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## Holistic Admissions

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HOLISTIC ADMISSIONS

ANNA KAM

Submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirement for the degree of  
Doctor of Nursing Practice

AUGSBURG UNIVERSITY  
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

2021

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**Augsburg University  
Department of Nursing  
Doctor of Nursing Practice Program  
Scholarly Project Approval Form**

This is to certify that **Anna Kam** has successfully presented her scholarly doctoral project entitled “**Holistic Admissions**” and fulfilled the requirements for the Doctor of Nursing Practice degree.

Date of presentation: April 30, 2021.

**Committee Members’ Signatures:**

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Date April 30, 2021

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Presentations

Holistic Admissions for MANE Admissions and Advising

November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Virtual

Holistic Admissions for MANE Faculty

November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Virtual

Update on Holistic Admissions for MANE Faculty

April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021

## Dedication

This project is dedicated to all the students who have taught me how to be a teacher. Your voices are with me, your questions motivate me to learn, and the spark of excitement in your eyes when we understand each other keeps me going.

### Acknowledgment

This project has been long and expansive covering years and multiple academic institutions. Dr. Faduma Sara Ali, director of MANE, your unwillingness to quit and unstoppable positivity have not only ensured this project's success but have shown me what leadership looks like at its best. Dr. Cheryl Leuning, faculty member and advisor at Augsburg, your calm hand and beautiful edits have molded this project into something we can both be proud of, thank you.

To my classmates, it has been a pleasure to learn and grow alongside you. Cinthia Fondrk, I'm sorry, it was my crazy idea that got us into this, but we are going to get out, ready to take on the world together. To my heart sisters whom I met in this program, you have taught me a great deal and our friendship has radically changed my life for the better, I am deeply grateful. A huge thank you to my sister, mother, and father for the many conversations, warm dinners, and child pickups and drop-offs. Your unfailing support and honest input have been foundational to this project. Finally, to my husband Jay and our daughters Zeya and Niyah, who I am in this world and what I have been able to achieve is the direct results of your love and encouragement, I couldn't have done it without you.

### Abstract

As patient populations of Minnesota and the nation become more diverse there is much work to do in preparing a nursing workforce that has the experiences and attributes to provide holistic and culturally congruent care. The process of holistic admissions admits the most qualified applicants into schools of nursing who bring with them life experiences and crucial attributes. These holistic aspects of the applicants support both academic success and promote quality nursing practice. Holistic review aims to align the mission and vision of academic institutions with the admissions process ensuring that both the applicant and organization are clear in their commitment to a holistic nursing practice. This project created and implemented a holistic review process in a consortium made up of eight schools of nursing. Using a developmental evaluation model, ongoing assessment, and readjustments allowed for the formation of a process that considers applicants holistically, while maintaining a manageable workflow for involved institutions. This project also considered the importance of sustainability, while carrying out translational research by documenting the process clearly so it can be followed each admission cycle. The commitment to holism extends beyond admissions to include education and ultimately nursing practice to ensure culturally responsive care for all patients and a nursing workforce that can meet the demands of a rapidly changing population.

*Keywords: Holistic Review, Holistic Admissions*



## Holistic Admissions

### Chapter One: Introduction

As the population of Minnesota becomes more culturally and linguistically diverse, schools of nursing are working towards educating and graduating an increasing number of students that reflect the changing population demographics of the area. The Minnesota Board of Nursing (2018) reported that 15.1% of applicants who took the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) to become registered nurses (RNs) in 2017 were minorities (p.13). Based on the 2018 census data, the Minnesota State Demographic Center (MSDC, n.d.) reported that 20% of the state's residents were minorities and this percentage was predicted to increase to 25% by 2035 (McMurry, 2009). The increasing diversity of the Minnesota population challenges nursing education to keep pace and provide an RN workforce that can meet the linguistic and cultural needs of diverse communities. To do this, schools of nursing will need to create an admissions process that views potential students holistically, considering the backgrounds, skills, and lived experiences that students bring to their academic training programs in addition to their grade point averages and standardized test scores.

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) has recommended that schools of nursing adopt a holistic admissions process as a means of increasing the cultural diversity of their students and thus graduating nurses who embody the demographic diversity of various regions of the country (2018). Viewing people through a holistic lens is not a new concept in nursing. Martha Rogers (1970) described people as more than a sum of their parts and emphasized that humans are constantly changing as they integrate with the environment around them. In the same way, nursing students must

be viewed as more than a GPA or standardized test score. Students come to schools of nursing with both the conscious and unconscious understanding of what it means to be unique members of their families and communities. Whether they come from immigrant or refugee communities, well-established ethnic communities, or the dominant sociocultural majority populations their backgrounds and cultures will allow them to contribute to nursing. Many come with a knowledge of what it takes to be other, to be non-traditional, or the first in their family to attend college. Students also come with a diverse range of ages and lived experiences. Holistic admissions regards potential nursing students as complex people who are integrated into communities and cultures that bring a wide variety of knowledge and creativity to nursing. As such, holistic admissions is a process through which nursing can further diversify the workforce in all regions of the country. In the metropolitan areas of the Midwest, the holistic admission process has the potential to encourage more students from minority cultural groups to apply to schools of nursing. It also provides admissions committees with a broader range of criteria for selecting students who will be well suited to serve individuals and communities in the region.

### **Background**

The current structure of nursing education in the United States (US) allows students to take several paths toward becoming an RN. There are four-year Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) programs, two-year Associate of Science programs, and entry-level master's programs for persons with baccalaureate or master's degrees in other fields. In the state of Minnesota, 28 of the 51 schools that educate RNs offer Associate of Science Degree programs (Minnesota Board of Nursing, 2018, p. 2). Entering nursing

through the Associate Degree of Nursing (ADN) path is the most affordable, accessible, and fastest route to becoming a registered nurse. These programs are in high demand within the Metro area. Students in associate degree-granting programs are on average older and more diverse than students in BSN programs and are thus more likely to be non-traditional students (Minnesota Board of Nursing, 2018). The purpose of this project is to create a holistic admissions process for a nursing education consortium in Minnesota. The consortium includes six programs that offer lower division courses ending in an ADN degree and two programs that offer both the lower and upper division courses ending in a BSN. Students are offered dual enrollment in a lower division program and an upper division program to facilitate the completion of a BSN. Changing the admissions process from a GPA and standardized test-based approach to a system that benchmarks student achievement and professional potential is anticipated to increase the number of culturally and linguistically diverse students admitted to the nursing programs. Ultimately, the goal is to graduate nurses who reflect the cultural demographics of the population in Minnesota and the surrounding region.

### **Significance**

Holistic admissions is one tool that can be used to combat what Puzan (2003) calls the “unbearable whiteness” of nursing (p. 199). White females have long dominated nursing and much of the discourse within nursing about multiculturalism depends upon the white perspective maintaining privilege and perpetuating the definition of normal (Allen, 2006). Multicultural students and faculty are, as a result, viewed as other, and systems like test-based admission have been left in place forming barriers to diverse students who are attempting to enter nursing. To be successful in nursing, students must

shed their unique perspectives and cultural worldviews, accepting science as the only truth and taking on the communication and behavior patterns of whiteness in nursing (Puzan, 2003). If the numbers of nursing students and ultimately nursing faculty from diverse backgrounds began increasing, this embedded whiteness could be uncovered, allowing for more diverse voices from all populations and cultures to be heard.

Increasing the number of diverse students in nursing could also promote a significant change in the structure of the healthcare system itself. If the future leaders in nursing come from the communities that struggle to overcome health disparities, new theoretical assumptions and more affective practice ideas will emerge. Historically, nursing has attempted to incorporate cultural competency training into education, but these programs have resulted in little change (Truong, Paradies, & Priest, 2014). Often the outcomes of these types of interventions are measured by participant self-assessment and do not consider the larger social and economic structures that perpetuate health inequities. By moving away from a model in which nursing teaches about culture into a space where nurses from many cultures are an integral part of the teaching and decision-making processes, true education system change can begin.

The first step in changing the education system starts with developing a process for admitting a more diverse group of students into nursing schools. Despite calls from the National League for Nursing (NLN) and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) to advance diversity and inclusivity within schools of nursing, a gap still exists between the lack of diverse nursing school graduates and the growing number of diverse persons seeking health care in the US (AACN, 2017; NLN, 2019). Data thus indicates that there is clearly a need for a new approach.

It is anticipated that this project will shift the admissions strategy of eight schools of nursing from a GPA and standardized test-based approach to a process that considers each student's life experiences and attributes in addition to metrics. One meaningful outcome of this change would be an increase in the number of culturally and linguistically diverse students admitted to and graduating from schools of nursing, in hopes of developing a nursing population that reflects the cultural demographic makeup of the population in the surrounding communities. The *Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice* (AACN, 2006) are reflected in this project. Particularly, the objectives of Essential II demonstrate a scholarly approach to organizational and systems leadership focused on nursing and health care goals to eliminate health disparities and promote patient safety and excellence in practice (AACN, 2006, pg. 10). Organizational and system leadership includes key concepts of communication, evaluation, sustainability, and sensitivity to diversity which are needed to move from an academic metrics-based admission system to one in which the student's life experiences and attributes are also considered. Additionally, Essential VI is reflected in the interprofessional collaboration that was involved in this project to improve population health outcomes by attracting and admitting more diverse nursing student cohorts (AACN, 2006, pg. 14). The transition to a holistic admissions process involved collaboration and input from advising, admission, nursing faculty, and administration. Collaboration will need to continue for the process to be sustainable and adapt to future challenges.

