

Special Endeavors: Aboriginal Programs

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Why is aboriginal enrollment in Health Sciences an issue?

- Population statistics
- Low health status
- Low representation in medicine student body
- public funded universities
- concept of " just society"

International Issue?

- Canada
- USA
- Australia
- Northern Scandinavia

Responses from around the World

- Recruitment and Mentoring programs
- Access programs
- Seats set aside
- Different admissions processes

Within Health Sciences Programs

- Personal academic and cultural support for students
- Pathway programs
- Development of curriculum and clinical placements
- Faculty and student sensitization

Admissions Processes

- Decrease focus on academic performance
- Decrease focus on nationally applied exams (UMAT, MCAT)
- Increase culturally appropriate assessment of non-academic qualities
- Increase participation of aboriginal students/faculty/people on selection committees

At UBC Faculty of Medicine

- History to date
- New aboriginal admissions policy
- Development process

Policy

- Target enrollment of 5% of class size
- Recruitment and communication strategy
- Access to special consideration for MCAT results and academic scores
- Welcome and support by the First Nations community on campus

Decision-making

- Evaluation including interview completed by a subcommittee
- Recommendations for acceptance or deferred acceptance to be made by this committee
- Advisory Board of Elders

Problems

- A system built on one culture responding to a different culture in its processes
- Historical issues relating to education
- Building trust after distrust: reconciliation

What can we learn?

- Similar issues of access for other students?
- Does excellence look different in different populations?
 - Rural
 - Ethnic
 - Low socio-economic background