

A NEW INITIATIVE AIMED AT IMPROVING STUDENT SUCCESS, RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION THROUGH INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE



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College of Pharmacy

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Introduction

Initially, the first-year (P1) students are often overwhelmed by the challenges of the Pharm.D. curriculum and undergo an adjustment period. However, most students acclimate to the rigors and successfully complete the program. Some, unfortunately, need to remediate or are dismissed for academic shortcomings. Recently, the college noticed a rise in remediation and dismissal of students; furthermore, the underrepresented minority (URM) students were disproportionately represented. Therefore, the college sought ways to mitigate this trend and created the Aggie Student Pharmacists Initiative for Recruitment/Retention and Education (ASPIR²E) in June 2018 with a 2-year grant funding from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's Minority Health Research and Education Grant Program. The aim of ASPIR²E is to help meet the mission of the college by recruiting and retaining URM students—which supports the need for more URM pharmacists in Texas.

2018-2019 TAMU College of Pharmacy ASPIR²E Participants



Track 1-PPIP Track 2-PPAP Track 3-PMP

Design

ASPIR²E includes four tracks: Pre-Pharmacy Introductory Program (PPIP), Pre-Pharmacy Advanced Program (PPAP), Pre-Matriculation Program (PMP), and the Academic Coaching Program (ACP). PPIP and PPAP address undergraduate recruitment of URM prospective students while PMP and ACP address retention and inclusion efforts for our admitted students. PPIP occurs in the fall semester for first-year undergraduate pre-pharmacy students while PPAP is applicable to second-year undergraduate pre-pharmacy students in their spring semester. PMP is carried out for incoming P1 students over the summer. ACP is for all four years of the Pharm.D. curriculum. Our current undergraduate feeder institutions for PPIP and PPAP are Texas A&M University at College Station (TAMU) and Texas A&M University at Kingsville (TAMUK).

Results

During the 18-19 academic year, the College completed all 4 tracks. Through all 4 tracks, 87 potential future students, 61 of whom are URMs, have been actively engaged with the program. When unfilled seats remained in a track, additional priority was considered for other diverse and nontraditional students. Track 3's preliminary PMP results indicate significant improvements in academic performance and retention of URM students plus a tremendous sense of belonging among the participants, with the faculty and staff, and with the college. All four tracks will be repeated in the 19-20 academic year. Currently, Track 3 is in progress and preparations have begun for Track 1 to kick off again in the Fall 2019 semester.



Sofia A. Garcia | Prospective Pre-Pharmacy Student | TAMUK Student | ASPIR²E PPIP Participant

"What I absolutely found beneficial about being a part of track one in the ASPIR²E program was the amount of resources they were willing to give us in order to succeed. We were given a personal tutor, a mentor, and a great amount of information on applying to pharmacy school. I loved how easy it was to reach out to our mentors and how much insight they provided for us about pharmacy school and the profession."

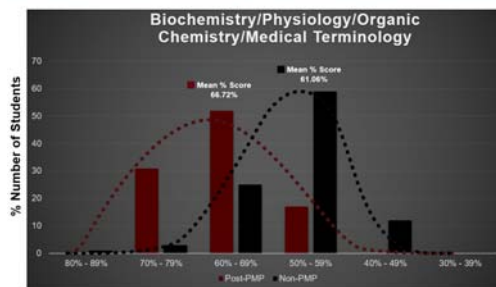


Arnoldo Gonzalez | First-Year Professional Pharmacy Student | ASPIR²E PMP Participant

"As a student getting ready to begin pharmacy school, I felt anxious of the class workload and a profound sense of loneliness of not knowing anyone. Thankfully, the ASPIR²E program alleviated my concerns by cultivating a close-knit group of fellow peers that could collaborate and learn together. Never had I been part of a program where making lifelong friends, fostering professional relationships with professors, and tackling P1 material head-on to be so engaging. Overall, the ASPIR²E program was the origin of my first sense of community and the stepping stone to a great future here at the Rangel College of Pharmacy."

