

Sigma's 29th International Nursing Research Congress

Holistic Admissions: An Evidence-Based Strategy to Diversify Global Nursing Education

Greer L. Glazer, PhD, RN, CNP, FAAN

Karen D. Bankston, PhD, MSN, BSN, AAS, FACHE

Angela K. Clark, PhD, MSN, BSN, RN

College of Nursing, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH, USA

Purpose: The healthcare environment is currently undergoing significant transformation due to a shortage of primary care providers, an aging population with increasingly complex comorbidities, and minority patient populations with ongoing disparities. These burdens to the healthcare industry have increased the demand for a more diverse healthcare workforce (Marrast, Zallman, Woolhandler, Vor, and McCormick, 2014). As a result of this increased demand for a more diversified pool of well-prepared graduates, universities are reevaluating their admission processes. One of the admission process changes being adopted by some schools is holistic admissions (Association of American Medical Colleges [AAMC], 2015). Holistic admissions is one diversity strategy that assesses an applicant's unique attributes and experiences alongside traditional measures of academic achievement such as grades and test scores in order to increase student diversity and to develop a culture that values diversity and inclusion (AAMC, 2015; Urban Universities for Health, 2014). Evidenced based practice has demonstrated that schools adopting holistic admissions review have a more diversified student body while still maintaining academic success (Urban Universities for Health, 2014; Witzburg & Sondheimer, 2013). Additionally, evidenced based practice shows that a more diverse student body promotes a more thoughtful and open-minded learning environment that increases student preparedness to serve minority populations (Saha, 2014). **The goal of this presentation is to describe the first national study in the U.S. of holistic admissions in nursing, medical, public health, dentistry and pharmacy (Urban Universities for Health, 2014). Second, we will describe a qualitative research study with sixty two nursing deans throughout the U.S. that revealed barriers, benefits, and feasibility of holistic admissions. The significance to global nursing is that the holistic admissions allows schools to admit students differently and build a diverse, culturally-competent workforce that will improve the quality of healthcare.**

Methods: Our qualitative study utilizing thematic analysis demonstrated that an overall lack of knowledge regarding holistic admissions is a significant reason nursing schools are lagging behind other professions. Unfortunately, fewer than half of U.S. nursing schools have adopted holistic admissions (Glazer, Clark, Bankston, Danek, Fair, & Michaels, 2016; Scott & Zerwic, 2015). Identified evidence-based strategies for successful implementation of holistic admissions review in nursing include: increasing knowledge and understanding of holistic admissions review among nursing deans, obtaining buy-in and support for holistic admissions review, conducting a self-assessment of current admissions practices, and providing nursing administrators, faculty, and staff with diversity and holistic admissions training. Third, sixty two deans or their designees attended one full day workshop with five sessions on: Building the Case for Diversity and Inclusive Learning; The Nuts and Bolts of Holistic Review; Leading the Way-Nursing Leaders Speak; Beginning the Journey-What Does Your Process Look Like?; and Leadership in Action.

Results: Fifty two participants (84%) completed pre-workshop institutional assessments to assess the institutions current admissions policies and practice as well as workshop evaluations. Thirty four (56%) of workshop attendees completed the post-workshop survey on institutional admission practices and policies two months after workshop attendance.

Conclusion: In conclusion, results indicated the success of the workshop in providing evidence and information on holistic review. This presentation will focus on workshop content and participant experience, and admissions practices pre and post-workshop.

Title:

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Keywords:

diversity, holistic admissions and nursing education

References:

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Abstract Summary:

Through this educational activity, the learner will be able to synthesize the benefits and perceived barriers to holistic admissions in nursing and apply implementation strategies for holistic admission in global nursing education.

Content Outline:

1. Benefits of Holistic Admissions Review
 1. Results of Urban Universities for Health study
 2. Need for a more diverse healthcare workforce
 3. Relationship to reduction in health disparities
2. Perceived Barriers to Holistic Admissions Review
 1. Results of Investigator Qualitative Research study on barriers in nursing
3. Strategies and techniques for implementation of holistic admissions review in nursing
 1. Increase knowledge of Deans, directors and faculty
 2. Obtain buy-in and support
 3. Conduct self-assessment of schools' admissions practices
 4. Training for holistic admissions review

First Primary Presenting Author

Primary Presenting Author

Greer L. Glazer, PhD, RN, CNP, FAAN
University of Cincinnati
College of Nursing
Dean and Schmidlapp Professor
Cincinnati OH
USA

Professional Experience: Greer Glazer, RN, CNP, PhD, FAAN is dean of the College of Nursing and associate vice president for Health Affairs at the University of Cincinnati. A nationally recognized leader in nursing education, Dr. Glazer has a strong history of developing community, national and international partnerships and securing federal funding for nursing research, scholarship and program implementation. In recognition for her work as researcher, educator and healthcare leader, Dr. Glazer has received significant honors and awards. She holds a bachelor's degree in nursing from the University of Michigan, and a master's and PhD degree in nursing from Case Western Reserve University.

Author Summary: Greer Glazer has extensive experience in holistic admissions as she led as a consultant for the study "Holistic Admissions in the Health Professions", a national study with the overall aim to improve the understanding and use of evidence-based university admissions practices that lead to a more diverse and culturally competent nursing workforce. She has completed U.S. Department of Education, HRSA, and NCI grants that educated underrepresented nurse scholars.

Second Author
Karen D. Bankston, PhD, MSN, BSN, AAS, FACHE

University of Cincinnati
College of Nursing
Associate Dean Clinical Practice, Partnership and Community Engagement
Cincinnati OH
USA

Professional Experience: My doctoral studies in social psychology with an emphasis in organizational behavior has supported my work in culture change. This has informed my work in higher education to understand the necessary steps to facilitate student access and student success.

Author Summary: Karen Bankston believes that you are placed where you are supposed to be when you are supposed to be there and that the focus becomes using your passions to reach your goal. She has spent the past 35 years leading, coaching and guiding others in doing just; facilitating others to find the "fire in their belly" and become their whole selves as they journey through life.

Third Author
Angela K. Clark, PhD, MSN, BSN, RN
University of Cincinnati
College of Nursing
Assistant Professor
Cincinnati OH
USA

Professional Experience: I have nine years of clinical and public health nursing experience and have focused on the identification and treatment of at-risk communities and individuals. Through my various career positions and clinical experience, I have learned to assess communities and individuals in need and effectively organize and promote optimal outcomes for a variety of health disparities. I have remained an advocate for the public's health, highlighting harm reduction strategies with a primary research concentration on addiction. During my dissertation study, I developed an innovative group-based opioid overdose educational intervention (based on the SAMHSA Opioid Overdose Prevention Toolkit) and determined its feasibility in the treatment setting. As part of my research support, I was chosen to work as the Dean's graduate assistant, conducting original research in nursing education. This research paired

well with my 7-year tenure as a clinical faculty member.

Author Summary: Dr. Clark's dissertation work included the development of an iBook entitled CARRY Narcan. Her work in the development of original ilearning tools was recognized across the University of Cincinnati in 2014 when she received the coveted E-learning champion award. Clark has over seven years of faculty experience. Her academic tenure includes instruction and course development at the University of Tennessee, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and the University of Cincinnati.