

BACKGROUND

- The Clinical Physiology course offered in the first semester of the UAMS PA Program suffered low student evaluation scores in 2019 and 2020.
- To improve these scores and engage students in active learning and teamwork, the faculty member transitioned the 5-hour endocrine module, historically delivered in traditional lecture format, into a culturally relevant, Olympic-themed active learning unit, the “Endo”lympics.
- This innovation benefits the UAMS educational enterprise as an active learning strategy in line with Vision 2029.

OBJECTIVE

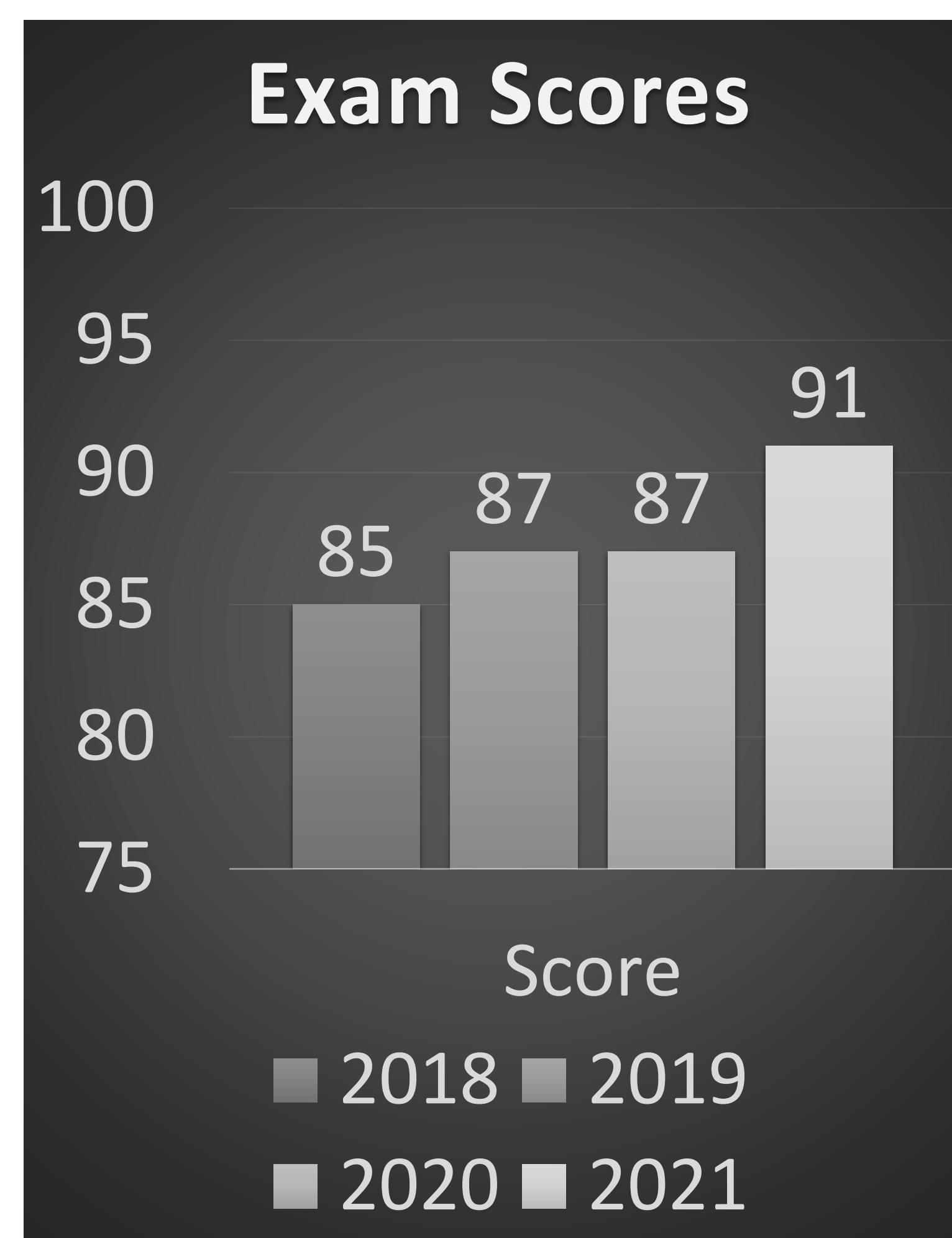
- Using Olympic-themed team-based learning activities, first year PA students will increase their knowledge of endocrine physiology while also engaging with their classmates to build morale and improve their teamwork skills.



METHODS

- The 38 students were divided into 9 teams and randomly assigned a color and endocrine organ.
- They designed a team “flag” which allowed them to creatively engage with each other and the content in a non-traditional format.
- Lecture material was presented via PowerPoint, and the teams competed in various activities to earn “Endo”lympic points:
 - Kahoot games
 - Worksheet activity
 - Jeopardy review game
 - Flag Competition
 - Team Spirit
 - Sportsmanship
- Using low-stakes formative assessments, students were able to gauge their own knowledge and apply the material to patient cases.
- At the end of the module, the faculty member conducted a closing ceremony during which medals were distributed for each activity.

RESULTS



- By implementing this active learning module, the students achieved improved exam scores for the content unit and built camaraderie with their peers, while the course showed improved student satisfaction on evaluations.
- The endocrine unit was mentioned 23 times positively in the course and professor evaluations in 2021.

CONCLUSIONS

- These results show that the students both enjoyed and benefited from the Olympic-themed active-learning curriculum.
- Exam scores, course evaluations, class morale, and student understanding of material all improved.



NEXT STEPS

- Consider a “Winter Endolympics” to bring active learning and excitement to the endocrine unit in the Principles of Medicine course, taught each December.
- Include more team-based activities such as relays and other competitions in the College of Health Professions courtyard.
- Reutilize this approach for the course in 2022 and conduct pre- and post-surveys to obtain more quantitative data from the students.

STUDENT FEEDBACK

- “The Endolympics were very **fun** and **engaging**, and I really feel like it **helped me learn** the material.”
- “The Endolympics were a **highlight** in the semester.”
- “It was a fantastic way to **engage** the class and make us **want to learn** to win for our team.”
- “The Endolympics were a great way to get **excited** about physiology.”
- “I speak for the whole class when I say the Endolympics were **amazing**. They helped us learn the information and **work as a team** to figure out the answers, and we also got to know **why** we got it wrong when we did.”
- “The Endolympics is absolutely **the best thing** to ever happen to PA School.”

