



# Ready, Set, Go: Preparing students to enter the race for post-graduate training programs

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## INTRODUCTION

- The American Society of Health-System Pharmacists Resident Matching Program's 2015 data reveals that of 4,358 applicants, 65% were successful in securing post-graduate year 1 residencies.
- There has been unprecedented growth in the number of US colleges and schools of pharmacy and increased interest in post-graduate training (table 1).
- The larger applicant pool and resulting competition for positions allows programs to expect higher caliber applicants, including students that are well prepared for the interview/application process.
- Some pharmacy schools offer activities promoting residency training, but few include formalized programs.
- At Touro College Of Pharmacy a formal preparation program was created to increase student readiness and preparation for post-graduate training.

Table 1: Residency Match and Available Positions, 2011-2015

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>Number of Available</b>	2173	2413	2694	2862	3081
<b>PGY1 Positions</b>					
<b>Number of PGY1</b>	3277	3706	3933	4142	4358
<b>Applicants</b>					
<b>Number of PGY1</b>	2027	2268	2495	2640	2811
<b>Applicants Matched</b>					
<b>into Residencies</b>					
<b>National Match Rate</b>	61.8%	61.1%	63.4%	63.7%	64.5%

## OBJECTIVES

- To evaluate student attitudes regarding a series of five residency preparation workshops
- To determine the impact of workshop attendance on students' post-graduate training readiness skills and match rates

## METHODOLOGY

- Five themed residency workshops were implemented over 12 months, targeting students in their third and fourth professional years (table 2).
- The timeline for the workshops was structured to coincide with local and national **residency** showcases and interviewing forums.
- Three formats were included in the workshop series: formal presentations, mock interviews, and a discussion panel.
- A 10-question survey was administered at the conclusion of the series to pharmacy students in their fourth professional year who attended at least one workshop.
- Descriptive statistics were used.

## METHODOLOGY

Table 2: Description of TCOP Postgraduate Training Preparation Program: Workshop One (AY 2015-2016)

Time/Date	Goals & Objectives	Topics
Introduction 8/2015 Open to all Classes	1. Introduce the different types of postgraduate training 2. Discuss the characteristics of a strong residency candidate 3. Discuss best practices of CV and letter of intent writing	What is a pharmacy residency? What is a fellowship? What can I do to become a strong candidate? CV and Letter of Intent Writing How to get the most out of rotations to prepare for post-graduate training?

## RESULTS

- A total 55% (12/22) students who attended the workshops completed the post-workshop survey.
- Approximately 17% of students attended all 5 workshops, while 33% attended between 3 and 4 workshops (figure 1).
- The majority of students who attended the workshops applied for residency training (75%) or fellowships (17%) (figure 2).

Figure 1: Student Workshop Attendance

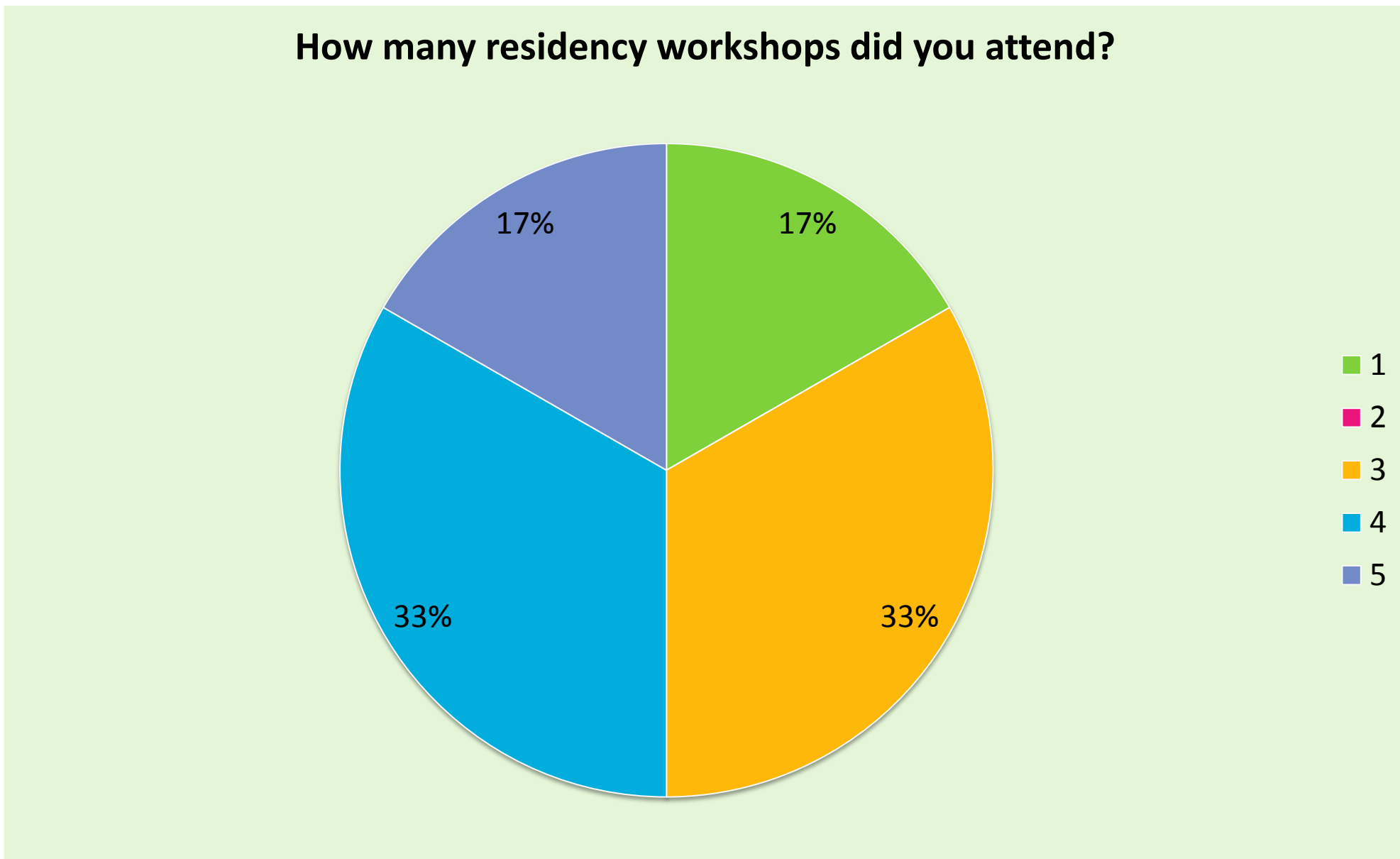
