



Bringing Bridging the Gaps to Camden: A Student Led Initiative

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Introduction

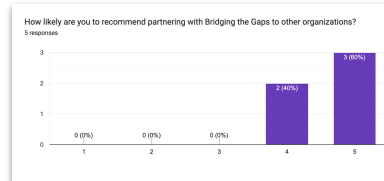
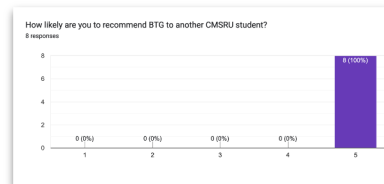
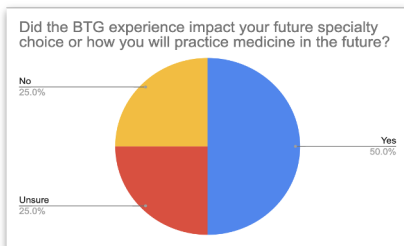
The Bridging the Gaps (BTG) Community Health Internship Program was established in 1991 at multiple health professions schools in the mid-Atlantic region to help create a more community-oriented healthcare workforce. The program pairs an annual cohort of medical students with a variety of community organizations for a seven-week summer internship. During the summer of 2020 BTG chapter was established at our Medical School. The purpose of this study was to determine the efficacy of the program.

Methods

We distributed a survey consisting of five questions to the summer 2021 (the second cohort of CMSRU BTG student interns) with four open-ended questions and one multiple choice. There were eight interns in the summer of 2021, and we received eight responses. In addition, we distributed a separate survey to the summer 2021 community preceptors, employees of Camden-based community organizations, who supervised students during their internships. Four questions were open-ended, and two were multiple-choice. Five organizations participated, and we received five responses. We distributed both surveys on the Google Forms platform and allowed all responses to be anonymous. There were no incentives to completing the survey.

Objective

Determine the strengths and weaknesses of the BTG program from both the student and community organization perspective.



Community Organization - Bridging the Gaps Feedback

Community Organization:

Your answer:

What were your expectations for your partnership with Bridging the Gaps?

Your answer:

How much did your community organization benefit from your partnership with Bridging the Gaps?

1 2 3 4 5
Did not contribute at all. Contributed to the organization in meaningful and lasting ways.

If applicable, what was the biggest benefit?

Your answer:

How likely are you to recommend partnering with Bridging the Gaps to other organizations?

1 2 3 4 5
Not at all likely. Very likely.

Based on your answer to the last question, why or why not?

Your answer:

What was the biggest challenge you faced in your partnership with Bridging the Gaps?

Your answer:

Results

Overall, both student interns and community preceptors reported a positive experience with the Bridging the Gaps internship program and provided constructive feedback for future improvement. The students overwhelmingly responded that the program enhanced their understanding of social issues relating to medicine, and the organizations felt the program was valuable for both them and the students. For example, when asked, "How do you feel the BTG has changed your medical education experience," 5/8 students responded that it made them more aware of community needs and resources. Additionally, 8/8 students answered that they were very likely to recommend BTG to another medical student at our institution. When asked how much community organizations benefited from their partnership with BTG, 4/5 organizations responded that they benefited in "meaningful and lasting ways." All five community organizations also stated they would be likely or very likely to recommend BTG to another organization.

Conclusion

The incorporation of the Bridging the Gaps program into our medical school, a student-led initiative, had a positive impact on the 2021 student interns' medical education, as well as community organization participants.

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