### **Nursing Theoretical Foundation**

The concept of holistic admissions focuses on seeing applicants as whole people. Martha Rogers' (1970) Theory of Unitary Human Beings has contributed to the expansion of the idea of a holistic person. Rogers believed that "abstraction and imagery, language and thought, sensation and emotion are fundamental attributes of man's humanness" (Rogers, 1970, p. 67). She did not subscribe to the concept of a human being as the sum of his/her parts. Instead, Rogers described human beings as irreducible, with characteristics that are unique and complex. She stated that human behavior cannot be predicted through the breakdown of a person's various characteristics or traits. As such, Rogers' theory can serve as a guide for schools of nursing as they seek to avoid an academic metrics approach to admissions. Rather, the Theory of Unitary Human Beings advances the importance of viewing applicants to schools of nursing as "whole, irreducible human beings," and selecting students for admission based on characteristics and human traits that are lacking in the current nursing workforce.

Rogers' theoretical stance that human behavior cannot be predicted brings into question the use of academic tests and grade point averages to forecast the future success of nurses. The Assessment Technologies Institute (ATI) Test of Essential Academic Skills (TEAS) testing site provides information about the TEAS, stating there is "a consistent link between a student's performance on the TEAS and future academic success" (ATI, 2019, p. #). There are two main problems with this approach. First, the primary goal of nursing schools is to admit students who will become exceptional nurses, not merely successful students. Secondly, Rogers' theoretical view of the unitary human being asserts that human potential cannot be limited to a sum of parts, but must be

understood as complex, context-based, and dependent on the environment, language, culture, and a myriad set of unique characteristics that cannot possibly be reduced to numerical descriptions (Rogers, 1970). The holistic human being, according to Rogers, is made up of energy and human connections that vibrate on a unique frequency. She described this energy as connecting people and the world around them in unique patterns and frequencies. Helicy is a term used by Rogers to describe innovation and increasing diversity in the environmental energy field patterns. Holistic admissions aims to identify applicants who are open to innovations and ideas and whose life goals, talents, and accomplishments reflect energy field patterns that promote growth and evolution in nursing practice.

Another contribution Martha Rogers makes to the discussion of holistic admissions is her views on the environment. Rogers stated that humans and the environment are in continual interaction with each other in an open system (Sarter, 1988). The environment, like human beings, is irreducible and made up of energy fields that change and adapt. Rogers (1970) stated that “man-environment transactions are characterized by continuous repatterning of both man and environment” (p. 53). As the environment changes, nursing changes, and changes in nursing affect changes to the environment. Rogers described this as the patterning of life which is an evolutionary process through which systems become more complex and continue to develop. In the case of holistic nursing admissions, the changes in the demographics of the United States influences the diversity of patients who need care. This pattern of growing diversity is bringing new energy into the human-environmental field, adding complexity to the admissions process and in turn, creating a richer learning environment. The NLN and

AACN's call for a more diverse nursing workforce is one of the adaptations that has resulted from the changing environment in which nurses' practice. Holistic admission policies represent another appropriate adaptation in the academic field of nursing. The growing diversity of populations pushes nursing to rethink how to adapt its' workforce to the changing demands of the environment.

With the NLN and AACN's support and the projected changes to the demographic makeup of the United States and the metropolitan Midwest, holistic admissions is a crucial step needed to improve nursing education's ability to assure that the diversity of the nursing workforce mirrors the diversity of the population nurses serve. Martha Rogers' (1970) Theory of Unitary Human Beings uplifts the dynamic nature of humanity and the environment and makes a strong case for the need to adapt the admissions process to be more holistic, allowing for nursing to positively influence patient care. With this goal in mind, Chapter 2 will review the current literature and examine the process of holistic admissions in nursing, the use of holistic admissions in other fields, and the potential impact changes in admissions can have on the legal issues and the academic success of an organization. As a holistic admissions process has already been adopted by several nursing programs around the country, specific details from these admissions policies will be explored. The question of how holistic admissions practices have impacted the diversity of students that gain entrance into nursing programs and the effects of those admitted on the NCLEX pass rates of these academic organizations will also be addressed.



## Chapter Two: Literature Support

Holistic admissions is not a new concept and has been encouraged by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) for over 15 years. This chapter will explore the highly cited Urban Universities for HEALTH's survey (2014) and AACN's recommendations for holistic admission (AACN, 2017) as well as review the resulting outcomes schools of medicine and nursing have experienced from using this admissions strategy. It will also include a discussion on the legal aspects of holistic admissions and its potential to be viewed as discriminatory. Finally, this chapter will examine Martha Rogers' (1970) Theory of Unitary Human Beings and how it guides important steps in the holistic admissions process. Literature for this review was collected by accessing CINAL PLUS and using the terms Holistic Review AND Nursing as well as Holistic Review AND Medicine. In addition, the resources section of the AACN webpage on holistic admissions was used to identify key literature included in this review (AACN, 2017).

### **Urban Universities for HEALTH and AACN**

In 2014 the Urban Universities for HEALTH published a report about the use of holistic admissions in health professions in which 228 individual health professions schools responded. The participating programs included 66 nursing schools and 44 medical schools (Urban Universities for HEALTH, 2014). The survey included questions about the schools' use of a variety of practices that are consistent with holistic admissions and if they identified themselves as having transitioned to an admissions process that is holistic. Several outcomes were also surveyed to assess the impact of including holistic admissions including student academic performance, racial diversity, and student's

openness to new ideas. Non-academic criteria most often considered by schools that used holistic practices included a student's socioeconomic status, geographic origin, experience with disadvantaged populations, origin in a community that is medically underserved, and being a first-generation college student. Medical schools have embraced these new admission strategies with 91 % of programs surveyed reporting the use of holistic review. In contrast, only 47% of schools of nursing report the inclusion of holistic review criteria in their admissions process. (Urban Universities for HEALTH, 2014). This indicates that schools of nursing are lagging in the adoption of this admission strategy.

Schools that reported adopting a holistic admissions process had an 81% increase in student diversity and a 75% increase in student's openness to new ideas and perspectives (Urban Universities for HEALTH, 2014). Of the schools surveyed, 97% reported that the grade point average of the graduating class was unchanged or improved with the inclusion of the holistic review process and 91% reported that the average number of attempts needed for students to pass the required licensing exam was unchanged or improved. Overall, leaders from 91% of the schools that implemented a holistic review process for admissions stated that the change had resulted in a positive impact on the school.

The AACN became involved in promoting holistic admissions review by providing letters of support and training for nursing schools that were seeking grants from the Health Resources and Services Administration (AACN, 2017). AACN reports that 24 schools have responded and received training in holistic admissions review through the offered workshop. The AACN also published a report identifying sample

essay questions and applicant criteria that have been used by schools that have developed successful holistic admissions review processes. They continue to maintain a website that provides information on the benefits of holistic admissions and references for schools of nursing to use as they consider the process.

### **Holistic Admissions in Medical Schools and Nursing Programs**

As early as 2003 schools of medicine began working on holistic review processes for admission to their institutions (Witzburg & Sondheimer, 2013). Boston University School of Medicine (BUSM) began transitioning to a holistic review process in the early 2000s and completed the process by 2008 (Witzburg & Sondheimer, 2013). They began by developing a mission statement that reflected the desirable traits they wanted potential applicants to possess. BUSM hoped to increase the number of applicants who displayed traits like cultural sensitivity, empathy, strength of character, and other characteristics they felt were central to the role of a physician. With a clear mission in place, they created decision-support tools to measure these traits in applicants. Elements used to map desirable traits included letters of reference, history of engagement in community service, a written essay, letters of reference, and interviews in which applicants described emotional distance that they had traveled in their lives to prepare for medical school admission (Witzburg & Sondheimer, 2013). These elements were submitted by applicants to provide evidence of their experiences and attributes and reviewed by the admissions team. Once the holistic review process was in place, BUSM noted several changes (Witzburg & Sondheimer, 2013). Incoming medical students were culturally, linguistically, demographically, and racially more diverse. Admitted students from groups who are underrepresented in medicine increased from 12% to 20% (Witzburg &

Sondheimer, 2013). They also saw more engagement in campus community activities as well as graduating students pursuing a broader range of specialty areas and more diverse career paths. This large shift in admission practices did not result in a significant change in the GPA or Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) scores submitted by incoming students.

Similar results have been published about the holistic review process for Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine (OUWB) (Grabowski, 2018). Their principal question was, does the process of holistic review result in a more diverse interview pool than using academic metrics alone. Administrators and faculty understood that grade point average and high MCAT test scores helped predict student success in medical school but did not correlate to other important outcomes like clinical performance or communication skills (Grabowski, 2018). To examine this question, applicants were selected for the opportunity to interview using holistic metrics or academic selection alone. Criteria for the holistic metrics included academic preparation, exposure to the medical field, enthusiasm, ability to work with others, service experiences, and adversities that prospective students had to overcome to apply.

