

The Role of Post-baccalaureate Programs in the Dental Education Pipeline

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Introduction

- The lack of dentists from underrepresented minority (URM) or socioeconomically disadvantaged (SED) backgrounds contributes to oral health disparities in the United States (US)
- Historically, post-baccalaureate (post-bac) programs have focused on increasing the share of URM/SED students pursuing health professions careers

Research Aim

Examine changing trends in post-bac and academic enrichment programs available to pre-dental students and assess contributions to oral health workforce diversity

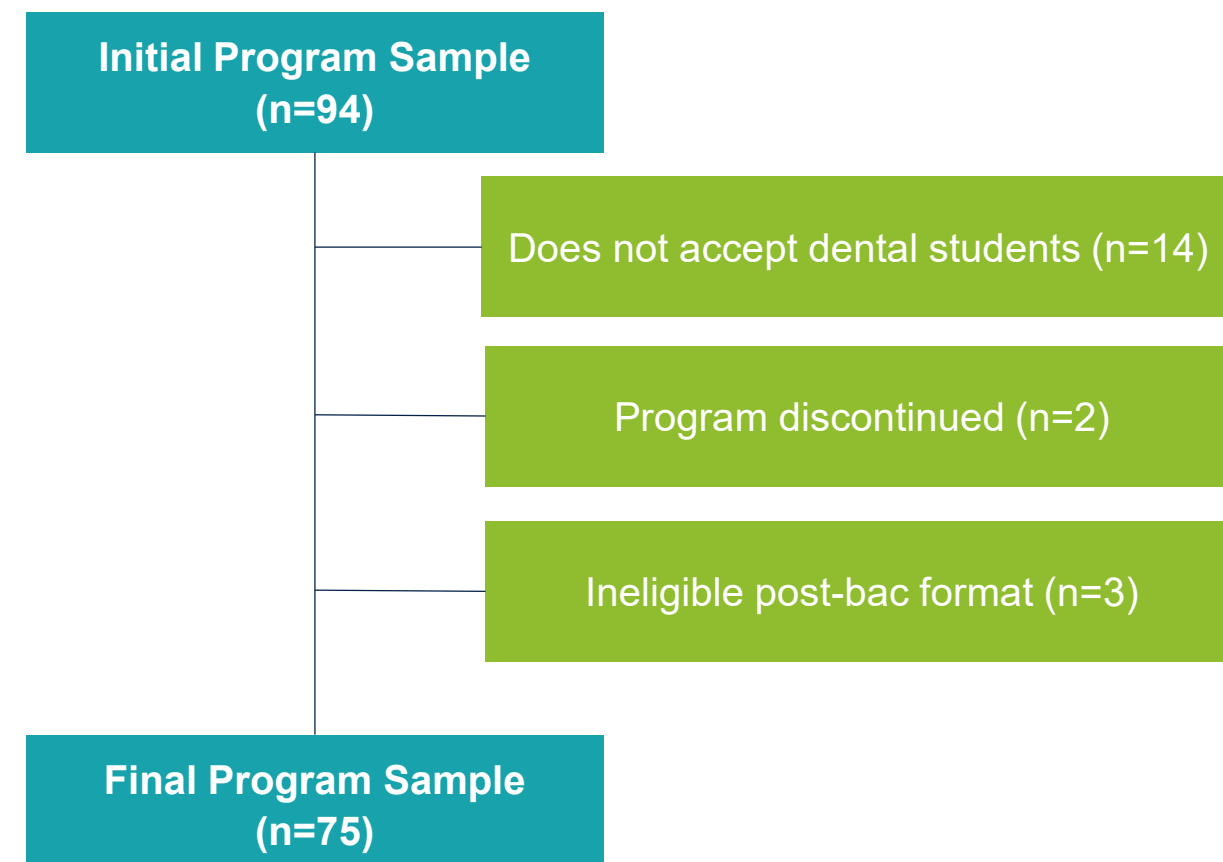
Methods

A list of post-bac programs for pre-health, pre-medical, and pre-dental student in the US was compiled through a web search

