

**School of Health Professions Enrollment Management Task Force:  
Strategic Planning for Student Enrollment in the MU School of Health Professions  
July 2017**

## **Summary**

In the Spring 2017 semester, the School of Health Professions convened a strategic enrollment management task force to identify current enrollment challenges and develop a School-wide framework to guide future enrollment goals for each of the School's 12 degree programs. The task force met throughout the spring semester, discussed opportunities and challenges in enrollment, gathered information about each academic program's strengths and challenges in meeting enrollment goals, and discussed strategies that will be effective for SHP's growth.

The task force included co-chairs Ruth Crozier and Barbara McLay and committee members Elizabeth Ball, Robin Bowman, Jill Diener, Cheri Ghan, Kyle Gibson, Megan Gill, Jessica Hosey, Jennifer Keely, Lea Ann Lowery and Stephanie Reid-Arndt. The task force met bi-weekly, and information provided in this report was collected in the meetings or through e-mail with the academic departments in the School.

## **Recommendations**

### Internal SHP Processes

- Get our 'story' out through faculty, students, alumni and staff, as well as the existing formal communication plan at SHP.
  - Articulate unique strengths of SHP programs, beyond high pass rates on licensure exams and employment rates, which are thought to be high across most institutions.
- Explore holistic admissions to re-examine potential barriers in admissions processes in SHP.
- Continue to develop our scholarship opportunities.
- Target retention efforts towards underrepresented students, particularly those who have historically not been as successful in gaining admission to professional programs in HP.
  - Collaborate with Academic Retention Services to work with 2<sup>nd</sup>-year CASE cohort students, to develop a professional network and meaningful academic plans.
- Find gaps in retention numbers, especially with underrepresented and Mizzou Online students; devise services that are better targeted to address these students' needs.
  - Work with Mizzou Online and MU Student Information Systems to access data.
- Develop a culture that is more considerate of transfer students.
  - Examine admissions policies that create barriers.
  - Develop programming that is aimed at engaging this population, e.g., co-enrollment and connection to a SHP faculty member, undergraduate research, mentoring with a transfer student.
  - Identify transfer student ambassadors and targeted outreach to their transfer institutions.

- Form an ongoing strategic enrollment committee, where progress towards the recommendations and collaboration across the school can be fostered.
  - A representative from each academic program, as well as representation from the offices of Student Services and Communication, should serve on this committee.

#### Campus-Level Collaboration and Support

- Improve collaboration with MU Admissions and Communications offices, which focus heavily on Journalism, Business and Engineering when recruiting and telling Mizzou student stories. Given SHP's growth and the size of the Health Science major, their focus appears to be on historical rather than current interest. In addition, coordinated collaborative (vs. independent/competitive) communication strategies across major campus divisions – MarCom, Admissions/Enrollment Management, Advancement, Extension and the divisions – is required to strategically engage prospective students and their families/communities.
- Collaborate with Academic Retention Services to identify cohorts of underrepresented students interested in SHP programs, specifically with the CASE cohort or other cohorts identified by ARS, for sophomore programming.
- Better classroom space and times for Health Science courses, given enrollment in the major and demand for the courses.

#### Collaboration and Support

- Recruit at HBCU's and regional colleges to develop a more robust pipeline and enhance enrollment from underrepresented populations.
  - Collaboration across professional programs will be an effective strategy, in addition to collaboration with the Office of Student Services, MU Admissions and other colleges and universities.
  - Attend more community college fairs.
  - Establish a presence for recruiting and early advising at Moberly Area Community College – Columbia campus.
  - MACC offers a Health Science Associate's degree; create an articulation plan for students who wish to pursue a path to degree completion.

#### **Strengths**

- The strong sense of community and support for students is one of the consistent strengths for SHP.
- The School of Health Professions offers excellent clinical and didactic instruction. Students engage with faculty and each other in a supportive, service-oriented environment.
- Many of the SHP programs are smaller than their peers, and some offer more affordable tuition. Even compared to institutions at which the tuition is lower, SHP professional programs offer instructional and clinical opportunities that translate to better-prepared graduates.

- SHP students, faculty and alumni provide services that impact every community in Missouri. The engagement council is actively working on collaborating and promoting these services.
- The Health Science degree, both residential and online, offers flexible and customizable learning formats for a wide range of students. The major currently has more than 1,950 students enrolled, and the online component has been steadily growing.
- The SHP Office of Recruitment is actively engaged in comprehensive recruitment practices, including building relationships with science teachers, counselors and high schools throughout the State as well as in Texas, Illinois, and Minnesota. In addition, SHP has a student ambassador team, which actively engages in outreach and communication, meetings and recruitment events for prospective students.
- The SHP Office of Student Services is engaged in outreach and communication to help students understand degree requirements and intervene when they may be at risk for not graduating. In addition, the professional programs are actively engaged in retention efforts, and students who start a professional program are at very low risk for attrition.

### **Opportunities**

- Our students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors and benefactors of SHP services can tell our stories in ways that personalize the impact of SHP and our programs.
  - The SHP Office of Communication actively measures the distribution and reach of SHP stories.
- Increasing awareness of, and utilizing, holistic admissions strategies within SHP professional programs; most academic programs indicate that a more diverse student population is an enrollment priority.
- Recruitment at community colleges, HBCUs, large hospital systems, military and collaborations with Mizzou Online marketing team for the online programs.
- Developing a better pipeline that encourages undergraduate students from underrepresented backgrounds to develop relationships with faculty in professional programs.

### **Challenges**

- Campus communication and recruitment strategies are overwhelmingly geared towards high school admissions. Mizzou will need to change its recruitment strategies given the number of high school students currently graduating.
- Scholarships and lack of financial aid can hamper recruitment efforts for academically high achieving students as well as students from some underrepresented backgrounds. Our location on campus and our facilities have not kept up with School growth. Students in Health Sciences have no 'space' in Lewis and Clark Halls.

## **Appendices**

- Summary of academic program recruitment goals, challenges and strengths.
- Summary of recruitment and retention activities, and scholarships.