

Variation and Challenges in Pre-Health Advising Resources in California's Institutions

Manuel Tapia, MD MPH

UCSF Latinx Center of Excellence

California Health Professionals Consortium (CHPC)

February 22nd, 2023



University of California
San Francisco

Healthforce
Center at UCSF



Disclosures

Funded by the

California Health Care Foundation (CHCF)

HRSA Latinx Center of Excellence (LCOE) Grant

No other disclosures

Background

- The physician workforce in California is **not representative** of the state's diverse population
 - Recent data show 3% of practicing physicians were Black/African American and 6% were Latinx ₁
- CA's public institutions produce relatively **low numbers of applicants/matriculants** to medical school.
 - In 2019, CSUs provided 273 *total* applicants to medical school from 107,319 graduates ₂
 - In 2022, UCs provided 4196 *total* applicants to medical school from 62,906 graduates ₃
- Advising and mentorship can provide **critical support** for prospective applicants, especially those who are **underrepresented (UIM)**

1) CHCF, 2020
2) UCSF LCOE 2021
3) AAMC, 2022

Objectives

- Quantify disparities in access to pre-medical advisors across type of CA institutions (CSU, UC)
- Gather advisor's perspectives on challenges to pre-health advising on their campus
- Investigate advisor perspective on advising UIM students

Mixed Methods

- **Interviewed pre-health advisors** from 9/9 UCs, 18/23 CSUs and 6 selected private universities
 - Private selectivity rates: <5% (1), 10 – 15% (2), 50 – 55% (2), 70 – 75% (1)
- Conducted 60-minute interviews over Zoom between June, 2022 – October, 2022
- Qualitative analysis: used Grounded Theory Approach to analyze emerging themes regarding perceived challenges and successes
- Quantitative analysis: calculated graduates per estimated pre-health advisor FTE

Results

On average, CSU campuses had **5.4** times more graduates per advisor than UC campuses, and **13.7** times more graduates per advisor than private colleges

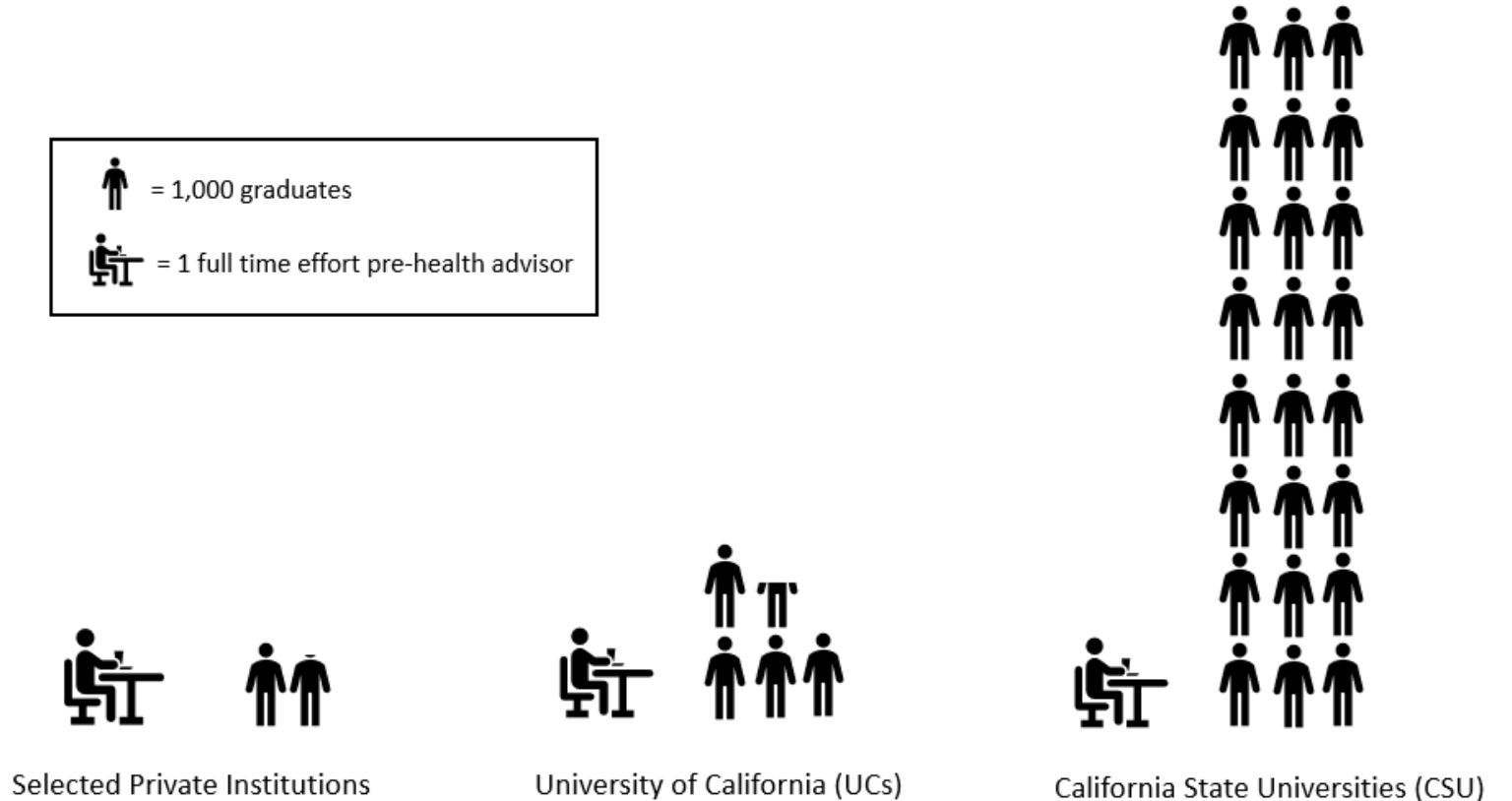
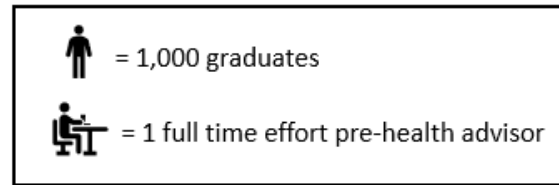
Mean graduates per FTE of pre-health advisor:

CSU: 24,620

UC: 4,526

Privates: 1,749

Graduates Per Full Time Effort Pre-health Advisor, California's Higher Ed Institutions



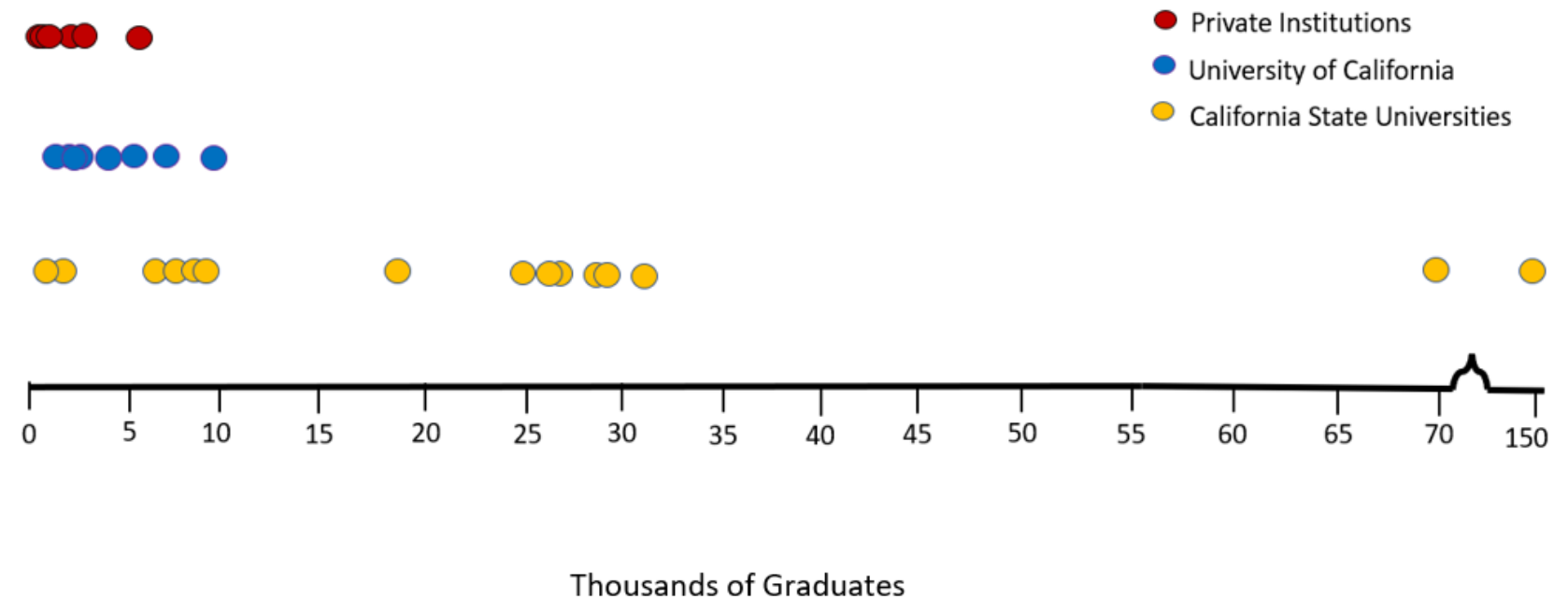
Variation within public university systems

