Participant Perceptions of the Aggie Student Pharmacists Initiative for Recruitment|Retention and Education (ASPIR2E) Pre-Matriculation Program

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Background

- Colleges and schools of pharmacy should work towards increasing the pipeline of diverse students to achieve a diverse student body because the learning experience of all students is enhanced.^{1,2}
- A diverse student body can lead to achieving racial/ethnic concordance between the future pharmacists and their patients. Racial/ethnic concordance has been shown to improve patient satisfaction, outcomes, and access to care.²
- Underrepresented minority (URM) students comprise one group in a diverse student body; more first-year URM students at the Rangel College of Pharmacy remediate or are dismissed compared to all other students who remediate or are dismissed.
- The Aggie Student Pharmacists Initiative for Recruitment/Retention and Education (ASPIR²E) is a project initiated with a 2-year grant from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) Minority Health Research and Education Grant Program.
- ASPIR²E includes four total tracks: two tracks for recruitment and two tracks for retention. The ASPIR²E Pre-Matriculation Program (PMP) is the third track and designed to enhance retention.

Objectives

- The objectives of this study were to understand the student perceptions of the PMP:
 - 1. Motivations for applying to the PMP
 - 2. The program's effectiveness in enhancing the participants' transition to the P1 year
 - 3. Areas of improvement.
- A separate study for determining the academic effectiveness of the PMP was conducted; please see Poster 178.

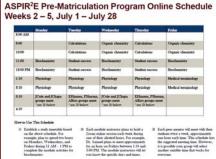
Methods

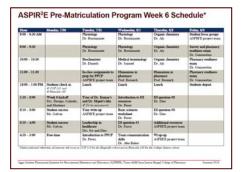
- Twenty-four Class of 2022 members were selected to participate. When selecting, emphasis was placed on URM students. When seats remained, additional priority was given to nontraditional students.
- Week 1 was on campus with housing and food. Weeks 2-5 were online. Week 6 was on campus but without housing. Participants were guided by—and interacted with—facultv. staff, and oeer mentors.
- Student perceptions were collected through pre- and post-PMP and post-P1 first semester surveys and preand post-PMP focus groups. Focus group meetings were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

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ASPIR²E PMP Summer 2018 Schedules





Results

- · Twenty-three students completed the program.
- Student perceptions of their level of knowledge in the six core modules and other areas shifted positively from very weak towards very strong.
- Students anticipated that the PMP would require moderate to large extent of work in all six core modules. However, only pharmaceutical calculations and physiology appeared to require the anticipated work load.



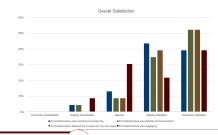


value of PMP—building relationships

- Peers, peer mentors, and PMP faculty members were found to indeed enhance the students' academic and social experiences.
- Data analysis of all open-ended survey comments and some focus group notes yielded emerging themes about the students' motivation for applying, the value of the program, and areas needing improvements. The most salient experience for the students appeared to be the relationships they built with the faculty, staff, peer mentors, and other students. The peer relationships they formed seemed profound.



areas needing improvement



Discussion

- The core subject of medical terminology was part of the PMP to help students prepare for a course that addressed learning the Top 200 Drugs. However, they did not seem to make that connection. In the current year's PMP, the medical terminology course was broadened to cover learning the Top 200 Drugs.
- Not providing housing and food for the final week was an often noted shortcoming. As a result, the sixth week of the 2019 PMP is also held at the main campus with housing and food.

Implications

- The PMP participants matriculated with a strong sense of belonging and an established network of peers, peer mentors, and faculty—social factors that enhance retention.
- The ability to offer a similar opportunity for all incoming P1 students would be beneficial.



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References

¹ Yanchick VA, Baldwin JN, Bootman JL, Carter RA, Crabtree BL, Maine LL. Report of the 2013-2014 Argus Commission: diversity and inclusion in pharmacy education. Am J Pharm Educ. 2014;78(10): Article S21.

² Nkansah NT, Youmans SL, Agness CF, Assemi M. Fostering and managing diversity in schools of pharmacy. Am J Pharm Educ. 2009;73(8): Article 152.

"There were two parts that I thoroughly believed to be the best parts of the PMP program. First, the hard science class modules such as Biochemistry, Calculations, Organic Chemistry, and Physiology were extremely helpful in that they not only helped me review old material, but also provided a great insight into how classes are taught and structured. Second, the social connections I had with fellow peers was one of the absolute best parts of the program. The connections I made allowed me to establish great friendships as well as great studying partners. If it wasn't for the friends I made during the program, my grades would have been worse as my friend group made during the program pushed (and continue to push) one another to do better in our classes and pharmacy organizations.