

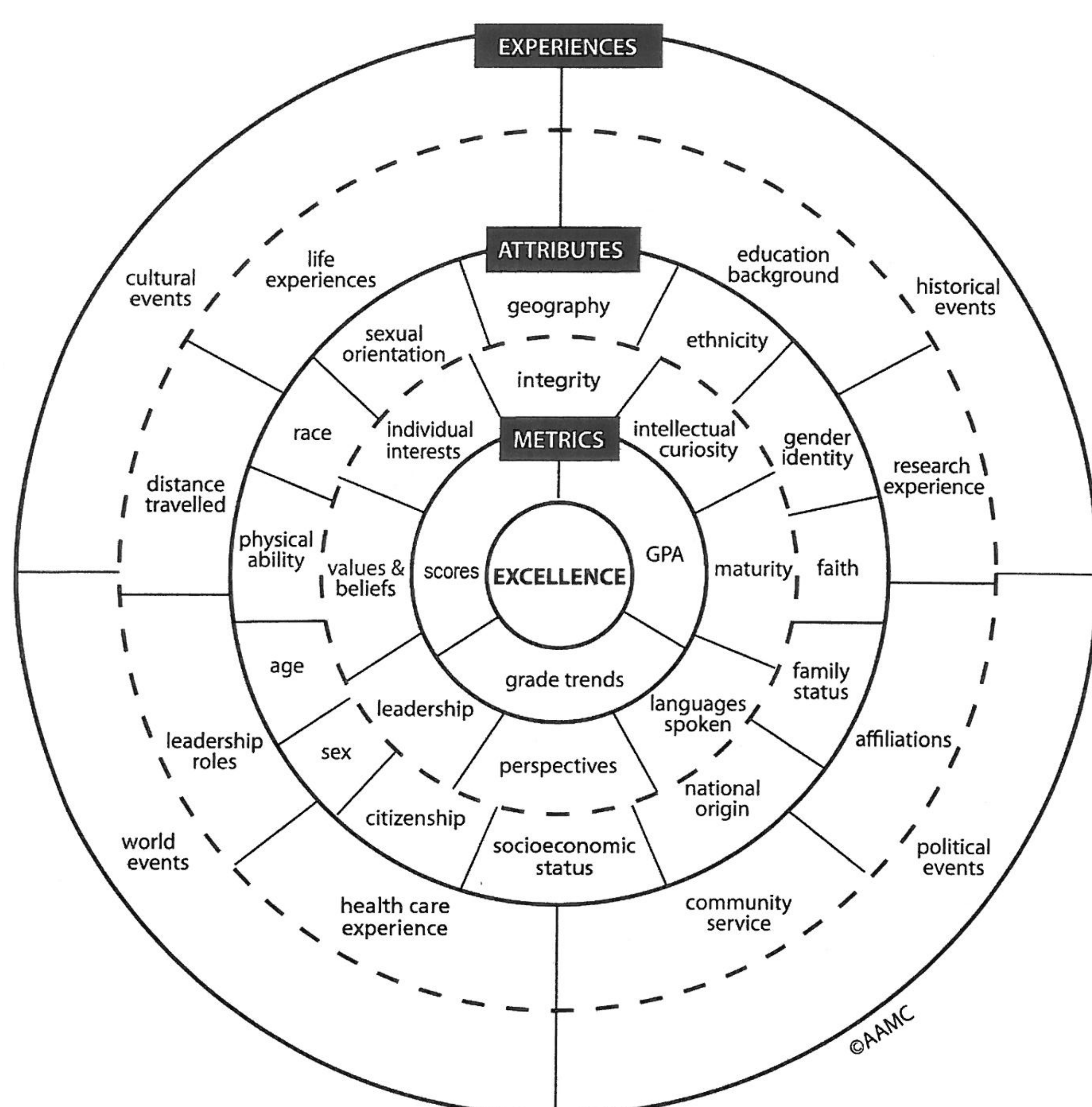
INTRODUCTION

- In 2013, a holistic admissions process was implemented to recruit and retain an academically talented and diverse student body for the purpose of (a) improving nursing workforce diversity and (b) providing care in rural and underserved Georgia communities.
- In Georgia, 80% of RNs are White and 15.8% are Black, while 56% of the population is White and 31% is Black. 94% of RNs are female.^{1,2}
- 70% of the counties are rural, nearly twice the national average, 80% are designated as a Health Care Professional Shortage Area (HPSA), and 89% are all or in part a Medically Underserved Area or Population (MUA/MUP).¹
- The Institute of Medicine recommends that every effort be made to (a) improve access to care for underserved populations and (b) have nurses who are underrepresented minorities provide more care to minorities and underserved populations, and work in an HPSA/MUA/MUP.³
- As the fourth public research university in the state with the only integrated academic health center and flagship nursing school, our commitment is to develop a culturally diverse nursing workforce to provide quality and culturally competent patient care.

