



FACULTY CASE STUDY #3

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

BACKGROUND

Demographic information: White faculty member; academic fieldwork coordinator; two years in academia

Themes: Retaining students of color; Implicit biases; Communication with students of color to learn their needs and challenges

PRIMARY SCENARIO

Kelly has been in academia for almost 3 years as an academic fieldwork coordinator. Her academic institution has a difficult time retaining students of color. Kelly started to examine why the university could not retain students of color in the program.

When she spoke with her coworker, Chun, who is an Asian American woman, Kelly started to figure it out. Kelly asked the question about implicit bias to which Chun replied, "Yes, that is a part of the problem." She shared her own experiences such as being overlooked to represent the department on various committees. Kelly started to reflect on her own implicit biases as the academic fieldwork coordinator. Once she spoke with Chun, she took a hard look at herself to understand her own implicit bias and how they manifest in her role as an academic fieldwork coordinator.

She began with learning how she could communicate better with students of color, encourage responsiveness, and understand their perspectives. Kelly admits it took her a long time to figure out the nature of the problem.

CONNECTIONS

Themes Presented in Case Study

- Lack of diversity and representation
 - Retention of students of color
- Experience of racialized trauma, stress, and fatigue
 - Implicit bias

AT A GLANCE

Recommended Actions

Faculty:

- Begin with yourself to identify and evaluate your own implicit biases.
- Recognize that we all have implicit biases.
- Make an effort to understand students of color and their unique needs and challenges.
- Open lines of communication for honest dialogue.
- Create a safe space to have conversations around anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Create a pipeline for fieldwork clinical instructors of color for our students.
- Create protocols and procedures for students to safely discuss and report grievances related to incidents of racism while on fieldwork.

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, review the AOTA DEI Toolkit evidence-based resources and 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?
- What strategies would you employ?



I started to reflect on my own implicit bias as the academic field coordinator.