

INTRODUCTION

- A key barrier for disadvantaged dental students is the lack of in- depth support. Mental health facets have expanded and can affect many areas of students’ lives, reducing their quality of life, academic achievement, physical health, and satisfaction with the dental school experience
- “Our country has a discouraging history of not being able to make care accessible to minority groups — whether it’s because of lack of insurance, limited physical access (such as not having a clinic nearby, inadequate transportation, limited time), or even racism. It’s important to put dentists into communities that need care.”
- The limited racial and ethnic diversity of the health care workforce has been implicated as a contributor to disparities in health care access and health outcomes
- (Landry, 2012)
- In the fields of dentistry and medicine, it is noted that producing a diverse and adequate physician and dentist supply, particularly for geographic areas with many poor, racial/ethnic minority and uninsured residents, is one of several solutions for eliminating health disparities. In underserved areas both an adequate supply of primary care dentists and greater racial ethnic diversity is associated with decreased disparities in access to care
- Countless studies have shown that feeling a sense of familiarity enhances communication and patient satisfaction.
- The dentist/-patient relationship is strengthened when patients see themselves as similar to their physicians in personal beliefs, values, and communication. Perceived personal similarity is associated with higher ratings of trust, satisfaction, and intention to adhere to treatment.
- HRSA reported that minority patients sometimes tend to receive better care from practitioners of their own race or ethnicity...and that non-English speaking patients experience...greater medical comprehension, and greater likelihood of keeping follow-up appointments when they see a language-concordant practitioner.
- (Landry, 2012) & (White et al., 2014, p.52)