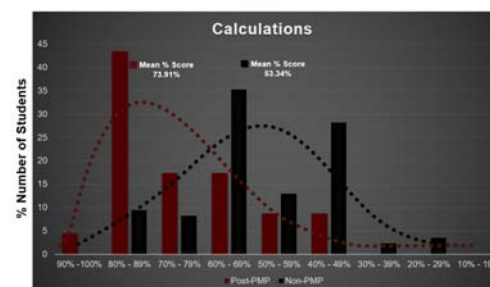
Period	Track	Completed	Gender	Ethnicity
Summer 2018	3 PMP	23 Class of 2022 admitted Rangel COP students	52% Male	26% Asian 4% Black 48% Hispanic 13% White
			48% Female	6% Asian 6% Black 72% Hispanic 16% White
			19% Male	18% Asian 6.2% Black 59.4% Hispanic 9.4% White 3.0% American Indian 3.0% Unknown
Fall 2018	1 PPIP	32 first-year undergraduate pre-pharmacy students	81% Male	6% Asian 6% Black 19% Hispanic 16% White
			19% Female	18% Asian 6.2% Black 59.4% Hispanic 9.4% White 3.0% American Indian 3.0% Unknown
			16% Male	21% Asian 11% Black 45% Hispanic 5% White 2% American Indian
Spring 2019	2 PPAP	32 second-year undergraduate pre-pharmacy students	72% Female	18% Asian 6.2% Black 59.4% Hispanic 9.4% White 3.0% American Indian 3.0% Unknown
			6.2% Male	21% Asian 11% Black 45% Hispanic 5% White 2% American Indian
			28% Male	21% Asian 11% Black 45% Hispanic 5% White 2% American Indian
Summer 2019	3 PMP	38 Class of 2023 admitted Rangel COP students (In Progress)	56% Female	21% Asian 11% Black 45% Hispanic 5% White 2% American Indian
			45% Male	21% Asian 11% Black 45% Hispanic 5% White 2% American Indian
			5% Male	21% Asian 11% Black 45% Hispanic 5% White 2% American Indian

Class of 2022 Pharmacy Readiness Assessment



Track 3: Pre-Matriculation Program

Class of 2022 Pharmacy Readiness Assessment



Track 3: Pre-Matriculation Program

Methods

The evaluation and performance measures for ASPIR²E includes formative and summative assessments that were both quantitative and qualitative in nature. Diagnostic (pre- and post-) measures were utilized to assess students' performance within each track. These assessments will be performed longitudinally within each of the four tracks to identify students' success and challenges within each track as well as progression between the tracks. These findings will help guide us to improve and refine each track along with building a cohesive initiative on how each track feeds to one another for achieving the program goals. Program Goals for ASPIR²E includes:

Goal 1: Recruit URM students into undergraduate tracks (PPIP and PPAP)

Goal 2: Recruit URM students into the PMP

Goal 3: Retain PPIP and PPAP students in the pharmacy school pipeline

Goal 4: Assess the effectiveness of the PMP & ACP in retaining URM students and enhancing academic success

Goal 5: Improve their acculturation of URMs to RCOP

Outcomes

The College is recruiting more (>40%) URM students, recording high success rates (e.g., licensure exam pass rates), and producing diverse pharmacists who can practice according to ethnic/racial concordance, resulting in improved patient outcomes. The retention has been over 94% overall since the beginning of the program. The sense of persistence and belonging seems to be improving and needs to be assessed and monitored.

Conclusion

By recruiting and retaining even more diverse students and helping them succeed academically, the College is taking great steps towards producing exceptional pharmacists to serve all populations in support of its mission and goals. In terms of recruiting for the incoming class, the college continues to recruit URM students from medically underserved areas so those students may return to serve their communities during clinical rotations and upon licensure. Forty-one percent of the current student body are URM, and the college has maintained an aggregate of 37% URM since opening. Also, at the end of the fall 2018 semester, the number of P1 URM students dismissed was reduced by 50% when compared to previous first year fall semesters.



AGGIE STUDENT PHARMACIST INITIATIVE FOR RECRUITMENT | RETENTION & EDUCATION

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