

# Engaging Generation Z Students Through a Discover Pharmacy Summer Camp

Julie Olenak, PharmD



## BACKGROUND

The Wilkes University Nesbitt School of Pharmacy (NSoP) is a private institution located in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, a small city in northeastern Pennsylvania surrounded by suburban areas. It is a 2+ 4 program.

Students have a variety of local options to pursue clinical health-care based degrees including doctoral level programs. Additionally, there are seven schools of pharmacy in Pennsylvania.

Wilkes University offers programs in pharmacy, undergraduate and graduate nursing (e.g. nurse practitioner, Doctor of Nursing Practice, Ph.D. in Nursing) and pre-medicine majors. Additional educational programs offered within 30 miles of Wilkes University include:

- two physician assistant programs;
- physical and occupational therapy;
- speech-language pathology;
- medical school and two additional nursing schools.

All of these programs with the exception of the medical school are located in Luzerne County.

National trends continue to indicate a decline in pharmacy applications. Data from June 2020 indicate a decline of 20.3% from the previous year. The mean number of applications per applicant has also declined 10.5%.

Schools of pharmacy have made efforts to increase enrollment and promote the profession. In an environment where students have so many choices, particularly in our geographic region, introducing students to the profession is crucial.

Wilkes University faculty and staff regularly participate in events to offer hands-on activities promoting the profession of pharmacy starting with elementary aged children. In summer of 2019, Wilkes University NSoP offered the Discover Pharmacy two day camp held on campus.

## PROGRAM GOALS

- To create engaging and meaningful experiences to attract potential high school students to the Wilkes University Nesbitt School of Pharmacy.
- Increase interest in the profession of pharmacy.

## DESCRIPTION

A two day camp targeting high school juniors and seniors was held on campus.

- Hours were 8:30am-5pm
- Several themes were important when developing the camp.

### THEME

Engaging topics for Generation Z students<sup>a</sup>

Highlight mentoring focus of institution

Highlight academic and non-academic pharmacists

### STRATEGY

Example topics included: pharmacy escape room, naloxone training, adventure learning technology advances in diabetes, nutrition fake news, surviving college and mindfulness

Maintain traditional laboratory size of 25-30 students to emulate the experience at our institution.

Showcase student, staff, and faculty involvement including lunch hour/break.

Partnered with a local health system that permitted release time for pharmacists to participate.

<sup>a</sup> Traditional topics also included: demonstration of cell culture and staining of cells, DNA isolation from strawberries, compounding lip balm and bath bombs, physical assessment.

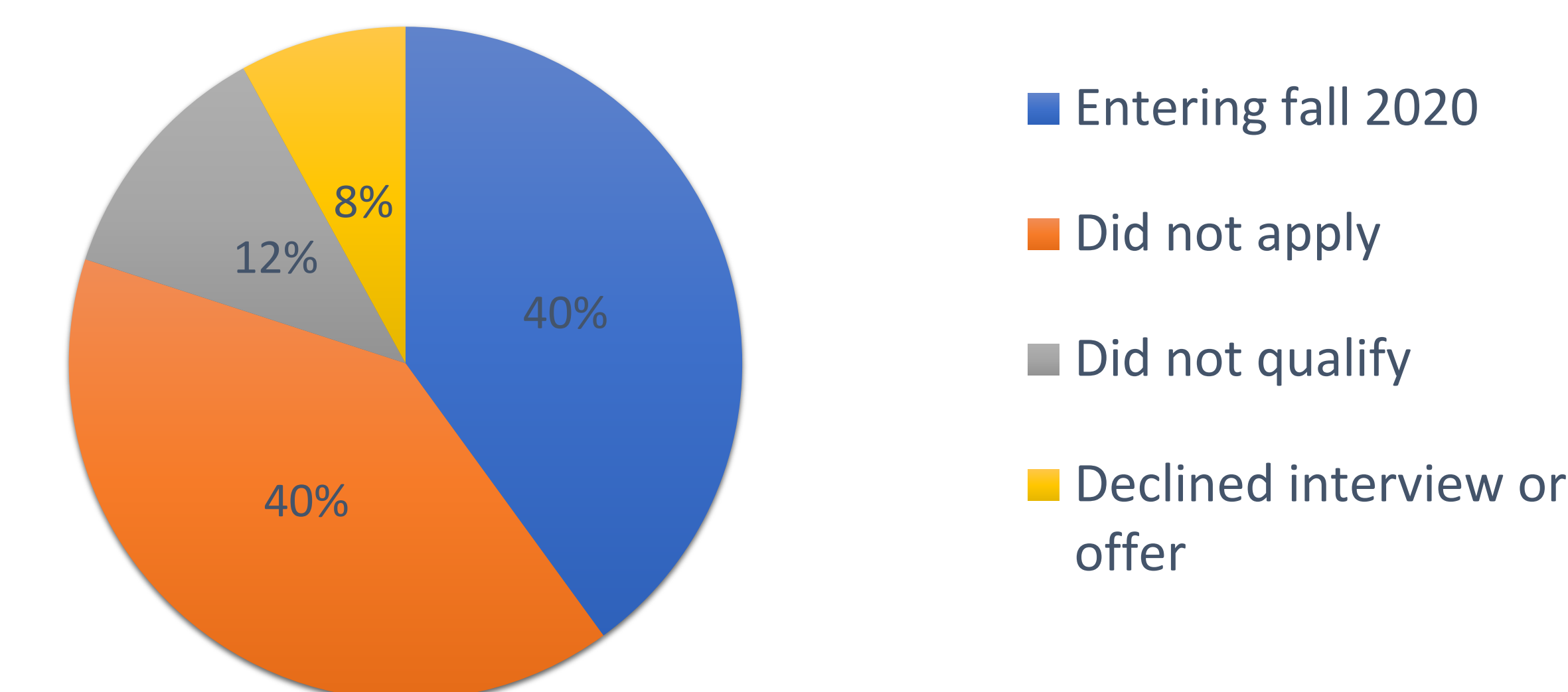
## RESULTS

68% of participants identified as female and 32% male

- 60% of camp attendees applied to the NSoP
  - Of these applicants, 73% were accepted

## RESULTS

### Student Application Outcomes



## DISCUSSION

The camp registration filled up in just under two weeks. We value holding the smaller size to mimic our laboratory size and will hold two camp sessions in the future.

We may want to consider academic criteria in our application process since 12% of those applying did not meet the minimum criteria.

Consideration will also be given to offer scholarships to reduce the cost for students in need.

## NEXT STEPS

COVID 19 concerns resulted in the cancellation of the on campus camp in June 2020.

August 2020 camp will be held virtually via Zoom.

- Example sessions include: naloxone training, making cough drops, pediatric drug dosing and measuring, pharmacogenomics and candy DNA mutations, building heart model with an A&P review, drug dissolution, chromatography, and patient counseling.
- Camp kits will be mailed to student homes.
- Camp forms were updated for online learning and interaction with minors.

In 2021, we plan to return to on campus camps and offer two sessions.