Data Collection

Three primary modes of data collection:

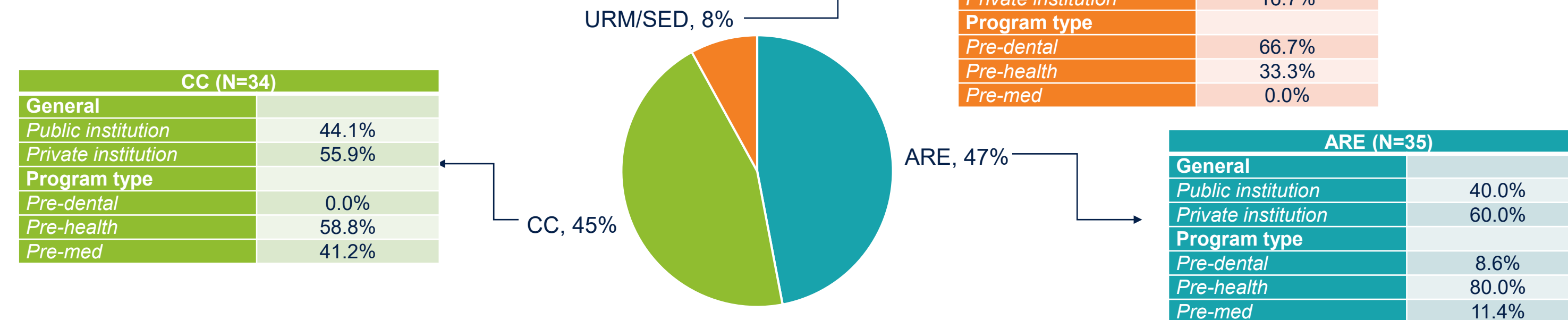
- Online survey sent to program administrators (sent to 91 programs at 77 institutions between January-April 2020)
- Extracting data from program websites
- Follow-up phone calls to program staff (when needed)



Results

- Post-bac programs are in 22 states, with half residing in just three: California (n=11), New York (n=10), and Pennsylvania (n=12)
- Only 8% of the final program sample were URM/SED focused (Figure 1)

