

Assessment of Student Wellbeing after Curricular De-densification in an Integrated Learning Experience Course Sequence

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Note: at the time the study was initiated, Taylor Steuber was affiliated with Auburn University

Background

- Student pharmacists face immense challenges when entering an increasingly complex healthcare workforce upon graduation.¹
- These complexities have led to dense pharmacy school curricula.²
- Student pharmacists may be negatively impacted by curricular density and hoarding, including longer class days, conflicting priorities and schedules, and decreased wellbeing, which may be low at baseline.²⁻⁵
- At Auburn University, the Practice-Ready Curriculum (PRC) was implemented in Fall 2017, which included the Integrated Learning Experience (ILE) course sequence.⁶
- There are 12 individual, 6-week, 6-credit hour ILEs offered P1-P3 year originally designed as a 3-hour, 5-day week course that integrates basic, clinical, and behavioral sciences, pathophysiology, and pharmacotherapy.⁶
- In year 5 of the PRC, we implemented a de-densification plan to transition each ILE to a 3-hour, 4-day week course with the goals to reduce curricular density, address physical space limitations, and address faculty and student pharmacist wellbeing.

Objective

- Assess the impact of de-densifying an ILE course sequence spanning three years on pharmacy student wellbeing.

Methods

- This study was approved by the Auburn University IRB.
- A 22-item survey was administered to P1-P3 students after completion of one semester of the 4-day ILE week.
- Survey data included baseline demographics and characteristics and how the students utilized the non-ILE day (P1-P3).
- Additionally, P2-P3 students were asked how the change affected various aspects of wellbeing (mental and physical health), academic performance, and their preference for a 4-day versus 5-day ILE week.
- Descriptive statistics were used to describe overall trends and summarize data.

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Link to
full survey →

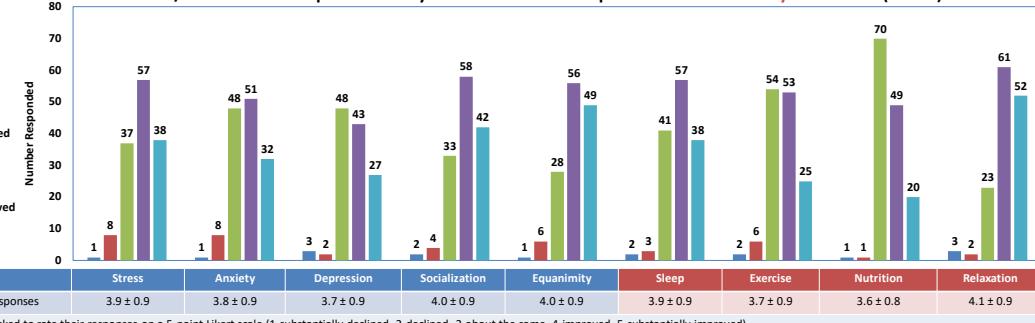
Baseline Characteristics (n=206)^a

Campus Attended, n (%)	
Auburn	179 (87)
Mobile	27 (13)
Year in School, n (%)	
Class of 2026 (P1)	64 (31)
Class of 2025 (P2)	75 (36)
Class of 2024 (P3)	67 (33)
Pre-Pharmacy Coursework, n (%)	
Auburn University	111 (55)
University of South Alabama	18 (9)
Other Institution	74 (36)
Hours Worked During School, n (%)	
None	79 (40)
0-10 hours per week	70 (34)
11-20 hours per week	46 (23)
21-30 hours per week	6 (3)
More than 30 hours per week	2 (1)
Age, n (%)	
20-24	146 (72)
25-29	46 (23)
30-34	6 (3)
35-39	5 (2)
Other Characteristics, n (%)	
Married	34 (17)
Children	12 (6)
Live Alone	63 (31)
Caregiver for Family Member	12 (6)
Commute More than 30 Minutes	22 (11)

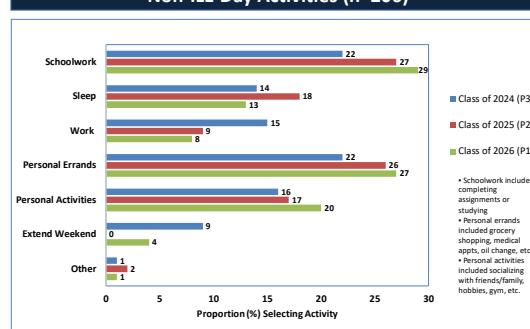
^aResponse rate = 52.8%

Results

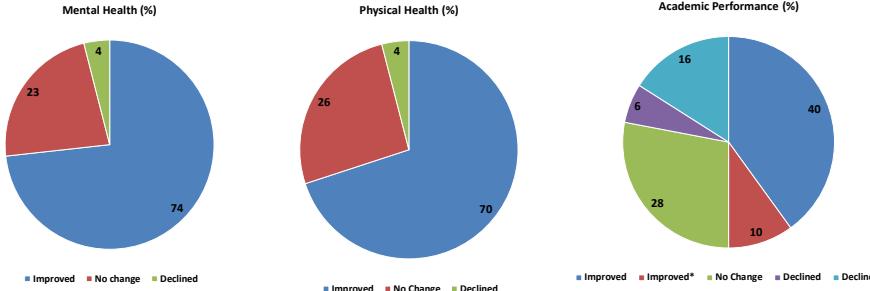
P2/P3 Student Perception of 4-Day ILE Week Effect on Aspects of Mental and Physical Health (n=141)



Non-ILE Day Activities (n=206)



P2/P3 Student Perception of Overall Impact of 4-Day ILE Week (n=141)



Discussion/Conclusion

- De-densifying from a 5-day to 4-day ILE week removed approximately 30 hours/semester of class time, allowing students additional time for academic and personal activities.
- Decreasing class contact time and content within the ILE course sequence positively impacted multiple areas of student wellbeing.
 - The most common activities for non-ILE day: schoolwork, personal errands.
 - There was an overall impact on both mental and physical health as well as academic performance, with more students reporting an improvement in mental health over all other aspects.
 - Socialization and stress were the two aspects of mental health that were most improved, while depression and anxiety were least affected.
 - Sleep and relaxation were the two aspects of physical health that were most improved, while exercise and nutrition were the least affected.
- Limitations include survey response rate (52.8%) and potential recall bias (survey focused on student self-report and perceptions).
- Additional efforts to de-densify the pharmacy curriculum through prioritization of content and consideration for overall student well-being should be continued.

References

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