Leveraging Institutional Resources to Meet Diversity Goals in Student Admissions

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Disclosure Statement

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      • Project Director - Project Access funded by US Dept of Education Office of Special Education Programs

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      • Project Faculty Member - Project Access funded by US Dept of Education Office of Special Education Programs

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Contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.
Objectives of Presentation

• Minority representation at the undergraduate and graduate levels
  • Data
  • Documented challenges to recruitment and retention of minority students

• Challenges and strategies used at the undergraduate level
  • Delta State University
    • Campus resources and strategies used to increase recruitment and retention from racial and ethnic minorities

• Challenges and strategies used at the graduate level
  • Jackson State University
    • Leveraging institutional resources to increase access to graduate programs
    • Legally addressing access and underrepresentation
Our Clients are Diverse: Why Aren’t We?

The ASHA Leader (2016)
# ASHA Education Survey Data

## Data Regarding Racial/Ethnic Minority Representation (CSD 2015 Education Survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Non-International</th>
<th>Total Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of Programs Responding</td>
<td>White (Percent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLP: MS/MA</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLP: PhD</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Images are Everything

“We rely on stories, examples, leaders or, in the purest, most basic form, images that inform us about who we are and what our potential is, and without these, we are left unaware and unable to be that which we cannot see.”

Topalian, 2014
Documented Factors Contributing to Underrepresentation at Undergraduate Level
Documented Factors Contributing to Underrepresentation at Undergraduate Level
Documented Factors Contributing to Underrepresentation at Undergraduate Level

Understanding and Locating Minority Students

Strategies to recruit traditional majority students may not work for ethnically diverse students

Recruitment efforts must respond to the needs and barriers of minority groups
Welcoming Underrepresented Students through Recruitment and Advising
Delta State University

Students primarily from the Mississippi Delta

Diverse, first-generation college students

Limited family financial support

Limited financial resources

Academic under-preparedness
## Recruitment Efforts

Target specific high schools  
Form relationships with High School Counselors  
Involve our students in recruitment efforts

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students From Underrepresented Group</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students From Majority</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Underrepresented Students Enrolled in the Program</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>71%</td>
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</table>
## Advising/Retention Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advising/Retention Practices</th>
<th>Campus Resources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall Orientation</td>
<td>Academic Resource Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Schedules</td>
<td>Graduate Program Visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Plans</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Senior Meetings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Advising/Retention Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduation Class</th>
<th>Number of Underrepresented Students</th>
<th>Number of Students who Applied to Graduate Programs in SLP</th>
<th>Average GPA of Students who Applied to Graduate Programs in SLP</th>
<th>Number Accepted to Graduate School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
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<td>2017</td>
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Leveraging Institutional Resources to Improve Access into Graduate Programs

Problem Space: Underrepresentation in the Field

- **Gender.** Males currently comprise 15.4% of audiologists, 3.7% of SLPs, and 19.2% of those with dual certification. Overall, the proportion of male ASHA constituents was 4.8% at the end of 2015, slightly less than that in 2014 (4.9%).

- **Race and Ethnicity.** Overall, 7.8% of ASHA members, nonmember certificate holders, international affiliates, and associates are members of a racial minority (compared with 27.6% of the U.S. population, according to the 2010 Census).
Access is Related to Underrepresentation

access
ˈakˌses/
noun
a means of approaching or entering a place

Synonyms: entrance, entry, way in, means of entry, approach, means of approach
Addressing Underrepresentation by Addressing Access

Does your program value diversity and access?
How is your program addressing underrepresentation by addressing access?
How is your program opening the door for underrepresented students?
Is the door wide open or are you using a door stopper?
How are you ensuring that the door remains open?
Does your admission requirements promote access?
What implicit biases are keeping the door closed?
Efforts to Increase Access at Jackson State University

Official designation of Mississippi’s Urban University
One of nine CAA-accredited programs at a Historically Black University
Mission of the university includes educating a diverse student population of highly capable students, as well as capable students who require a nurturing academic environment.
Leveraging Institutional Resources to Improve Access into Graduate Programs

Campus Diversity Experts

• Chief Diversity Officers

• Office of Multicultural Affairs

• University Diversity Boards

We cannot address this problem alone!
Leveraging Institutional Resources to Improve Access into Graduate Programs

Is the problem qualification……..or access?

How does one become an SLP?
• Admission to an accredited program
• Successful completion of degree requirements
• Successful completion of Praxis exam for certification
  • Our institutional data show that passing rates for underrepresented students are comparable

If this is the case, then it’s not that underrepresented students are failing in their quest – it’s that they aren’t getting their foot in the door!
Legally Addressing Access and Underrepresentation
Legally Addressing Access and Underrepresentation

Looking at Admissions Procedures

How are graduate students admitted into programs?

Objective Criteria
(GRE, GPA, Completion of Prerequisite courses)

Subjective Criteria
(recommendation letters, personal statements, writing samples, resumes, experiences)
Legally Addressing Access and Underrepresentation

So how do we increase diversity within the normal admission parameters?

Cannot:
• Use quotas to mandate a certain number of a specific ethnic group (*Bakke v. California Board of Regents*)
• Have separate admission processes for specific demographics. (*Grutter v. Michigan*)
• Insulate applicants who belong to certain racial or ethnic groups from the competition for admission. (*Grutter v. Michigan*)
Legally Addressing Access and Underrepresentation

So how do we increase diversity within the normal admission parameters?

Can/May:
• Take strategic steps to address “underrepresentation” within the university and/or field.
• Consider gender, race or ethnicity flexibly as a “plus” factor in the context of individualized consideration of each and every applicant. (Grutter/Fisher)
  • The use of race may be allowed under a standard of strict scrutiny to determine whether the policies are "precisely tailored to serve a compelling governmental interest."

Bottom line: The law allows for flexibility to implement a holistic admissions process. We have to stretch ourselves!
Application of Strategies
Outcomes

Admission Procedures that Promote Access into Graduate Programs

↓

Retention

↓

Graduation and Success

↓

Increased Diversity in Field; Alleviation of Underrepresentation; An Increase in Images of Diverse SLPs
April 9, 2013

Guess who got into a graduate program in Communication Sciences and Disorders!!!!!!! This girl!!!!!!!!!!!!

April 9, 2017

Good morning Dr. Newkirk! Check this FB status from a couple of years ago! I was so excited that day! I didn’t make it to my NPHC meeting on time because I was jumping up and down and screaming when I got the email instead of walking fast. Thank you so much for believing in me and giving me a chance when everyone else said “no.” Thank you for seeing my work ethic and my drive instead of my GPA and GRE scores. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of the HBCU experience that so many people unfortunately don’t get to experience!

If it weren’t for you and the other professors at JSU I most definitely would not be where I am today!

Love you!!
Questions?