Data were collected over five years and included 2773 applicants selected using holistic review criteria and the same number selected as having the top academic performance (Grabowski, 2018). There were 1204 applicants who were found to overlap between the two groups. The study then compared demographics and characteristics on the holistic review group, academic review only group, and the group that was selected under both systems. Findings included a higher number of females, a higher number of applicants that are traditionally underrepresented in medical schools, and a higher number

of first-generation college students in the holistic review group. Other findings included a higher number of students that self-identified as having a disadvantaged status and a higher number of students who had performed a significant number of community service hours (Grabowski, 2018). Overall, the answer to the priority question was a resounding yes, the process of selecting students using holistic review did result in a more diverse interview pool.

Schools of nursing have become increasingly interested in holistic review and have been encouraged by the work being done by the AACN (Scott and Zerwic, 2015, Wros and Noone, 2018). The University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) College of Nursing (CON) noted the lack of diversity in the nursing workforce and the continued health disparities documented in marginalized communities and set out to change their admissions process (Scott & Zerwic, 2015). They began by shifting their focus from considering how successful applicants would be in nursing school to thinking about what type of contributions applicants could make to nursing. Another key point considered was how a more diverse classroom contributes to more creative, productive, and robust teaching and learning environments (Scott & Zerwic, 2015).

With these concepts in mind, the administration and faculty at UIC College of Nursing created a holistic admissions review process that included an assessment of applicants in three categories (Scott & Zerwic, 2015). The first category identified experiences of applicants like geographic exposure, volunteerism, cultural and diversity experiences, leadership roles, and community experiences. A second category involved the applicant's attributes and included demographics like age and ethnicity as well as concepts like intellectual curiosity and perspectives. The final category captures

academic metrics and included educational background, GPA, number of repeated courses, standardized test scores, and pre-admission test scores like the TEAS. After putting the holistic review process in place the College of Nursing at UIC saw a significant increase in the number of Hispanic students it admitted and through an applicant survey, 92% of the potential students reported that they felt the application process helped them showcase their skills and attributes beyond academic performance (Zerwic, Scott, McCreary, & Corte, 2018). The other interesting finding was that their NCLEX board scores increased in the years following the change in the admission process.

The Oregon Health and Sciences University (OHSU) school of nursing instituted holistic review for their admissions process and after 4 admission cycles reported how the change impacted the demographics of their applicants (Wros & Noone, 2018). They found the percentage of diverse students increase from 11% to 16% and have been able to retain and graduate 90% of disadvantaged students (Wros & Noone, 2018).

Recommendations from OHSU school of nursing on how to implement a holistic admissions review process include creating an admissions mission statement that relates to the overall organizational mission and vision and includes a statement on diversity. They also encourage using external experts to ensure best practice and provide advice on how to develop admissions policy and procedure and identifying early adaptors within the organization who can champion the change. Finally, they recommend collecting data to adjust the admissions process to assist in overcoming barriers.

### Legal Aspects

As schools of nursing consider a holistic review process, concerns of legality and risk of legal action against the college surface. An academic metrics-based admissions system that only considers GPA and standardized test score are objective to review and defend. In comparison, a holistic admissions process that includes a wider variety of subjective assessments opens the system up to bias on the part of reviewers. The Urban Universities for HEALTH (2016) published a set of guidelines to assist schools in navigating the legal concerns of this process. Recommendations include ensuring the schools' educational mission statement gives a clear view of the school's role in society. For schools of nursing, this may include statements about increasing diversity in the nursing workforce or supporting the creation of a workforce that mirrors the patient populations it serves. Other important legal aspects to consider involve limiting the use of race or ethnicity data and making a strong case for its inclusion only when it is necessary to meet the school's mission-related goals. The final considerations involve the use of evidence from outside sources who are experienced with holistic review, school-specific data about how admission demographics have changed to meet the needs of the nursing profession, and ongoing review of how the process is working over time.

The importance of having a mission statement that promotes the concept of diversity is supported by several other authors (Meloy, 2014, Glazer, Clark, and Bankston, 2015). They also stress the importance of a balanced flexible approach to admissions that is not based on race or ethnicity but supports a diverse group of students that meet the needs of the populations they serve. Meloy (2014) suggests admission criteria instead should include several factors like parental marital status, primary

language spoken, being the first in the family to attend college or an applicant's economic status. Race as a criterion should be avoided especially if federal financial aid is being used but instead a creative and well-rounded admissions program should be used to reach diversity goals. Glazer, Clark, and Bankston (2015) add a recommendation that stakeholders, like hospitals or clinical systems, should be included in the process of developing admission criteria. Once a holistic admissions program is in place these same stakeholders should be surveyed to assess the readiness and preparedness of new graduates into the role of a nurse. This allows schools to adjust the admissions criteria if desired results are not being achieved and to ensure the students that are graduating from schools of nursing are meeting the needs of health care organizations and the community.

### **Nursing Theory and Concepts in Holistic Admissions**

Martha Rogers' (1970) Theory of Unitary Human Beings has guided several key aspects of the holistic admissions process in nursing. In the past, Rogers' theory has been used to understand the complex nature of how students and the learning environment of nursing schools influence each other either knowingly or unknowingly (France, Fields, & Garth, 2004). In a study on black nursing students in a primarily white nursing program, France, Fields, and Garth (2004) explored how the lack of peer support and exclusion experienced by black nursing students in the program created an environment that negatively affected their performance and overall experience. The difficulty black nursing students face in schools as described in this study may have contributed to the lower numbers of black nurses graduating from schools of nursing. This may have in turn affected the environment of nursing in hospitals, clinical, and in the community where the racial makeup of nursing does not reflect the population it serves. Rogers' (1970)



insight on the human-environmental interplay can be used to see how a change in the environment of admissions will, in turn, bring changes to the demographic makeup of schools of nursing and ultimately the nursing profession at large.

Rogers' (1970) concept of helicy also has been used to describe nursing and the quality of care provided by nurses to patients, families, and populations. In a paper on the art of nursing and how it relates to high-quality care, Alligood and Fawcett (2017) describe how helicy depicts the continuous and unpredictable increase in diversity both in the human and the environmental energy fields which is rooted in caring about the welfare of others. They described the responsibility nursing has to quality improvement. Nursing continues to strive, evolving to meet the needs of patients and populations it serves. Holistic admissions is a perfect example of the evolving progress of quality improvement in schools of nursing as the discipline attempts to admit students and graduate nurse who can provide the type of care population need and deserve.

Understanding how holistic admissions was developed beginning with the Urban Universities for HEALTH's survey (2004) and further by the workshops provided by AACN points to the continued efforts nursing is making toward quality improvement. Reviewing outcomes that have been already been achieved by several schools of nursing (Scott and Zerwic, 2015, Wros and Noone, 2018) and medicine (Grabowski, 2018, Witzburg & Sondheimer 2013), provide a clear path on which associate degree nursing schools in Minnesota can follow. The following chapter describes the process by which a consortium of nursing schools created a system for holistic review that considered experiences and attributes along with metrics to evaluate applicants.

### Chapter Three: Holistic Admissions

Creating a holistic admissions process for an eight-member consortium of schools in Minnesota was a challenging task that required a team approach and working together with all the member schools along with continued input from AACN consultants. The desired outcome is a holistic admissions process, implemented by all consortium schools, that can be evaluated as three cohorts of students are admitted and ultimately graduate from the programs. Student retention, NCLEX scores, and an increase in the diversity of students that are admitted will be measured. This chapter will describe the efforts made by a holistic review committee to create an admissions process designed to attract and enroll a diverse cohort of students who will ultimately serve the nursing needs of populations in the Twin Cities and surrounding area.

#### **Description of the Project**

The process began with informal conversations between faculty and admissions staff from various schools of nursing sharing concerns about the system that was in place. Several nursing programs in the consortium reported students taking the standardized Test of Essential Academic Skills exam multiple times to raise their score high enough to gain admission to the program, putting a large cost burden on students. Other concerns included examples of how students were admitted, but then dropped out after only a few months in a nursing program. These students reported that they did not have the interest or passion in nursing to continue. Faculty and advisors felt that there must be a different way to admit students that captured their whole character and passion for nursing, without putting so much emphasis on a standardized test score. Interested representatives from consortium member schools, including nursing administrators, admissions

counselors, college advisors, and nursing faculty met for a one-day workshop facilitated by AACN consultants to learn more about the holistic review process.

