



VCU

School of Pharmacy

Holistic Success: An Approach for Pharm.D. Students

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Background

- Pharmacy school students experience stress during their Doctor of Pharmacy programs.¹⁻³
- Hirsch and colleagues suggest that Pharm.D. students experience a significant amount of stress specifically during P1-P3 years due to academic performance, financial constraints, and mental health concerns.³
- The stress likely impacts student overall health, well-being, degree completion and satisfaction during their Pharm.D. program.

Objective

To describe holistic student wellness interventions at the VCU School of Pharmacy.

Methods

The VCU School of Pharmacy Office of Admissions and Student Services (OASS) offers a holistic approach to student wellness, focusing on psychosocial, emotional, and financial wellbeing.

- Allotment of one personal day each semester fostering work/life harmony
- Implementation of a 4-day class schedule week
- Offering wellness events (e.g., therapy dogs)
- Development of the Student Success Emergency Fund established to offer financial support for emergent and unexpected hardships



Statistical Methods

Assessment of the holistic student wellness interventions were described by student utilization of wellness offerings and by comparison of the end of the year Student Experience Surveys for 2021-2022 and 2022-2023.

Results

Table 1. Student utilization of wellness offerings (n= 73)

Personal Day Utilization	
Semester	Student Utilization
Fall 2022	18 students (6%)
Spring 2023	23 students (8%)
Student Success Emergency Fund Utilization	
Time Frame	Funding
Fall 2019 – Spring 2023	\$15,276.87
Wellness events	
Semester	OASS offerings
Fall 2022	5
Spring 2023	3

Table 2. Comparison of student experience surveys

Year	Agreement with statement: "I am satisfied with my experience at VCU School of Pharmacy"			
	Class of 2026	Class of 2025	Class of 2024	Class of 2023
2021-2022	---	100% (n=71)	85% (n=93)	97% (n=71)
2022-2023	96% (n=75)	98% (n=87)	96% (n=81)	---

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Discussion

- OASS offered a holistic approach to student wellness outside of only sick days.
- Student utilization of the services increased from Fall 2022 to Spring 2023.
- OASS wellness events were consistently offered over the Fall and Spring semesters.
- Student utilization of the emergency fund has ranged from 5 to 12 students per year since its inception.
- Student agreement with "I am satisfied with my experience at VCU School of Pharmacy" for 2022-2023 ranged from 96% to 98% for all didactic years, with an increase for the Class of 2024 and a slight decrease for the Class of 2025.

Limitations

This characterization of the impact of the holistic approach in OASS student wellness is limited to this single institution. Additionally, comparison of the student experiences cannot be attributed to the OASS student wellness focus alone, there are many factors that might contribute to this statement.

Conclusions

VCU School of Pharmacy has initiated a holistic view of student success, focusing on psychosocial and personal wellness in addition to academic and physical health interventions. Overall student satisfaction with their experience at the school has been positive.

References

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