TITLE: Holistic Admissions in Action: Case Examples from Dentistry and Medicine

AUTHORS (FIRST NAME, LAST NAME): Jack Dillenberg, Andria Williams, Michael de Arellano, Steven Chesbro

INSTITUTIONS (ALL):
3. Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine, Florida International University, Miami, FL, United States.
4. College of Medicine, Medical University of South Carolina, Charleston, SC, United States.

ABSTRACT:

Purpose: Holistic admissions refers to a process of considering the capabilities, experiences, and attributes of applicants beyond grade point averages and standardized test scores. Considering criteria beyond academic metrics allows admissions and selections committees to better assess a student's readiness to engage in graduate or professional education. Holistic admissions processes have been widely adopted by many health profession institutions seeking to identify a diverse student body best capable of meeting their institutional mission and objectives and to enhance diversity in the health professions workforce. This course is designed to introduce physical therapy educators to the value of a holistic admissions process and to promote the adoption of the concept, practice, and utilization of a holistic review framework. A.T. Still University's Arizona School for Dentistry and Oral Health, Florida International University's Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine, and the Medical University of South Carolina's College of Medicine will describe their school's adoption of holistic admissions review processes, including use, benefits, barriers, and lessons learned. The promotion and implementation of holistic admissions processes have been collectively identified by the American Council on Academic Physical Therapy, American Physical Therapy Association, and the Education Section of the APTA through the Education Leadership Partnership as a strategic priority for physical therapist education.

Methods and/or Description of Project: Course presenters will describe their school's experience with developing, implementing, and evaluating holistic admissions processes, including outcomes to date, during this moderated panel discussion. Course participants will be encouraged to ask questions of the speakers, especially those questions that would inform physical therapy educators as they consider holistic admissions processes in the context of their academic programs.

Results/Outcomes:
A.T. Still - Arizona School of Dentistry & Oral Health
The mission of the Arizona School of Dentistry & Oral Health is to educate caring, technologically adept dentists who become community and educational leaders serving those in need. The ASDOH admissions process is unique in that applicants must have a minimum cumulative and science grade point average of 2.50 on a four-point scale, and a DAT score of over 17. As part of the admissions process, ASDOH
requires a Community Service Supervisor recommendation letter in addition to two other letters of recommendation, a minimum of 200 hours of service to the broader community and applicants must complete Multi Mini Interviews (MMI), three scenarios interacting with standardized patients. ASDOH’s admissions process has been very successful. They have the highest number of dental applications per "seat" and their students exceed the national average on board exams.

Florida International University - Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine
Florida International University’s Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine (FIU HWCOM) located in Miami, Florida, has embarked on a number of initiatives that are guided by its mission of, providing an environment enhanced by diversity, clinical innovation, and research to prepare socially accountable, community-based physicians, scientists, and health professionals who are uniquely qualified to transform the health of patients and communities. These initiatives are in response to a recognition that the physician workforce does not accurately reflect the population of the U.S., and that higher education institutions have been slow to respond to the growing need to diversity the physician workforce. One of these initiatives is the use of holistic review in the admissions process. Holistic review is a flexible, highly-individualized process by which balanced consideration is given to multiple ways in which applicants may prepare for and demonstrate suitability as medical students and future physicians. Through the use of holistic admissions, FIU HWCOM has been able to assess the “whole” applicant and balance the three areas of experiences, attributes, and metrics in a way that will help achieve their mission. With a 99% aggregate Match Rate and board exam scores that far exceed the national average for the five graduating classes, FIU HWCOM has not only been able to achieve academic excellence, but also provides access to students who would have been overlooked if only metrics were considered. In addition, there has been an enriched educational environment and learning community that benefits all students and prepared and graduated a physician workforce that is better able to meet the needs of a diverse nation within a global society.

Medical University of South Carolina College of Medicine
The Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) College of Medicine has a longstanding commitment to diversity among its students, faculty and staff. Through a deliberate strategic planning process, a continuum of programs has been instituted to increase the number of students from backgrounds that are underrepresented in medicine (URM) in order to achieve a more diverse student body. This includes programs focused on pipeline development and recruitment, holistic review for admissions, and student mentorship and retention. Its holistic review process is mission driven, incorporating a range of criteria in addition to standardized test scores and grade point average. Each applicant’s accomplishments are considered, including clinical exposure, volunteer work, and leadership experience. Other applicant characteristics are incorporated into the review process, including post-baccalaureate work experience, significant artistic/athletic achievements, cultural experiences, and overcoming adversity. The success of our holistic review admissions program is dependent on effective pipeline programs providing a very
strong pool of applicants and a well-developed student mentorship and support program enabling students to thrive and excel in their studies. As a result of these efforts, the MUSC College of Medicine has emerged as a national leader for its diversity programs, and it has had particularly strong success with its recruitment, retention, and graduation of African American students. For example, in the 2016-2017 academic year, the College of Medicine had 129 URM students enrolled, which constituted 19% of the medical student body. Furthermore, US News and World Report recently ranked MUSC 5th in the country for the number of African American students in our medical school. Importantly, its graduation rate has remained high, MUSC is in the 96th percentile for graduates who are African American among US medical schools.