Once the AACN workshop was completed, consortium leadership committed to the process of holistic admissions and began to move forward. Phase one of the holistic admissions project started with the consortium leadership applying for and receiving a grant to fund the task of developing a holistic admissions process for the consortium schools of nursing. A workgroup with representation from all the consortium schools met several times to assess the current admission process and plan for changes. Data was gathered on the demographic characteristics of consortium students who had been admitted in the previous semester. Admission criteria included two data points, the TEAS scores, and the GPA of several prerequisite courses. The group felt that decreasing the weight of the TEAS and giving more value to the GPA might be a good first step in promoting a more diverse admission cohort. However, when data were manipulated to project what effect this change would have had on admissions no significant shift in demographics was noted. The idea to change how the two data points were weighted was then abandoned by the workgroup in favor of a complete overhaul of the admissions process.

An organization's mission statement is an important part of the holistic review process as it provides the legal foundation on which attributes and experiences are considered as part of the admission application. The following mission, vision, and core values were adopted by the consortium to strategically align with the holistic admissions process and goals. The consortium's mission is "to increase baccalaureate prepared nurses through collaborative, transformative education strategies consistent with our core

values” and its vision is “to prepare professional nurses to promote health and meet the evolving and complex healthcare needs of an increasingly diverse population in Minnesota” (MANE, 2020, para. 2). Core values of the consortium include, “Innovation and the Pursuit of Excellence, Collaboration and Partnership, Integrity and Accountability, Mutual Respect and Collegiality, Diversity and Inclusiveness, Responsiveness to Local and Global Healthcare Need” (MANE, 2020, para. 3). These statements align well with the holistic admission goal to meet the needs of patient populations by increasing the diversity in nursing education and ultimately the nursing workforce.

The final action taken in phase one was to gather exemplar data to test how applications will be assessed, the interrater reliability of the assessment team, and to work out details on how many team members will be needed to review all the applications. As a first step, applicants to all the programs in the consortium for the fall 2020 admission date were asked to include an essay as part of their application. Directions were given to answer a general question about why the applicants desired to enter the nursing profession at this time. Information was posted to inform applicants that the essay would be used to test a future admissions process but would not affect the current admission cycle. These essays were deidentified and placed in a holding file until the fall 2020 admissions were completed.

Phase two began with the holistic admissions workgroup identifying which attributes, experiences, and metrics would be considered as important aspects of a student’s application. Attributes suggested by the Holistic Review in Nursing: Workshop Participant Guide (Urban Universities for HEALTH, 2020) included ethnicity,

intellectual curiosity, values and beliefs, socioeconomic status, leadership, and maturity. Workgroup members voted on the attributes that were included in the admissions process. The attributes of intellectual curiosity, teamwork, accountability, and beliefs and values were selected. Each of these attributes was then defined and how they would be measured was identified (see appendix A for definitions). The same process was used to select experiences that would be valued in the admissions process with lived experience, service experience, and formal education is selected. Answers to two short answer questions and a resume submitted with the application would be used to measure these attributes and experiences along with a proctored writing sample. A rubric was developed to assign points based on how well the applicant's responses and resume aligned with the experiences and attributes that were selected by the consortium workgroup. While the rubric is not a public facing document a graphic to assist students understand the scoring for applications was designed (see appendix A for experiences, attributes, and metrics that are included in the rubric). For the metrics portion of the application, it was decided that GPA and TEAS test scores would continue to be used. A change was made in how these were weighted however, with a GPA cut off of 2.75 and increasing points given as the TEAS score increased.

Phase Three of the project involved developing a centralized online application that includes two short answer questions and a resume. This online application is being trialed in the Fall 2021 cohort's application cycle. Phase three also included the creation of an admissions workgroup that will review applications. The members of the admissions workgroup are made up of administrators, admissions representatives, councilors, and non-nursing faculty from the consortium programs. This workgroup

received training from AACN on how to decrease implicit bias and they will work with the data collected in the fall 2021 admissions cycle to ensure interrater reliability and adjust the process for efficiency.

Results of the project will be measured in 2022 and 2023 as cohorts who were admitted using the holistic admissions process proceed through nursing school, take the NCLEX, and begin working as nurses. Data will be collected to assess demographic changes in admitted cohorts and if these changes improved classroom learning experiences for students. NCLEX pass rate data will also be monitored and feedback from communities and industry partners will be solicited. Adjustments will likely be needed as the process progresses and evaluation data becomes available.

### **Theoretical Framework and Conceptual Model**

Martha Rogers' (1970) Theory of Unitary Human Beings provided key concepts that relate to the process of creating a system of holistic admissions. She described human beings as *open pandimensional energy fields* that exchange energy in unique patterns with the environments that surround them. Rogers (1970) used the term *integrality* to identify this connectedness or oneness of a human being and their environment. The process of holistic admissions considers the concept of integrality when it elicits the experiences of applicants and recognizes the environments people have inhabited are connected to their attributes or personhood.

Rogers (1970) further described this human environment energy exchange as having *resonancy*, meaning not only are energy patterns connected but they affect each other's cadence or frequency. As students are admitted to schools of nursing the academic environment will begin to have interplay with the energy patterns students

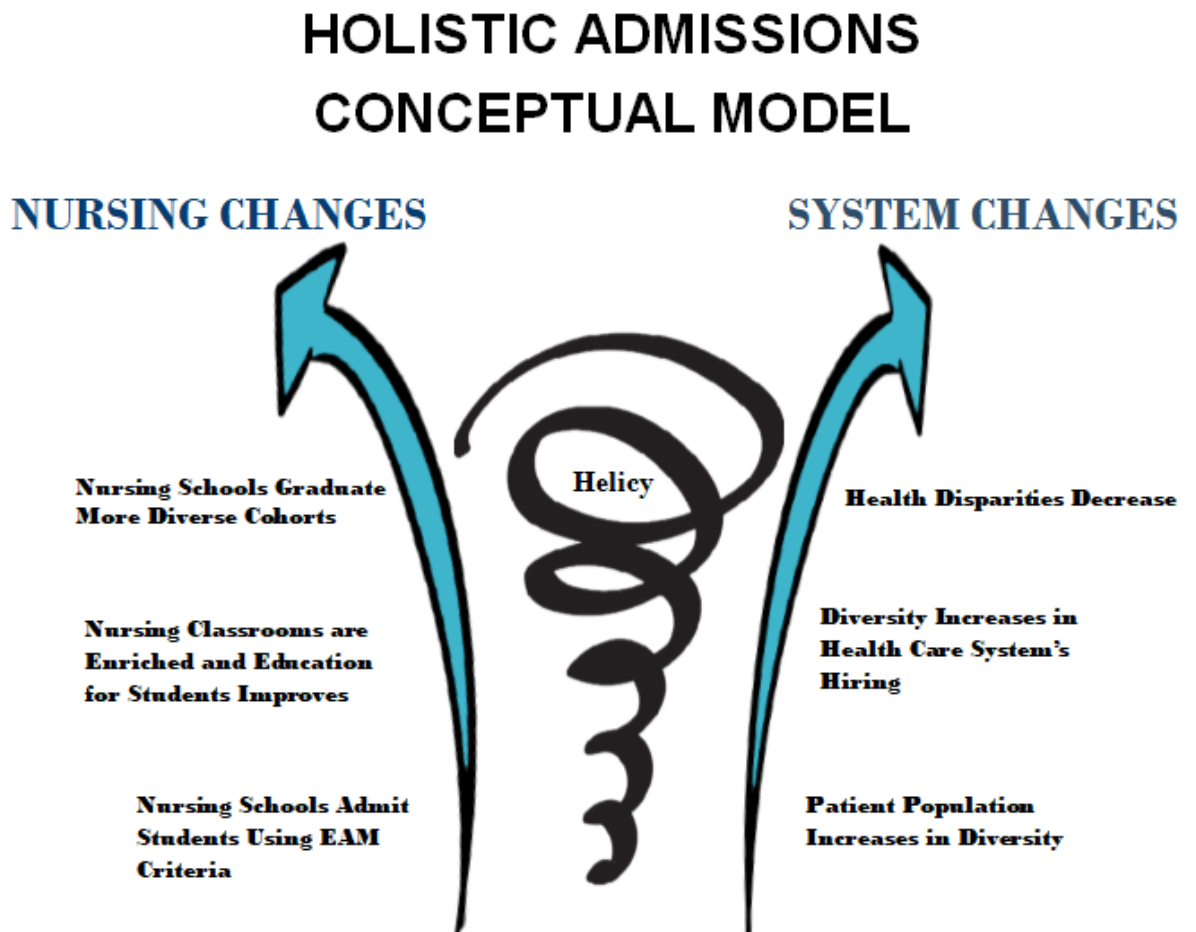
bring to their nursing programs. Holistic admissions then seeks to identify students with attributes or energy frequencies that will affect the energy of cohorts of students and nursing education itself.

*Helicy* is another concept of Rogers' (1970) that highlights an important aspect of holistic admissions. Helicy describes the human environment energy exchange as being constantly moving towards innovation, complexity, and diversity. The holistic admissions process aims to identify students with energy patterns that will enhance the innovation and diversity of the learning environment and bring dynamic change to the broader nursing education system, health care system, and communities who seek care. The exchange is circular with nursing having an impact on the students and the students in turn shaping and changing nursing as it moves forward and adapts to the changing demographics of populations.