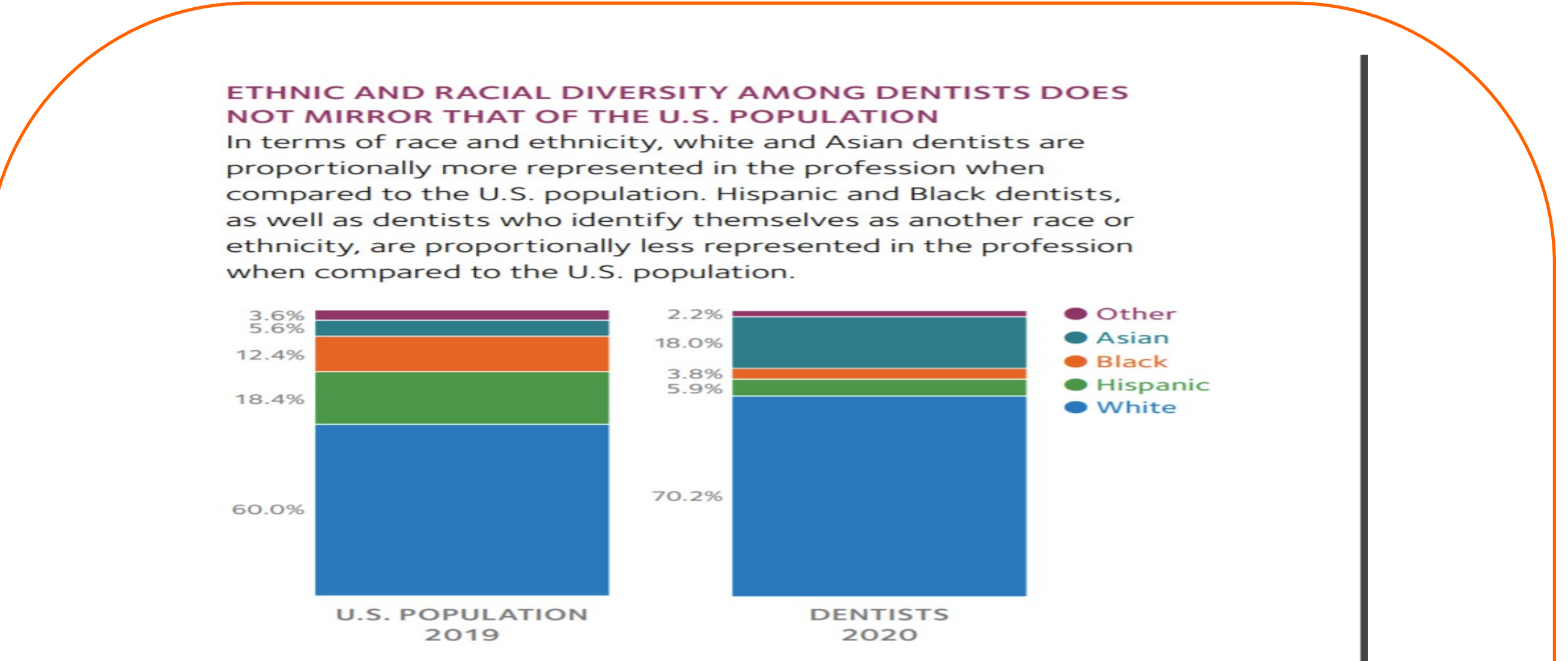
METHODS

- This Project the describes and assesses the trends, hardships and characteristics experienced by underrepresented dental students and dentists to include women and minorities and the impact on the dental workforce.
- Reviews of epidemiological studies and queries were retrieved from Pub Med, Google Scholar, and Embase. Most articles pertained to medical students and nursing students. There are very few articles about Underrepresented Minority Dental Students’
- Fifty articles were reviewed Fourteen articles were selected. Most articles were eliminated because due to information related to other professions. Some articles were eliminated due to lack of information on underrepresented populations.

Barriers for Disadvantaged Students to Enter the Graduate Health Professional Schools

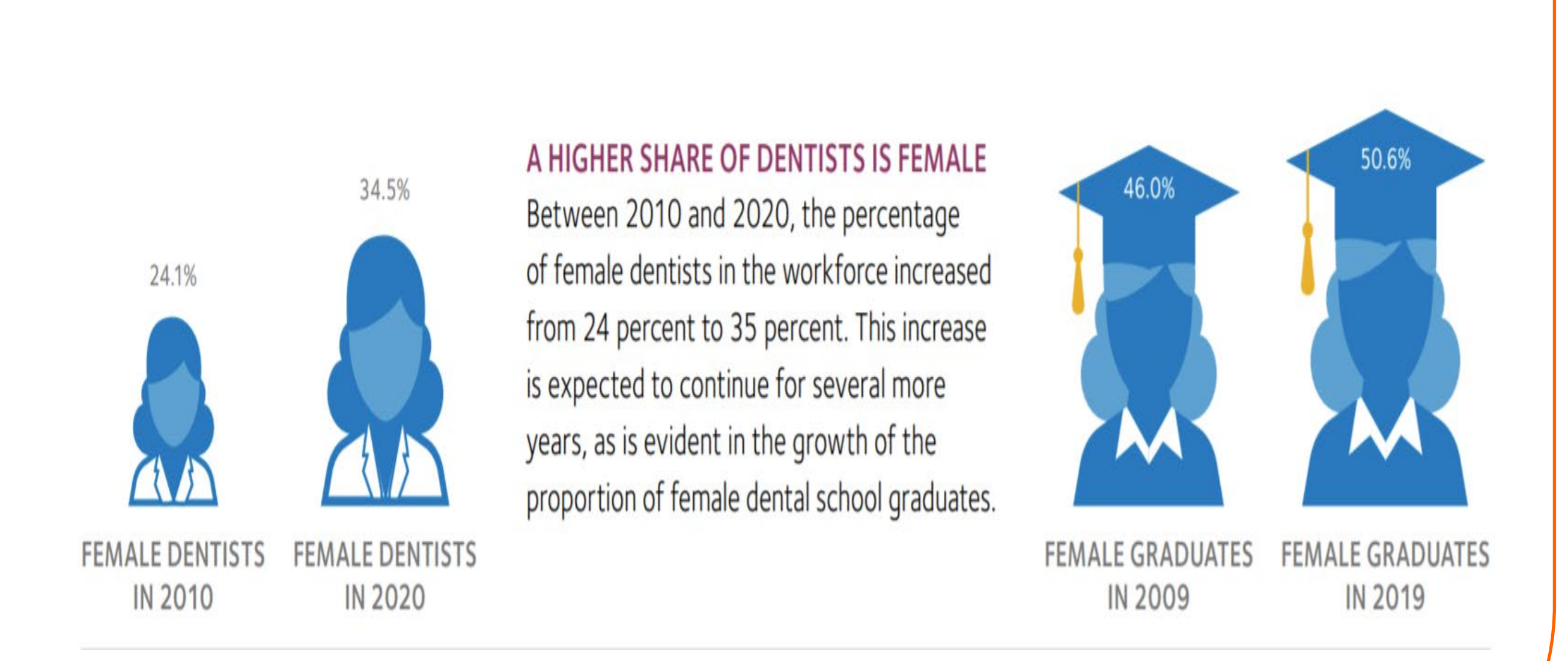
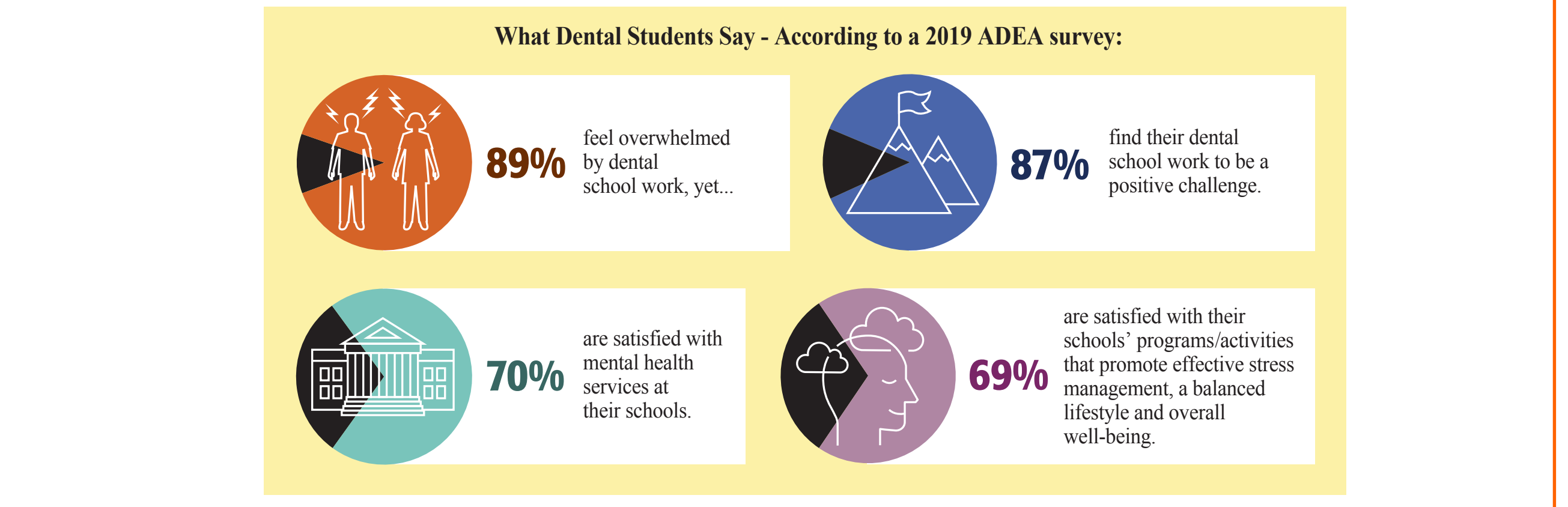
- The cost of education
- Fear of high loan debt of more than \$400,000
- Lack of academic preparation
- Admissions requirements, especially for doctoral degree programs
- Lack of concordant mentors
- Stereotype threat
- Limited exposure to health careers
- Poor advising
- (Wanchek et al., 2017)

