

# Strengthening Student Well-Being Initiatives to Improve Student Success

Nicole Pizzutelli, Jaime Maerten-Rivera, Karl Fiebelkorn, Kalpesh Desai, Jennifer Rosenberg, Christine Stumm, Ashley Woodruff  
University at Buffalo School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences



## Objective

- To develop and implement initiatives to promote and improve pharmacy student well-being using a data-driven approach.
- To administer a Student Experience survey and evaluate student responses on well-being.

## Background

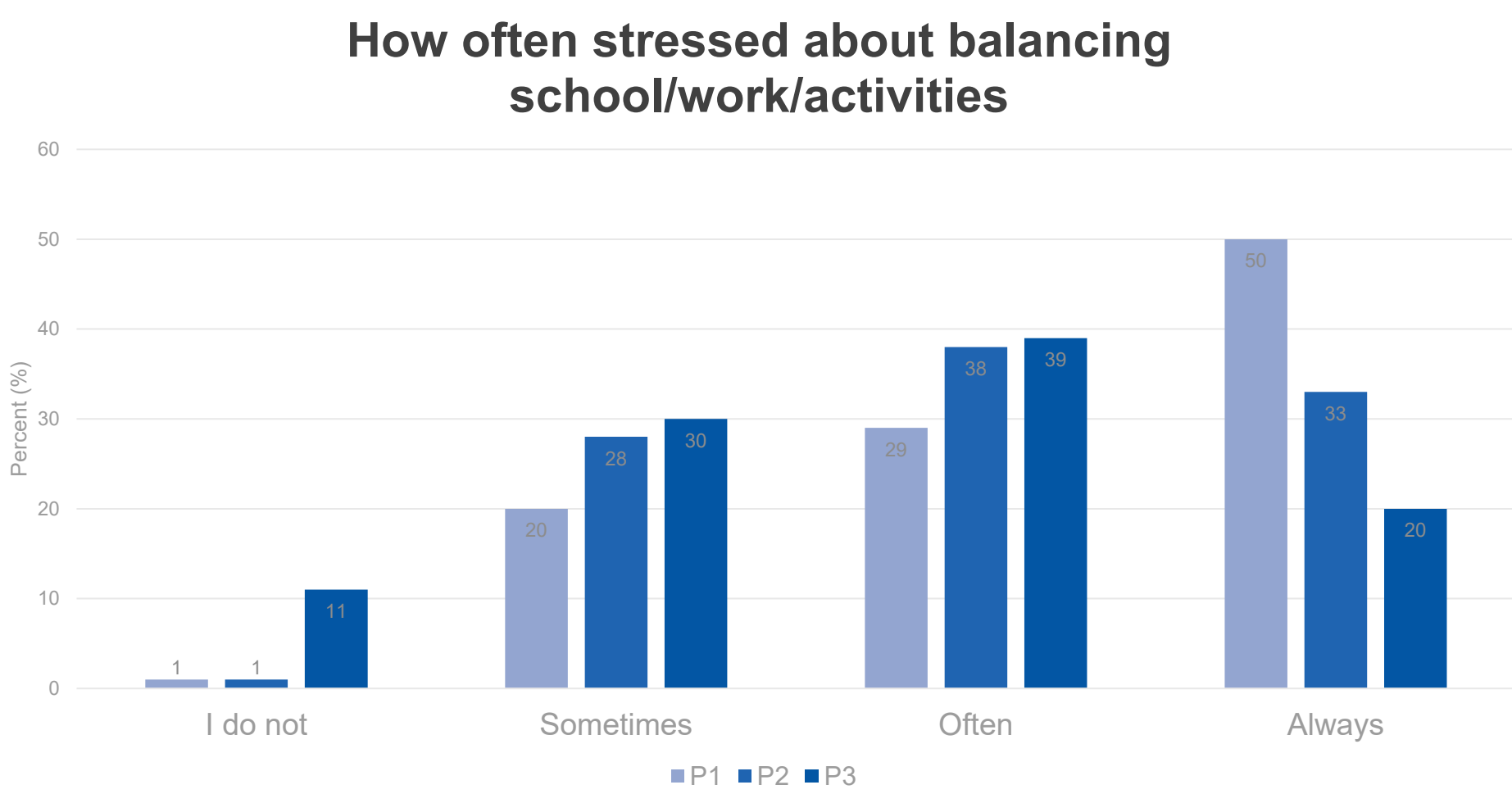
- The ACPE Standards state “all administrators, faculty, staff, preceptors, student pharmacists and alumni should contribute to a culture of wellness and resilience in pharmacy education.”
- Pharmacy is an academically demanding and rigorous program that is often stressful.
- The University at Buffalo School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences (UB SPPS) continuously strives to identify strategies, resources and initiatives to support students.
- UB SPPS, founded in 1886, is a public four-year PharmD program with approximately 130 students per cohort.



## Methods

- A Student Experience survey was administered to PY1-PY3 students in Spring 2022 to assess multiple areas of the PharmD program.
- The survey was internally developed by teams of faculty, staff and students.
- Student team members advocated for inclusion of a “well-being” section within the survey.
- Response rate was PY1 (79%), PY2 (68%) and PY3 (79%).
- The well-being section contained items using a five-point Likert rating system with scales to measure:
  - 1 learning climate
  - 2 connectedness
  - 3 faculty perceptions
  - 4 value and respect
  - 5 life balance
  - 6 financial well-being
- An open-ended item asked students what changes they would propose to improve students’ overall well-being.

