



Voluntary Community Service at the John A Burns School of Medicine: Perceived Impact and Benefits on Medical Students

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The investigators retained full independence in the conduct of this research

INTRODUCTION

- Voluntary community service
 - Work that is done without compensation
 - Action that is undertaken by free will or choice
 - Provides a benefit to others such as people in a community
- Community service in medical education: service learning vs. voluntary community service
 - Service learning occurs in a structured learning environment with defined objectives and has been the focus of community-oriented activities in medical education
 - Voluntary community service may range in its degree of structure, is less likely to have specific learning objectives, and has less coverage in literature
- Voluntary community service may provide similar, positive outcomes to participants such as promoting empathy, enhancing leadership qualities, and fostering civic and social responsibility that may be gained in service learning (Loh et al)
- LCME's Standard 6.6 for accreditation states, "The faculty of a medical school ensure that the medical education program provides sufficient opportunities for, encourages, and supports medical student participation in service-learning and/or community service activities"
- At the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM), community service is an integral component of the first year curriculum. Students choose from a wide range of offered service projects and dedicate time to community service as a required course. Often times, JABSOM students voluntarily participate in community service activities beyond curricular requirements.

PURPOSE

- Quantify the number of hours of community service donated and the types of community service JABSOM students participated in
- Assess student-perceived benefits of voluntary community service for themselves as well as the community they served



Figure 2. Photos of JABSOM students participating in community service activities

METHODS

- A survey was distributed via Google Forms to 65 medical students entering their fourth year at JABSOM
 - 63 of 65 students responded to the survey
- Survey inquired brief descriptions and estimated number of hours of contribution for all voluntary community service activities during medical school that students participated in outside of curricular requirements.
- The survey defined community service into six categories
 - Patient care
 - Mentoring
 - Teaching
 - Donation
 - Companionship
 - Miscellaneous
- Survey answers were screened for possible submissions of curriculum-required community service activities or erroneously high hours, which were discarded from the data pool after individual clarification with students
- Ten students with the highest recorded number of hours (210 to 621 hours), were followed up for comments on perceived benefits of community service for themselves and for the community.
 - Eight of ten students responded with comments