Conclusions/Relevance to the conference theme: Through the Looking Glass: Transforming Physical Therapy Education: This course is directly related to the sub theme of this conference, Admissions Perspectives and Challenges—Where are we now? The promotion and implementation of holistic admissions processes has been collectively identified by the American Council on Academic Physical Therapy, American Physical Therapy Association, and the Education Section of the APTA through the Education Leadership Partnership as a strategic priority for physical therapist education. The profession of physical therapy has much to learn from other health professions education groups. As physical therapy educators consider alternative ways of making admissions decisions, considering experiences from dentistry and medicine can facilitate the adoption and implementation of holistic admissions processes.

Course Objectives: At the conclusion of this course, participants will:

1. Appreciate the importance and benefits of a diverse workforce in the health professions.
2. Identify challenges and opportunities experienced by three programs from dentistry and medicine in facilitating a holistic admissions review process.
3. Engage in questions and answers (Q&A) about the benefits of holistic review and lessons learned.
4. Identify needs of individual programs that seek to adopt and support a holistic admissions review process.

Instructional Methods:

1. Description of use of holistic admissions from three academic programs in dentistry and medicine
2. Moderated question and answer period
3. Discussion (large group)
Tentative Outline/Schedule:
5 min: Introduction and Welcome (Moderator: Chesbro)
20 min: A.T. Still University's Arizona School for Dentistry and Oral Health (Dillenberg)
20 min: Florida International University's Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine (Williams)
20 min: Medical University of South Carolina's College of Medicine (de Arellano)
25 min: Questions and Discussion (Moderator: Chesbro)

SHORT BIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT & SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS:

Jack Dillenberg, DDS, MPH, is the inaugural Dean of A.T. Still University’s Arizona School of Dentistry & Oral Health. He completed his dental education at New York University, College of Dentistry and received his Master’s Degree in Public Health from the Harvard School of Public Health. Previously, Dr. Dillenberg was Associate Director for public health programs in the California Department of Health Services. He also served in several capacities in the Arizona Department of Health Services, including being its Director for four years. Dr. Dillenberg continues to serve in numerous leadership positions on health-related boards and associations and is the recipient of many honors and awards locally, nationally and globally.

Andria Williams, MBA, has been employed in numerous capacities with Florida International University (FIU) since January 1999. FIU is a student-centered public research university, located in Miami, Florida. She joined the FIU Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine (HWCOM) Office of Student Affairs in June 2007. In her current role as the Director for Admissions and Recruitment, Ms. Williams is primarily responsible for the management of the College’s comprehensive admissions process including counseling and recruitment of prospective medical students. She oversees and directs the recruitment and marketing plan with the purpose of promoting the school's visibility and general recruitment efforts. In addition, she participates in the department’s strategic planning and the development of policies and procedures for admissions, interview, and recruitment. Ms. Williams is a proud alumna of FIU. In 2000, she earned a Bachelor of Business Administration with a major in Management from FIU’s R. Kirk Landon Undergraduate School of Business and also graduated from the FIU Honors College. As a student in the Honors College she participated in interdisciplinary seminars, took part in numerous community service projects, and enrolled in an exciting summer study abroad program in Spain. While a full-time employee at FIU, Ms. Williams graduated with a Master of Business Administration from FIU’s Chapman Graduate School of Business in 2003. She currently serves on numerous HWCOM committees and is a member of the Group on Student Affairs of the AAMC.

Michael de Arellano, PhD, serves as the Senior Associate Dean for Diversity at the Medical University of South Carolina College of Medicine. He is responsible for
programs focused on recruitment, mentorship and retention of students, medical residents, and faculty from backgrounds that are underrepresented in medicine (e.g., African American, Hispanic/Latino, Native American/American Indian). Dr. de Arellano is also a professor and a Licensed Clinical Psychologist at the National Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. He directs the Mental Health Disparities and Diversity Program, which facilitates the development of research, clinical work and educational programs to enhance culturally-competent and linguistically-appropriate care.

**Steven B. Chesbro, PT, DPT, EdD,** is the Vice President for Education at the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA). In this role he provides leadership for the Department of Education that includes the divisions of academic services, accreditation, postprofessional credentialing, and residency and fellowship education. Prior to joining APTA staff in 2016, Dr. Chesbro served as dean of the College of Health Sciences and founder and director of the Center to Advance Rehabilitative Health and Education at Alabama State University. He has also held faculty positions at Howard University and the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center. The majority of Dr. Chesbro’s career has focused on health professions education, including initiatives to improve diversity in education and workforce environments. He was appointed to a 4-year term to serve on the Diversity Task Force of the NICHD/NIH, served as a board member of the Tuskegee Area Health Education Center, has been a recipient of the APTA’s Diversity Award, received the Academy of Geriatric Physical Therapy’s Distinguished Educator Award, and has served as the principal investigator/project director/site director of grants specific to health professions diversity from AHRQ, HRSA, and NIDRR. Dr. Chesbro has published and presented scholarly works related to diverse issues in the healthcare workforce and higher education. Dr. Chesbro completed a BA and MS (psychology and college teaching) at Northeastern State University, a BS (physical therapy) at Langston University, an MHS (neurologic physical therapy) at the University of Indianapolis, an EdD (occupational and adult education) from Oklahoma State University, and a DPT from MGH Institute of Health Professions. He is a Board-Certified Geriatric Clinical Specialist.

References:


