



Committed to Our Future: The 2017 Health Professions HEED Awards

by *Alexandra Vollman* 

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With a responsibility to prepare the next generation of healthcare providers, health professions schools are tasked with not only ensuring that individuals of all backgrounds and identities have access to health professions programs and careers, but that graduates are prepared to provide equitable, culturally competent care to all patient populations. The ability of these schools to deliver on this commitment is critical to their continued success — and that of their students — as well as to maintaining our nation's health and its reputation as a leader in medical education and research.

At *INSIGHT Into Diversity*, we know that this work requires a comprehensive and strategic approach. Ensuring a diverse, equitable, and inclusive campus for all and culturally competent, knowledgeable care for patients involves a commitment to members of the campus and surrounding community, the investment of resources, continuous dialogue and education, awareness of and attention to the campus climate, and opportunities for celebrating differences.

This year, we are pleased to announce that 24 health professions schools have demonstrated this commitment and are being awarded the *INSIGHT Into Diversity* Health Professions Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award for their efforts.

Now in its second year, the Health Professions HEED Award recognizes U.S. medical, dental, pharmacy, osteopathic, nursing, veterinary, and allied health schools as well as medical centers that demonstrate an outstanding commitment to diversity and inclusion on their campuses. Schools are evaluated through a variety of lenses, and recipients proactively work to ensure the representation and inclusion of people of all backgrounds and circumstances, including those of different races, ethnicities, religions, nationalities, abilities, veteran statuses, socioeconomic statuses, sexual orientations, and gender identities.

Each facing distinct challenges in their area of healthcare, 2017 Health Professions HEED Award institutions have developed unique and thoughtful approaches to addressing the needs of their diverse constituents. Through the creation of a range of programs, services, scholarships, events, forums, centers, student and faculty groups, trainings, and policies — and with support from senior leaders — these schools provide spaces that foster the academic, professional, social, cultural, and personal lives of every member of their campus communities.



A.T. Still University of Health Sciences



Florida State University College of Medicine



The Ohio State University College of Nursing

In an effort to ensure a robust pipeline of future healthcare professionals, many of these institutions offer pipeline programs targeted at diverse and underrepresented groups. Students in elementary school through college gain exposure to medical fields, get hands-on research experience, engage with faculty and graduate students, and learn about the graduate school admissions process through a range of innovative programs.

The health of the community is also important to these institutions. Via educational workshops, health screenings, and service work, they partner with local neighborhoods and organizations to improve health literacy and ensure the well-being of all members of their communities, particularly those who are underserved.

Strategic initiatives, policies, diversity committees, campaigns, and dialogues have informed many of these schools' efforts around improving equity and inclusion on their campuses and in health professions in general. Students, faculty, staff, and administrators collaborate to not only discuss issues of diversity, social justice, bias, and discrimination in order to increase understanding, but to also take action to address these critical areas.

All of these efforts and more are what set Health Professions HEED Award institutions apart. Their commitment to preparing the next generation of diverse, culturally competent healthcare providers is witnessed by the ways in which they invest in members of their campus communities. By not taking their responsibility to their students and our nation's future lightly, these 24 schools have proven themselves worthy of national recognition. ●

Alexandra Vollman is the editor of *INSIGHT Into Diversity*.

View a PDF of the 2017 Health Professions HEED Award section from our December issue.

See the 2017 Health Professions HEED Award recipients.



University of Tennessee Health Science Center
College of Pharmacy



Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai