

Limited Opportunities for Student Involvement in Infectious Diseases in the Mountain West: How a New Group is Bridging the Gap

^{1,2}Divyam Goel, ³Wendy Hobson-Rohrer, MD, MSPH, ^{3,4}T.W. Jones, MD, MMC, FAAP

¹University of Utah Honors College, ²University of Utah Office of Undergraduate Research, ³University of Utah Department of Pediatrics, ⁴Division of Pediatric Infectious Diseases

divyam.goel@utah.edu

@uofuinfected



Introduction

The need for infectious disease physicians continues to grow across the United States.¹ This need is especially pronounced in rural regions, common throughout the Mountain West, and efforts to encourage involvement in ID at the undergraduate level are lacking.

Methods

This study characterized student groups focused on infectious diseases (ID), microbiology (M), or global/public health (GPH) in eight Mountain West states (Utah, Idaho, Nevada, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Arizona, New Mexico).

1. Lists of undergraduate colleges (UPs), and graduate/professional schools providing either medical (MD & DO) and/or PA degrees were developed (GPs)
2. Institutional websites were searched for 1) the presence of student groups and 2) full lists of available student groups

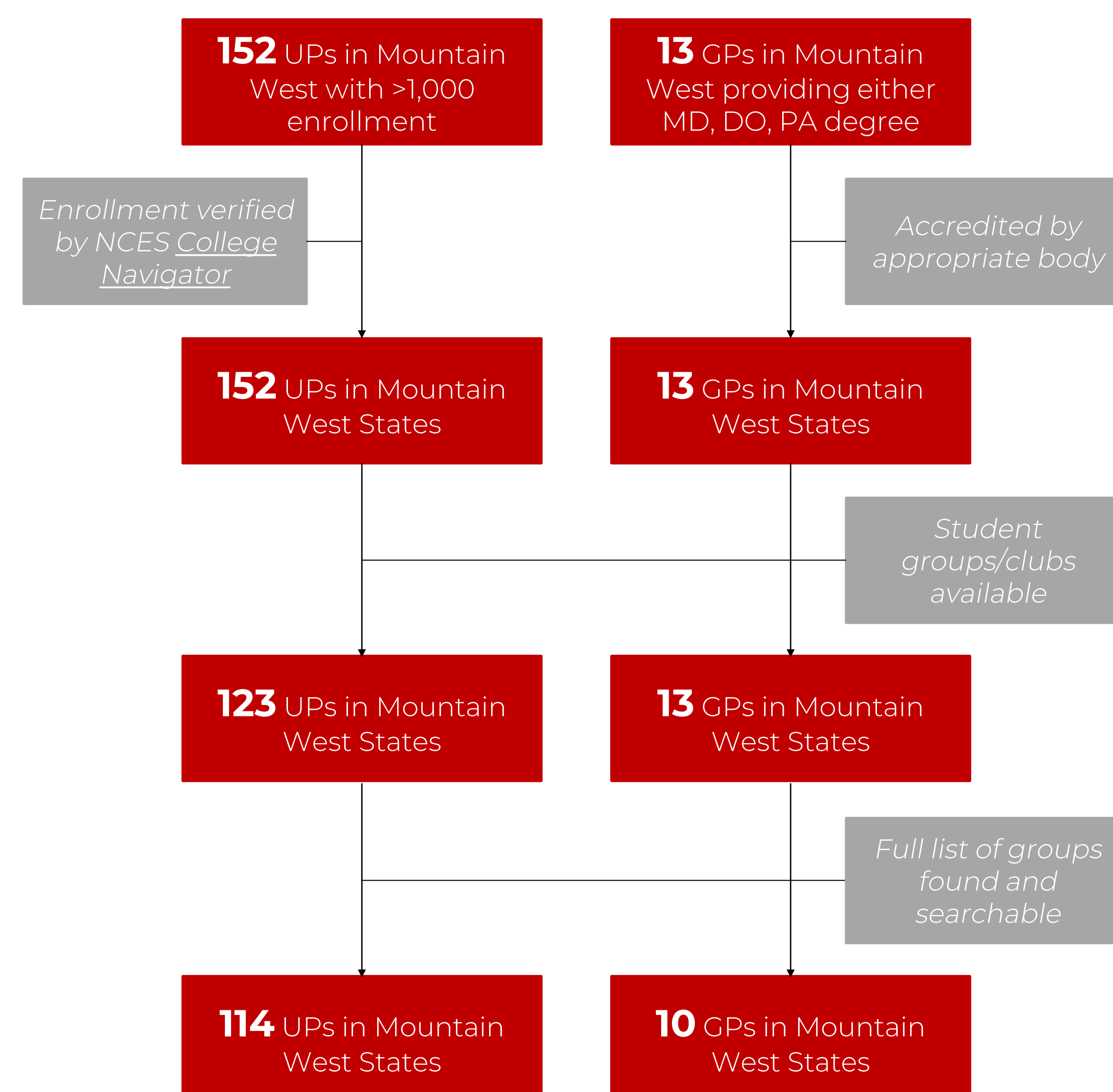
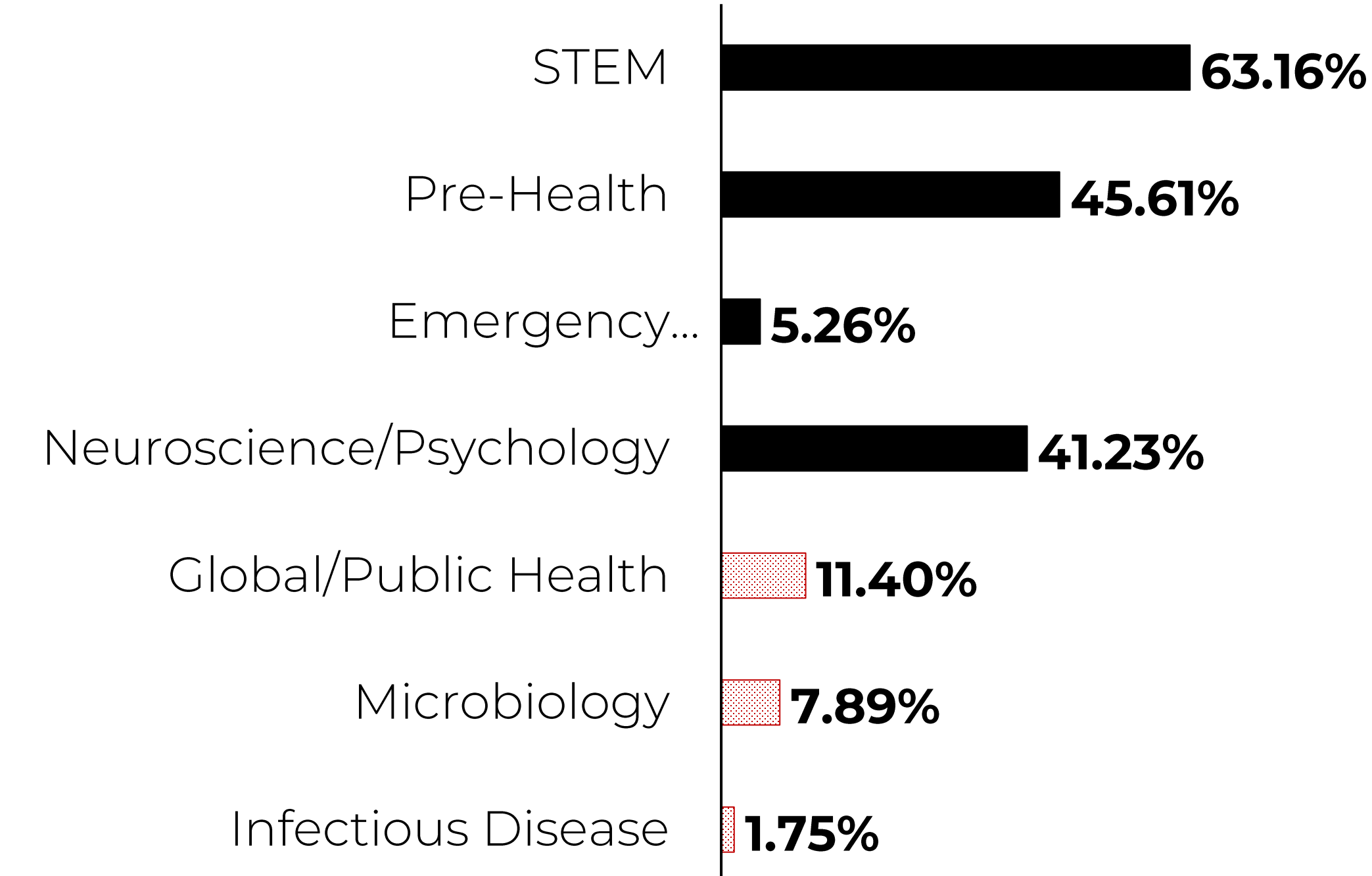


Figure 1 – Flow Chart of Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Results

Undergraduate Colleges

Figure 2 - Percentage of Undergraduate Colleges with Student Groups for Different Fields



Undergraduate Enrollment	ID	M	GPH	N/P	EM	PreH	STEM	# of UPs
1000-3499	0	0	0	11	2	12	21	43
3500-8699	0	0	2	13	1	14	22	35
8700-70000	2	9	11	23	3	26	29	36
Total	2	9	13	47	6	52	72	114

Table 1 - Percentage of Undergraduate Colleges with Student Groups for Different Fields

Graduate and Professional Programs

Of the 10 programs, 2 (20.0%) ID and 4 (40.4%) GPH student groups were found. In comparison, 9 (90.0%) programs had groups for emergency medicine and all programs had groups for internal medicine and neurology/psychiatry.

Conclusions

There are limited opportunities for students in the Mountain West to become involved with and exposed to ID and adjacent fields in microbiology and global/public health through student groups. More opportunities among student groups could help encourage student interest in infectious disease careers in regions like the Mountain West.

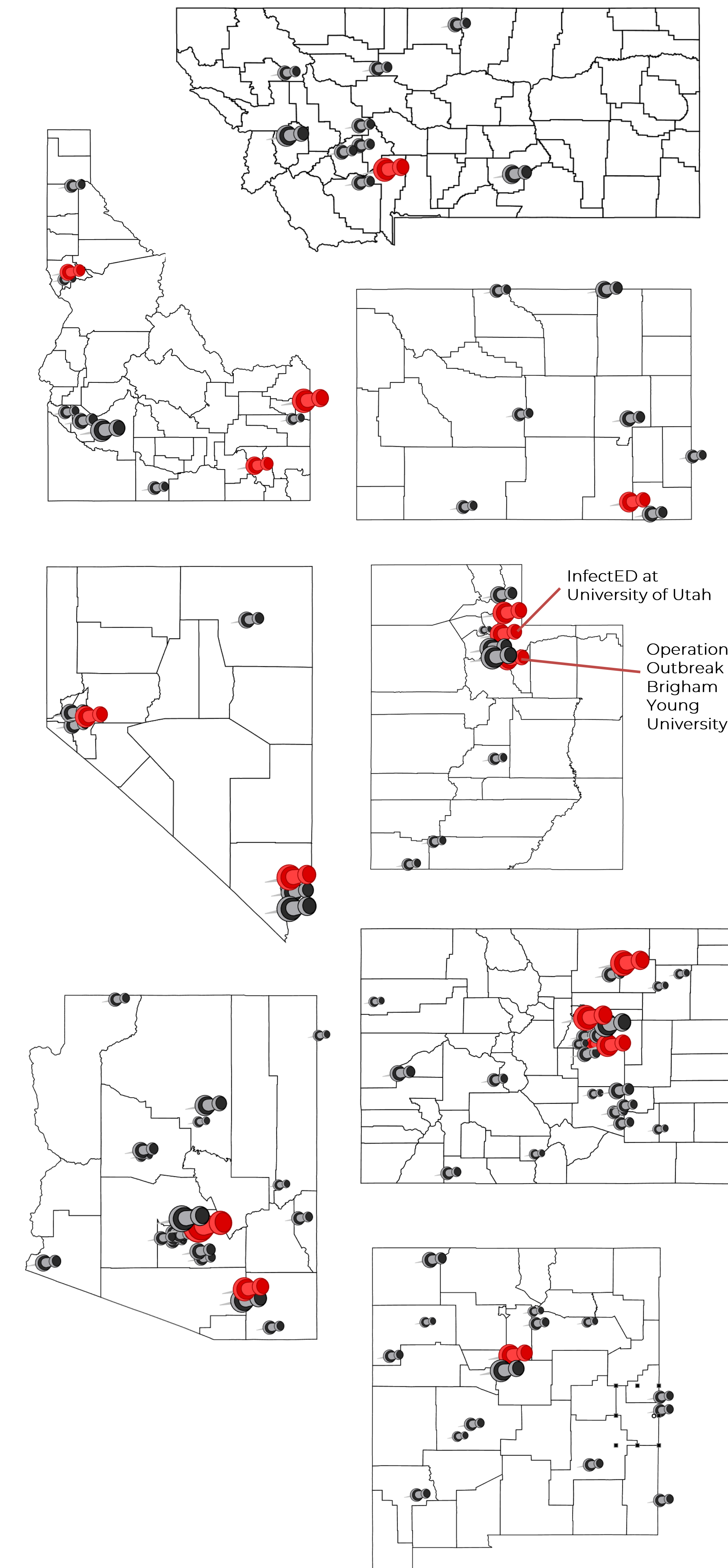


Figure 3 – Distribution of infectious disease, microbiology and global/public health groups across 114 Mountain West Colleges by State [colleges with any of ID/M/GPH groups colored red]. Push pin size roughly corresponds to size of institution measured by undergraduate enrollment. The two ID clubs are labeled.

University of Utah Student Group Spotlight

The student group founded at the University of Utah, 'InfectED', is one of two infectious disease-centric undergraduate student groups in the Mountain West. InfectED has found success in community education efforts, as well as on campus with student recruitment.

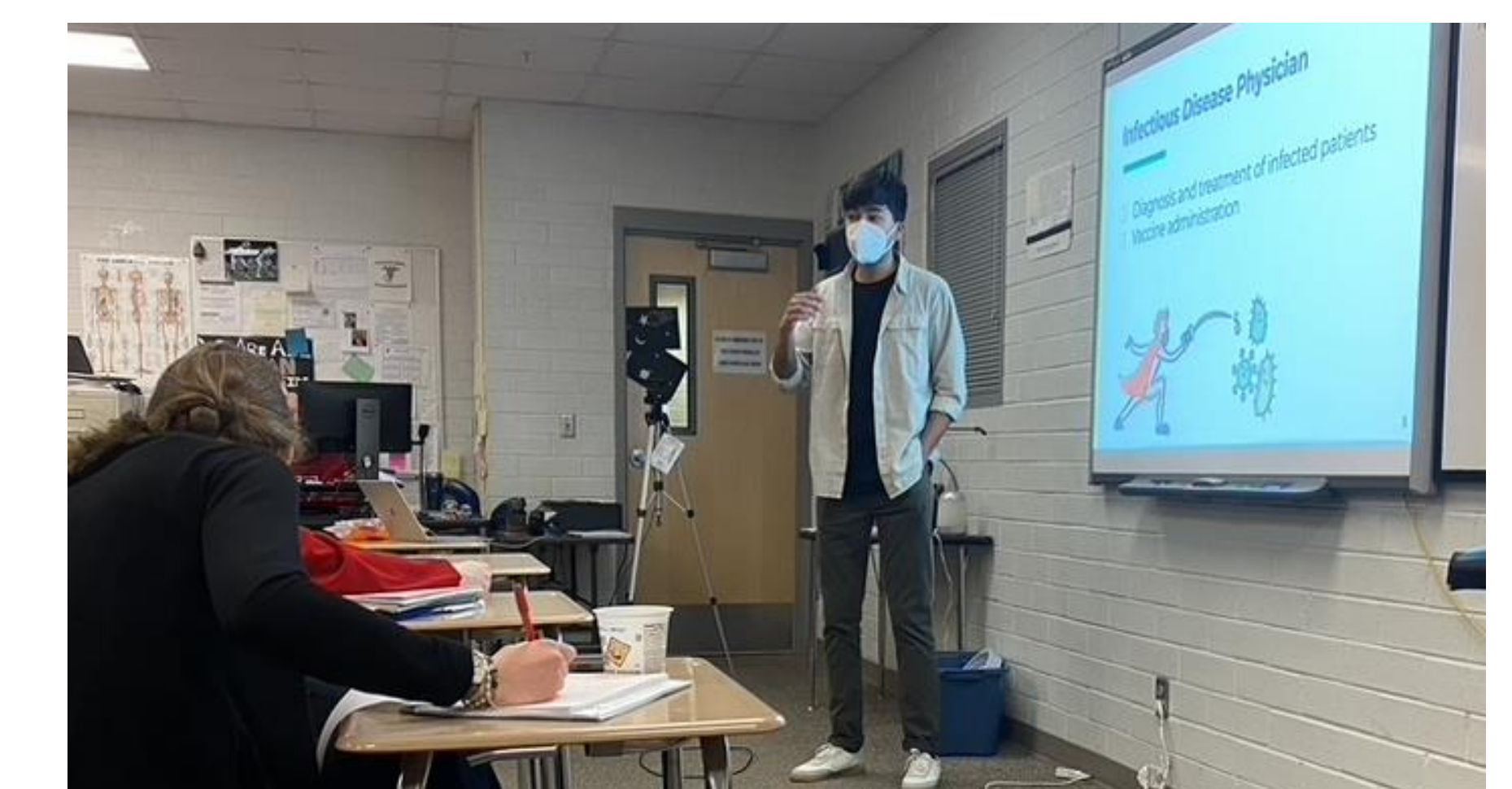


Figure 4 – An undergraduate member of InfectED leads a discussion in a local high school

1. InfectED blends attributes of different types of clubs to attract students with various interests.
2. Community education efforts in both English and Spanish attract students with a passion for education and community service
3. Journal clubs and guests speakers attract students with interest in health professions and research.



References

1. Walensky RP, Del Rio C, Armstrong W. Charting the Future of Infectious Disease: Anticipating and Addressing the Supply and Demand Mismatch. Clin Infect Dis, 2017 May 15;64(10): 1299-1301.

Acknowledgements

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