TRENDS



Promoting Well-being and Resilience in Dental Education

Clinician burnout is a major issue among the health professions, with the potential to result in harm to patients. Providing students with the tools to nurture their own wellness and resilience will not only help them during their education years, but also equip them to better manage stress and burnout in their professional careers—ultimately benefiting their patients.



Elucidating Barriers

- U.S. demographic shifts make it imperative that academic dental institutions and, in turn, the dental profession must diversify to best meet the needs of the nation’s quickly changing population. (Clyburn et al., 2019)
- In addition to efforts to increase the diversity of dental professional students, oral health curricula need to be updated to ensure that future dental professionals have substantial practical experiences in a variety of settings (e.g., Federally Qualified Health Centers [FQHCs], nursing homes, local health departments). (Institute of Medicine and National Research Council. 2011)
- Dental professional education programs should:
 - Increase recruitment and support for enrollment of students from underrepresented minority, lower-income, and rural populations;
 - Require all students to participate in community-based education rotations with opportunities to work with interdisciplinary teams
 - Recruit and retain faculty with experience and expertise in caring for underserved and vulnerable populations.
 - (Institute of Medicine and National Research Council, 2011)

DIVERSIFYING DENTISTRY

- Since its inception in 1881, the Howard University College of Dentistry’s primary mission has been to maintain a fully accredited institution that will provide dental education of exceptional quality to all students, with a special focus on promising African American students, minorities, and students from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Overall, 58% African American dentists in the United States graduated from HUCD. An online survey was performed in January 2020 to track HUCD alumni that approximately 86.7% currently working as primary care dentists and 50% serve in medically underserved communities and socially vulnerable populations across 43 states in such settings as federally qualified health centers, homeless clinics, the Bureau of Prisons, and the Indian Health Service, among many others.
- HUCD’s multicultural faculty members and students provide oral health services to the underserved community in the DC metropolitan area.
- (Gu, X. Research forum 2020)

CONCLUSION

- Organize strategies for successful recruitment
- Develop processes for retention, and advancement
- Increase in scholarships for disadvantaged students
- Providing tailored student support
- Systems for academic success (tutors, mentors, mental health team)
- Engaging faculty and getting buy-in
- Overall, institutional changes must be implemented and supported
- (Wanchek et al., 2017)