



Bridges to Research Collaboration: A Health Sciences and Medicine Endeavor

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Purpose

- Medical students are increasingly required to complete research projects (MSR's).
- Students may struggle to find research mentors and settle for projects unrelated to future career goals.
- Penn State College of Medicine (COM) Hershey Campus is affiliated with a large academic medical center.
- The regional University Park Campus (UPC), still establishing its research program, is affiliated with a smaller community hospital.
- **AIM:** Bring together Penn State (PSU) health sciences researchers with UPC students to increase collaborations and assist them in selecting meaningful MSR's.

Methods

- A PSU Nutritional Sciences doctoral student and a faculty member from the Penn State COM planned two research luncheons over 2 years.
- PSU health sciences researchers and UPC students were invited.
- Faculty each gave 3-5 minute overviews of their research.
- UP students were encouraged to seek out those whose research was of interest.
- Data presented are from second luncheon.

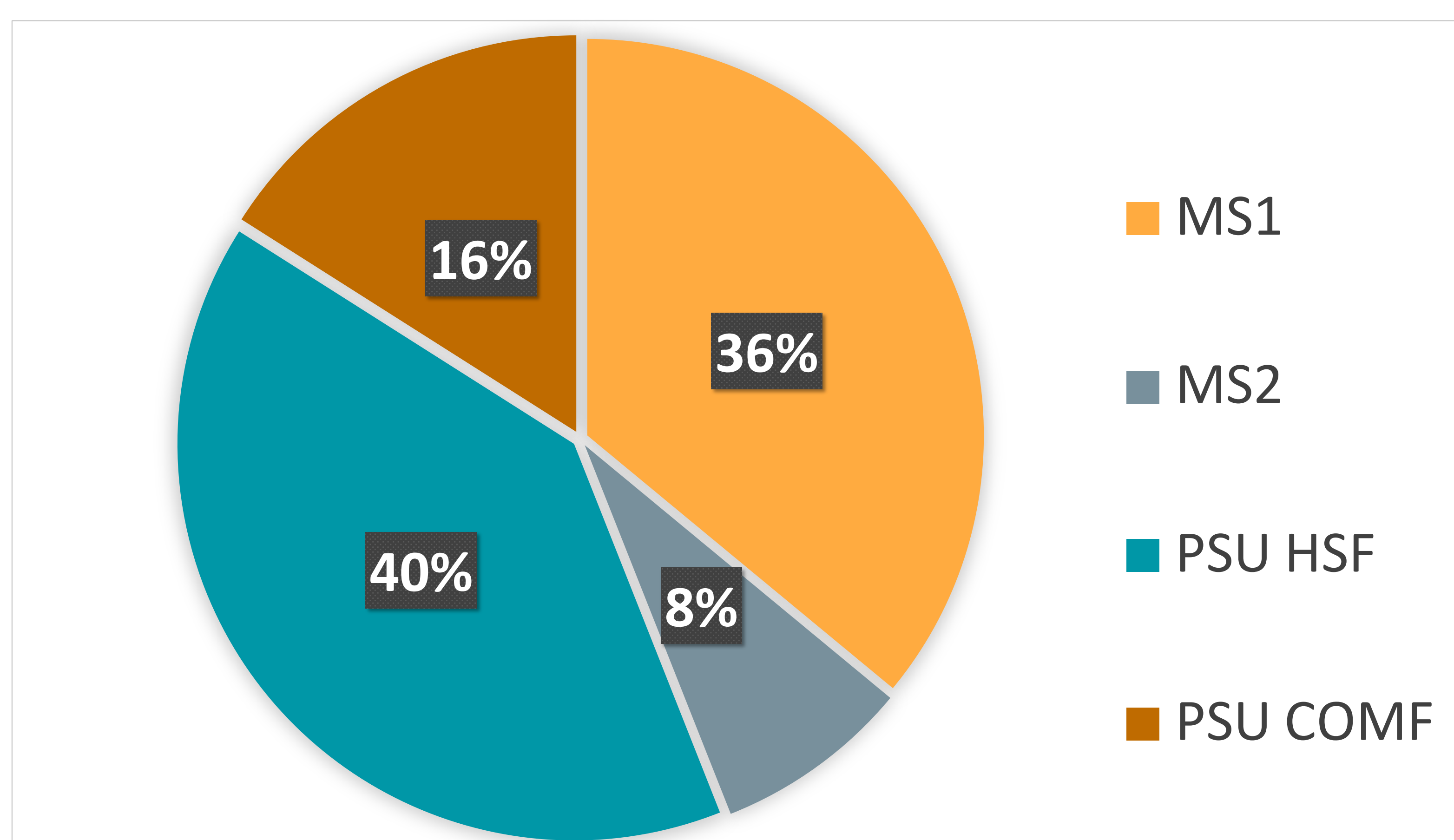
Results

- 11 medical students (9 MS 1 and 2 MS2), 10 researchers from the PSU College of Health and Human Development (HHD) and an assistant dean and 4 COM faculty members.
- HHD Faculty represented **Nutritional Sciences, Kinesiology, Physiology, Biobehavioral Health, Health Policy and Administration departments.**

•Post-lunch surveys:

- Two medical students found projects and 1 medical student reported making a connection that may lead to collaboration.
- Three faculty attendees identified collaborators and 1 made a connection that may lead to collaboration.
- **Comments:** Requests for a longer event next year to allow more discussion.

Figure 1: Breakdown of Luncheon Attendees



N=25 attendees; MS1= year 1 medical students, MS2= year 2 medical students, PSU HSF= Penn State Health Sciences Faculty, PSU COMF= Penn State College of Medicine Faculty

Conclusions

- Event brought together HHD faculty from 5 departments with collaborators from the COM for local/ international health research projects.
- COM faculty made HHD faculty aware of a website where they may post research projects open to medical students.
- **First luncheon:** 2 medical students matched with research mentors in Nutritional Sciences and Kinesiology departments.
- A manuscript on "Diet Assessment in Clinical Practice" resulting from one collaboration is currently under review at a scholarly journal.
- **Second luncheon:** 3 research matches made; connections made for 2 potential collaborations.
- This program required minimal resources.

Future directions

- Make this luncheon an annual program.
- Encourage HHD faculty to regularly update their research openings on COM website.
- Consider standing research placements for medical students to increase continuity.
- Plan grand rounds and colloquia that involve speakers from HHD and other PSU departments with the COM to build connections.