

New Beginnings: Launching a Program to Empower and Diversify the Next Generation of Pre-Dental Students

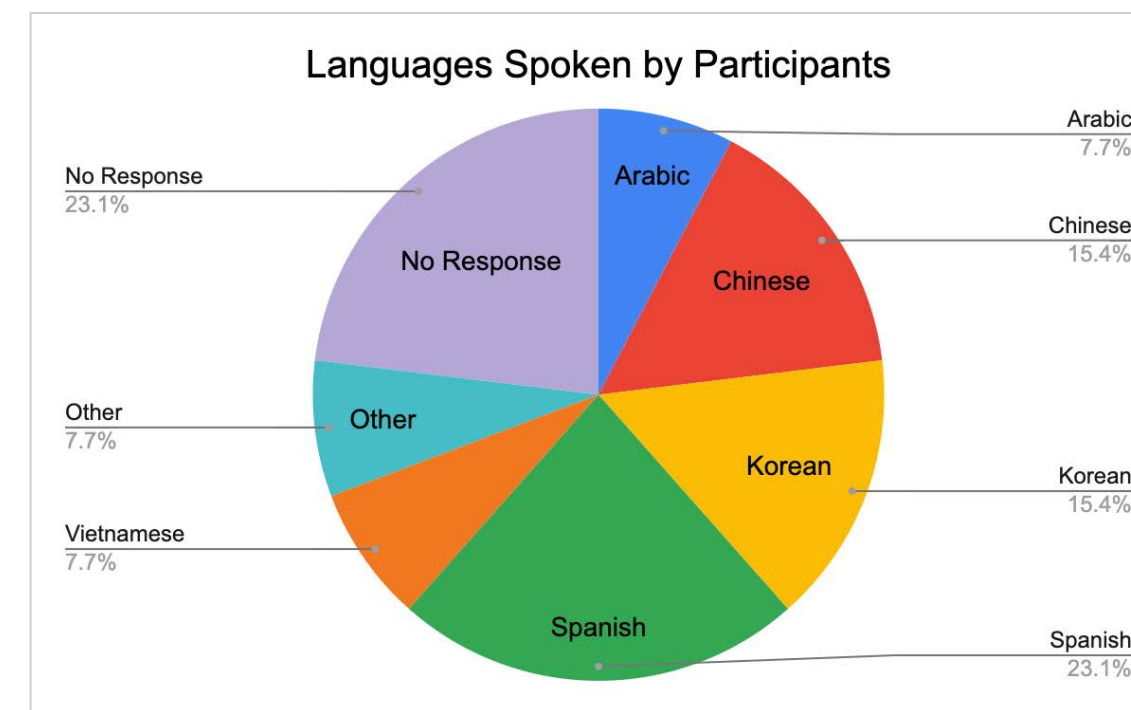
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OBJECTIVE

Career pathway-based instruction in high-school is becoming increasingly common, yet access to pre-dental education for high school students remains limited primarily to shadowing and familial experience.¹ This program introduced a diverse group of high-schoolers to the scope of opportunities in dentistry through personalized instruction and clinical activities developed by an interdisciplinary team of faculty, staff, and dental students. The goals of this program were to provide high school students from various backgrounds opportunities to explore a career in dentistry that they may not have otherwise had, and to advance diversity and inclusion amongst future dental school applicants.