METHODS

- The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) Attributes-Metrics Model was utilized to (a) align admissions to mission and goals and (b) implement college and institution-specific, diversity-related goals to yield the desired educational and workforce outcomes (Figure 1).⁴
- Utilizing the Attributes-Metrics Model, admission committee members identified which experiences, attributes, and metrics (E-A-Ms) nursing applicants must have (a) to contribute to the incoming class and (b) to have potential for success in the program and as a professional.
- Admission committee members used a holistic approach and the identified E-A-Ms to review applicants with a minimum grade point average (GPA).
- Based on assigned scores, applicants are categorized as highly recommended, recommended, alternate or reject. Highly recommended are admitted first.

Figure 1. AAMC Experiences – Attributes-Metrics Model



Note. Adapted from *Workforce America: Managing Employee Diversity as a Vital Resource*. McGraw Publishing 1990.

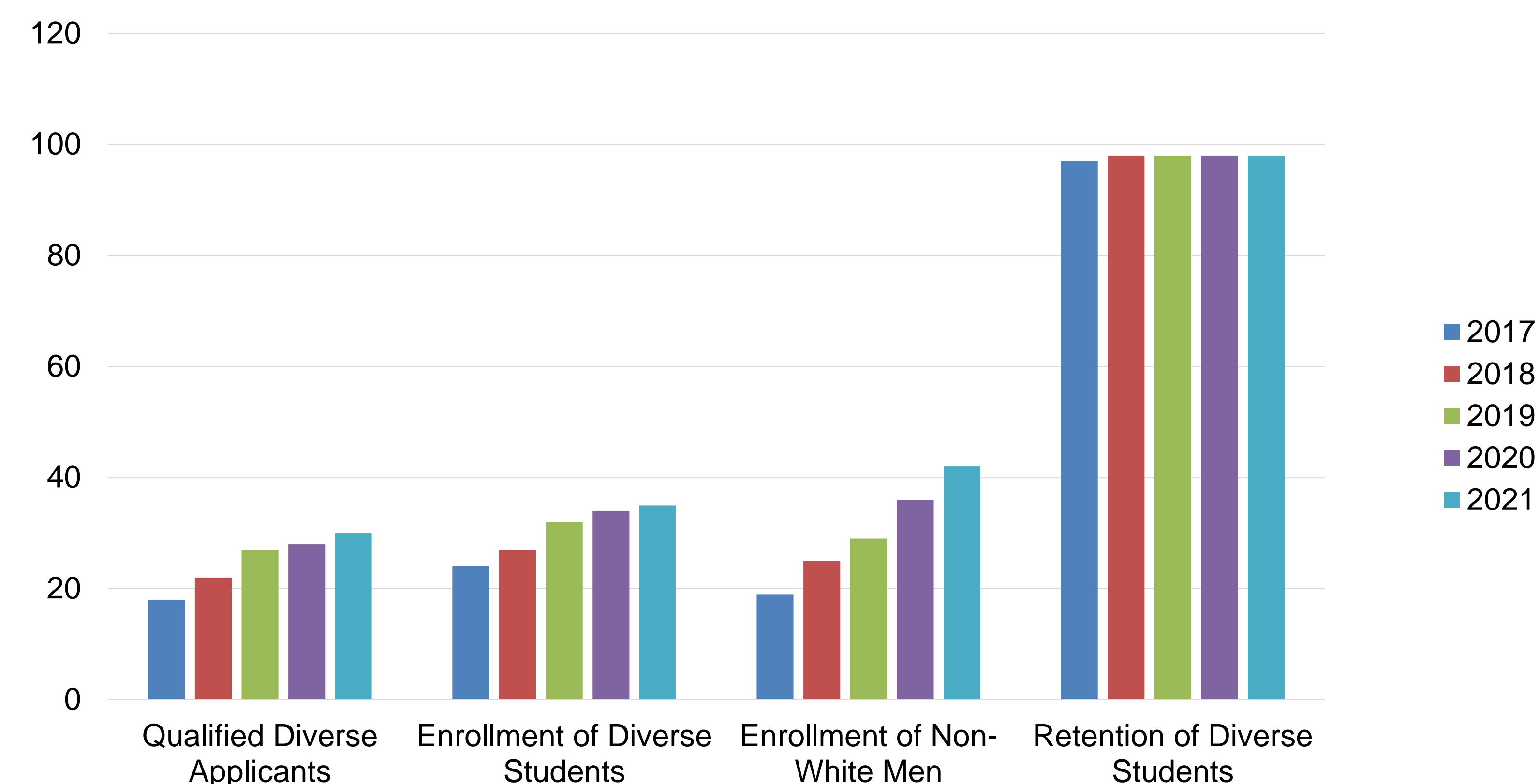
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RESULTS