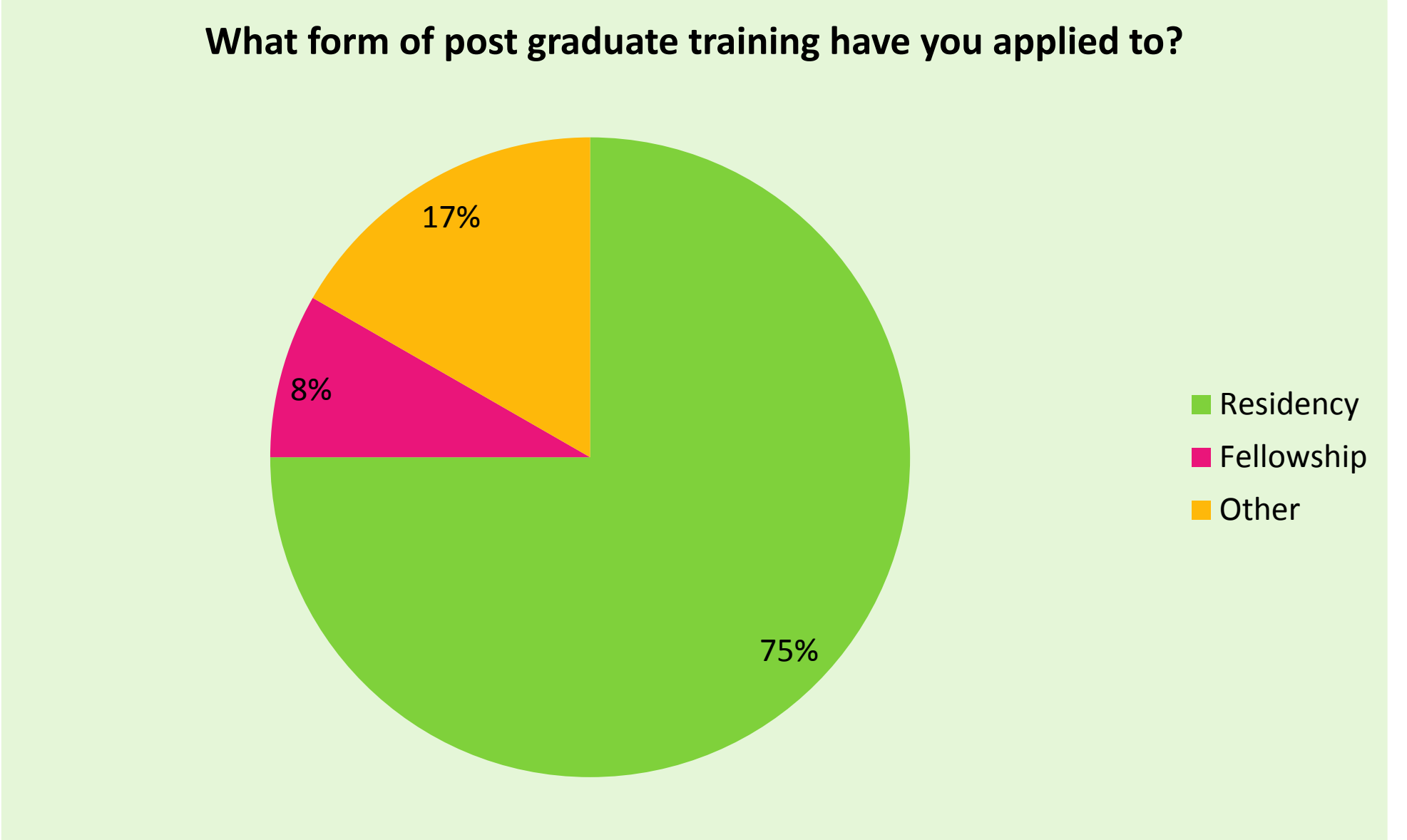


