color of Health website (www.colorofhealth.org http://louisville.edu/nursing/colorofhealth/) – a multicultural/multilingual website that is focused on collaboration with community partners to develop a health information portal for the Louisville metro community. Graduate and undergraduate faculty and students are encouraged to use this site for course projects.

- Community Engagement Data Base – Since 2010, data on the community engagement activities and number of hours has been compiled for all student learning activities. In 2011, data on faculty community engagement was initiated. Data are collected annually. These data can be used by faculty and staff for a variety of purposes.

- Office of Disparities & CE Bulletin Board – (located just outside room 4055) provides the latest in literature in the targeted areas and is updated monthly

- Office of Disparities – (located in Room 4055) can assist you with identification of approaches and techniques for incorporation of disparities content and community engagement opportunities into any course curriculum; will provide guest speakers to the ULSON to speak on their work in these areas; will provide support to faculty and students who wish to present their work on health disparities and/or community engagement; and can assist faculty and students who wish to develop manuscripts based on community engagement and health disparities/equity work.
Health Disparities are differences in health status among distinct segments of the population including differences that occur by gender, race or ethnicity, education or income, disability, or living in various geographic localities.

Health equity is achieving the highest level of health for all people. Health equity entails focused societal efforts to address avoidable inequalities by equalizing the conditions for health for all groups, especially for those who have experienced socioeconomic disadvantage or historical injustices.

- Distribution of disease, disability and death in such a way as to not create a disproportionate burden on one population.
- The absence of persistent health differences over time, between racial, ethnic, vulnerable and underserved groups.

Community Engagement – Although this term has a variety of definitions and is seen as encompassing all university activities in which students and faculty partner with community to the mutual benefit of both groups, the ULSON has defined what we identify as Community Engagement into two categories:

- **Engagement activities** – activities that are part of the course curriculum but are *not a routine part of services provided* by a collaborating organization or service provider. These activities are developed by students and community to meet their unique (unmet) need(s). Examples are health fairs, health education in public schools, blood pressures in a community center and home visits to at-risk community members.

- **Service learning activities** – activities that are part of the course curriculum where students undertake roles, responsibilities and activities that *are a routine part of services provided* by a collaborating organization or service provider. These activities are designated by the organization/service provider; however, the ability to provide these services is enhanced by the involvement of students. Examples are NP student in an AHEC placement, and a doctoral student working with a health care initiative as part of an independent study.