

Professional Qualities of A  
Model Health Practitioner: The  
Perspective of 570 Faculty in Six  
Schools of the Health Sciences at  
the University of Washington

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& the Ethics Working Group

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# Ethics Working Group

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# Themes to be explored by the Working Group

- Are there common values across the health professions that define professionalism?
- Are there unique values within any of the professions that foster interprofessional conflict?
- Is the perception of professional qualities consistent within and across professions?
- What core content should be included in an Interprofessional Ethics course?



# The Committee Thrash

# Process: Study Population

- Who should we survey?
  - Faculty
  - Practitioners
  - Students
  - Administrators
- What decision rules regarding profession versus faculty appointments?
- Was there a master list?

# Process: Level of Detail

- Within any profession, there are multiple specialties. Is it important to distinguish between internists and surgeons; nurses and nurse practitioners?
- How should we parse the world of public health?
- Should we include the bench scientists, whose work underpins the professions?

# Decisions

- Be inclusive in defining the study population.
  - All faculty in the Health Sciences
  - All clinicians employed by the Health Sci Cntr
- Focus on professions with provider-patient relationship
- Focus on professional qualities, ethics and interprofessional collaboration
- Focus on ‘model’ practitioners

# Methodology

- On-Line, Web-Based Survey
- Two stage recruitment.
  - Invitation to participate
  - Survey Completion
- **Forced-choice** of the three most important professional qualities of **model practitioner**
- Elicit core content for a course on interprofessional ethics

# The Survey – Please choose the 3 most important professional qualities of a XX?

- Competency
- Truthfulness
- Patient Autonomy
- Interprofessional Collaboration
- Patient Privacy
- Altruism
- Compassion/Empathy
- Considers Patient Interests Before One's Own

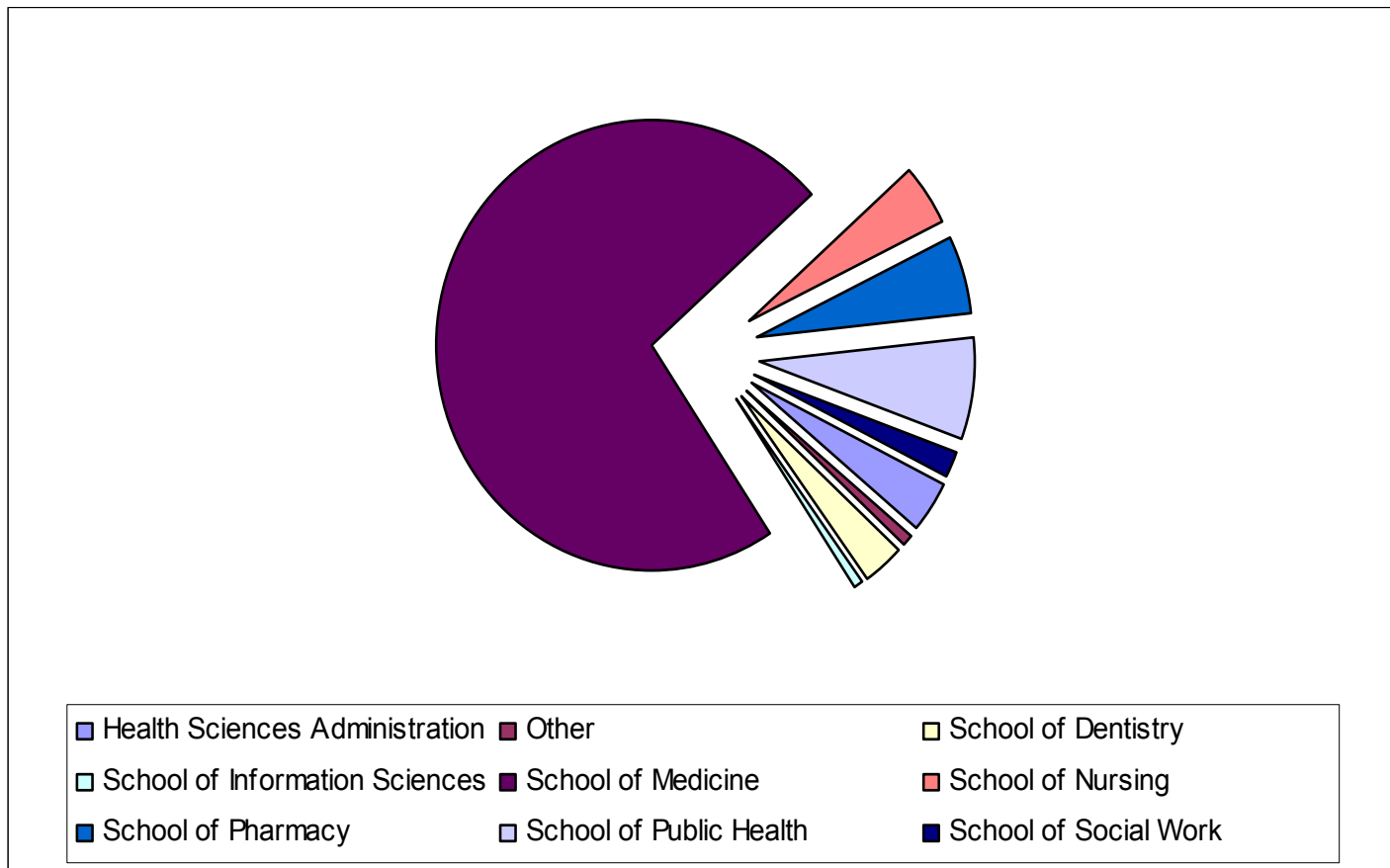
# The Survey: Professions Represented

- Dental Hygienist
- Nurse
- Nutritionist
- Pharmacist
- Physical Therapist
- Physician Assistant
- Dentist
- Nurse Practitioner
- Occupational Therapist
- Physician
- Social Worker
- Speech Therapist

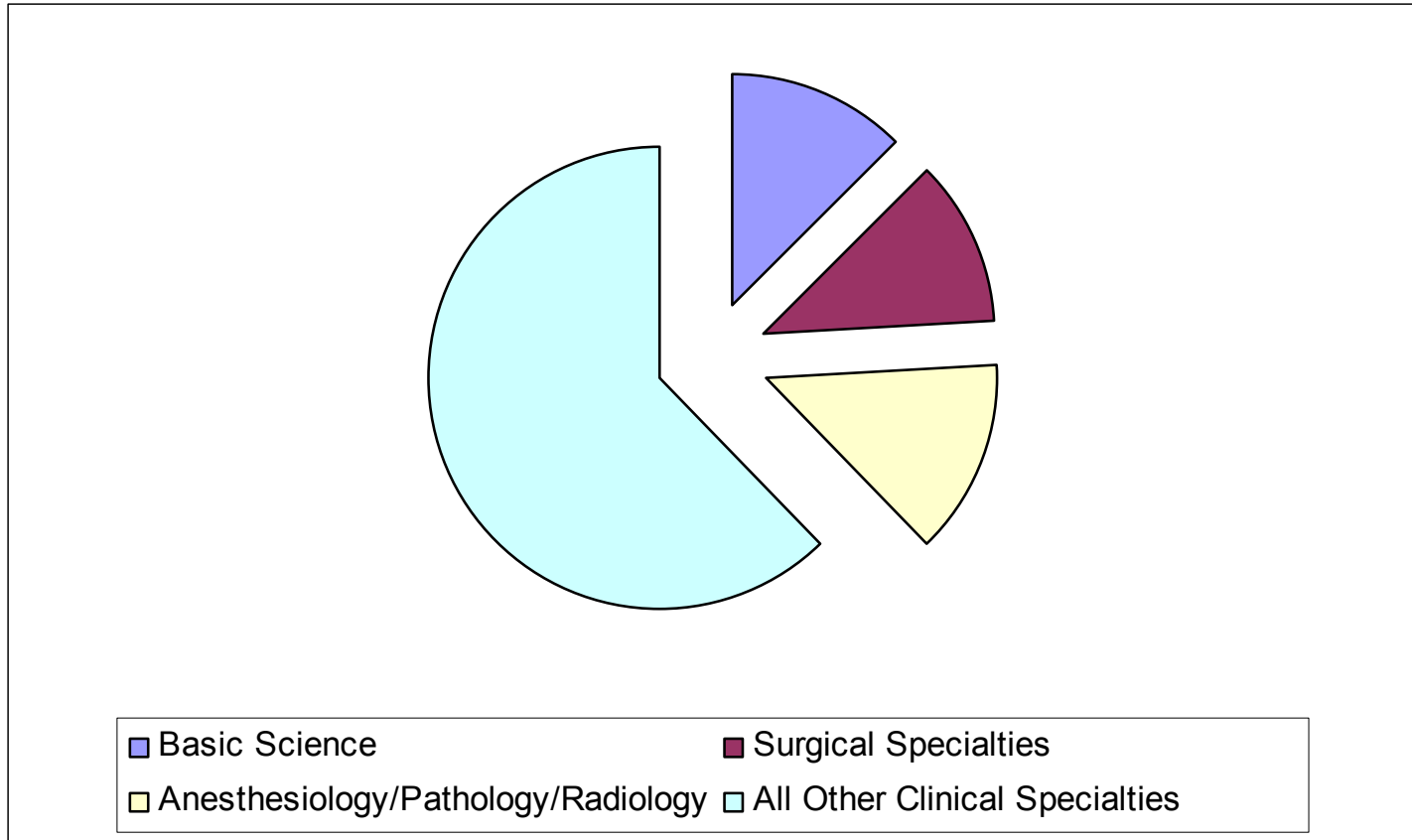
# The Survey: Professional Collaboration