- We found large variations in availability of pre-health advising within both the UC and CSU systems

- CSU had the greatest variation across campuses

- Range of advising availability:
 - CSU: 1: 1,059 – 1: 150,520
 - UC: 1: 1,912 – 1: 10,920
 - Privates: 1: 722 – 1: 5,300

Figure 1: Thousands of Graduates Per Pre-Health Advisor, Cal State University, University of California, and Select Private Institutions 2020



Summary of Advisor Perspectives

- Individual advisor challenges
- Student challenges
- Structural challenges

Advisor Challenges

- Advisor capacity
- Turnover
- Lack of training

Advisors are thrown into this role without training. We train each other the best way possible, but we don't have an official training process. When I first started, I was handed a catalog, and I was told to read it. That was my training and then you really can't learn everything out of the catalog because every situation, every student is so different. Their needs are so different.

- CSU Campus advisor

Advisor perspectives on student challenges

- Reaching students early in education path
- Student access to clinical experiences
- UIM students face complex and disproportionate barriers

“The major hurdle that students say that holds them back is gaining real-world experience: shadowing. Especially when you're dealing with populations of minorities or [first-generation students], they don't have connections, right? They don't have family members that are physicians. They don't have close acquaintances that they could ‘Go work with so-and-so over the summer,’ and they're really at a loss in terms of how to gain experience.”

- CSU Campus advisor

Advisor Perspectives on Structural Challenges

- Competing priorities for advising
eg 4-year graduation vs
manageable course load
- Lack of coordination between
community college and 4-year
- Insufficient institutional
investment in advising

“I’m going to be honest. I don’t believe that the administration puts enough value and resources into pre-health advising, either because they have bigger fish to fry and bigger problems, or because they don’t think it’s important.”

- CSU Campus advisor

Advising successes

- Pre-health conferences
- Peer advisors/student workers
- Health professions career exploration course
- Advisors w/ shared experiences
- Connections with local physicians
- Enhanced academic success experience
- Summer bootcamp
- Student club partnerships
- Connections with community colleges
- Keeping up to date w/ Advisor networks

Summary

- Large differences in access to pre-health advisors between CSU and UC system and selected privates
- Significant variation of pre-health FTE within CSU and UC
- Advisors often under trained and overwhelmed
- Advisor perceived UIM students needs not being met
- Advisors perceive a lack of institutional support

Recommendations

The CSU and UC systems should:

- Establish **advisor to student ratios** and fund additional advisors where needed
- Establish **training standards** for all pre-health advisors
- Recognize the importance of **holistic, individualized advising** for students from underrepresented, first generation or non-traditional backgrounds
- Signal institutional support for pre-health advising by providing **competitive compensation** to pre-health advisors
- **Partner with local healthcare systems** and physicians to offer clinical experiences and paid internships for students

Acknowledgements

- Participating pre-health advisors
- Co-authors: Francine Rios-Fetchko, BA; Mariam Carson, BS; Janet Coffman, PhD, MPP; Alicia Fernandez, MD
- California Health Care Foundation (CHCF)

Discussion/Questions

References

- 1) California Health Care Foundation, March 2021, California Physicians: A supplement to California's Health Care Foundation's California Physicians: A Portrait of Practice; <https://www.chcf.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/PhysiciansAlmanac2021QRG.pdf>
- 2) Pffeffer et al., Recovery with Limited Progress: Impact of California Proposition 209 on Racial/Ethnic Diversity of California Medical School Matriculants, 1990 to 2019, <https://healthforce.ucsf.edu/publications/recovery-limited-progress-impact-california-proposition-209-raciaethnic-diversity>
- 3) AAMC, 2022 FACTS: Applicants and Matriculants Data, <https://www.aamc.org/data-reports/students-residents/data/2022-facts-applicants-and-matriculants-data>