



The Results of a Free, Student-Run, Volunteer-Based Medical School Application Advising Service



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INTRODUCTION

The medical school application process can cost thousands of dollars for the average applicant. While many struggle with this financial burden, the more privileged applicants can access the help of professional consultants that can cost tens of thousands of dollars.

50% of medical school students come from the top quintile in family income with 5% of students coming from the bottom quintile.

We created Giving A Boost to provide a free service, provided by volunteer University of Pittsburgh medical students that could rival that offered by paid consulting businesses.

OBJECTIVES

Are medical students able to tackle the inequities involved with medical school admissions via assistance in the application process?



METHODS

- 65 medical student volunteers were trained to provide revisions and guidance for applicant essays
- 97 Applicants were contacted via pre-health advising departments, student organizations and social media at schools in the Greater Pittsburgh Area
- Students were given a survey and asked to rate the usefulness of our services compared to other support avenues

Applicant Demographics	Number
1 st Generation College Student	4 (5.6%)
LGBTQIA+	6 (8.5%)
Underrepresented Minority in Medicine	11 (15.5%)
Reapplicants	4 (5.6%)
From Medically Underserved Area	12 (16.9%)

Table 1. Demographic breakdown of applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds

RESULTS

- Across 72 responses applicants rated GAB an average of 8.7 ± 1.8
- This was significantly higher than the next highest rated category, Friends (7.6 ± 2.3 , $p = 0.0034$), and all other resources ($p \ll 0.01$)

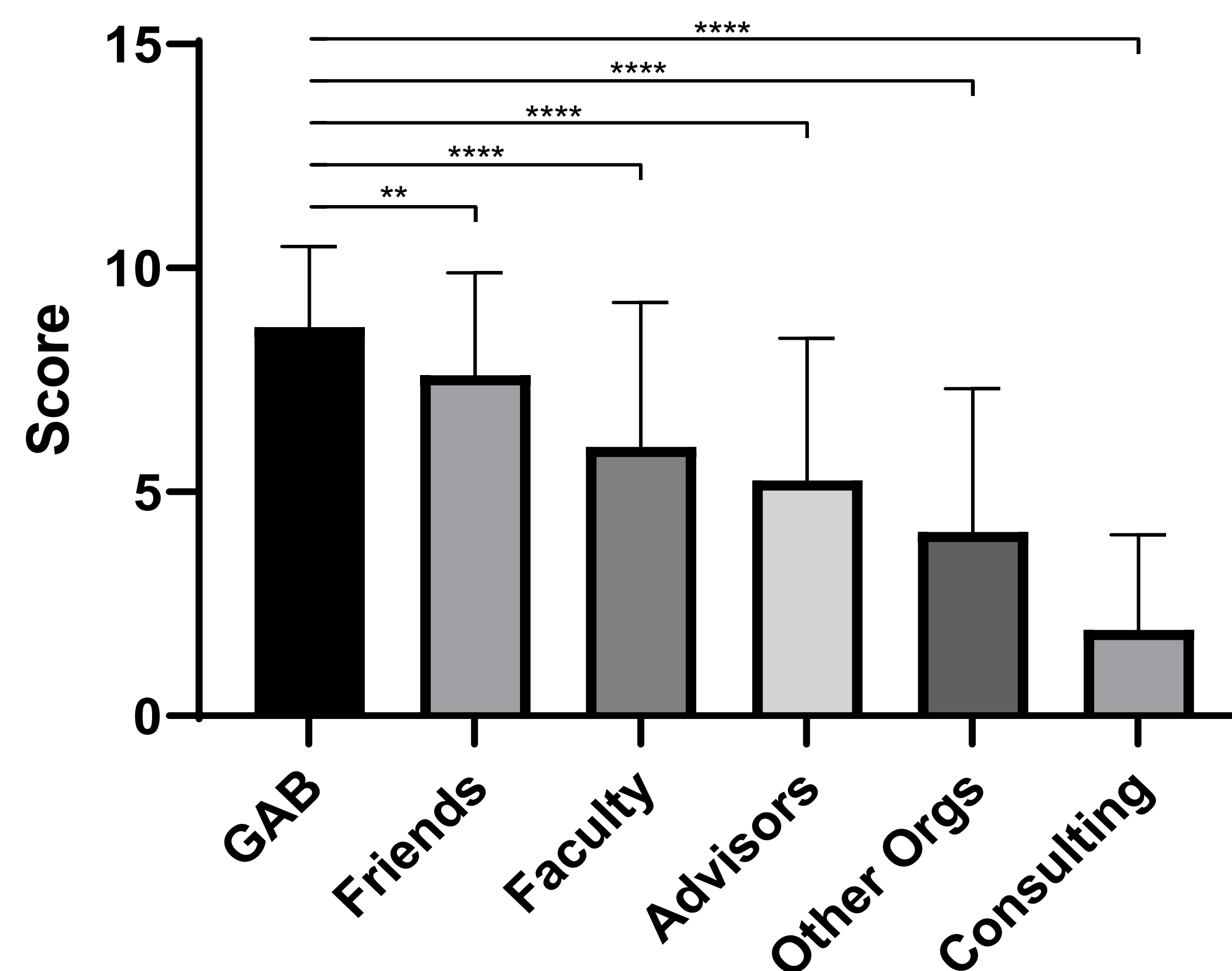


Figure 1. Graphical representation of the average scores and error bars for each of the resources rated by applicants. **** $p < 0.0001$, ** $p < 0.01$.

CONCLUSION

Giving a Boost was able to recruit and train volunteer students to support self-selected underprivileged applicants, and these applicants cited our services as extremely useful, especially when compared to other means of support.

DISCUSSION

While the results from this survey indicates satisfaction provided by our program to applicants, we still hope to grow GAB into an effective mentorship program that can provide free and high-quality support to even more underrepresented and disadvantaged pre-medical students. Our next steps are to gauge applicant acceptance rates and compare to baseline undergraduate data.

We hope to expand GAB at Pitt and throughout the mid-Atlantic region. Since the summer, we have offered other services and allowed other applicants within the PA, DE, and WV areas to access our services. At least so far, we have shown that a student organization here at the University of Pittsburgh can not only support students from this area but also even impact a tri-state region.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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