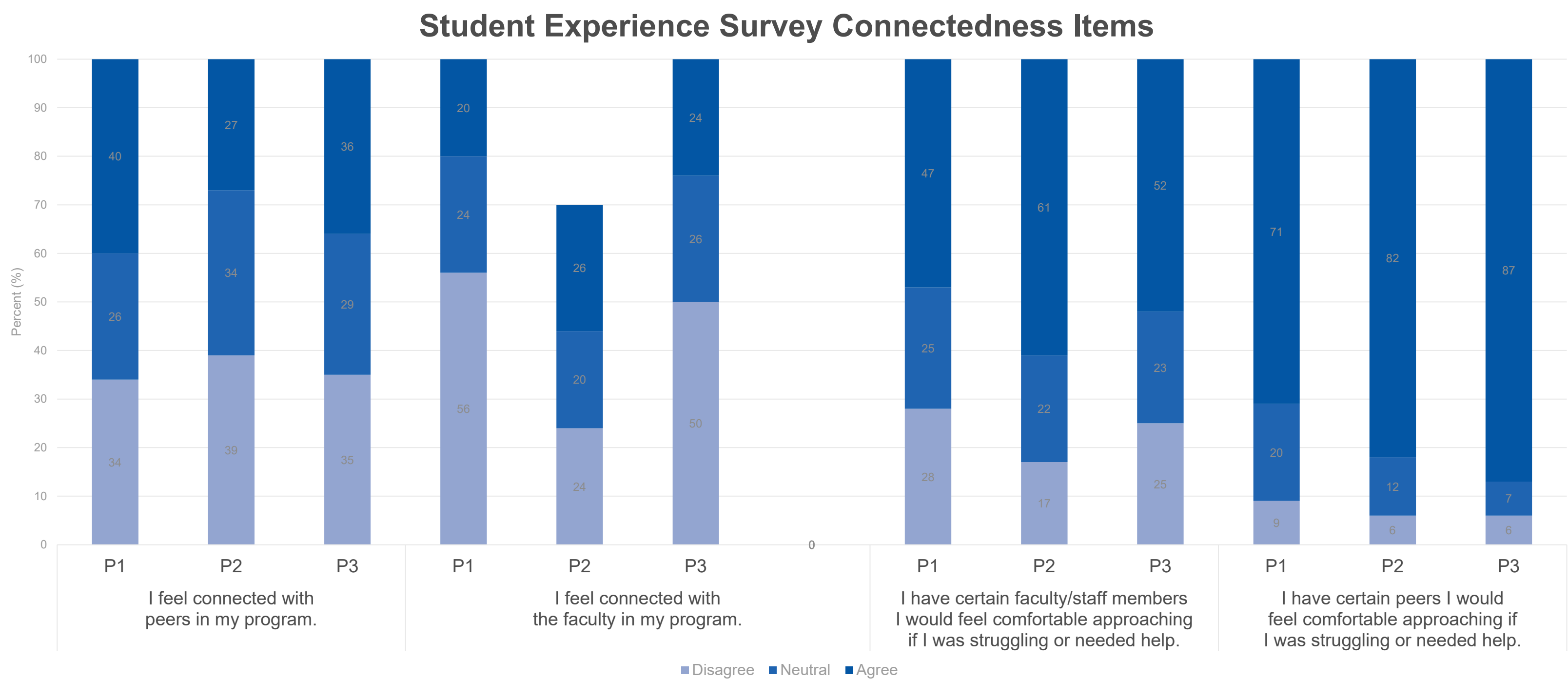
## Results



### Open-ended Question

“What changes would you propose to the UB SPPS PharmD program that would improve students’ overall well-being?”

- Scheduling of exams
- Weekly schedule
- Faculty engagement
- Student activities/school activities
- Mental health support/mental health days



## Well-Being Initiatives & Activities

- Embedded mental health counselor onsite in building
- Wellness “alert” communication tool implemented for faculty & staff
- “Quiet space” dedicated to meditation, prayer, and quiet time
- Midday breaks with snacks and games
- Self-care workshop (required)
- Financial literacy workshop (required)
- Yoga classes (optional)
- Interpersonal skill-building workshop (optional)
- Conflict de-escalation workshop (optional)
- Pet therapy (optional)
- Guided meditation sessions (optional)

## Conclusion

Our school strives to promote well-being and inclusivity throughout the PharmD program, from the admissions process through graduation. The goal is for graduates to develop practices that extend beyond graduation and into the future. Based on the result of high positive agreement on students’ stress level and other factors, we developed programming responsive to students’ needs. The process followed can serve as an example for other schools.

## Reference

Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education. Accreditation Standards and Key Elements for the Professional Program in Pharmacy Leading to the Doctor of Pharmacy Degree ("Standards 2016"). Published February 2015. <https://www.acpe-accredit.org/pdf/Standards2016FINAL.pdf>. Accessed July 26, 2019.