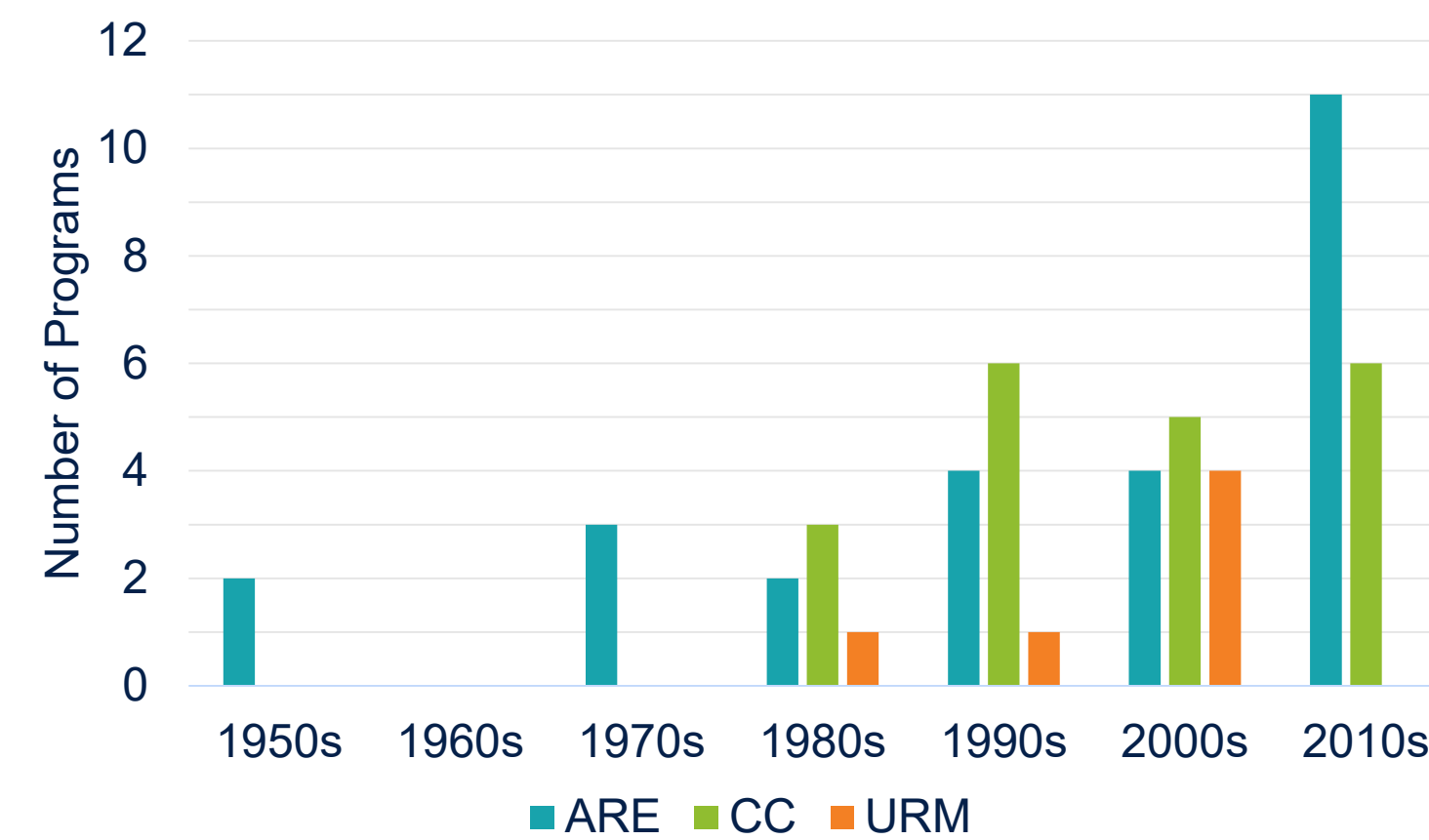
Figure 1. Program Category Breakdown



General Characteristics

- Since 2010, at least 17 new pre-health/dental post-bac programs have been initiated, none of which focus exclusively on URM/SED students (Figure 2)
- URM/SED focused programs are more established, more likely public institutions (83%), and more likely to be specifically pre-dental

