HOLISTIC ADMISSIONS REVIEW PRIMER:
IMPLEMENTATION IN ACADEMIC NURSING
INTRODUCTION

» By 2050 the federal government projects that racially and ethnically diverse persons will comprise 53 percent of the United States population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019).

» As the population becomes more diverse, cultural competence and humility among healthcare professionals becomes essential to meet complex healthcare needs.

» Demand for registered nurses (RNs) was projected to increase by 795,700 RNs between 2014 and 2030 (HRSA 2017).
“Evidence indicates that diversity is associated with improved access to care for racial and ethnic minority patients, greater patient choice and satisfaction, and better educational experiences for health professions students, among many other benefits.”

Institute of Medicine, 2004
UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT ON HEALTH OUTCOMES

The Rationale for Diversity in the Health Occupations: A Review of Evidence (HRSA, 2014) identified four pathways to better understand the impact of workforce diversity on health outcomes.

1. Service patterns - Diverse providers are more likely to serve diverse populations, thereby improving access
2. Racial, ethnicity, and language concordance - Patients who see providers of a similar, diverse background will have improved communication and decision-making
3. Trust in the healthcare delivery system - greater diversity will increase trust
4. Occupational advocacy - diversity among providers will lead to more leadership and policies benefiting vulnerable populations
A CASE FOR HOLISTIC ADMISSIONS

» Colleges and Universities fail to fill their new classes and meet enrollment targets, while...

...over 67,000 qualified applicants are turned away from entry level baccalaureate nursing programs each year (AACN).

» Admission decision making process is critical to identify who will meet the patient care needs of the future.

» Nursing schools “evaluate outcomes related to employer satisfaction. If employers and nursing schools are on the same page as to what is needed from nurses, then we can look at these attributes during the admissions process (Glazer, 2016).”
Holistic Admission Review is defined as a flexible, individualized way of assessing an applicant’s capabilities by which balanced consideration is given to experiences, attributes, and academic metrics (EAM) and, when considered in combination, how the individual might contribute value as a nursing student and nursing profession.

Adapted from: AAMC Advancing Holistic Review
Holistic Admissions is:

1. Mission-driven
2. Strategically-focused
3. Promotes diversity and inclusion as essential to institutional excellence
4. Informed by data
EXPERIENCE, ATTRIBUTE, METRIC MODEL (E-A-M)

» Experiences- Lived events or encounters that may result in knowledge acquisition or practical wisdom
  – i.e. Healthcare experiences, educational background, community enrichment

» Attributes- A quality, characteristic, ability, or skill of a person or population
  – i.e. Resilience, integrity, intellectual curiosity, ethnicity/race, socioeconomic status, multilingual abilities, geography, faith, perseverance

» Metrics- The traditional measurements of academic achievement or testing measurements
  – i.e. Cumulative GPA, science GPA, grade trends, entrance exam score
TRADITIONAL ADMISSION IMBALANCE AND THE MYTH OF METRICS...

» For many years, metrics have been the overriding mechanism for applicant selection in nursing programs.

» Rarely do test scores and grade point averages (GPAs) provide the full context of an applicant’s potential to succeed in higher education (Page, 2008).
First to examine the nationwide impact and use of holistic review for students pursuing careers in the health professions.

Describe the impact on academic success, diversity, and other outcomes such as students’ engagement with the community.

The majority of schools that self-identified as using holistic review reported:

1. An increase in the diversity over the past decade
2. Measures of student success over the past decade were unchanged or improved, including the academic quality of the incoming class, student retention, and student academic performance

Source: http://www.uuhealth.org
THE HOLISTIC ADMISSIONS BALANCE

» Information about the full applicant – their prior lived experiences, their unique characteristics that shape them as individuals – coupled with their academic history utilized to determine which students should be admitted into nursing programs (Sedlacek, 2004; DeWitty, 2018).

» Finding students who possess and demonstrate the core values of the nursing profession along with the potential to succeed in nursing’s rigorous courses should be the primary aim of every admissions office.
CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

» Two common challenges for admission committees: Time commitment and financial resources

» Successful strategies to mitigate these challenges:
  – **Prioritization** - streamlining with technological solutions helps to prioritize committee and staff member time.
  
  – **Faculty Engagement** - service on an admissions committee can be personally and professionally rewarding for faculty members
  
  – **Advisor Engagement** - staff, senior students and alumni can engage in the review efforts, including advocating on behalf of advisees throughout prerequisite coursework
  
  – **Recruiting Investment** - interview process with diverse faculty representation can be a powerful recruiting tool.
Some faculty and administrators worry that retention, graduation, and certification pass rates will suffer when admitting diverse students.

Schools that have effectively implemented holistic admissions have not experienced declines in academic performance.

A more diverse student population can enhance programmatic success in terms of completion and standardized exam performance (Barton, Willis, & Hsin-Hui Lin, 2017).
ENHANCING ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Elemental Strategies:

» Pre-programmatic support
» Evidence-based admissions processes
» Academic support for nursing coursework
» Fostering Inclusion
PROMISING PRACTICES FOR IMPLEMENTING HOLISTIC ADMISSIONS

- Evaluate
- Collect Data
- Develop support services
- Staff/faculty engagement
- Rubrics reflect EAM
- Recruitment practices align
- EAM Model connects with mission
- Mission values diversity & inclusion
RESOURCES:


RESOURCES:

