

An innovative approach to reduce education costs and enhance the applicant pipeline in a PharmD program



COLLEGE OF
PHARMACY
UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

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Objective

Nationally, applications and enrollments for colleges/schools of pharmacy have steadily declined for several years. At the same time, the cost of pharmacy education continues rising. For many persons, this is a barrier to enter the profession. Locally, entering class sizes at the University of Utah College of Pharmacy (UUCOP) have decreased leading to sustainability concerns. Additionally, with a renewed focus on diversity and inclusion, the UUCOP is seeking ways of marketing to and admitting students from a variety of backgrounds into the Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) program. With these realities, the UUCOP launched the First Year Free (FYF) initiative to completely cover the cost of tuition for all incoming students in their first year of the PharmD program.

Methodology

Through a generous philanthropic gift from a partnering foundation, the UUCOP created an endowment that will fund the majority of FYF for the foreseeable future. University administration also supported FYF by offset of additional tuition. All matriculated students, regardless of whether they are from Utah or another state, will not pay any tuition for their first academic year.

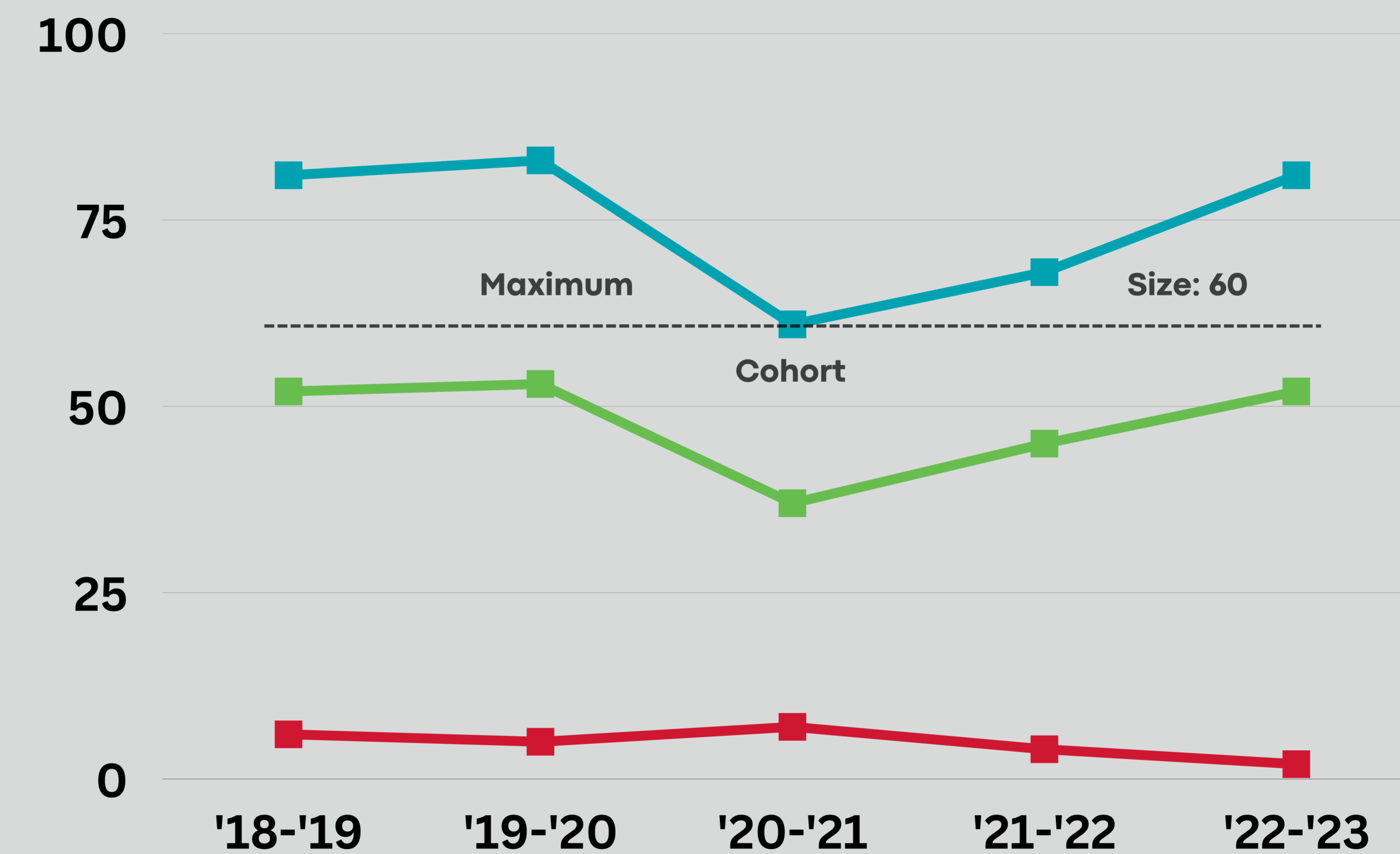
Results

FYF reduces the total tuition cost for an in-state applicant by over \$32,000 and an out-of-state applicant over \$62,000. Marketing and recruitment efforts are ongoing following the announcement of FYF in October 2022. Data are being collected related to interest generated, number of applications, retention of accepted students, and other key metrics and demographic information.

PharmD Cohort Size

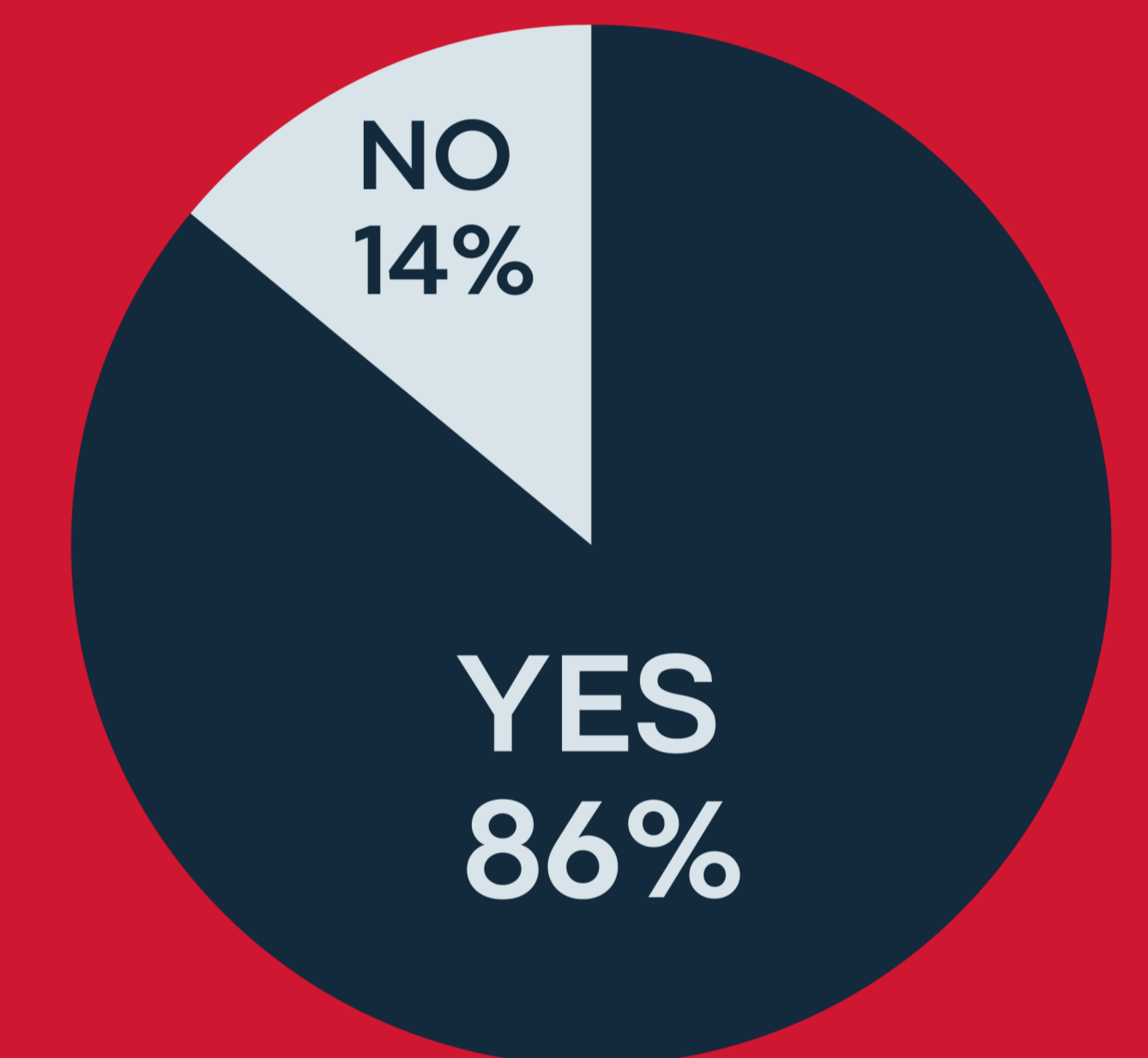
*Prev. 5 Cycles

- = Interviews
- = Matriculated
- = Melt



Students Requiring Loans

*via AACP Grad Survey



First Year Free Impact

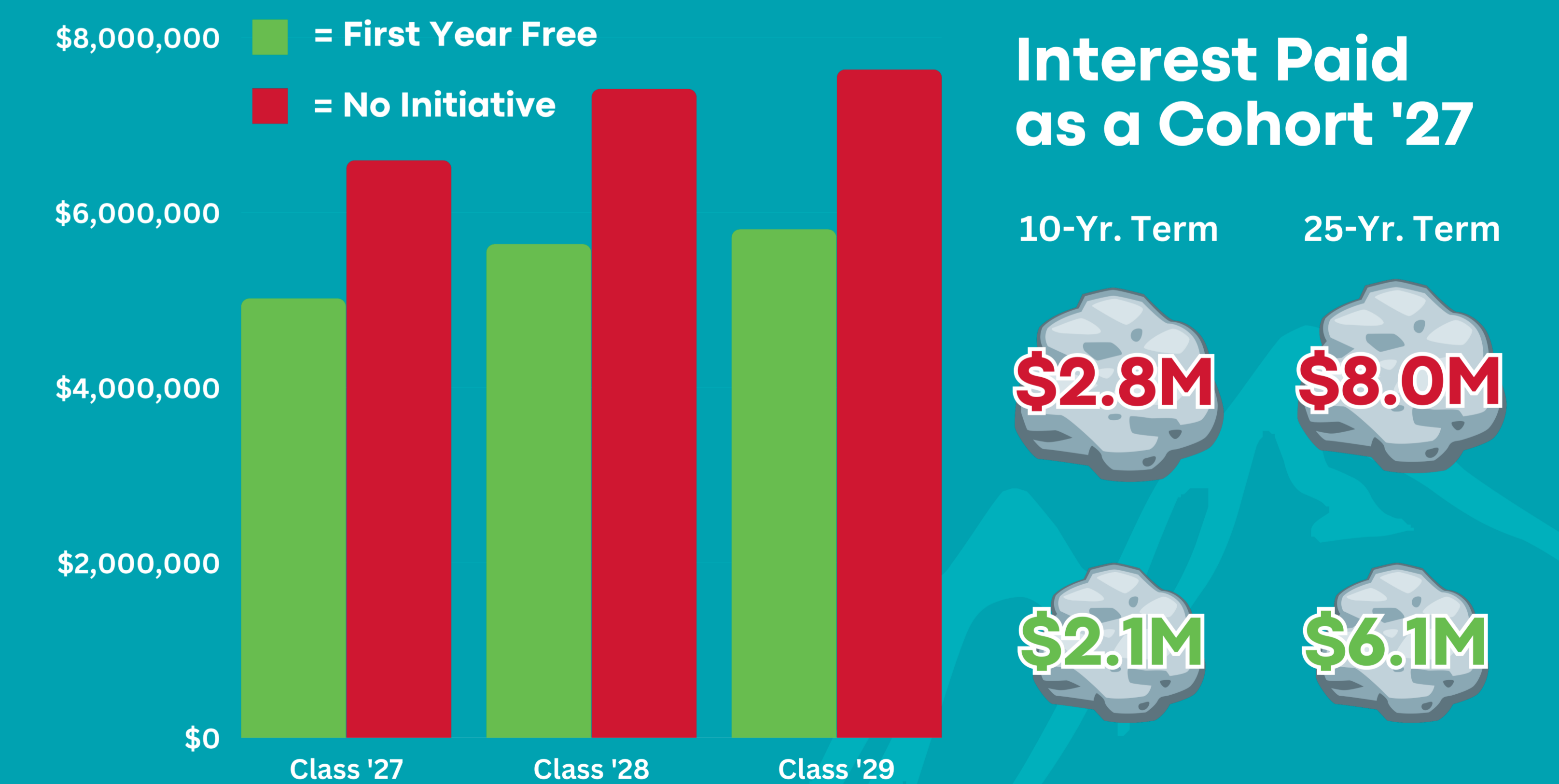


Total PharmD Education Savings

*Class of 2027

- Cost w/o FYF: ~\$139K
- Cost w/FYF: ~\$106K

*Per Student, Assuming No Loans



Student Loan Burden

*Based on Unsubsidized Loan Maximums and Federal Interest Rates (7.05-8.05%)

Recommendations



- (1) Schools/colleges should seek creative, sustainable means to reduce to cost of pharmacy education
- (2) Lowering the cost of education can lead to an enhanced recruitment pipeline
- (3) More research is needed on the impact of lowering the education cost on diversity and student outcomes

Authors

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Title

First Year Free: A Novel Program to Enhance Diversity and Affordability in PharmD Education