Conceptual models are used to provide a visual representation of concepts and their interrelationships. To better visualize the relationships between demographic changes in patient populations, the nursing workforce, and nursing education, the model (figure 1) below was developed. The left arrow represents changes in nursing related to the process of holistic admissions. The right arrow documents increasing diversity in the nursing environment including both the workforce and patient population. The final change in the nursing environment is a decrease in health disparities resulting from care being provided by nurses who come from the communities they serve. The upward spiral in the center demonstrates Martha Rogers' (1970) concept of helicy, highlighting the increasingly diverse and complex interactions between nursing and the environment.

Figure 1

*Holistic Admissions Conceptual Model*



In addition to Rogers' theory, concepts from the developmental evaluation model were used (Patton, 2011). Major system change involves the need for adjustment and adaptation and the developmental evaluation model serves this purpose by providing feedback on changes that need to be made as the process evolves. This model does not wait for a process to be implemented completely before evaluating, instead it looks to engage participants in identifying emerging themes and make necessary changes (Patton,



2011). The multiple trial runs that were included in this process allowed for adjustments and corrections to be made before final implementation.

The change from an admission system of only two data points to a more holistic process that attempts to capture the dynamic relationship that each applicant has with their environment and the impact they could have on nursing is complex. The issue of potential bias, as well as the difficulty in quantifying concepts like accountability or intellectual curiosity, have made this transition difficult but also rewarding. Evaluating the outcomes of these changes will likely be complex as well but will allow participants the ability to witness changes to nursing education and the nursing workforce.

## Chapter Four: Evaluation

The process of designing and implementing holistic admissions in an eight-member consortium of nursing schools allows many opportunities for evaluation of both the process and the outcomes. A large change in the status quo will be achieved as the admissions process for an entire consortium of schools will be transformed. The consortium structure particular to this project allows for a unique opportunity to review evaluation data for a large group of students with admission cycles happening twice per year. This chapter will address how the process of developing a new admissions practice has advanced nursing practice, provided evaluation opportunities, and promoted understanding and unity between the eight schools of nursing in a consortium.

### **Evaluation Process**

The developmental evaluation method (Patton, 2011) has been used in this project and will continue to guide the holistic admissions process' implementation and evolution. In the Summer of 2020, the admissions workgroup met and evaluated the initial essay data collected in the Spring 2020 admission cycle using the experiences and attributes rubric. This evaluation allowed the rubric to be further developed and the group to adjust practices and better define the concepts being measured. Developmental evaluation (Patton, 2011) described project implementation and evaluations as a ready, fire, aim process. This project's trial run with the initial data from students was a way to get ready and then fire off the first round of questions. The data collected from those responses allowed the short answer questions to be adjusted or aimed more closely to the target experiences and attributes that were being measured.

The second opportunity for developmental evaluation occurred after the test run of the centralized online application. Data collected with that application allowed the admission workgroup to assess the efficiency of the online application process and the interrater reliability of the team member's use of the rubric. It also provided a comparison of the demographic data of students admitted using the metrics only process versus students who would have been admitted if a holistic admissions process had been used. With this data the process will again be adjusted prior to the go live admission cycle.

Other aspects of project evaluation include reliability, dependability, confirmability, and validity (Mertens, 2015). Interrater reliability of the EAM rubric was assessed in the summer of 2020 between members of the admissions workgroup but will be reassessed as that workgroup evolves and the tool is used in the next admissions cycle (Mertens, 2015). The reliable use of the rubric is central to the functioning of the admissions process and must be evaluated regularly. As the holistic admissions process is best understood in a qualitative framework, its' dependability over time as it adapts and changes should be considered (Mertens, 2015). Continued involvement and oversight from an AACN consultant is important in ensuring changes and evolutions of the process are consistent with academic and national standards of holistic admissions.

AACN consultants have also been instrumental in ensuring the confirmability of the holistic nursing process that has been developed (Mertens, 2015). These consultants made several visits during the development of the process providing feedback, giving direction, and distributing evidence that was used to make decisions. The consortium is committed to their oversight and will include AACN in the continuing process to ensure confirmability as changes are made. Validity must also be considered as a key aspect of

evaluation. With the completion of the first holistically admitted cohort predictive validity can be assessed using demographic data of graduating classes, student evaluations of the learning environment, nursing school GPA, and NCLEX pass rates (Mertens, 2015). Admission practices are particularly connected to outcomes like retention, graduation, and the acquisition of a nursing license making predictive validity a significant evaluation marker.

Threats to the validity of the project must also be considered (Mertens, 2015). These would include the change in NCLEX testing that will occur in 2023 (NCSBN, 2020). New types of questions will be introduced at the same time the first holistically admitted cohort will be testing. This change will make predictive validity harder to assess. Another threat to validity is the COVID pandemic which is taking place during the launch of the online application and may continue to affect students for several semesters. The effects of the pandemic have been widespread, and it is difficult to anticipate how it is impacting this process.

The first application cycle of the holistic admissions process will be fully implemented in the spring of 2022 with students completing the program the summer of 2023. Data will be collected after that first admission cycle and the process will be adjusted for efficiency and to ensure it is meeting the goal of admitting more diverse cohorts of students. Demographic data on cohorts admitted, student progression data, student and faculty evaluations of the learning environment, and NCLEX pass rates will provide continual feedback for process improvement and further program development. Additional data from industry partners who hire graduates of the consortium will also be solicited to provide further insight into changes that may be needed.

### Critical Reflection

Holistic admissions is not new to education, but the unique involvement of an eight-school consortium further advances this process providing more data to advance nursing education practice and impact the diversity of the nursing workforce. Findings on how holistic admissions can be implemented in larger education systems or consortiums and evaluating data from a greater number of applicants per enrolment cycle will allow for further learning and refinement of this process. This more complex approach to admitting students is an important process change being encouraged and supported by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN, 2017) and can be used as an example for further system change nationally.

There are many examples in the literature of process changes involving holistic admissions (Grabowski, 2018; Scott & Zerwic, 2015; Witzburg & Sondheimer, 2013; Wros & Noone, 2018) however, there has been nothing published documenting the implementation of the holistic admissions process within a consortium of schools of nursing in the Midwest. Unique challenges of this project included different prerequisite courses being offered and required from schools and the large number of applications that need to be processed twice a year. Another contribution of this project is that documents a holistic admissions process that does not include interviews. Interviews are commonly required as part of the admissions process to assess the experiences and attributes of applicants. However, the consortium was unable to complete interviews with applicants and instead is relying on two short answer questions and a resume. This approach is

somewhat unique and evaluation data once collected will be compared to other holistic admissions processes in which interviews were used to contrast differences.

One of the most interesting outcomes of this project was the effect it had on the participants and consortium programs. From conception to implementation this process will take three years of coordination and collaboration among a consistent team of admissions staff, advisors, administrators, and faculty from all eight consortium schools. This prolonged and intense focus helped workgroup members from multiple schools and disciplines see themselves and the consortium differently by increasing the understanding of the interdependent nature of each member of the workgroup. It has highlighted the shared goals and struggles of the consortium programs and improved communication and collaboration. In many ways, the attempt to make the admissions process more holistic has resulted in the whole consortium becoming more holistic.

This project has provided unique opportunities for partnership, innovation, and authentic system change. In moving forward towards the implementation of holistic admissions, evaluation data will continue to steer the project and provide insight into how to further advance the process of admitting students. There is also a potential that the project will promote holism in other aspects of nursing education besides admissions through the collaboration between disciplines and schools of nursing.

## Chapter Five: Conclusions

As the project to create and implement a holistic admission process for a consortium of nursing schools nears its completion, the next steps include plans on how to assess the efficiency of the process and evaluate its outcomes. Further changes are being contemplated to ensure curriculum development and retention efforts are also holistic. Additionally, consideration is also taking place on how this project reflects AACN's goals and essentials of doctoral education (AACN, 2006). This chapter will address how this project aligns with AACN's broader work and how outcomes of this project will spark new insights into how best to create holistic nursing education and retention of diverse students.

### **AACN Essentials**

The AACN *Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice* (AACN, 2006) guide the work of DNP nurses as they translate research into practice. For this project Essential II was impactful as it highlights system change. The project's focus on changing a metrics-based admissions process to a holistic process demonstrates a scholarly approach to organizational and system change in nursing and health care. The goals of this essential include system change that helps to eliminate health disparities and the promotion of patient safety and excellence in nursing practice. This project includes organizational and system leadership, encompassing concepts like communication, evaluation, and sensitivity to diversity. Essential VI, which focuses on interprofessional collaboration was also significant in this project as the holistic admissions process involves the work of academic staff in advising, admissions, and administration, as well as that of nursing faculty. This collaboration was vital in the initial creation of the process

as the rubric and will continue to be important in making the changes sustainable and adaptable to future challenges and population shifts.

