



FACULTY CASE STUDY #1

Based on Experiences Shared During the AOTA 2020 Be Heard, We're Listening Sessions

BACKGROUND

Demographic information: Black faculty member advocating for male student of color; Applying to Occupational Therapy programs at Predominately White Institutions (PWI) versus Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU); Working OT student

Themes: Holistic admissions; Funding support for working students of color while in OT school

PRIMARY SCENARIO

Mia is a Black faculty member advocating for a student candidate of color applying to Predominately White Institutions (PWI). When applying to PWIs, the student confided in Mia that he felt like he was simply a statistic for the purpose of fulfilling a quota. When the student was not accepted, the director shared the admissions committee sought students who 'fit the culture' of the program. Mia was aware that the foundation of OT is to view take a holistic viewpoint of a person and not simply think of a person as a number. She felt that the PWI OT schools the student was applying to should practice what is preached and take a holistic perspective when reviewing applicants.

The candidate applied to a Historically Black College and University (HBCU), where he felt he had a voice and was given the opportunity to pursue an OT career.

Mia believes the OT field is about being holistic and students should be encouraged to advocate for themselves when applying to programs. She also feels that admission committees should undergo DEI training to develop intentional plans for holistic admissions and be sensitive to the needs of minority students who are often working 40 hours a week while supporting themselves and do not have generational wealth in which to depend.

CONNECTIONS

Themes Presented in Case Study

- Lack of diversity and representation.
 - Lack of admission to PWI.
- Experience of racialized trauma, stress, and fatigue.
 - If admitted to PWI minority student would just be a statistic.
- Anti-racism.
 - Lack of equitable opportunities for all on an individual or system-wide level and the need to take action against biases and racism toward students of color.

AT A GLANCE

Recommended Actions

University Admissions:

- Implement holistic policies and procedures for recruiting, hiring, and retention of a diverse faculty bias training for all faculty, staff, and students.
- PWI admission officers should not use students of color to fulfill a quota.

Student Support:

- Create pipelines for students of color to enter OT/OTA programs.
- Faculty should understand that students of color have their own set of challenges and should be met with compassion and equitable practices to support students' fundamental needs.
- Understand that some students of color must maintain employment to support themselves.

Career Services Support:

- Provide guidelines for working student, and resources to merge work in academia together.
- Develop college student work roles, department student work roles,
- Create partnerships with local or affiliated hospitals to create job placements for students.

Additional Consideration:

- When seeking the assistance of an internal staff subject matter expert (SME), consider compensating for DEI issues and training.

Analysis and Strategies

Now that you have reviewed the case, address the following questions:

- How was the person impacted?
- How does this case impact the field of occupational therapy?
- What are the implications for clients and stakeholders as a result of these experiences?
- Review the AOTA Toolkit Evidence-based resources.
- What strategies would you employ?