From 2017 to 2020:

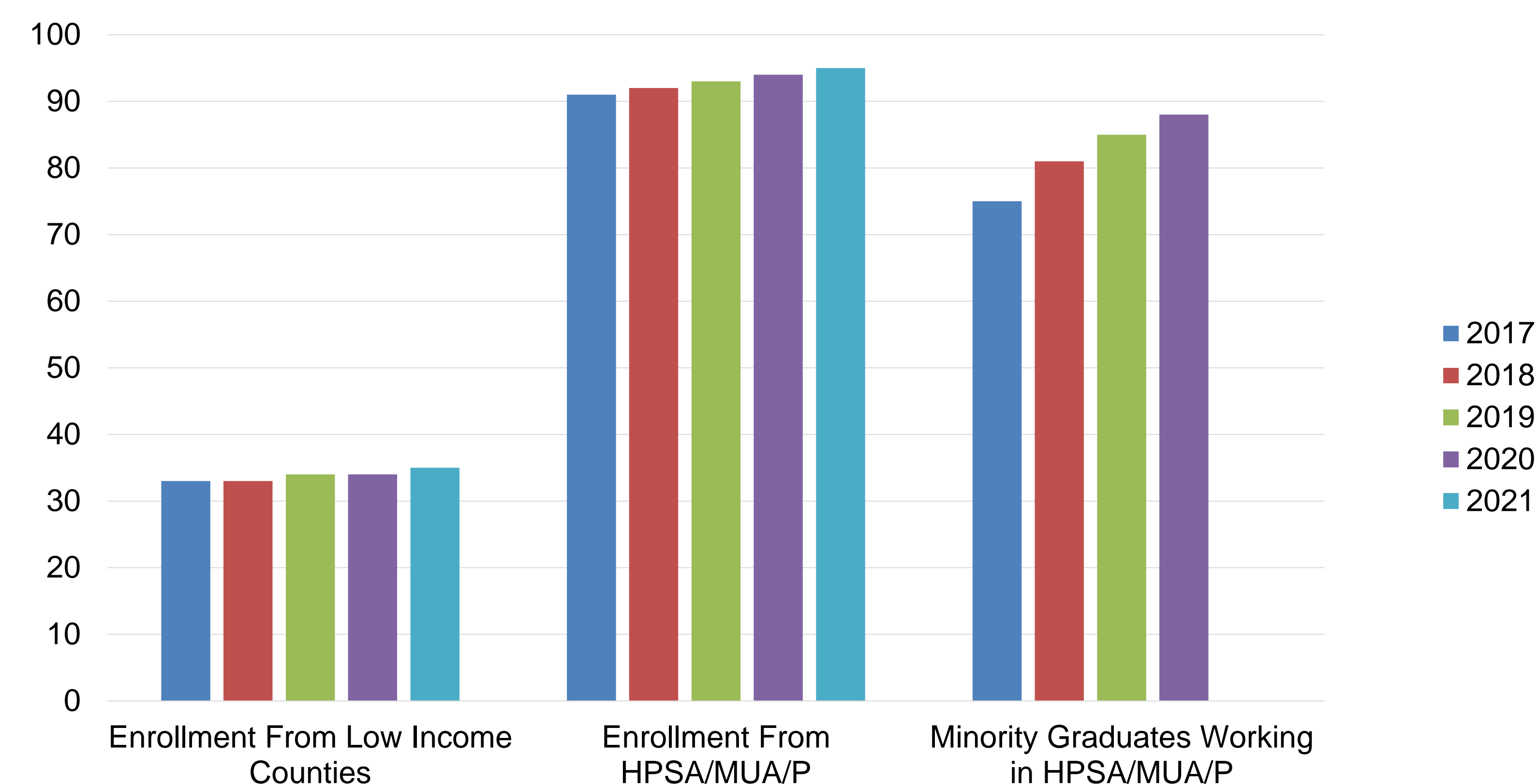
- Number of qualified applications from diverse backgrounds, including ethnic and racial minorities, increased from 14% to 30% of the total applications received. Strategies included focused recruitment, new partnerships with Historically Black Universities, motivating applicants to complete their applications prior to deadline, and promoting grants and scholarships (Figure 2).
- Enrollment of students from diverse backgrounds, including ethnic and racial minorities, increased from 15% to 35% of total enrolled students, with 33% of female and 42% of male students being non-white. Strategies included using the holistic admissions review process, ensuring all qualified minority applicants completed their applications prior to deadline, offering early admission, and implementing a nurse scholar program.
- Retention rate and graduation of underrepresented students were maintained at 97%-98%. Strategies included a pre-immersion program, peer and faculty mentoring, tutoring, evaluation of social determinants with an established action plan, scholarships for tuition support, and regular meetings with a retention coordinator.

