

Reflecting The Communities That We Serve: Embracing Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives In Occupational Therapy Education

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Background

- There is a current lack of diversity seen in OT classrooms across the country.
- It is paramount we create a diverse occupational therapy student body in order to meet the needs of the diverse communities we serve.
- Students, educators, and therapists, need to develop cultural reflexivity, humility and safety when serving patients of various background (Taff & Blash, 2017).
- Through establishing diversity and inclusion initiatives within OT education we can increase awareness and provide education that will radically shape the OT workforce in coming years.
- Efforts to diversify OT programs is key to progressing as a profession, and reflecting the populations we serve (Taylor, 2007); thus achieving AOTA's vision for 2025.

“Occupational therapy maximizes health, well-being and quality of life **for all people, populations, and communities** through effective solutions that facilitate participation in everyday living” (Vision 2025, 2017).

Student Initiatives: Thomas Jefferson University

The Process:

1. Planning events and building connections
2. Advocating for community involvement
3. Collaborating with faculty to improve curriculum

Supports:

- Faculty members
- COTAD
- Fellow classmates
- TJU Diversity and Inclusion Action Council & Vice-Provost

Barriers:

- Lack of student interest & involvement
- Lack of predecessor
- Limited guidelines to start novel program

Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA) Diversity & Inclusion

JeffLGBTQ Student Leadership

Diversity & Inclusion Initiatives

University Level:

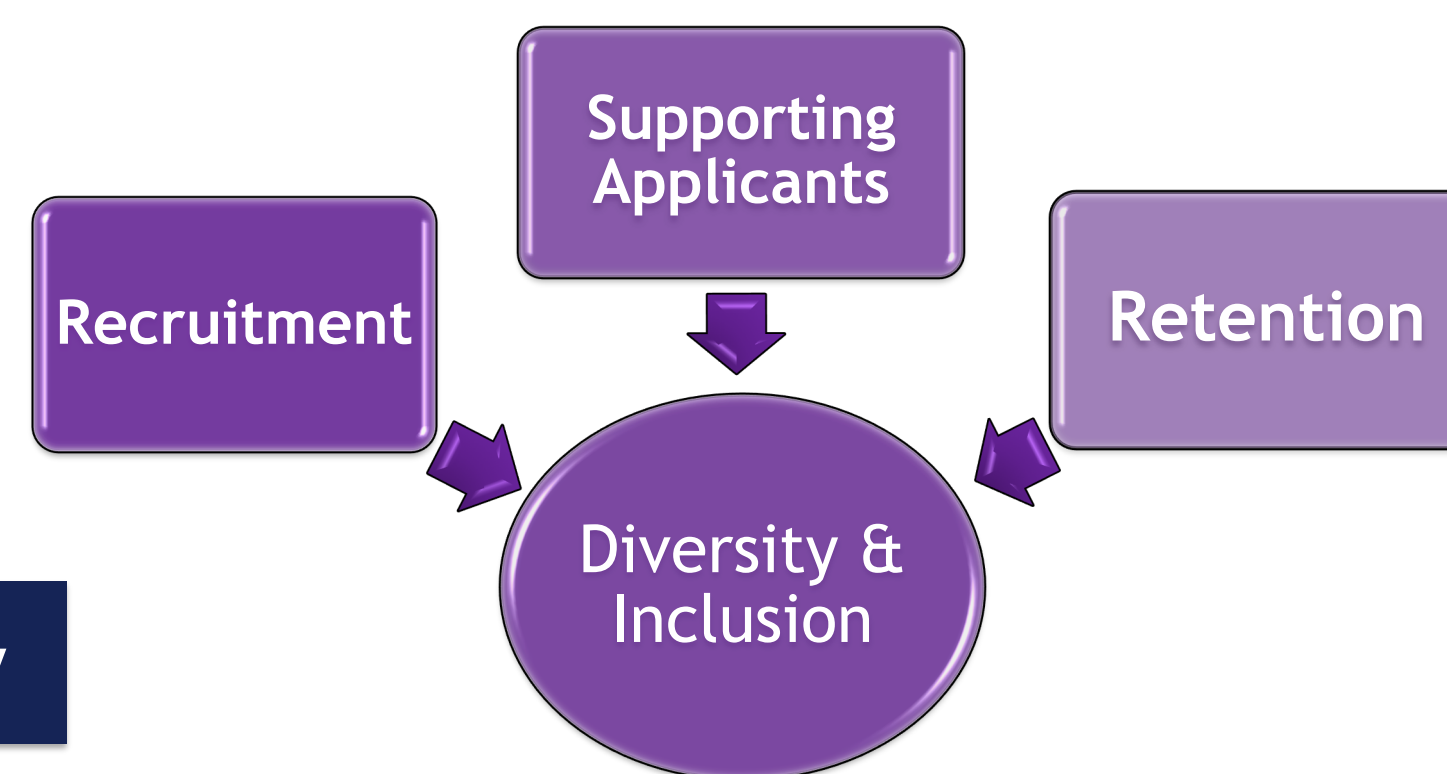
- Saturday Academy
- Future Health Professions
- Jefferson Pipeline for Youth to Healthcare Professional
- Summer Training and Enrichment Program for Underrepresented Person's- STEP-UP