### **Future Areas of Study**

The project will need to expand beyond admissions to encompass holism in the curriculum, teaching strategies, and retention efforts. As holistic cohorts enter the schools of nursing in the consortium, it will be important to focus efforts on adjusting to the change in student demographics and experience levels. Plans are in place to provide support and education for faculty to prepare for these changes and some basic education on the holistic admissions process has already been completed (see appendix B). Further education will allow faculty to capitalize on the diverse attributes and experiences these holistically admitted cohorts will bring to the classroom. Implicit bias training from AACN will be offered to all faculty as well as workshops on equity and inclusion. This will be foundational in providing faculty and administration with the framework they will need to understand diverse students. Work will be done in the consortium's curriculum committee in anticipation of these changes as well. The developmental evaluation model (Patton, 2011) will be in full effect as rapid transformations are made to curriculum and retention strategies that will accommodate the change in student demographics.

Evaluation data will be of utmost importance to guide changes to the admissions process as well as adaptations in the classroom and curriculum adjustments. Developing a robust and ongoing data collection process and implementing multiple evaluation methods will also provide new insight into how diversity and a holistic approach to nursing affect the classroom, curriculum, teaching practices, NCLEX pass rates, and ultimately the nursing workforce. Having over a thousand students in each admission



cycle will be beneficial in the evaluation process, allowing for results to be more generalizable. Holistic admissions is rather new to nursing education and there is much to learn.

As system change takes root sustainability must be considered, particularly with a process that is as labor-intensive as holistic admissions. The review of hundreds of applications and resumes twice a year by the admissions workgroup will require a large time commitment and significant funding. Several strategies have been put in place to help sustain the process. First, faculty involvement in the admissions workgroup has been kept to a minimum as they have teaching commitments and other obligations. Secondly, the consortium has allocated a budget to support the continued work and funding of the admissions workgroup in case extra hours are required to complete the admissions cycle. Finally, there are plans to include volunteers from community partners and community members in the review of admission applications and resumes. This influx of new partners will help sustain the energy, focus, and passion of the admission workgroup as they do the work of identifying the best candidates for the nursing workforce. The hope is that this power-sharing strategy will improve the connection between schools of nursing and community partners and members and decrease the time commitment of each consortium school.

This project opens doors for future research in the areas of holistic education, equity and inclusion strategies, and approaches to increase retention. As patient populations become more diverse there is much work to do in preparing a nursing workforce that can meet their needs and provide holistic and culturally congruent care. The process of holistic admissions attempts to bring the most qualified applicants into

schools of nursing who bring with them experiences and attributes which will support both academic success and quality nursing practice. Legal aspects must be considered with admission policies and the mission, vision, and core values of academic institutions must be aligned to increase student diversity and reflect the patient populations being served. Robust evaluation methods should be in place to allow for frequent and clear feedback to the admissions process, keeping it agile and relevant. Consideration of the classroom environment and a curriculum that is based on the values of equity and inclusion are also important to ensure student retention and success. The commitment to holism must extend beyond admissions to include the whole educational experience and nursing practice. The goal is for the diversity of nursing to reflect the diversity of the population nurses serve contributing to diminishing health disparities and health equity for all people.

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Appendix A

Experiences, Attributes, and Metrics used in Rubric

**mane**  
Minnesota Alliance  
for Nursing Education

**Experiences (E) - 40%**

**Lived Experience** Tell us about your personal lived experience, not including work and educational experiences. How has your lived experience influenced your desire to enter the nursing profession? (350 words)

- Personal story/lived experience and/or
- Path travelled/personal journey and/or
- Obstacles overcome and/or
- Personal growth

**Service**

- Community Engagement/Experience (can include volunteer work to support community, school/Parent-teacher association, TRIO engagement, Jeremiah/parent co-operative engagement, Foster care engagement, board service within community, volunteer with non-profit organizations, etc.)
- Healthcare Experience (can include nursing assistant, MA, LPN, phlebotomist, EMT, HUC, etc.)
- Service Experience (can include wait staff, bartender, barista, hair stylist, customer service, taxi/ride share driver, etc.)

**Formal Education**

- Any previous degree and completed MANE required general education credits, as outlined in curriculum plan

**Attributes (A) - 40%**

**Intellectual Curiosity/Informal Education**

- Intellectual curiosity seeks to learn, think, and understand ideas
- Seeks training and other learning experiences (related to volunteering, caregiving, military service, ROTC, massively open online courses (MOOC), online courses, community education, etc.)

**Certifications**

- Basic life support/ACLS/PALS, conflict resolution, computer software (Microsoft/Excel/PowerPoint), project management professional, equity and inclusion, interpreter training (second language/American sign language), specific job-related training, etc.

**Teamwork, Collaboration and Accountability: Situation Task Action and Result (STAR)** Please describe a situation in your life that demonstrates your experience with Teamwork/Collaboration & Accountability. What was your role and what was the outcome of this experience? (350 words)

- **Teamwork, Collaboration:** The willingness to work with others to complete specific tasks that work toward the completion of a common goal
- **Accountability:** The willingness to understand, accept, and take responsibility for one's actions/decisions to complete a particular task/goal
- **Beliefs and Values:** Ethic of care is the belief and valuing that all individuals deserve the right to be treated with human dignity and have a responsibility to respond to the needs of others

**Metrics (M) - 20%**

**GPA**

- 2.75 GPA minimum (Semester 1 Courses) to apply
- Conditional Acceptance pending completion of 2nd semester coursework with cumulative 2.75 GPA across required semester 1 and 2 courses
- All MANE required courses taken must have a letter grade of C or higher for application


**ATI (TEAS)**

- Basic or Developmental TEAS Score <58%
- Proficient TEAS Score 58.7-79.3%
- Advanced TEAS Score 80 - 91.3%
- Exemplary TEAS Score of 92-100%

All applicants can apply to the program with any TEAS score

## Appendix B


## Presentation to MANE Faculty



**Minnesota Alliance for Nursing Education:**  
**Implementation of Holistic Admissions**


FadumaSara Ali, DNP, APRN, CNP  
*MANE Executive Director*

In collaboration with Anna Kam, MSN, RN  
Doctoral Candidate/DNP Candidate  
(November 10th, 2020)



**The purpose of this presentation is to:**

1. Explain the limitations of the current metrics only admissions process
2. Educate faculty on the research-based solution of holistic admissions
3. Allow faculty the opportunity to ask questions and dialog about the changes that will accompany this new admissions process





**Academic Limitations:**

- **Metrics based admissions** increase homogeneity in learning environments which impedes students in their ability to struggle with complex identity, cultural, and racial issues and decreases their exposure to peers who have experiences that are different from their own.

(Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002)
- A **metrics only approach** negates the experience and attributes of applicants and does not fully capture the complexity of what makes a good nurse.

(Wambuguh, Eckfiled, & Van Hofwegen, 2016)

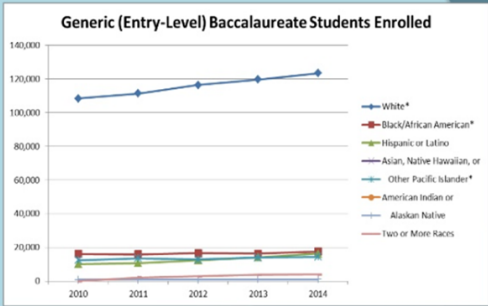



**Workforce Limitations:**

- Schools of nursing, using an academic metrics only system, are admitting predominantly white women resulting in a nursing workforce that *does not* mirror the gender, racial, and cultural diversity in North American.
- The **Minnesota Board of Nursing (2018)** reported that 15.1% of applicants who took the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) to become RNs in 2017 were minorities.
- **Based on the 2015 Census data**, the Minnesota State Demographic Center reported that 19% of the state's residents were minorities and this percentage is predicted to increase to 25% by 2035 (Martha McMurry, 2009).

**Baccalaureate Enrollment**

**Generic (Entry-Level) Baccalaureate Students Enrolled**




Year	White*	Black/African American*	Hispanic or Latino	Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Other Pacific Islander*	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Two or More Races
2010	105,000	15,000	12,000	10,000	5,000	8,000
2011	110,000	16,000	13,000	11,000	6,000	9,000
2012	115,000	17,000	14,000	12,000	7,000	10,000
2013	120,000	18,000	15,000	13,000	8,000	11,000
2014	125,000	19,000	16,000	14,000	9,000	12,000

(AACN, 2017)







**Our Mission**  
 The mission of the **Minnesota Alliance for Nursing Education (MANE)** is to increase baccalaureate prepared nurses through collaborative, transformative education strategies consistent with our core values.


**Our Vision**  
 Through increased access to baccalaureate nursing education MANE will prepare professional nurses to promote health and meet the evolving and complex healthcare needs of an increasingly diverse population in Minnesota.

