Integrating Experience and Attributes Criteria into Nursing Admissions at a Public University

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Background

Reflecting the national trend of excess numbers of qualified applications for available nursing program spaces,[1] California State University, Long Beach (CSULB) rejects hundreds of qualified applications each semester. A highly competitive pool and metrics driven admissions process at CSULB regularly yields cohorts of students with an average science pre-requisite grade point average (GPA) of >3.95 and an average first-time NCLEX pass rate of 97%.

However, the student body does not reflect the diversity of the community served by the University. Data from a 2020-21 report showed that while Black residents represented 14.4% of the Long Beach population, Black students were the least represented ethnic group in the College of Health & Human Services (CHHS) at 3.9%.[2]

Ethnic Group	Long Beach	CHHS Students
Hispanic	35.8%	44.2%
White	33.1%	15.5%
Black/African American	14.4%	3.9%
Asian (Non-Hispanic)	11.9%	24.2%
All other ethnicities	4.7%	16.1%

For nursing, the results were even lower. Black students represented only 1.9% of the nursing student population at CSULB from 2015-2020.[2]

Purpose

To increase nursing student diversity at a public university by adding experience and attributes criteria for admission

Proposed Admissions Criteria

	Current	Proposed
Experience	None	• Community service, healthcare experience, leadership (25% weight)
Attributes	None	• Casper* (situational judgment test; 25% weight) • Interview (25% weight); questions/rubric based on CHHS mission and core values (integrity, growth mindset, collaboration, innovation)
Metrics	• Pre-Req. GPA (50% weight) • TEAS Test (33%)	• Pre-Req. GPA (25% weight) • Eliminate TEAS
Other	Interview of top applicants to evaluate communication proficiency	Interview of top applicants to evaluate communication proficiency; rubric to evaluate attributes based on responses to interview question(s)

*Casper provides test takers with a series of video and written hypothetical real-world situations calling for open responses (video and written). Responses are evaluated by trained reviewers. Casper assesses attributes such as empathy, self-awareness, ethics, problem solving, and resilience.

Timeline

- **Fall 2023:** Faculty approval
- **Spring 2024:** submitted proposal to Chancellor's Office (CO) for approval; followed up with Casper representative and campus contracts office to secure vendor agreement
- **Summer 2024:** obtain final CO approval; publicize new criteria (website, stakeholders incl. high school/community college counselors)
- **Fall 2024:** Casper available for applicants; Fall 2025 application window opens with new criteria
- **Spring 2025:** implement new interview rubric and admissions process
- **Fall 2025:** welcome first cohort under holistic admissions

Future Work

- Increase intentionality of outreach to middle and high school students in diverse areas of Long Beach
- Evaluate demographic data to evaluate impact of new admissions process
- Collaborate with other CSU campuses to assist with transition to holistic admissions process

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Biography

Dr. Dyo serves as a professor and leader at California State University, Long Beach. Creating meaningful learning experiences and equipping students to have a significant impact on the lives of their patients and in their communities is her driving force when things get hard. She obtained her PhD in nursing from Azusa Pacific University where she explored the relationship of physical symptoms and spiritual transformation in cardiac patients. That experience solidified her belief in the integration of faith, science, and scholarship and has shaped her perspective on teaching, leadership, and the unique worth of every individual. Her current research focuses on moral distress, compassion fatigue, and faculty vulnerability.

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