College Level:

- OT-STEP-UP
- Janice P. Burke Scholarship

Student Level:

- SOTA-Diversity & Inclusion Chair (COTAD liaison)
- JeffLGBTQ programs & curriculum



Events:

- Proverbs Cards Activity: Participants discover that people with different backgrounds share similar beliefs and values
- Culture Café: Unmasking stereotypes and biases
- Pot-luck

Events:

- Trans Health 1010
- Team Based Learning: patient interviewing skills
- Advocacy: Pride Parade
- HRC online LGBTQ curriculum
- Transgender speaker
- Transgender standardized patient encounter



OT STEP-UP Program

Occupational Therapy Summer Training and Enrichment Program
➤ A 4 -month on campus program that offers academic enrichment and application preparation to first generation college students and underrepresented minorities.

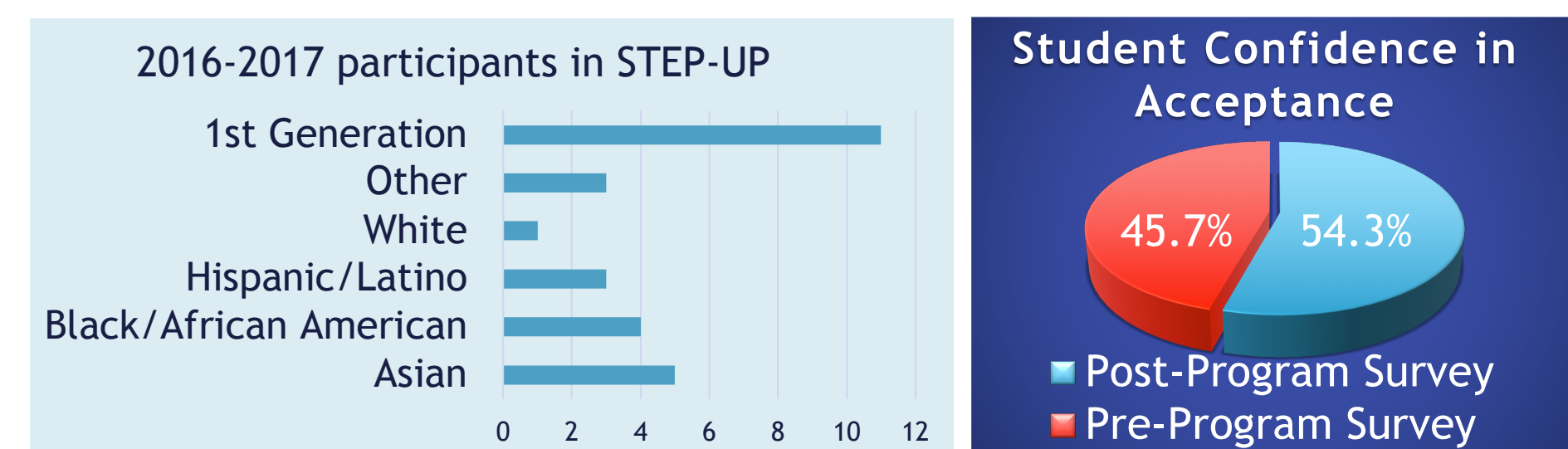
Sample curriculum

- Clinical experience shadowing OT's
- GRE workshops
- Resume writing and interview preparation
- Faculty mentoring
- Faculty and current student involvement throughout program

OT STEP-UP Outcomes



Participant demographics and self-reported confidence levels collected from de-identified pre-and-post STEP-UP program surveys.



References

- American Occupational Therapy Association. (2017). Vision 2025. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 71, 7103420010. <https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2017.713002>
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- Taylor, M. C. (2007). The Casson Memorial Lecture 2007: Diversity amongst Occupational Therapists – Rhetoric or Reality? *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 70(7), 276-283. doi:10.1177/030802260707000702