Promoting Diversity in Nursing School Admissions: Lessons Learned from Dentistry

Session Sponsored by NursingCAS
Dental School Applicants and First-Time Enrollees, 1980-2014

Source: American Dental Education Association, U.S. Dental School Applicants and Enrollees, 2014 Entering Class
Enrollees by URM and Non-URM Status in U.S. Dental Schools, 2000-2014

Source: American Dental Education Association, U.S. Dental School Applicants and Enrollees, 2014 Entering Class

Note: URM includes Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, American Indian or Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

Source: American Dental Education Association, U.S. Dental School Applicants and Enrollees, 2014 Entering Class
Significance of Holistic Review
A Holistic Perspective of Applicants

**Experiences:**
-- the road traveled
-- educational background
-- employment
-- research experience
-- dentistry-related experiences

**Attributes:**
-- skills and abilities
-- personal and professional characteristics
-- demographic factors

**Metrics:**
GPAs and DAT scores
The Holistic Perspective

Institution
Mission

Applicant

Experiences
Attributes
Metrics
Holistic Review: Motivations for Change and Buy-in

We knew:
- Better educational experience for all students

- Improved access & quality of care
  - A diverse workforce contributes to trust and credibility with underserved communities
- Institutional excellence
- Societal excellence

We knew it was the smart thing to do and the right thing to do. (Smedley, 2001)
1-4 The dental school must have policies and practices to:

a. achieve appropriate levels of diversity among its students, faculty and staff;

b. engage in ongoing systematic and focused efforts to attract and retain students, faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds; and

c. systematically evaluate comprehensive strategies to improve the institutional climate for diversity.
Dimensions of Diversity

Structural
- Also referred to as compositional diversity, focuses on the numerical distribution of students, faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds in a program or institution.

Curriculum
- Also referred to as classroom diversity, covers both the diversity-related curricular content that promote shared learning and the integration of skills, insights, and experiences of diverse groups in all academic settings, including distance learning.

Institutional Climate
- Also referred to as interactional diversity, focuses on the general environment created in programs and institutions that support diversity as a core value and provide opportunities for informal learning among diverse peers.
ADEA Holistic Review: Peer-to-Peer Training

- Initial ADEA Holistic Admissions Committee Workshops based on 2002 Dental Pipeline Findings and Dr. David Brunson’s work.
- Evolved into a formal training program
- RWJF Funded Training Program for 10 Admissions peers
- ADEA committed to support teams of trainers to visit dental schools requesting training
- Ongoing
Components of Admissions Committee Training

- Define what constitutes holistic review in admissions (balance consideration of education, attributes and metrics)
- Diversity is integral to achieving excellence in each area of dental education’s tripartite mission
- Components of sound admissions practices (legally sound, CODA Standards)
- Key topics: Non-cognitive variables, Implicit Bias and Legally Sound Admissions Practices
- Results of the 2012 Admissions Officers Survey
- Tools (bank of interview questions, promising practices)
- Case Studies
ADEA Holistic Review: Lessons Learned

• Organized structure surrounding workshop important
• ADEA expectations - who should attend, importance of dean attendance, workshop length.
• Pre-visit phone call: identify school goals and issues to address
• Meeting with trainers and organizers the day/evening prior
• Feedback to ADEA following workshop.
What is the most important outcome of the workshop?

“Opening a dialogue about the holistic review process and get other faculty onboard with the philosophy.”

“Discussing how holistic review increases diversity yet does not decrease academic qualifications of the class.”

“Reviewing at a base level the applicants who are able to successfully complete our program.”
Characteristics of successful schools

Dean suggestion
Hosted an early workshop
Admissions Committee with a mission statement
Candidates are reviewed holistically during initial screening
Lots of checks and balances in the system
Multi-year process of reviewing our admissions procedures and taking small baby steps to move in a different direction.
What we Learned
UU Health Study - Reported Use by Health Profession

Self-reported use of holistic review by health profession

Primary Degree Program

- DDS/DMD: 93%
- MD: 91%
- MPH: 82%
- PharmD: 78%
- BSN: 47%
UU Health Study Extent of Use
Holistic Review - Dentistry

- Not using holistic review: 3%
- Some elements of a holistic process: 27%
- Strong holistic process: 70%
Holistic Review Practices

- Evaluating applicant criteria related to specific mission or goals of the school
- Mission statement for admissions includes diversity
- Considering non-academic criteria alongside academic metrics in the initial screening process
- Selecting students from the waitlist by characteristics related to school’s mission or goals
- Providing training for the admissions committee related to school mission and/or diversity
What we Learned
UUHealth Study Impact - Dentistry

Of those evaluating admission outcomes:

- **76%** of dental schools reported that diversity of the incoming class *increased*.
- **88%** of dental schools reported average GPA of the incoming class was *unchanged or increased*.
- **100%** of dental schools reported graduation rates were *unchanged or increased*.
- **84%** of dental schools reported that the average number of attempts for students to pass required licensing exams remained *unchanged or improved*.
ADEA Initiative: 3 Key Factors to Success

• Support from the top
  – Takes more resources to review applications holistically

• Small achievable goals extended over time
  – Evidence that numbers don’t always predict success

• Early success stories
Hidden Gold in College Applications 03/05/16

Frank Bruni      New York Times Op Ed
QUESTIONS?
• Attend an Upcoming Webinar or Event
• Schedule a Call
• Visit the following sites for more information:
  • www.mynursingcas.org
  • www.aacn.nche.edu/nursingcas
  • www.nursingcas.org

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