The Status of Service Learning in Dental Education

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Response Rate

- 69% Responders
- 31% Non-Responders
Prevalence of Community-based Clinical Education: 90%
Prevalence of Community-based Non-Clinical Education: 82%
Evaluation of Students’ Non-Clinical Activities

- Attendence ONLY: 13%
- Attendence 16%
- N/A 18%
- Other 5%
- Journal 5%
- Oral 8%
- Paper 21%
- No Grade 14%
- Other 5%
- N/A 18%
Faculty’s Self-Reported Familiarity with Service-Learning

- 19% Poor
- 19% Fair
- 19% Good
- 33% Very Good
- 10% Excellent
Non-Clinical Activities that are considered to be service-learning

- 60% of respondents indicated 26-50% of their non-clinical activities are service-learning.
- 23% indicated 51-75%.
- 13% indicated 1-25%.
- 4% indicated 76-100%.
- 4% indicated 0%.
Clinical Activities that are considered to be service learning
Barriers to SL Implementation
Pipeline, Profession & Practice: Community-Based Dental Education

- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Initiative

- Designed to help increase access to dental care for underserved populations

- Initially 10 dental schools chosen

- 5 year awards of $1.3 Million
RWJF Requirements

- Establish community-based education programs
- Revise didactic and clinical curricula to integrate community-based practice experiences into educational programs
- Implement programs to increase minority recruitment and retention of underrepresented minority and low-income students
New England Dental Access Project (NEDAP)

Principal Investigator: Spencer N. Frankl
Project Director: Ana Karina Mascarenhas
Co Director: Michelle M. Henshaw
A. Enhance community-based clinical education programs that provide care to underserved populations in New England

B. Develop, implement, and monitor programs to increase recruitment and retention of underrepresented minority and low-income students
Existing Externship Program

- Focus on clinical dentistry
- Students spend 6 weeks providing clinical care in community health centers
- Majority of sites located in Greater Boston area
Enhanced Externship Program

- Students spend 10 weeks providing clinical care in community health centers
- More balanced focus between clinical dentistry and needs of the community
  - Case Presentation
  - Public Health Project
Public Health Project: Service Learning in a clinical rotation

- Clinical rotation sites suggested at least 3 possible projects that would help address an unmet community need
- Students chose a topic and worked together with external and internal faculty
- Students wrote a paper reflecting on the project and how it impacted their professionalism, confidence, skills, career goals, etc.
- Students had to propose 2 other projects that would be beneficial to the community and suitable for future students
Public Health Project:  
Student Outcomes

- Greater understanding of the community’s needs and how the community health center functions
- Enhanced communication skills
- Enhanced leadership and organizational skills
- Greater sense of professionalism
Overall Student Outcomes

- Enhanced confidence in dental skills
- Increased motivation to learn
- Increased commitment to public health
- More aware of oral health disparities and lack of access for disadvantaged populations
- Better prepared to treat a wider range of dental disease and patient populations