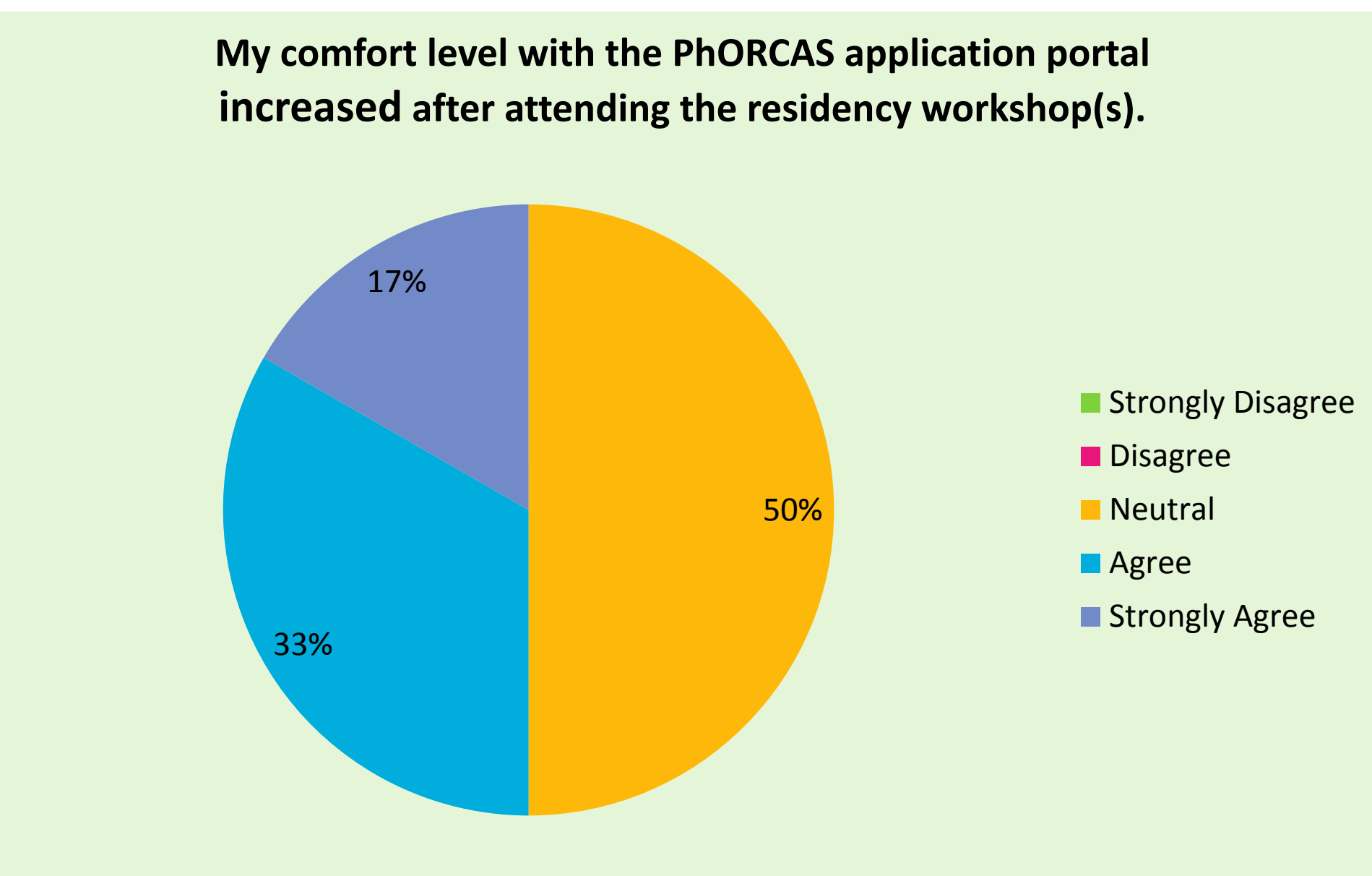
Figure 2: Student Applying to Post-Graduate Residency Programs



## RESULTS

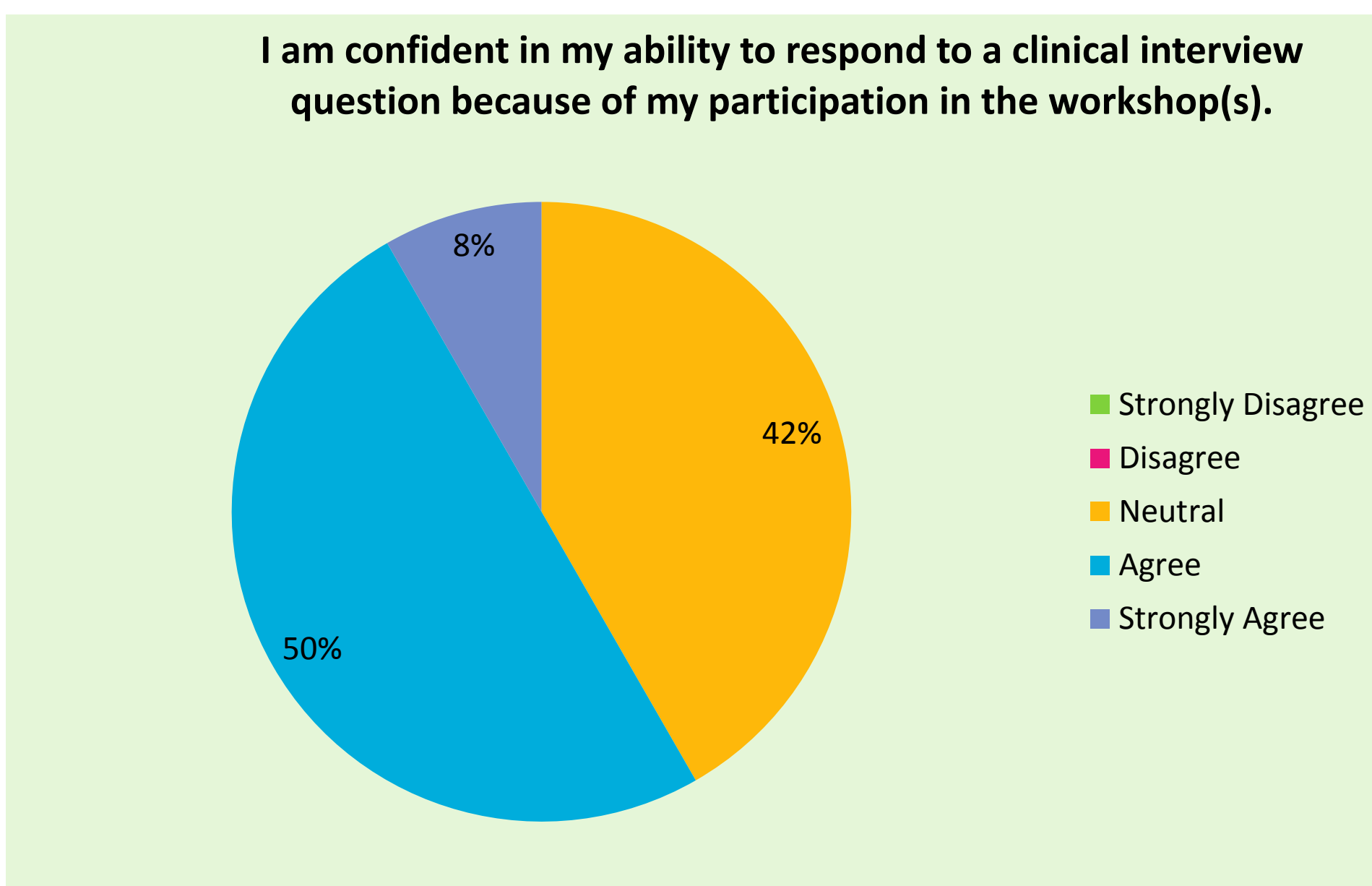
- Students who attended the workshops felt more comfortable navigating the PhoRCAS application portal.
- More than half strongly agreed/agreed (figure 3) that their comfort level increased after attending the workshops.

Figure 3: Student Comfort Level with Residency Application Portal



- Students who attended the workshops felt more comfortable responding to clinical questions.
- More than half of students (figure 4) directly associated their participation in the workshops/mock interviews with an increased ability to handle this challenging part of the interview.

Figure 4: Student Comfort with Clinical Interview Questions



- Post implementation of the residency workshop series 64% (14/22) of student workshop participants applied for residencies with a match rate of 57% (8/14).
- While the number of students applying stayed the same the match rate increased by 42% from the prior year.

## DISCUSSION

- The majority of students who responded to the survey attended at least three of the five workshop sessions offered.
- The residency workshops were well received and appreciated by these students.
- Many of the students indicated that the workshops increased their comfort level with the PhoRCAS application process and all of them agreed that they were better prepared for their interviews.
- The students also largely agreed that the workshops were instrumental in improving their skills in both interviewing and CV preparation. This was expected since each workshop was designed to include an interviewing session, in an effort to increase students' experience with and readiness for the rigorous post-graduate training program interviewing process.
- All of the students also agreed that they would recommend others to participate in the workshops.

## CONCLUSIONS

- Our five-themed postgraduate training preparation program at TCOP was well received by the students.
- We anticipate there will be increased interest in our program as interest in residency opportunities continues to increase among our students.
- We expect to continue offering this preparation program at TCOP and refining it to better meet the needs of our student body.
- Future programming may include additional information or sessions focused on preparation for the fellowship interview process, as an increasing proportion of our students are pursuing this area of postgraduate training as well.

## REFERENCES

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