

# An Evaluation of New Enrollment Strategies to Boost PharmD Applicant Retention and Deposit Yield

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## Introduction

Like other institutions, Belmont University College of Pharmacy & Health Sciences located in Nashville, Tennessee, has experienced enrollment challenges as a result of changes in higher education enrollments, the pharmaceutical workforce and high competition for qualified applicants.

Belmont has worked to be strategic about fiscal resources and leverage campus partnerships during this cycle in an effort to increase enrollment. This year, we tried a variety of initiatives to address our enrollment issues from multiple perspectives.

## Objective

Increase enrollment and retain more applicants throughout the enrollment funnel with the implementation of new recruitment initiatives that demonstrate an investment in students and the profession.

## Class Observations

We worked with several faculty members who teach P1 courses to organize some class observation opportunities for incoming students to experience the dynamic classroom atmosphere and camaraderie between students firsthand. This practice played a significant part in yielding deposits for several of our applicants.

## Interprofessional Collaboration

Belmont's health professional programs continue to grow with the opening of the Frist College of Medicine in Fall 2024, joining pharmacy, nursing, physical and occupational therapy. Our team used the momentum from this growth to initiate a pre-health admissions, advising, and recruitment team for idea and resource sharing. Both teams were able to attend the SAAHP conference for pre-health advisors & students this summer to collectively promote the PharmD and other health science programs.



## Pre-Interview Scholarship Calculation

The Director of Admissions sends an email at the beginning of each interview week with an individual scholarship projection for qualified applicants.

Applicants qualify for a scholarship at Belmont if they have achieved any combination of the following academic milestones: a  $\geq 3.0$  cumulative and Math/Science GPA, a Bachelor's degree, a composite score of 60 or higher on the PCAT. Their scholarship offer is proportionate to the strength of their academic profile.

## Tuition Reduction Incentives

Belmont's administration chose to initiate several financial incentives for incoming & current students as a result of the current tumultuous state of pharmacy profession.

- The University reduced the cost of tuition by 11% for all incoming and current students for Fall 2023.
- The College of Pharmacy received funding for two incoming students to receive full-tuition graduate assistantship (GA) positions. The GAs will work 20 hours per week in a combination of roles in the campus pharmacy, Office of Admissions, and undergraduate chemistry tutoring. The GA positions were created to offset administrative needs while providing a needed financial incentive for incoming students.

## Results

As of Wednesday, July 5th, we were successful in yielding 59% of applicants who were invited to interview to an interview day, compared to 55% in 2022. In addition, our deposit yield as of this date is 56% for 2023 over last 48% as of this date in 2022.

## Conclusions

We attribute many of these new processes to our success in enrolling a larger cohort this fall. We believe that the introduction of the tuition reduction incentives and pre-interview scholarship notification had the greatest immediate impact on our success this cycle, although our ongoing joint recruitment initiatives with the Frist College of Medicine are expected to yield longer term benefits once they can formally join us in our recruitment efforts.



**ANNOUNCING GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS FOR INCOMING FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS**

In exchange for a full- or half-tuition discount, awardees will work in a variety of settings and capacities in the College of Pharmacy and Admissions.

**ROLES INCLUDE:**

- Tutoring pre-pharmacy students
- Admissions Ambassador
- Work in our campus pharmacy
- Research & data collection
- ...and more!

**REQUIREMENTS**

- Must be admitted to the College of Pharmacy by March 31, 2023
- Minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA
- Minimum 3.25 math/science GPA
- Must have earned strong grades in Organic Chemistry
- Preferred: Tutoring, work, and/or pharmacy experience

**Assistantship Application Deadline: March 31, 2023**