**Our Core Values**  
 MANE is dedicated to achieving our mission and vision in a manner consistent with our values of:

- Innovation and the Pursuit of Excellence
- Collaboration and Partnership
- Integrity and Accountability
- Mutual Respect and Collegiality
- Diversity and Inclusiveness
- Responsiveness to Local and Global Healthcare Needs

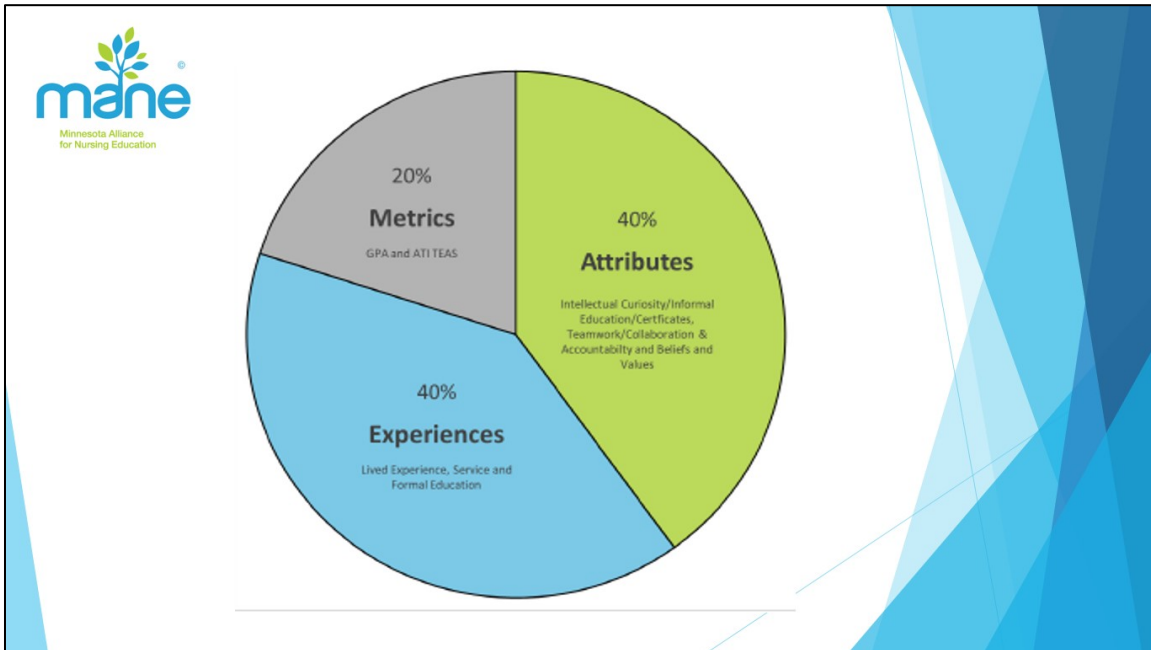
**MANE Timeline by Semester: Holistic Admissions Implementation**


Spring 2019	<b>Project Inception</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MANE Diversity Committee requests AACN Holistic review of admissions processes</li> <li>Discussion begins within alliance regarding Holistic Admissions with a Central Online Application</li> <li>MinnState Multi-campus collaboration grant approval provides initial source funding for implementation of new admissions process</li> <li>AACN provides initial review workshop on the process of Holistic Admissions and status of MANE admissions process</li> </ul>
Fall 2019 - Spring 2020	<b>Holistic Admission Workgroup</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workgroup on Holistic Admissions is formed and includes admission, advising, faculty, and administrators from all MANE partner institutions.</li> <li>Process and EAM rubric are developed with help from AACN consultants</li> </ul>
Summer 2020	<b>Approval of Holistic Admissions process and Central Online Application development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MANE Steering approves change admissions process for Holistic Admissions to begin Spring 2022</li> <li>Workgroup formed to design Central Online Application and review use of EAM rubric</li> <li>Final EAM rubric and focused Experiences and Attributes questions identified</li> </ul>
Fall 2020	<b>MANE is currently admitting for SPRING 2021</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implicit Bias Training/American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) National Team - "Unconscious Bias and Cultural Humility in Academic Nursing"</li> <li>Advising and Admission meetings resume to discuss implementation challenges and process needs for alliance</li> <li>Establishing FAQ's for Advisors</li> <li>Training for Advisors session 1 of 2</li> <li>Training for Faculty session 1 of 2</li> <li>Ongoing edits to Central Online application/working with System Office/Web developer</li> </ul>



**MANE Timeline by Semester: Holistic Admissions Implementation (Future)**

Spring 2021	<p>MANE is currently admitting for FALL 2021/Dec 1<sup>st</sup> to Feb 1<sup>st</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Possible trial run of Central Online Application for this admission cycle</li> <li>Trial run of Central Online application (1-week period of data collection/Review in November)</li> <li>Trial run of Holistic Review of applicants with soft data (1 week/5 days)                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate data with EAM Rubric 'dry run' (~1,200 applicants/November)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Fall 2021	<p>MANE is currently admitting for SPRING 2022/Holistically Admitted Cohort/April 1<sup>st</sup> to June 1<sup>st</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Holistic Review principles revisited (2 days)</li> <li>Go Live run of Central Online application (1-week period of data collection/Review in November)</li> <li>Evaluate nursing applicants with EAM Rubric (~1,200 applicants/November)</li> </ul>
Spring 2022	Holistically Reviewed Cohort begins.





### Experiences (E) - 40%

**Lived Experience** Tell us about your personal lived experience, not including work and educational experiences. How has your lived experience influenced your desire to enter the nursing profession? (350 words)

- Personal story/lived experience and/or
- Path travelled/personal journey and/or
- Obstacles overcome and/or
- Personal growth

**Service**

- Community Engagement/Experience (can include volunteer work to support community, school/Parent-teacher association, TRIO engagement, Jeremiah/parent co-operative engagement, Foster care engagement, board service within community, volunteer with non-profit organizations, etc.)
- Healthcare Experience (can include nursing assistant, MA, LPN, phlebotomist, EMT, HUC, etc.)
- Service Experience (can include wait staff, bartender, barista, hair stylist, customer service, taxi/ride share driver, etc.)

**Formal Education**

- Any previous degree and completed MANE required general education credits, as outlined in curriculum plan

### Attributes (A) - 40%

**Intellectual Curiosity/Informal Education**

- Intellectual curiosity seeks to learn, think, and understand ideas
- Seeks training and other learning experiences (related to volunteering, caregiving, military service, ROTC, massively open online courses (MOOC), online courses, community education, etc.)

**Certifications**

- Basic life support/ACLS/PALS, conflict resolution, computer software (Microsoft/Excel/PowerPoint), project management professional, equity and inclusion, interpreter training (second language/American sign language), specific job-related training, etc.

**Teamwork, Collaboration and Accountability: Situation Task Action and Result (STAR)** Please describe a situation in your life that demonstrates your experience with Teamwork/Collaboration & Accountability. What was your role and what was the outcome of this experience? (350 words)

- **Teamwork, Collaboration:** The willingness to work with others to complete specific tasks that work toward the completion of a common goal
- **Accountability:** The willingness to understand, accept, and take responsibility for one's actions/decisions to complete a particular task/goal
- **Beliefs and Values:** Ethic of care is the belief and valuing that all individuals deserve the right to be treated with human dignity and have a responsibility to respond to the needs of others

### Metrics (M) - 20%

**GPA**

- 2.75 GPA minimum (Semester 1 Courses) to apply
- Conditional Acceptance pending completion of 2nd semester coursework with cumulative 2.75 GPA across required semester 1 and 2 courses
- All MANE required courses taken must have a letter grade of C or higher for application

**ATI (TEAS)**

- Basic or Developmental TEAS Score <58%
- Proficient TEAS Score 58.7-79.3%
- Advanced TEAS Score 80 - 91.3%
- Exemplary TEAS Score of 92-100%

*All applicants can apply to the program with any TEAS score*

## Does the Evidence support Holistic Admissions?

“Evidence indicates that diversity is associated with improved access to care for racial and ethnic minority patients, greater patient choice and satisfaction, and better educational experiences for health care professions students, among many other benefits.”

(IOM, 2004)

“Schools using holistic review also reported an improved teaching and learning environment, with students more engaged with the community, more cooperative, and more open to perspectives different from their own.”

(Urban Universities for Health, 2014)

“Seventy-two percent (72%) of health profession schools that reported using holistic review also reported increased diversity in their incoming classes.”

(AACN, 2017)



**Affects of Holistic Admissions on Test Scores: *Examples from the literature***

**The College of Nursing at UIC:**

- Significant increase in the number of Hispanic students it admitted
- NCLEX board scores **increased** in the years following the change in the admission process.

Scott, L. D., & Zerwic, J. (2015)

**Boston University School of Medicine:**

- Medical students became culturally, linguistically, demographically, and racially more diverse
- No significant change in the GPA or Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) scores submitted by incoming students.


(Witzburg & Sondheimer, 2013)

**The Urban Universities for HEALTH survey:**

- Programs with holistic admissions have experienced an increase in student diversity
- No decline in student success outcomes have resulted from admission changes

(Urban Universities for HEALTH, 2004)

# What Questions Do You Have?



Thoughts...

- How will this change our classrooms?
- How will this change our curriculum?
- How will this change MANE?
- How will this impact communities we serve?
- How will this affect the types of students we attract in the future?

### References

AACN. (2017). *American Association of Colleges of Nursing*. Retrieved from Strategic plan: <https://www.aacnnursing.org/About-AACN/AACN-Governance/Strategic-Plan>

Gurin, P., Dey, E., Hurtado, S., & Gurin, G. (2002). Diversity and Higher Education: Theory and Impact on Educational Outcomes. *Harvard Educational Review* 72(3), 330-367.

