



UST Geriatrics Interest Group: Inspiring Service through Education

Elizabeth Silver^{1,2}, Natalie Espeso^{1,3}

Team Leads: Carlos Cardenas^{1,4}, Kelli Nelson^{1,5}

Mentors: Christine Donat^{1,2}, Roshni Patel MD^{1,6}

Urban Health/AHEC Scholar¹, UConn School of Medicine², UConn School of Pharmacy³, UConn School of Dental Medicine⁴, Quinnipiac PA Program⁵, Yale Primary Care Internal Medicine⁶

Abstract

The Urban Service Track (UST) Geriatrics Interest Group (IG) is a new student-led group that met on a monthly basis to learn about the unique needs of the geriatric community. Topics for each meeting were generated based on collective interests of the group. Co-leads invited content experts to present various topics of interest and helped engage learners in interactive educational activities. Additionally, short educational videos about social isolation and pulmonary health were prepared by group members to share with the South End Wellness Center Facebook page.

Post-meeting surveys and a final end-of-year survey were administered to obtain feedback and to assess satisfaction with interest group activities. Results indicate that overall, members were satisfied and found this a valuable educational experience.

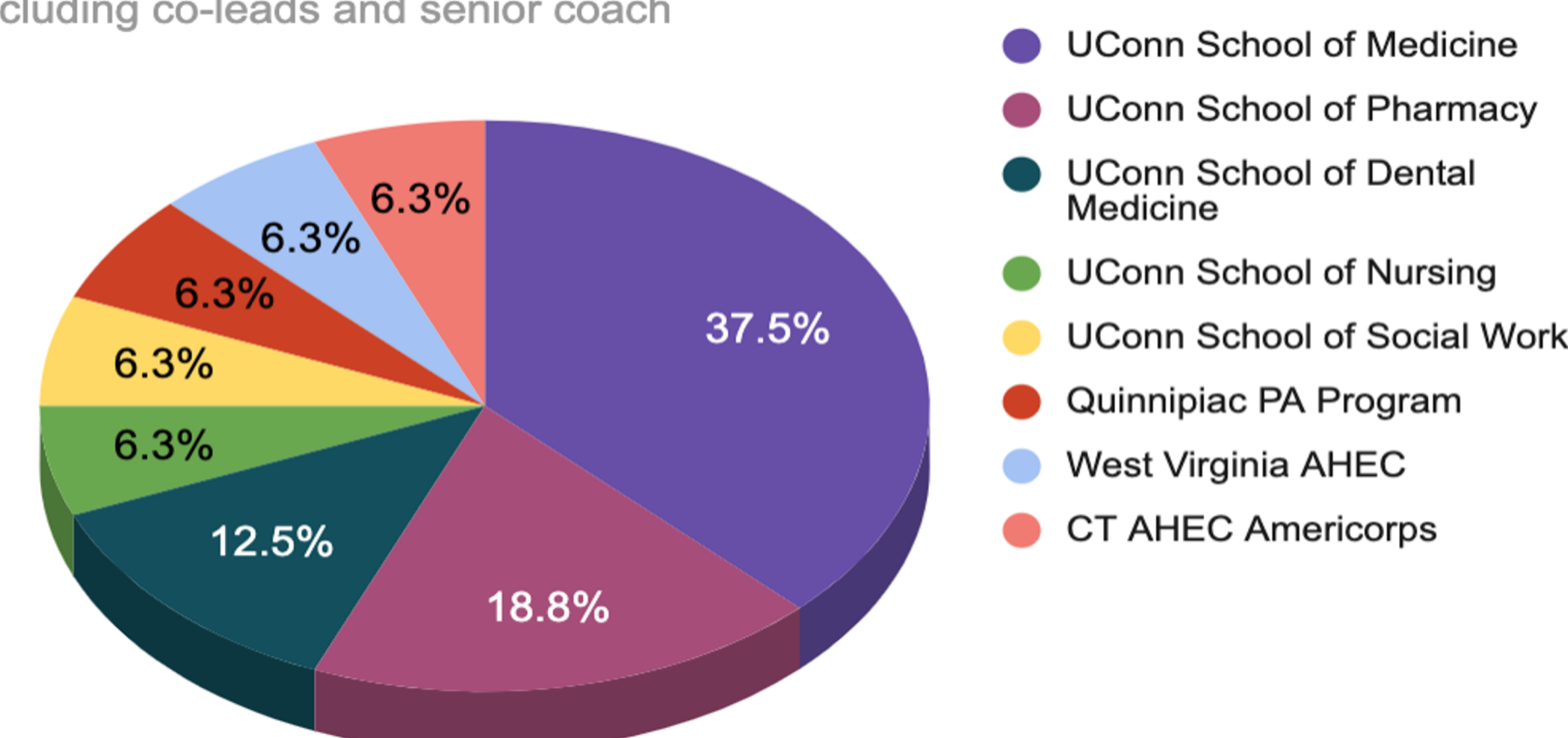
Background

The UST/AHEC Scholars Program is an interactive and service oriented 2 year curriculum that focuses on providing care and health education to Connecticut's underserved communities through interprofessional collaboration.

The UST IG is a new student-led initiative which consists of seven interest groups focused on one of the following topics: adolescents, behavioral and mental health, geriatrics, health care advocacy and policy, pediatrics, social justice, and women's health.

The Geriatrics IG is led by UST scholars Carlos Cardenas, DS-2 and Kelli Nelson, PA-S2, senior scholar coach Christine Donat, MS-4, and UST alumni partner Roshni Patel, MD. Other group members include scholars from several UConn programs in addition to one West Virginia AHEC scholar as shown in the figure below.

Breakdown of Group Members
Including co-leads and senior coach



The Geriatrics IG met on a monthly basis to learn about the various healthcare needs of the geriatric community. Overall the IG is a creative, student-centered, educational tool that brings health professions students together to learn with and from each other.

Objectives

- To identify and address topics of interest in geriatric health
- To engage learners via interactive group educational activities with guidance from content experts
- To gain valuable knowledge about an interprofessional approach to geriatric care
- To use education to inspire service and community work within the geriatric population

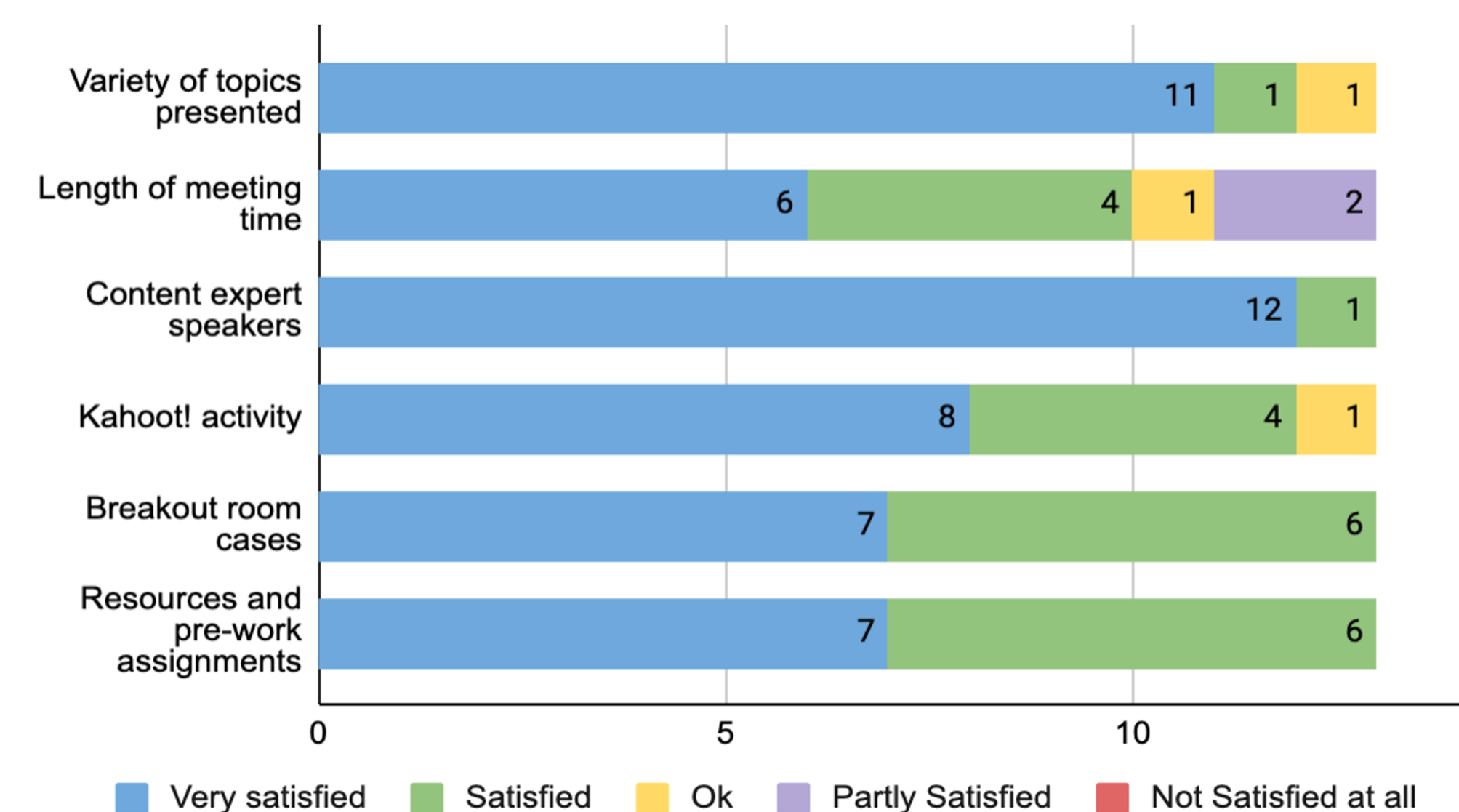
Methods

- 5 IG meetings took place between November and March 2021
- Co-leads administered baseline surveys via Google Forms to gauge student interest in various topics surrounding geriatric care and to elicit preferred learning styles
- Based on survey results, the co-leads, with guidance from senior coach and alumni partner, planned monthly meetings via Zoom
- Prior to each meeting, the co-leads created and shared an agenda with group members which included suggested resources such as pre-reading assignments with journal articles, videos, and websites with content to better prepare for each topic
- Content experts and guest speakers were recruited to provide interactive informational sessions based on the topic of the meeting
- Interactive educational activities including mock patient cases, Q&A sessions, and collaborative discussions were conducted to give students an opportunity to apply their learning and listen to the perspectives of students from other disciplines
- Post-event surveys were administered for feedback on the event and to assess students' learning

Results

- From baseline surveys administered prior to monthly IG meetings:
 - Decisions were made by group consensus and active involvement of coach and alumni partner
 - Topics of interest: practical information for patient care, clinical cases, healthcare approach, advocacy, and community service
 - Meeting topics: long term care planning, dementia and cognitive decline, mental health in the elderly, dying with dignity/elder law
- Three guest speakers were featured during the IG meetings:
 - Dr. Julie Robison, PhD - Long Term Care Planning
 - Dr. Karina M. Berg, MD - Cognitive Decline & Caregiver Support
 - Patricia Bowen, MSW - Dying with Dignity and Elder Law
- Educational activities included:
 - Informational lectures with accompanied PPT presentations
