



INTRODUCTION

In 2009, a study analyzing reasons why students of the Class of 2013 selected to attend Columbia University College of Dental Medicine (CUCDM) for dental school was conducted and unpublished. Much has changed since this study was conducted, both in the world and at Columbia specifically. This study seeks to understand how different factors that led students to select CUCDM have changed over time by giving the same survey to students of the Class of 2023 and comparing the results to that of the Class of 2013. Understanding the motivating factors, in order of priority, that influence students to select CUCDM for their dental education can better inform admissions officers as to what factors are important in student's decisions to matriculate to particular dental programs.

METHODS & MATERIAL

Data from the Class of 2023 was collected retrospectively in the form of a self-administered online questionnaire regarding why students chose to attend Columbia. The questionnaire asked students to rate factors in order of their importance that influenced their decision to matriculate at CUCDM from 1-10 with 1 being the most important. Additional questions were included in the survey instrument; namely, questions were asked about gender, ethnicity, educational levels of parents, financial background, influence of CUCDM faculty and students met on interview day, and an additional question on tuition. Data on tuition and the importance of different matriculation factors were analyzed in aggregate and disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, and financial background. The same questionnaire was administered to the Class of 2013 but unpublished under protocol number AAEE5947 and the responses were analyzed and compared to the data collected from the Class of 2023.

RESULTS

Factors students rated as most to least important in their decision to matriculate to CUCDM

Answer Option	Class of 2013 Average	Class of 2023 Average	Percent Change	Increase/Decrease in Importance
Academic Reputation	3.33	5.51	65%	↓
Location in NYC	3.98	5.54	39%	↓
Admission into Specialty Programs	4.16	6.09	46%	↓
Class Size	5.17	5.43	5%	↓
Curriculum	5.21	5.4	4%	↓
Perceived Patient Pool	6.09	5.09	-16%	↑
Research Opportunities	6.16	5.17	-16%	↑
Facilities	6.19	5.51	-11%	↑
Tuition Cost	6.74	4.83	-28%	↑
Financial Aid	7.43	5.21	-30%	↑

Source: Student Survey, question 6 Note. Values are average ratings on a scale of 1-10 (1=most important and 10=least important). Class of 2013 N=56, Class of 2023 N=46

RESULTS

Factors students rated as most to least important in their decision to matriculate to CUCDM stratified by race for the Class of 2023

Top Choices	Asian	African American	Hispanic	Caucasian
1	Tuition	Patient Pool	Academic Reputation	Patient Pool
2	Financial Aid	Research	Curriculum/Facilities	Tuition
3	Academic Reputation	Financial Aid	Specialty	Research

Source: Student Survey, question 6 Note. Values are average ratings on a scale of 1-10 (1=most important and 10=least important). Class of 2023 N=46

Factors students rated as most to least important in their decision to matriculate to CUCDM stratified by gender for the Class of 2023

Top Choices	Male	Female
1	Tuition	Academic Reputation
2	Financial Aid	Location in NYC
3	Patient Pool	Curriculum

Source: Student Survey, question 6 Note. Values are average ratings on a scale of 1-10 (1=most important and 10=least important). N=46

What role did the onsite interview, the dental students that were met, or the faculty members at Columbia have in the students' decision to attend CUCDM?

Prompt	Class of 2013	Class of 2023	Percent Change	Increase/Decrease in Response
<i>The experiences I had at interview day played an important role in my selection of the College of Dental Medicine.</i>				
Strongly Agree	38%	62.86%	25%	↑
Agree	55%	37.14%	-18%	↓
Disagree	5%	0%	-5%	↓
Strongly Disagree	2%	0%	-2%	↓
<i>The faculty I met at interview day played an important role in my selection of the College of Dental Medicine.</i>				
Strongly Agree	36%	31.43%	-5%	↓
Agree	54%	48.57%	-5%	↓
Disagree	9%	17.14%	8%	↑
Strongly Disagree	1%	2.86%	2%	↑
<i>The Columbia dental students I met at interview day played a major role in my selection of the College of Dental Medicine</i>				
Strongly Agree	13%	62.86%	50%	↑
Agree	55%	34.29%	-21%	↓
Disagree	24%	2.86%	-21%	↓
Strongly Disagree	9%	0%	-9%	↓

Source: Student Survey, question 7, 8, and 9 Note. N=46

CONCLUSION

- The importance of research opportunities, the perceived patient pool, facilities, tuition cost, and financial aid availability have increased from the Class of 2013 to the Class of 2023.
- The importance of academic reputation, location in NYC, admission into specialty programs, class size, and curriculum have decreased from the Class of 2013 to the Class of 2023.
- Compared to the Class of 2013, less of the Class of 2023 perceives the tuition at CUCDM to be fair and reasonable.
- The importance of dental students met on interview day increased and the importance of faculty met on interview day decreased.