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Minnesota Board of Nursing. (2018). *Annual Nursing Education Program Report*. Retrieved from [https://mn.gov/boards/assets/Annual\\_Educ\\_Rpt\\_2017\\_tcm21-286546.pdf](https://mn.gov/boards/assets/Annual_Educ_Rpt_2017_tcm21-286546.pdf)

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Witzburg, R. A., & Sondheimer, H. M. (2013). Holistic Review: Shaping the medical profession one applicant at a time. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 1565-1567.

Appendix C

Presentation of DNP Project

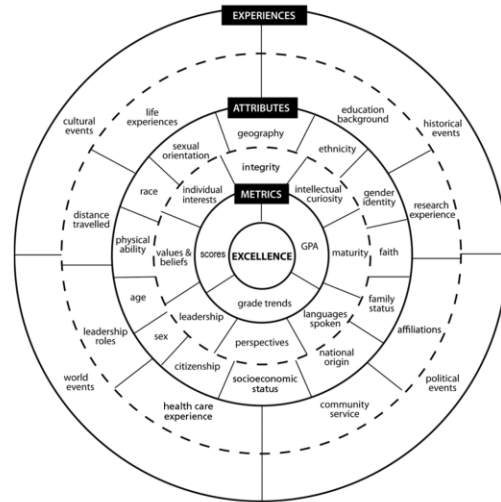
# Holistic Admissions


**Anna Kam**  
Augsburg University

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Nursing Practice

## Objectives:

- Discuss the creation of a holistic admissions process for a nursing education consortium in the upper Midwest
- Highlight the potential impact of this change in both the academic and professional areas of nursing





Category	Percentage	Sub-categories
Metrics	20%	GPA and ATI TEAS
Experiences	40%	Lived Experience, Service and Formal Education
Attributes	40%	Intellectual Curiosity/Informal Education/Certificates, Teamwork/Collaboration & Accountability and Beliefs and Values

## Holistic Admission

**Project Purpose:**

Create an admissions process that considers applicants attributes, experiences, and metrics to align with nursing values and the professional skills needed to provide high quality care.

## Background

- Several paths to becoming a registered nurse exist, however associate degree-granting programs are accessible and attract a diverse student population making them an ideal place to institute holistic admissions.
- This project created a holistic admissions process for a nursing education consortium in the upper Midwest, that includes six ADN programs.
- Ultimately, the goal is to graduate nurses who reflect the demographics of the population in Minnesota and the surrounding region.
- Increasing the number of diverse students allows for future nursing leadership that will come from the communities that are most affected by health disparities promoting new theoretical and practice ideas.



## Literature Support

### The College of Nursing at UIC:

- Significant increase in the number of Hispanic students it admitted
- NCLEX board scores **increased** in the years following the change in the admission process.

Scott, L. D., & Zerwic, J. (2015)

### Boston University School of Medicine:

- Medical students became culturally, linguistically, demographically, and racially more diverse
- **No significant change** in the GPA or Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) scores submitted by incoming students.

(Witzburg & Sondheimer, 2013)

### The Urban Universities for HEALTH survey:

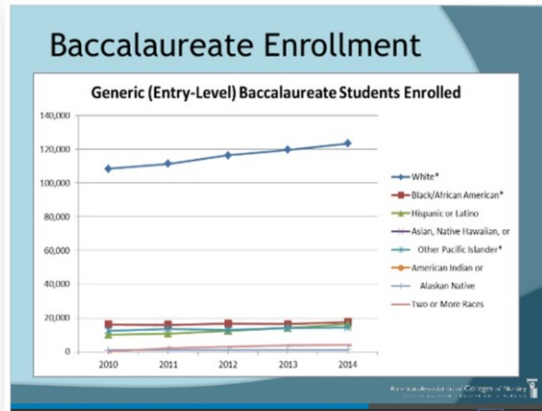
- Programs with holistic admissions have experienced an increase in student diversity
- **No decline** in student success outcomes have resulted from admission changes

(Urban Universities for HEALTH, 2004)

## Nursing Theorist & Concepts

- Martha Rogers' Theory of Unitary Human Beings contributes to the expansion of the idea of a holistic person.
- Rogers did not subscribe to the concept of a human being as the sum of his/her parts. Instead, Rogers described human beings as irreducible, with characteristics that are unique and complex.
- The Theory of Unitary Human Beings states that human behavior cannot be predicted which serves as a guide for schools of nursing in seeking to avoid an academic metrics only approach to admissions.
- Rogers advances the importance of viewing applicants to schools of nursing as "whole, irreducible human beings," and selecting students for admission based on characteristics and human traits that are lacking in the current nursing workforce.

Schools of nursing in the consortium aim to admit more diverse cohorts of students to reflect the changing demographics of the larger population and meet the linguistic and cultural needs of diverse communities



## Population of Interest



**Phase One:** Apply and receive a grant to fund the task of developing a holistic admissions workgroup and process

**Phase Two:** Workgroup identifying which attributes, experiences, and metrics to consider and design a rubric to measure

**Phase Three:** Develop a centralized online application and trial it with an admissions workgroup created to review applications

**Outcome:** Admit first cohort using holistic admission Spring of 2022

**StarID Authentication**

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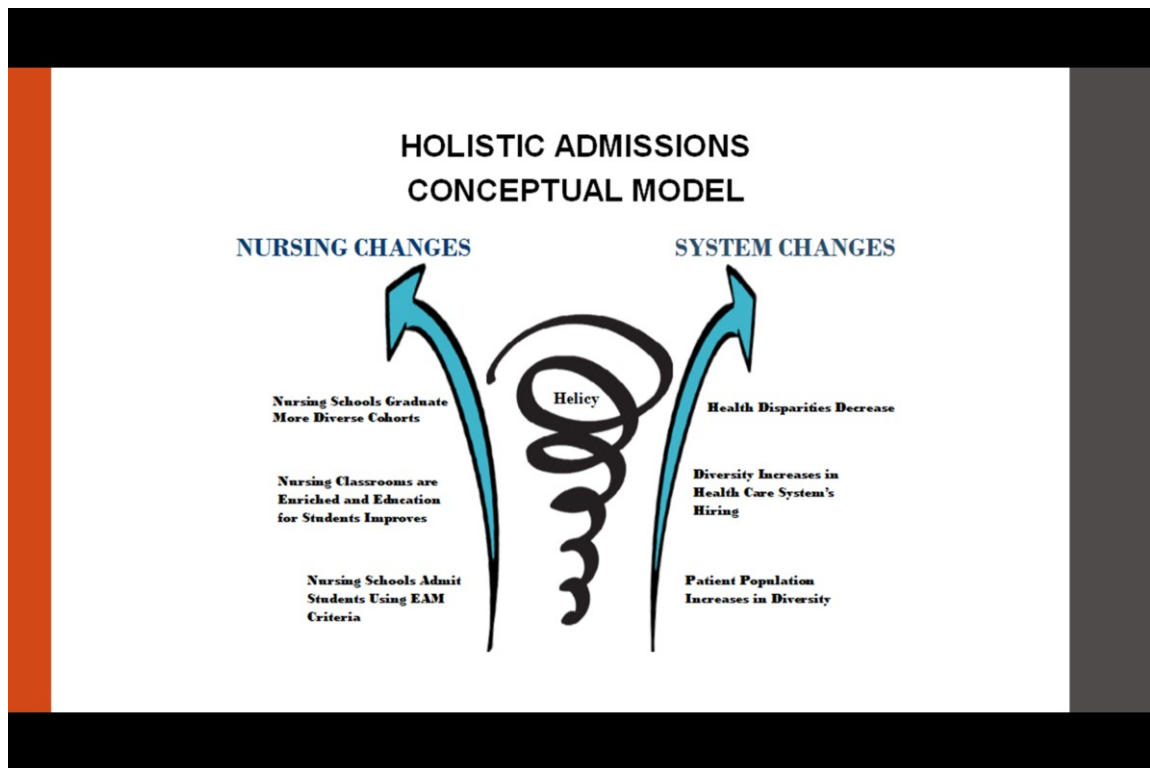
Current College:

StarID:

StarID Password:

## Project Description and Outcome





## AACN Essentials

- Essential II is represented in the scholarly approach to organizational and systems leadership focusing on nursing and health care goals to eliminate health disparities and promote patient safety and excellence in practice.
- Essential VI is reflected in the interprofessional collaboration that involved collaboration and input from advising, admission, nursing faculty, and administration.

## Next Steps



- Next steps include plans on how to assess the efficiency of the process and evaluate its outcomes
- Further changes are being contemplated to ensure curriculum development and retention efforts are also holistic
- As holistic cohorts enter the schools of nursing in the consortium, efforts will need to be made to adjust to the change in student demographics and experience levels.
- Plans are in place to provide support and education for faculty to prepare for these changes and some basic education on the holistic admissions process has already been completed

## References

- AACN. (2017). *American Association of Colleges of Nursing*. Retrieved from Strategic plan: <https://www.aacnnursing.org/About-AACN/AACN-Governance/Strategic-Plan>
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