



# Team Based Academic Decathlon

Analane Powell AAS, PACE<sup>1</sup>, Arren Hill BS<sup>1</sup>, Zoe Stauffer BS<sup>1</sup>, Jake Graff BS<sup>1</sup>, Shaaffae Hussain BS<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Alice Akunyili MD<sup>1</sup>

1) Affiliation with Noorda College of Osteopathic Medicine Provo, Utah USA



## Background

First year students struggle to climatize to the volume of medical information in Medical School. This is one of the causes for increased anxiety around exams which leads to student burnout. To foster an environment of collegiality, cooperation, and wellness, the research curriculum at the Noorda College of Osteopathic Medicine involves an Academic Decathlon between students who compete not as individuals, but as a part of assigned research houses. This team-based approach harnesses the individual's strengths while allowing them the opportunity to realize their weakness in a manner that mitigates feelings of inadequacy and highlights their strengths.

## Purpose

The Academic Decathlon is a team-based competition designed to boost students' confidence and overall preparation for final and board exams.

## Collaboration vs. Competition



Academic Decathlon Winners—Mukwege House

## Academic Decathlon Events



Kahoots!  
Challenge



Practicum  
Challenge



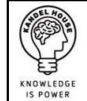
Pipetting  
Challenge



Anatomy  
Challenge



Pathology  
Challenge



## Methods

Upon enrollment, students are assigned to one of four research houses based on responses to a survey about their research interests and preference. These research houses are strategically designed to provide academic support, leadership opportunities, and social support for their research endeavors. For example, each of the research houses are responsible for conducting Journal Club, facilitate research projects, and host social and study activities.

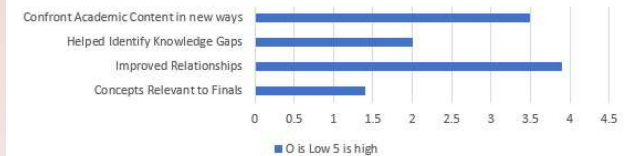
The Academic Decathlon is a four-hour competition between these four research houses, to test students' knowledge. Students demonstrated their knowledge and skills in eight different events including a Jeopardy style event, clinical lab exercises, anatomy demonstrations, and a Kahoots! game. Each event is worth points. The research house with the most points at the end of the event wins the house trophy and "bragging rights" for a year.

Following the decathlon, we sent out a survey asking the students to report their overall confidence and preparation for their exams and the extent to which the competition fostered collaboration instead of competition within the student body as a whole.

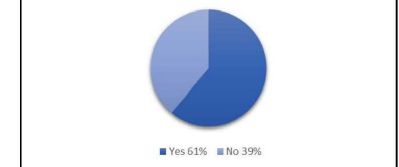
## Results

Our research discovered that the decathlon helped students to identify content areas of strength and to narrow areas of focus to review before the final exams. It prompted students to look at content in new and different ways while assisting in building/improving relationships with other house members. Out of the students who responded to the survey 38.2% identified knowledge gaps; 69.9% of the students reported the event increased their relationship with peers. Of the students who prepared in a group, 61% reported they would feel more comfortable reaching out to peers for study help.

Students Resonse to the Survey



Students willingness to reaching out to peers for study help.



## Conclusion

Team based competition helped boost students' confidence, relationships, and identified areas in which students should focus study to preparation for their final exams. The most common feedback item was that the groups should be smaller in size for the games to be more effective. 30% of students recommended the event not be held close to exam time and indicates that optimal timing needs further investigation.



## Interested in a Decathlon?

If you would like more information on how to run a decathlon at your school, please scan the QR Code and type in your information

