

ABSTRACT: 2014 ELAM Institutional Action Project Poster Symposium

Project Title: *PENN path: to promote academic career in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery*

Name and Institution: Anh Le, DDS, PhD; University of Pennsylvania Dental Medicine

Collaborators: Vice-Provost, University of Pennsylvania; Vice-President, University of Pennsylvania; Chairs of OMFS programs; American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (AAOMS)

Background, Challenge or Opportunity: It is a major concern for our specialty as graduates from oral and maxillofacial surgery (OMFS) training pursuing academic faculty position is relatively low, estimated less than 2-3%. To advance our specialty, our task will be to develop a supporting and nurturing platform to enable a successful academic path for future generation of OMFS.

Purpose/Objectives: To promote academic career in OMFS

Methods/Approach: We will identify major barriers to academic career choice in OMFS and faculty career advancement using existing survey conducted by the AAOMS (database available to AAOMS member). Based on survey findings, we will develop mentoring/counseling networking to assist our junior faculty members and senior residents prior to completion of training.

We will leverage on existing academic programs, including the Faculty Educator Development Award (FEDA), the Junior Investigator Day and the Research Summit Meeting, organized by the AAOMS to develop mentoring and counseling opportunities through workgroup sessions, lectures, and websites. We will follow all candidates who benefit from these opportunities in terms of their career choice after graduation, their faculty appointment, time length to promotion, faculty positions at different academic tracks.

We will partner with other professional schools, Penn Medicine, Penn Nursing, Penn Vet, to organize a forum that will assemble officers from these professional schools to discuss strategies and best practices to promote and sustain academic clinicians overall.

Outcome and Evaluation: From the AAOMS survey, we identified the following barriers: 1) huge educational loan burdened on OMFS trainees; 2) lack of faculty mentoring and role model; 3) inadequate institutional support.

To address the educational loan burden, several initiatives have been taking place in the last decades to provide some forms of deferred loan payments to qualified health professionals (http://www.lrp.nih.gov/about_the_programs/index.aspx). The AAOMS has developed the Faculty Educator Development Award (FEDA) which offers funding support for 3 years to junior faculty with interest in academic career (http://www.aaoms.org/docs/residency/feda_application.pdf). In addition, AAOMS Day on the Hill has actively lobbied with Congress and Senate members for reform in educational loan repayment for OMFS residents. I will participate in the upcoming event on April 2, 2014 at Capitol Hills.

Other initiatives to improve mentorship and role model have been taken place under the new initiatives funded by the AAOMS, known as the Junior Investigator Day/Research Summit event which provides a forum for interaction between junior faculty and mentors to exchange academic interest, job searching, and mentorship. Several proceedings have been published in the Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery and an increase in residents and junior faculty participation has been documented. At Penn, with potential funding and support from the Provost office, I will organize a conference or workshop, which assembles faculty from other professional schools, Penn Medicine, Penn Nursing, Penn Vet, to discuss strategies and best practices to promote and sustain academic clinicians.

The last challenge is institutional and departmental support. Penn OMFS is developing a healthy funding support for faculty development via active continuing education activities, fund raising events. These initiatives have been initiated in summer 2012.

Some preliminary outcomes have been positive; however, further ongoing projects are underway to address the challenging academic gap in academic medicine and dentistry.



BACKGROUND

It is a major challenge in academic medicine/dentistry as the number of trainees, specifically surgical residents, entering academic surgery continue to decline. In Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (OMFS), the national percentage of OMFS in academics is relatively low, estimated less than 5%, whereas at Penn, we have maintained a three-fold increase (*Figure 1*). To advance our specialty, our task will be to develop a supporting and nurturing platform to enable a successful academic path for future generation of OMFS.

OBJECTIVES

To promote academic career in OMFS

APPROACH

We will identify major barriers to academic career choice in OMFS and faculty career advancement using existing survey conducted by the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (AAOMS) (database available to AAOMS member). Based on survey findings, we will develop mentoring/counseling network to assist our junior faculty members and senior residents prior to completion of training.

We will leverage on existing academic programs, including the Faculty Educator Development Award (FEDA), the Junior Investigator Day and the Research Summit Meetings, organized by the AAOMS to develop mentoring and counseling opportunities through workgroup sessions, lectures, and websites. We will follow all candidates who benefit from these opportunities in terms of their career choice after graduation, their faculty appointment, time length to promotion, faculty positions at different academic tracks.

We will partner with other professional schools, Penn Medicine, Penn Nursing, Penn Veterinary Medicine, to organize a forum that will gather faculty and leaders to discuss strategies and best practices to promote and sustain academic clinicians overall.