Hours donated in each community service category

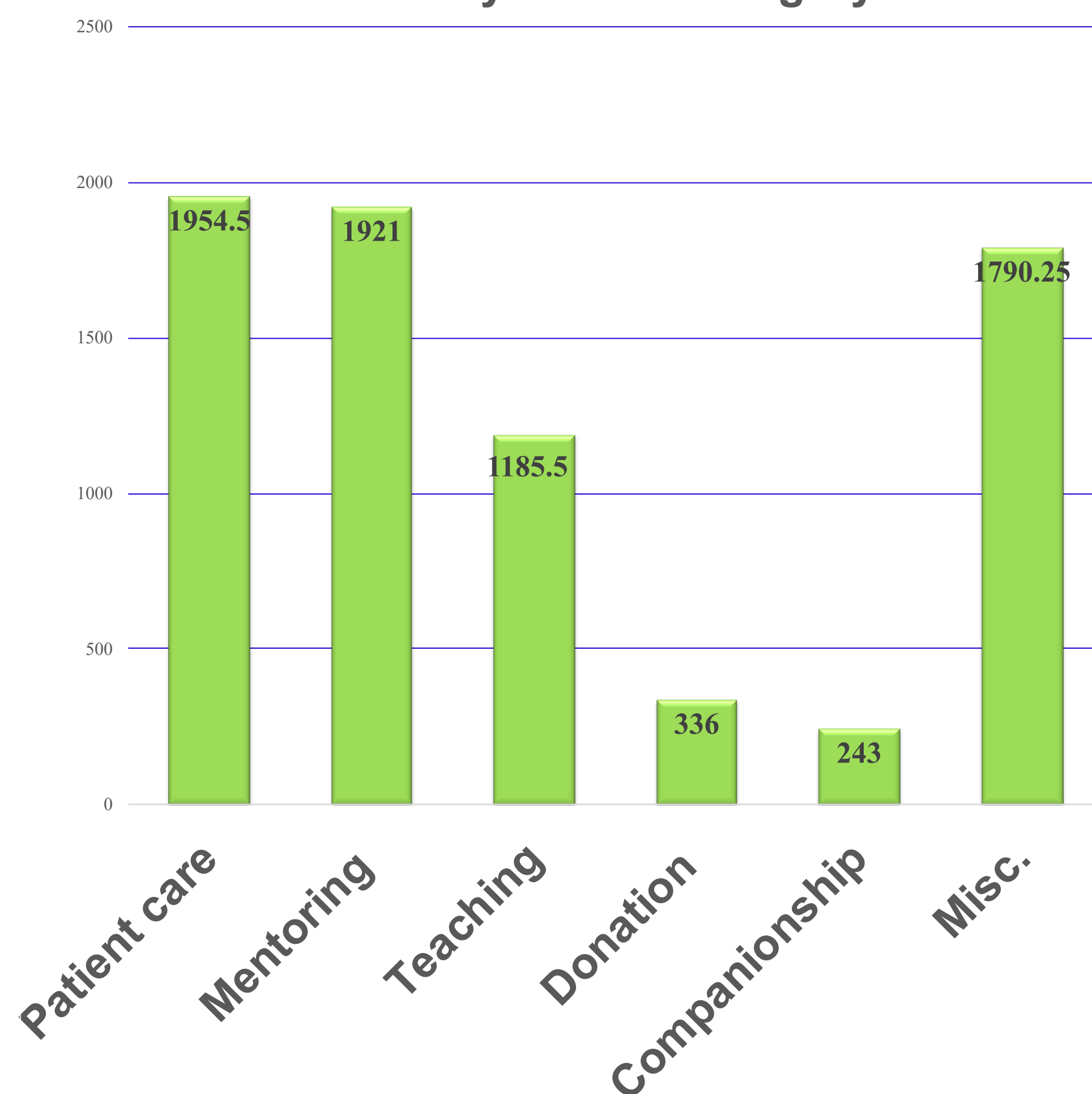


Figure 1. Number of hours per community service category

RESULTS

- Total number of hours of community service among 63 students throughout the first three years of medical school at JABSOM amounted to 7,430.25 hours, benefiting > 35 organizations (Table 1, 3)
 - On an individual basis, hours of contribution averaged to 88 hours according to the median (Table 4)
- Students participated in all six categories of community service with notably more hours contributed to patient care (26.30 %) and mentoring (25.85%) as a cohort (Table 1, Figure 1)
 - On average, students participated in four different categories of community service activities (Table 2)

Category	Hours
Patient care	1954.5
Mentoring	1921
Teaching	1185.5
Donation	336
Companionship	243
Miscellaneous	1790.25
Total	7430.25

Table 1. Number of hours by community service category and total

Statistic	Value
Median	4
Mean	3.8
Mode	4

Table 2. Average number of community service categories participation per student

Statistic	Value
Minimum	4
Maximum	621
Median	88
Mean	122.8

Table 4. Community service hours donated by individual medical students

Patient care (5)	Mentoring (10)	Teaching (6)	Donation (6)	Companionship (3)	Miscellaneous (5)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HOME Project First aid services Health screenings Health fair Community health clinics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-medical student mentoring HYPE Teen Health Camp Imi Ho'ola STEM outreach for girls Future Physicians Symposium YMCA Career Night MSMP Student interest groups AHEC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HCOP PBL tutor Clinical teaching sessions for pre-med students Smoking prevention teaching SHEP Healthy Keiki Camp Kidney education event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Angel Tree Blood donation Soup kitchen Food drives Homeless feeding & special events Clothing drive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nursing home & elderly visitation Camp for children with muscular dystrophy and parents with ALS Make a Wish Foundation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AHEC Physician Workforce Summit HPH Fest at Bishop Museum Beach environment clean up Walk with a Doc Relay for Life

Table 3. Identified activities by community service categories

- Impact of community service on medical students: self-perceived improvement in interpersonal skills, perspective transformation, and development in citizenship
- Perceived benefits on the community: transfer of knowledge from students to the community, promotion of healthy lifestyle habits, and provision of mentorship and companionship

DISCUSSION

- Limitations of this study
 - Self-reported retrospective data & lack of a formal tracking system for hours volunteered in community service
 - Self-determined categorical assignment of community service by student submissions did not account for possible crossover of individual activities into several community service categories
- Community service allowed medical students to
 - Meet and connect with populations that they were less familiar with (e.g. homeless, disabled, and marginalized members of the community) and overcome stereotypes
 - Better understand the perspectives and needs of the community
 - Feel a sense of achievement by taking part in a positive cycle of giving back to the local community that they belong to and benefited from in the past

CONCLUSIONS

- The current 4th year medical students at JABSOM voluntarily contributed 7,430.25 hours of community service benefiting > 35 organizations
- Incorporating community service as a part of medical education allows medical students to gain valuable knowledge and skills that cannot be learned in the classroom
- Community service helps medical students to develop a stronger sense of their extended roles and social responsibilities as future physicians by facilitating connection to the community and promoting self-reflection

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