

**Baylor College of Medicine**  
**Second Annual Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Showcase**  
**Tuesday, October 5, 2021**

**Title of Proposal:** Holistic Admissions: Becoming Part of the Whole Picture

**BCM Mission Area:** Education

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**Abstract:**

**BACKGROUND** Providers that match their patients in characteristics, including cultural, interpersonal, life experiences, and physical attributes, contribute to a provider-patient relationship that is more successful. Selection processes for admission to physician assistant (PA) programs have not historically ensured that applicant experiences and attributes, not just metrics, are part of the evaluation. Some programs are moving toward this model, which is holistic review. BCM's PA Program started in 1971 and now enrolls a class of 40 students annually. **GOALS** Understand the rationale behind a holistic admissions process  
Reconstruct the admissions process for implementation of holistic review  
Expand the diversity of the incoming class using BCM mission-aligned holistic review **METHODS** Removed metrics from subjective interview evaluation process  
Removed photos from application  
Modified current interview evaluation tools to be mission-aligned • Introduced three new domains into new interview evaluation tool - Character development, Capacity to succeed, Mission-aligned attributes (Unique experiences, Leadership, Diversity, Non-traditional background, Underserved/Underrepresented in Medicine (URM/UIM)) • Clearly defined each evaluation domain within the new interview evaluation tool - Bullet points used to elaborate and avoid misinterpretation, Included example question for each domain, Defined scoring system scale for evaluation  
Training - Implemented faculty training prior to interviews, Communicated rationale for admissions process, Clarified all steps of process, Training presented virtually for easy access, Utilized self-study process with voice-over presentation,

Training platform was multi-dimensional, Explained each domain of interview tool, Provided written directions and visuals to help interviewers locate information within applicant file, Required training of all interviewers on annual basis Collected data of demographic data of applicants and matriculants over time RESULTS Over time, our results have shown increases in some of our mission aligned areas, such as those who are underrepresented in medicine. We have also seen a modest increase in numbers of first-generation students enrolled. Interestingly, we continued to see positive trends despite a virtual interview platform during last year's pandemic. Of note, this process change also did not significantly affect standard metrics, such as overall GPA of admitted applicants, or average age of the enrolled applicants. DISCUSSION While a holistic process was implemented, only modest changes in enrollment of underserved or underrepresented in medicine applicants was observed. This suggests that other factors likely play a role in whether or not an applicant decides to attend a particular institutional program. Holistic review implementation by itself needs to be supported by processes and procedures that prove the home institution stands behind the desire to be diverse and inclusive. CONCLUSION Once a holistic admissions process is implemented, programs and institutions must also focus on outreach opportunities. The outreach process should ensure as diverse an applicant pool as possible. Important outreach efforts and goals include: targeting undergraduate and high school institutions, making information sessions more accessible (recorded or virtual), and participation in pre-PA application fairs through national organizations.