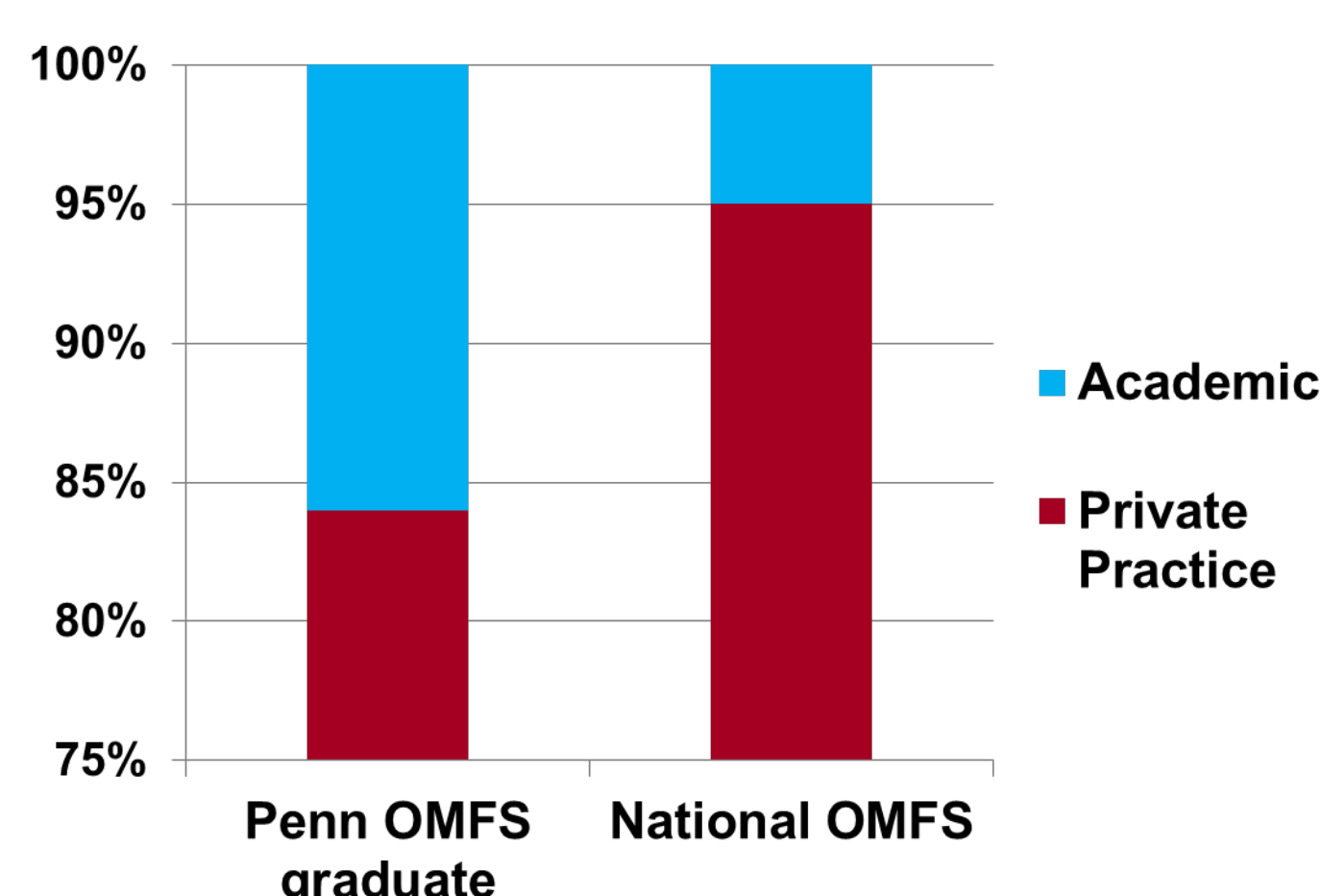


Figure 1: Current state of OMFS graduates in academics (Based on survey data by AAOMS 2013)