Figure 2. Program founding's by decade



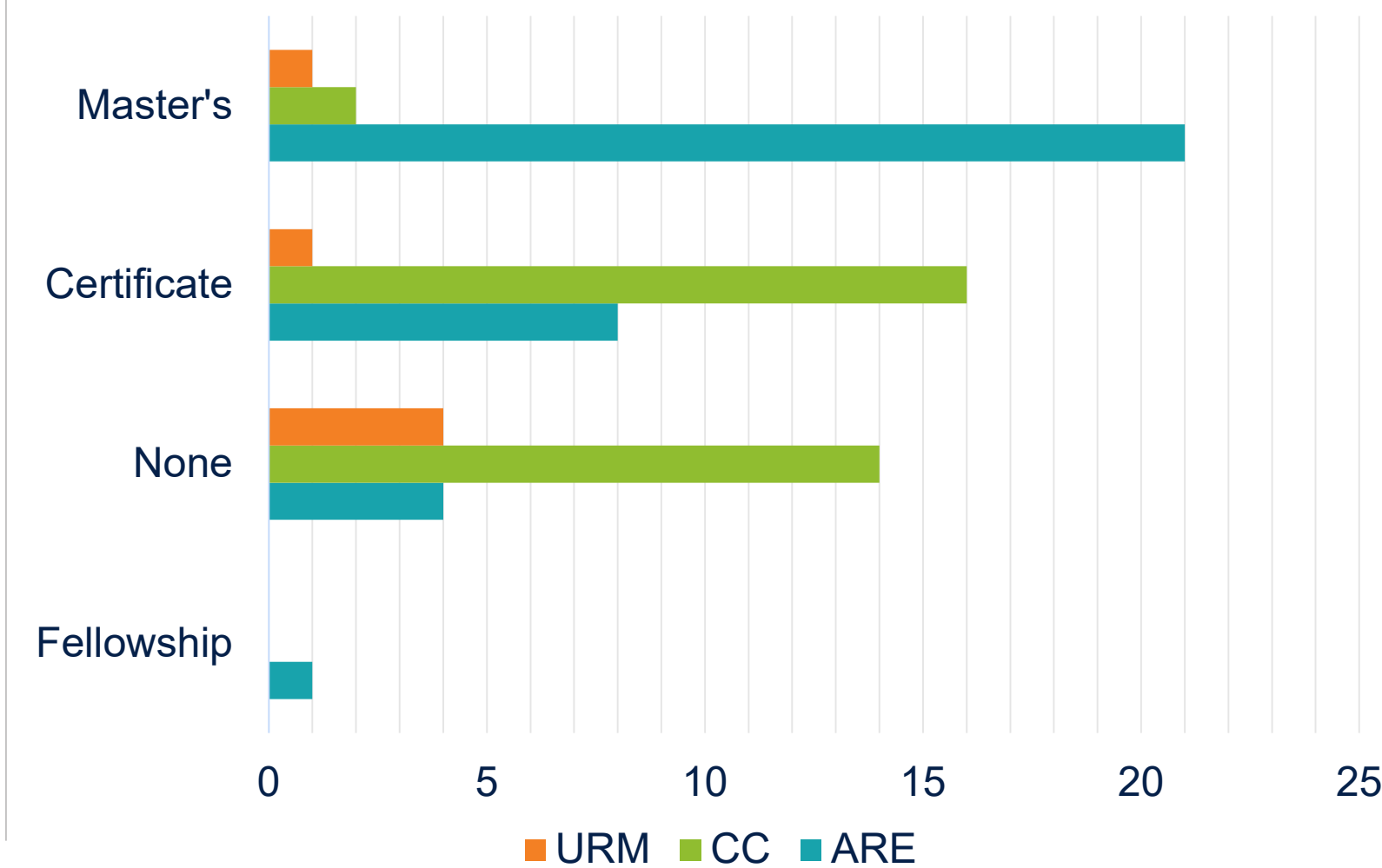
Application Requirements

- URM/SED programs are more likely to require an interview (83%), US citizenship (67%), community service, work, or other extracurricular activities (50%), and a slightly lower GPA cutoff than ARE/CC programs

Academics and Outcomes

- ARE programs most likely to offer a Master's degree (60%), CC programs a certificate (47%), and URM/SED no degree (67%) (Figure 3)
- URM/SED programs have the shortest mean duration (10.8 months), and lowest mean tuition (\$13K)
- URM/SED programs produce a higher median number of applicants per program lifetime (n=65), but a slightly lower mean admit rate (70%) than ARE/CC programs

Figure 3. Degrees Awarded by Program



Discussion

- Pre-dental students participating in rapid growth, high-cost, often degree-granting pre-health education far outnumber those attending URM/SED programs.
- ARE and CC programs may be crowding out visibility of those students that need post-bac programs most.
- More research is needed on whether post-bac completers are admitted to dental school and their URM/SED status to be definitive about the relative contributions of each program to workforce diversity.

Limitations

- Findings may not be generalizable to the full landscape of pre-dental post-bac programs from this convenience sample, and item non-response was highly variable
- Data regarding the class demographics dental school matriculation was not available, so success specifically in sending URM/SED students to dental school is unknown, as is the percent of dental school matriculants that attend these types of programs.

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Key References

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