- With which profession (not your own) do you have the MOST favorable collaborative experiences?
- With which profession (not your own) do you have the LEAST favorable collaborative experiences?

# The Study Population N=4255

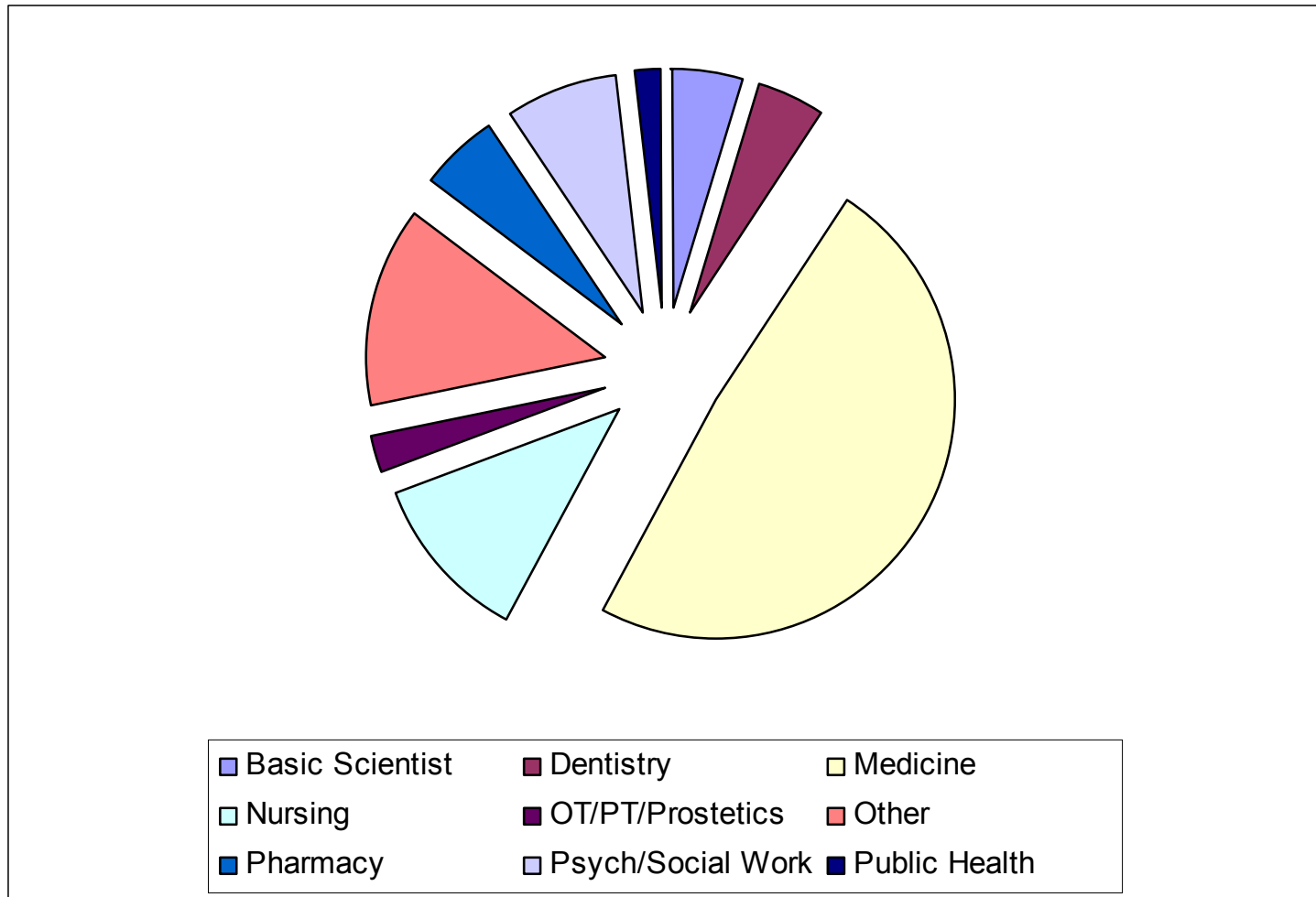


# School of Medicine: N=3080



# Results: Study Respondents

N=570



# Results: Top 3 Professional Qualities by Professional Group

Professional Group	First Attribute	Second Attribute	Third Attribute
<b>Dental Hygienist</b>	Competency	Compassion-Empathy	Patient Interest First
<b>Dentist</b>	Competency	Patient Interest First	Truthfulness
Nurse	Competency	Compassion-Empathy	IP Collaboration
Nurse Practitioner	Competency	IP Collaboration	Compassion-Empathy
Nutritionist	Competency	IP Collaboration	Truthfulness
Occupational TX	Competency	IP Collaboration	Compassion-Empathy
Pharmacist	Competency	IP Collaboration	Patient Privacy
Physical Therapist	Competency	Compassion-Empathy	IP Collaboration
<b>Physician</b>	Competency	Compassion-Empathy	Truthfulness
Physician Assistant	Competency	IP Collaboration	Compassion-Empathy
Social Worker	Competency	Compassion-Empathy	IP Collaboration
Speech Therapist	Competency	Compassion-Empathy	IP Collaboration

# Results: Most-Least Favorable Collaborative Experiences

Professional Group	Percent Least	Percent Most
Physician	28.7%	27.2%
Nurse	12.7%	18.7%
Dentist	9.0%	2.1%
Social Worker	7.0%	9.4%
Nutritionist	5.6%	.5%
Physical Therapist	4.8%	4.8%
Dental Hygienist	4.5%	3.0%
Physician Assistant	4.5%	6.0%
Nurse Practitioner	4.2%	12.7%
Pharmacist	3.9%	8.3%
Speech Therapist	1.7%	1.2%
Occupational Therapist	1.7%	3.5%
Did Not Respond	22.5%	5.2%

# Results: Interprofessional Collaboration – External vs. Internal Perspective

Profession	All Respondents	Within Profession
Dentists	18.5%	11.5%
Nurses	38.9%	34.3%
Nurse Pr.	45.2%	65.5%
Pharmacists	55.4%	63.3%
Physicians	34.1%	26.6%
Social Work	36.2%	45.2%

# Results: Core Content for Interprofessional Ethics Course

Interprofessional Collaboration	56.6%
Truthfulness	46.7%
Patient Autonomy	44.8%
Compassion-Empathy	39.2%
Considers Patient Interest First	32.9%
Patient Privacy	31.1%
Competency	26.8%
Altruism	13.4%
Did Not Respond	10.3%

# Results: Generalized Themes

- Competency is taught in our schools (silos). It is the primary responsibility of our faculty.
- Interprofessional collaboration doesn't appear to be a domain of education. It appears to be a domain of employment.
- These professional qualities aren't about professional groups, they are about individuals. Individuals need to be certified, not professions.

# Results: Generalized Themes

- All health care education needs to optimize the opportunities for communication across professions
- Teach us conflict resolution that benefits patient care without increasing hostility.
- Technical, procedural competence is the baseline; patient care is enhanced when IP collaboration is optimized.

# Lessons Learned

- Consider separate surveys for basic scientists and clinicians.
- Include ALL potential professions in your response demographics.
- Competency is a loaded word, provide explicit definitions.
- Don't assume that one's profession (degree) maps well with functional role

# Conclusions

- Competency is regarded the highest value within each profession studied.
- Interprofessional collaboration is important in optimizing patient health, why not teach it?
- A course should be developed which allows students to grapple with the relative importance of professional values in service to patients.

# Limitations

- One institution
- Dominated by medicine
- Complex domain overly simplified
- Forced choice and limited response set constrained the value of the data
- Difficult to parse professions from professional roles

# Next Steps

- Potential
  - Focus groups to map the domain of competency within professions
  - Refined survey to trainees within the Health Science Schools
- Active
  - Development of a certifying OSCE for elements of professionalism and ethics across the Health Sciences