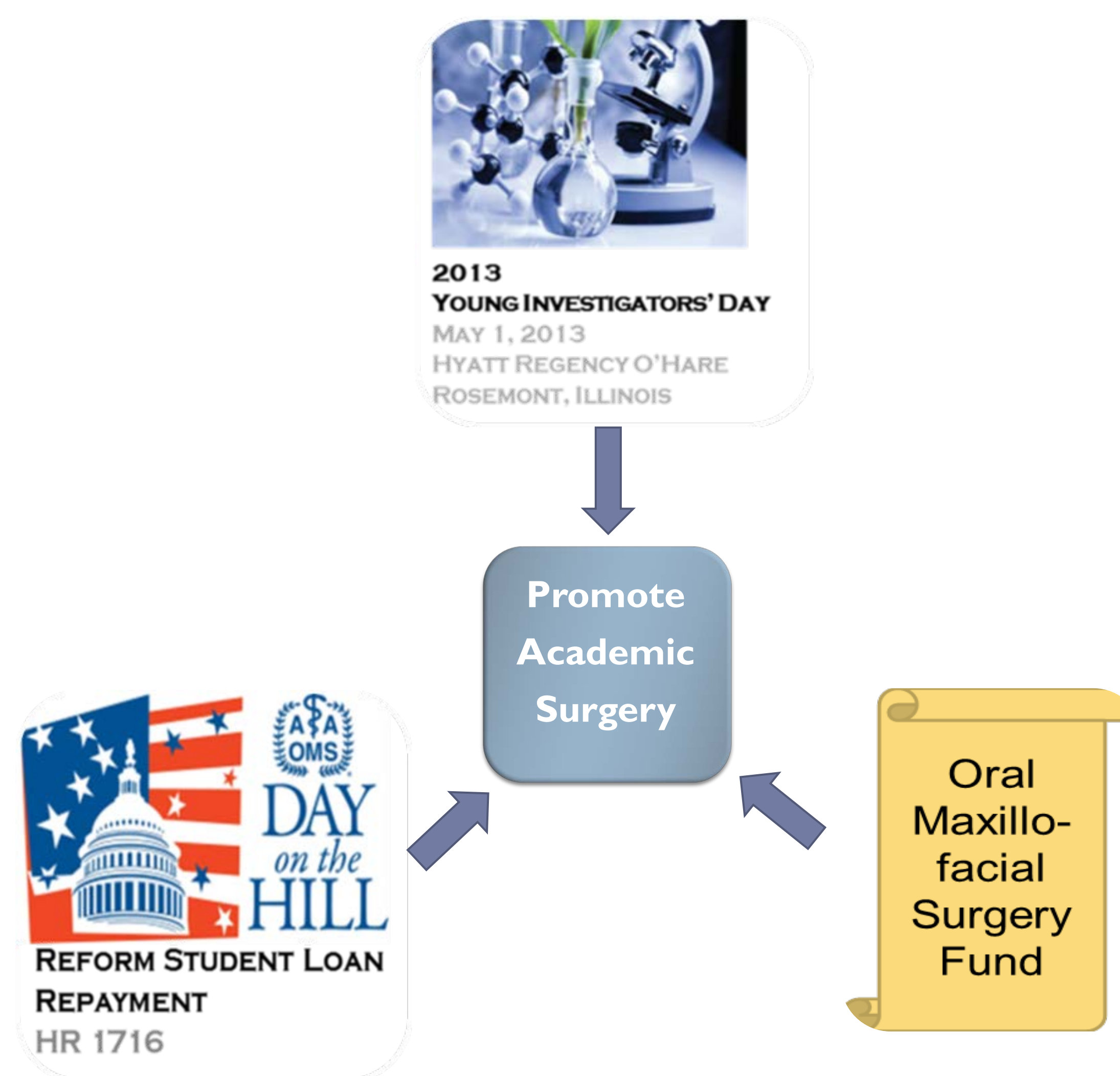


Figure 2: Strategic plan to promote academic career in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery



Figure 3: Day on the Hill--Faculty from several OMFS training programs lobbied for Reform of Student Loan Repayment at Senator Patrick Toomey's office at Capitol Hill on April 02, 2014

OUTCOMES

Major barriers that deter academic career choice:

- 1) Huge educational loan burden on OMFS trainees (tuitions for both dental and medical schools)
- 2) Lack of faculty mentoring and role model
- 3) Inadequate institutional support

To address these barriers, several initiatives have already taken place at Penn and at national meetings in collaboration with the AAOMS task force (*Figure 2*):

- 1) **Reform educational loan repayment:** actively participated in AAOMS Day on the Hill (April 2, 2014 at Capitol Hill) to lobby Congress and Senate members for deferred income based loan repayment for OMFS graduates.
- 2) **Provide a platform for mentorship and role model:**
 - Lectured on Career Development at the Junior Investigator Day/Research Summit-funded by the AAOMS-in May 2013
 - Multidisciplinary conference on promoting academics in health professional specialties-funded by the University of Pennsylvania Provost Office (pending project)
- 3) **Establish faculty development fund:** to provide salary coverage for academic protective time for junior faculty, and support faculty recruitment and retention
 - Develop continuing education workshops
 - Raise fund and endowment support for faculty position

SUMMARY

Several efforts have been initiated to address the alarming decline in academic surgery in our specialty which were funded by the AAOMS and NIDCR. Next steps would be to engage other stakeholders, i.e., OMFS training programs in the US, the American Dental Association, and other health professional organizations to jointly develop conference on promoting academic career.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Acknowledge AAOMS for the survey data and support of Day on the Hill, Penn Vice-Provost for Faculty, Anita Allen, for helpful discussion.