

The Holistic Admissions Process

Saint Louis University, Trudy Busch Valentine School of Nursing

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INTRODUCTION

The Holistic Admissions Process is an evidence-based strategy used to increase the enrollment of students from diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds. It is a flexible, individualized way of assessing an applicant's potential based on their experiences, attributes, and academic metrics.

AIM

To increase the number of students from underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds at Saint Louis University School of Nursing through implementing a Holistic Admissions Process.

METHODS

- Established a formal agreement with AACN to provide an on-site Holistic Review Training Workshop, Promising Practices in Holistic Review, and a subsequent Bias Education Workshop.
- Formed a Holistic Admissions Task Force charged to develop a Holistic Admissions Statement and a formalized applicant review process.
- Developed the criteria to evaluate applicants for admission beyond the traditional admission standards of the high school grade point average and the standardized test score.

ACTIVITY

- Targeted recruitment in urban areas and schools that primarily educate minorities and students from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Sponsored campus visits for high school students in targeted recruitment areas and paired high school students with nursing students for a half-day shadowing experience in the simulation lab.
- Worked with faculty and staff to ensure the Holistic Admission Statement represented the University's Jesuit Mission and fostered diversity and inclusion.
- Developed a rubric based on applicant experience, attributes, and metrics using the following criteria: No evidence, suggestive evidence, persuasive evidence, and compelling evidence.



RESULTS

- Thirty-five faculty attended the Holistic Admissions Workshop sponsored by AACN and the follow-up Bias Education Workshop.
- In partnership with AHEC, 75 high school students attended a Summer Scholars' and Summer Scrub's programs.
- Over the course of the four-year grant, 42 racially and ethnically diverse students were admitted to the traditional four-year baccalaureate program. Thirty-six (36) of the 42 remain in the program resulting in a retention rate of 86%.
- The Holistic Admissions Process was adopted for the entire School of Nursing and expanded to all programs in the School, BSN, MSN, DNP, & PhD.

Rubric

- Experiences:** Leadership activity, community service activities, or community involvement such as volunteering, faith-based activities, athletics, organizational clubs, and family life.
- Attributes:** Parents highest level of education, socioeconomic status, high school attended, the student's letter of intent expressing values of altruism, faith, sense of mission, accomplishments, beliefs, integrity, and other personal attributes such as resilience, work ethic, intellectual curiosity, compassion, and empathy.
- Metrics:** High school GPA, ACT Score, and a test-optional review

CONCLUSIONS

- The evidence base for the holistic criteria will be built through a variety of data kept by the retention specialist, including grades and the use of academic supports such as tutoring.
- Students admitted with academic metrics that did not meet the historical standard admission requirements (H.S.GPA > 3.2; ACT>24) will be compared to students meeting the traditional criteria and cross-referenced to the non-academic experiences and attributes.
- This information will provide insight into what students do to succeed and commonalities among those who do not. As we refine the holistic admissions processes and amass more data, we will be better able to link the applicant's likelihood of success to experiences or attributes.

REFERENCES

AACN. (2020). Promising practices in holistic admissions review: Implementation in Academic Nursing, *White Paper*. Retrieved from <https://www.aacnnursing.org/Portals/42/News/White-Papers/AACN-White-Paper-Promising-Practices-in-Holistic-Admissions-Review-December-2020.pdf>.

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