Figure 2. Data After Implementation: Applicants, Enrollment, & Retention



- Enrollment of students from low income designated counties increased from 33% to 35%. Strategies included recruitment at high schools and Universities in low income counties, working with designated pre-health students in these counties, helping with the application process and using the holistic admissions review process (Figure 3).
- Enrollment of students from a HPSA/MUA/MUP increased from 91% to 95%. Strategies included recruitment at high schools and Universities in low income counties, working with the designated pre-health students in these counties, helping with the application process and using the holistic admissions review process.
- The number of underrepresented graduates working in an HPSA/MUA/MUP designated county increased from 75% to 90% of the total minority graduates from 2017 to 2020. Strategies involved clinical placement at rural and/or underserved practice sites, mentoring on interviewing and developing resumes, and supporting graduates to apply for employment in agencies serving rural and/or underserved populations.

Figure 3. Data After Implementation: Enrollment & Employment



SUCCESSSES

Increasing diversity was incorporated in the University and College mission-related educational goals and strategic plan.

Early adopters were selected to assist with implementation.

Started with one program per year and worked extensively with them.

An annual diversity seminar was conducted. Sessions included unconscious & implicit bias, allegories on race & racism.

A four-year HRSA grant was obtained to support this initiative and other nursing workforce diversity initiatives in the College.

LESSONS LEARNED

Provide comprehensive training and best practices prior to implementation.

Do video when implementing for ongoing training of new committee members.

Implement inter-rater reliability at beginning of process.

Bring in other Colleges who had implemented process or utilized HRSA Consultant to provide overview to all committees first.

If students struggled in the program, some blamed the new process. Constant review of data & re-education was required.

CONCLUSIONS

- The holistic admissions review process helped committee members tailor the admission process to their program and consider the 'whole' applicant rather than disproportionately focusing on academic performance.
- College data substantiated changes between pre-holistic and holistic admissions review cycles in recruitment, retention, and graduation.
- An academically talented and diverse student body was graduated, which in turn improved diversity within the nursing workforce and provided care in rural and underserved communities in need throughout the state.
- A diverse student body can result in an improved educational experience for all students and could reduce or eventually eliminate healthcare disparities.

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