 - Question and answer session with content experts
 - Mock patient cases working as an interdisciplinary team
 - Kahoot! quiz activities based on pre-work assignment material
- 2 wellness videos about social isolation and lung health have been provided to South End Senior Wellness Center in Hartford, CT

Participant Satisfaction



All 13 participants agreed that:

- "I feel more comfortable in regards to understanding my role in approaching geriatric care as part of an interprofessional team."
- "I found this experience valuable for my education."
- "I would recommend this interest group to my colleagues."

Discussion

Overall, the Geriatric IG has shown promise in creating an educational student-led group that meets the interests and needs of students as demonstrated by pre-meeting and post-meeting surveys

Strengths included:

- Gathering information from group members to help cater educational content through the use of pre- and post-event surveys
- The diversity and effectiveness of speakers and topics (92% satisfied or very satisfied with topic variety, 100% satisfied or very satisfied with expert speakers)
- Resources provided through pre-work assignments (100% satisfied or very satisfied with resources and pre-work)
- Application of content to clinical situations through collaborative interprofessional group work with case studies and breakout room discussions (100% satisfied or very satisfied with breakout room cases)
- The promotion of health in the population of interest through the wellness videos to South End Senior Wellness Center

Areas for improvement included:

- Time management during meetings: members gave feedback of wanting more time in the breakout room team activities
- Eliciting more group member voices via electronic learning platforms

Future Directions

- When the COVID-19 pandemic no longer remains a concern, members will be able to increase their exposure to the geriatric population by participating in more community outreach events
- Potential topics to explore moving forward include: the complexity of Medicare, caregiver burnout, careers in geriatric medicine, spiritual and emotional health
- IGs have laid the foundation for other student led initiatives which can include additional educational videos to share with seniors centers, participation in health fairs, home visits to elderly to assess well being, or having those with dementia/cognitive decline participate in educational activities
- This pilot interest group laid out a foundation for student-led interprofessional teams and may be improved upon by establishing predetermined objectives to better determine success of groups in the future

References

CT AHEC Program at UConn Health Center
Urban Service Track/AHEC Scholars Program
<http://h.uconn.edu/UST>

Acknowledgements

Dr. Julie Robison, PhD, Center on Aging, UConn School of Medicine
Dr. Karina M. Berg, Karina M. Berg, M.D., M.S., UConn Center on Aging
Patricia Bowen, LiveWell Dementia Specialists
South End Senior Wellness Center
CT AHEC Program

Dr. Roshni Patel, MD, Yale Primary Care Internal Medicine (roshni.patel@yale.edu)

Christine Donat, MS-IV, UConn School of Medicine (donat@uchc.edu)