

University of Missouri – Kansas City: Admissions Policies and Programs Focused On Achieving Diversity

To increase diversity in the UMKC six-year B.A./M.D. program, the UMKC School of Medicine has focused on two efforts to increase diversity: holistic review in admissions, and pipeline programs for underrepresented high school students. Both efforts were guided by data within the school, as well as national trends, and both efforts allow admissions and recruitment efforts to be driven by institutional mission and goals.

CHALLENGE

Achieve a diverse student body and institutional climate

The School of Medicine believes that a diverse and inclusive institutional climate is essential to providing medical education that promotes the effective delivery of health care in diverse communities. Diversity includes, but is not limited to: differences in racial and ethnic origin, socioeconomic background, rural and urban community origin, and diversity of personal experiences such as overcoming hardship, community involvement, multilingual abilities, and other life experiences that may contribute to a diverse learning and working environment. The challenge lies in identifying such students, both through pipeline program initiatives and the medical school admissions process.

SOLUTION

Implement a mission-driven holistic review process, focused recruitment efforts, and pipeline programs

Holistic Review: When making admissions decisions, as a part of its Experiences-Attributes-Metrics (E-A-M) model, the admissions committee reviews a candidate's experiences, such as clinical experience or community service; attributes, such as race/ethnicity, gender, geographic origin, first-generation status, and disadvantaged status; and metrics such as grades and test scores. EAM are reviewed in combination with each other, and no one quality guarantees an interview or an offer of admission. The balanced consideration of EAM occurs at each stage of the admissions process: screening, interviews, and final decisions.

Achieving a diverse institutional climate is the foundation of the holistic admissions process at the UMKC School of Medicine, and is the motivation for the recruitment initiatives and pipeline programs in place to recruit underrepresented minority students.

Pipeline Programs and Recruitment: The School of Medicine's Coordinator of Diversity Programs and Recruitment makes an effort to recruit students from backgrounds underrepresented in medicine, specifically Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian/Alaska Native, and underrepresented Asian backgrounds. In addition, recruitment efforts target low-income, first generation, rural, and local, urban students. Example strategies include:

- Building relationships with local counselors, advisors, and community members who can connect the school with students from diverse backgrounds;
- Arranging activities and events to introduce underrepresented students to health care careers;
- Communicating with students early in their high school and college careers, in order to prepare students for the competitive nature of admission to medical school;
- Providing underrepresented students and their families with information on the college and medical school admissions processes, financial aid resources, and other resources during on- and off-campus visits.

- For example, the School of Medicine hosts the Summer Scholars and Saturday Academy programs as pipeline programs for the school. Summer Scholars is for students entering their junior or senior year of high school. In addition to daily instruction in chemistry and anatomy, students spend time in the School of Medicine's simulation lab and observe practicing professionals through rotations at Truman Medical Center and Children's Mercy Hospital. Saturday Academy is designed for students in both middle and high school, and provides information about health care careers as well as supplemental instruction in science and math. These programs specifically seek to include students from disadvantaged backgrounds and underrepresented groups (African American, Hispanic and Native American) in the Kansas City Metro region.

RESULTS

Increased diversity in incoming medical school classes

- Since the implementation of holistic review, the School of Medicine has increased the percentage of underrepresented minority students from around 10-12% to 18-20% in any given year. An additional outcome of holistic review has been the retention of students in the first two years of the six-year program, with retention increasing from an average 80% to 88-90% in any given class.
- Currently, 21% of UMKC medical students from backgrounds underrepresented in medicine completed the Summer Scholars program.
- More than 60% of Saturday Academy participants who are now in college are pursuing degrees in health care.

ABOUT UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI – KANSAS CITY

University of Missouri-Kansas City is a public research institution that was founded in 1929 and serves the greater Kansas City metropolitan area. With emphasis on graduate and professional study, including an innovative Interdisciplinary Ph.D. program, UMKC prepares scholars for the challenges of the 21st century. In partnership with the Kansas City community and its educational institutions, UMKC is active in the region's economic and cultural development. The University of Missouri-Kansas City is recognized nationally and internationally for the quality of its faculty, students, research and community leadership.

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