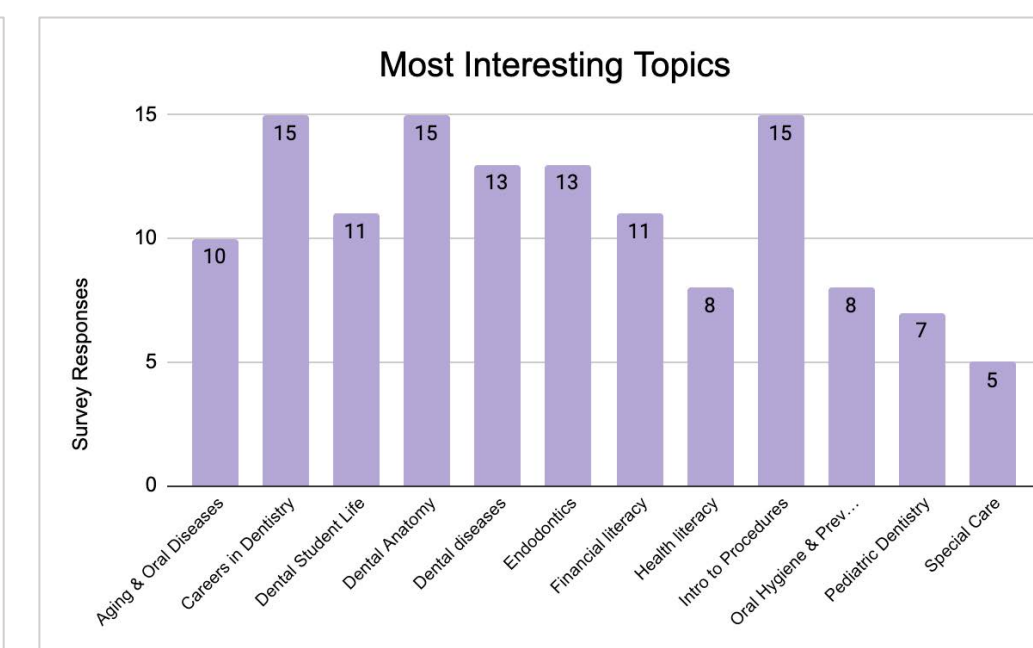
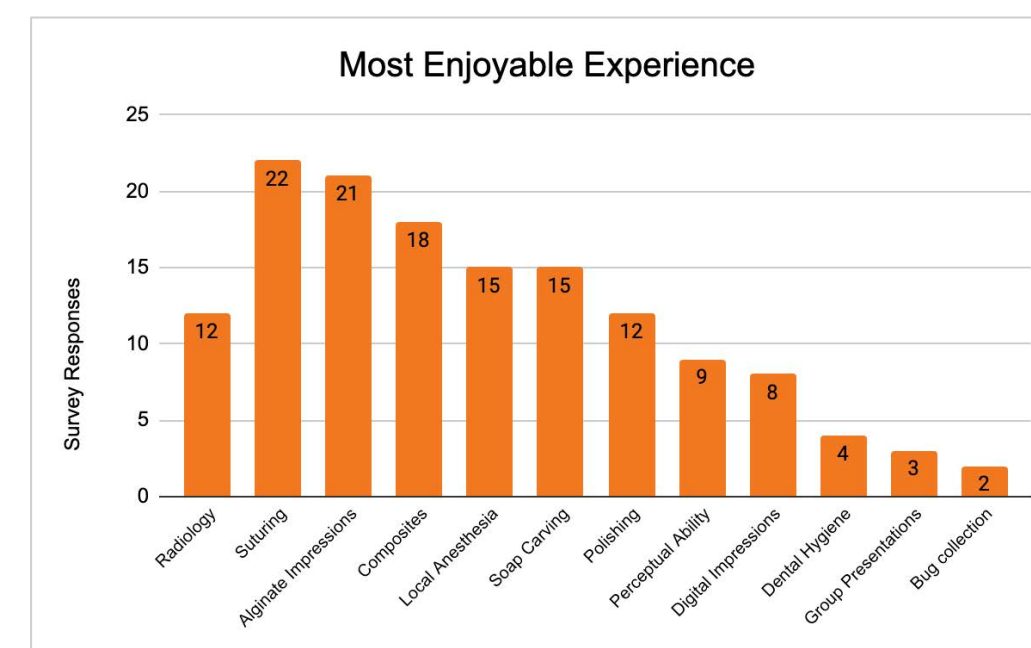
METHODS

IRB review set status as exempt. High-school students from across the country enrolled in a two-week pre-dental program of foundational presentations and activities. Participants (n=40) engaged in team-building exercises, hands-on clinical simulations, health presentations, and interactive workshops to expose them to endless opportunities in dentistry. Multiple surveys were administered to participants, which were analyzed for demographics and student experience.



RESULTS

12 students (30% of participants) received scholarships through local school district initiatives. Of the demographic survey respondents (n=13), 23% spoke Spanish, %15 Chinese, 15% Korean, 8% Arabic, and 8% Vietnamese. 30% indicated that they were the first in their immediate family to have interest in dentistry. Respondents to the second survey (n=27) indicated that their most enjoyable experience through this program were activities led by dental students. Suturing activity (81%), followed by alginate impressions (77%) were the most enjoyed hands-on experiences. Interesting topics that were presented in lecture format were Careers in Dentistry (55%), Intro to Dental Procedures (55%), and Dental Anatomy (55%) by both faculty and dental students.



CONCLUSION

As a result of this program, high-school students from various backgrounds were introduced to the field of dentistry and inspired to pursue a dental career. Dental students developed a framework for continuing the program for future years, creating more opportunities for interprofessional education and collaboration with faculty. Ultimately, this inaugural program expanded access to pre-dental education by encouraging the next generation of pre-dental students to explore dentistry through critical thinking, problem solving, and evidence based dentistry while increasing diversity in the dental education pathway. Additionally, at least 60% of potentially rising seniors in the SHSI applied to UOP's pre-dental program after this experience.*

*Some students indicated their grade at the time of the application and others their rising grade.

REFERENCES & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- American Dental Education Association. (November 2018). ADEA Survey of Dental School Seniors, 2018 Graduating Class Tables Report. Washington, D.C.

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OKU Sutro Excellence Day Project Cover Sheet

Project Title

Full name(s) and class year(s) of all project collaborators

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Project Category

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