



Pre-Dental Summer Enrichment Program for American Indian/Alaska Native Students

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Disparities in oral health have been linked to a lack of diversity in the dental professions. There have been few gains in dental school enrollment of American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) students. Creighton University School of Dentistry offers the only pre-dental summer enrichment program for AI/AN undergraduate students to introduce them to a dental career.

Course Description

The program was offered for 3 consecutive summers (2009-2011) with a total of 16 students. The four-week program includes lectures, hands-on labs, community engagement and shadowing in the dental school.

Course Results

Students complete a questionnaire to measure interest and understanding of dentistry as well as intent to apply to dental school. Results of the five-point likert-scale questionnaire (with 5 being the highest) are as follows:

The Summer Enrichment Program ...	Score
provided me with a better understanding of dentistry	5.0
provided me with a better understanding of the dental school admissions process	5.0
gave me certainty that I will apply to Creighton dental school	5.0
provided an environment that was open, encouraging and respectful of me as a person	4.8
gave me certainty that I will apply to dental school	4.8
was respectful of my Native American heritage.	4.7
provided me with a better understanding of what dental school will be like	4.7



Conclusions

A summer enrichment program specifically targeting undergraduate AI/AN student with strong tribal and cultural affiliation was effective in providing a better understanding of dentistry, knowledge of the dental school admissions process and increased intention to apply to dental school.

Student Comments

“It motivates me greatly to hear from those who have gone through the process of becoming a dentist.”

This project was funded in part by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to improving health and health care for all Americans

Student Comments

“Getting to know all the faculty and students was great and to hear their personal stories on their journey to becoming a dentists.”

“It was nice to see dental students doing fillings in real life and to try it for ourselves in lab. It kinda gives you a feeling that you are not there to just watch but to participate and see what it would be like to be a dental student.”



Sponsored by the Creighton University Jesuit Community, in association with the Deglman Center for Ignatian Spirituality.