



Strategies for Elevating Student Retention in an Accelerated Pharmacy Program



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BACKGROUND

- William Carey University School of Pharmacy (WCUSOP) is an accelerated Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) program located in Biloxi, MS.
- Accelerated PharmD programs face multiple challenges including:
 - Content must be delivered within a constrained period of time.
 - The amount of time between content delivery and assessments can be limited.
- In the face of these challenges, development and implementation of student retention strategies have been a key focus of the Curriculum, Assessment, Admissions, and Experiential Committees as well as the Office of Student Success.
- Multifaceted approaches to bolster student success and retention have been incorporated into the program. These approaches can be divided into the following four domains: (1) didactic curriculum, (2) experiential curriculum, (3) student services, and (4) the mentor-mentee relationship.

DIDACTIC CURRICULUM



- Recitation sessions accompany each first-year course.
- Students are assigned to groups each year and sit and work together in the classroom.
- Groups work together on formative assessments such as instructional games, problem sets, and case studies.

- Summative assessments are formally reviewed collectively in the classroom as well as individually through a prescribed process.
- Course content and assessments are intentionally sequenced to reinforce content and allow for connections between courses to be made.



- Faculty who teach within the first and second years of the program are currently developing case studies that incorporate course learning objectives for multiple courses.
- These case studies will be employed throughout the didactic curriculum.

EXPERIENTIAL CURRICULUM

- The experiential curriculum is designed to emphasize the development of student pharmacists who can manage medication use systems; promote population-based, patient-centered care; and apply didactic knowledge in an interprofessional, team-based, clinical setting.

Introductory Pharmacy Practice Experiences (IPPEs)

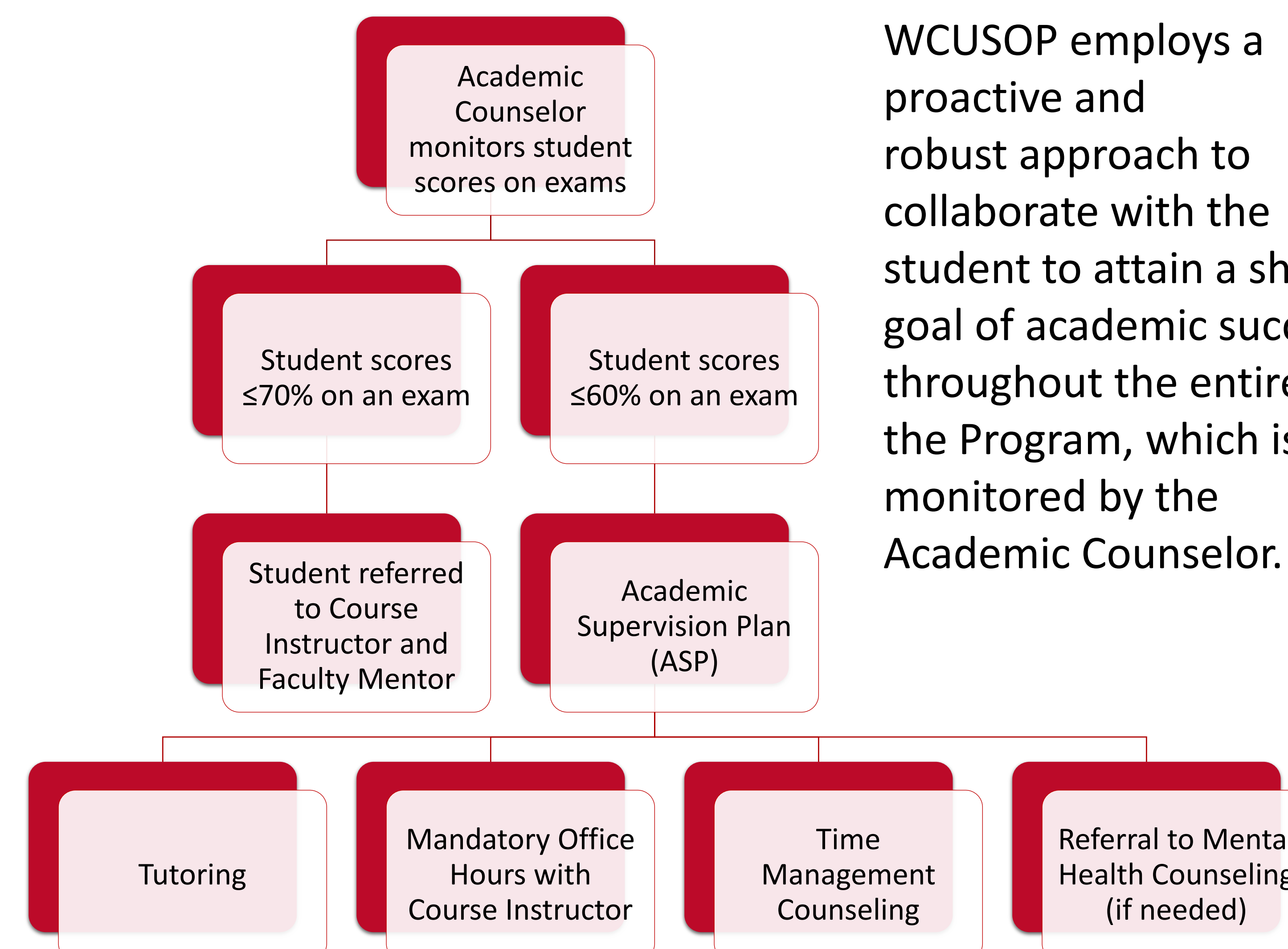
- First-year student pharmacists complete a series of two, 5-week IPPE rotations in the community and institutional pharmacy settings. Under the guidance of their preceptors, the didactic curriculum is reinforced by having the students use the same assignments from the classroom while on IPPE rotations.

Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experiences (APPEs)

- Third-year student pharmacists complete a series of six, 6-week APPE rotations in 4 required practice settings (community, institutional, acute care, ambulatory care) and two elective practice settings. APPE performance is assessed at midpoint, which allows for identification of at-risk students as well as intervention through combined efforts by the Academic Counselor and the Office of Experiential Education.



STUDENT SERVICES



WCUSOP employs a proactive and robust approach to collaborate with the student to attain a shared goal of academic success throughout the entirety of the Program, which is monitored by the Academic Counselor.

MENTORING PROGRAM

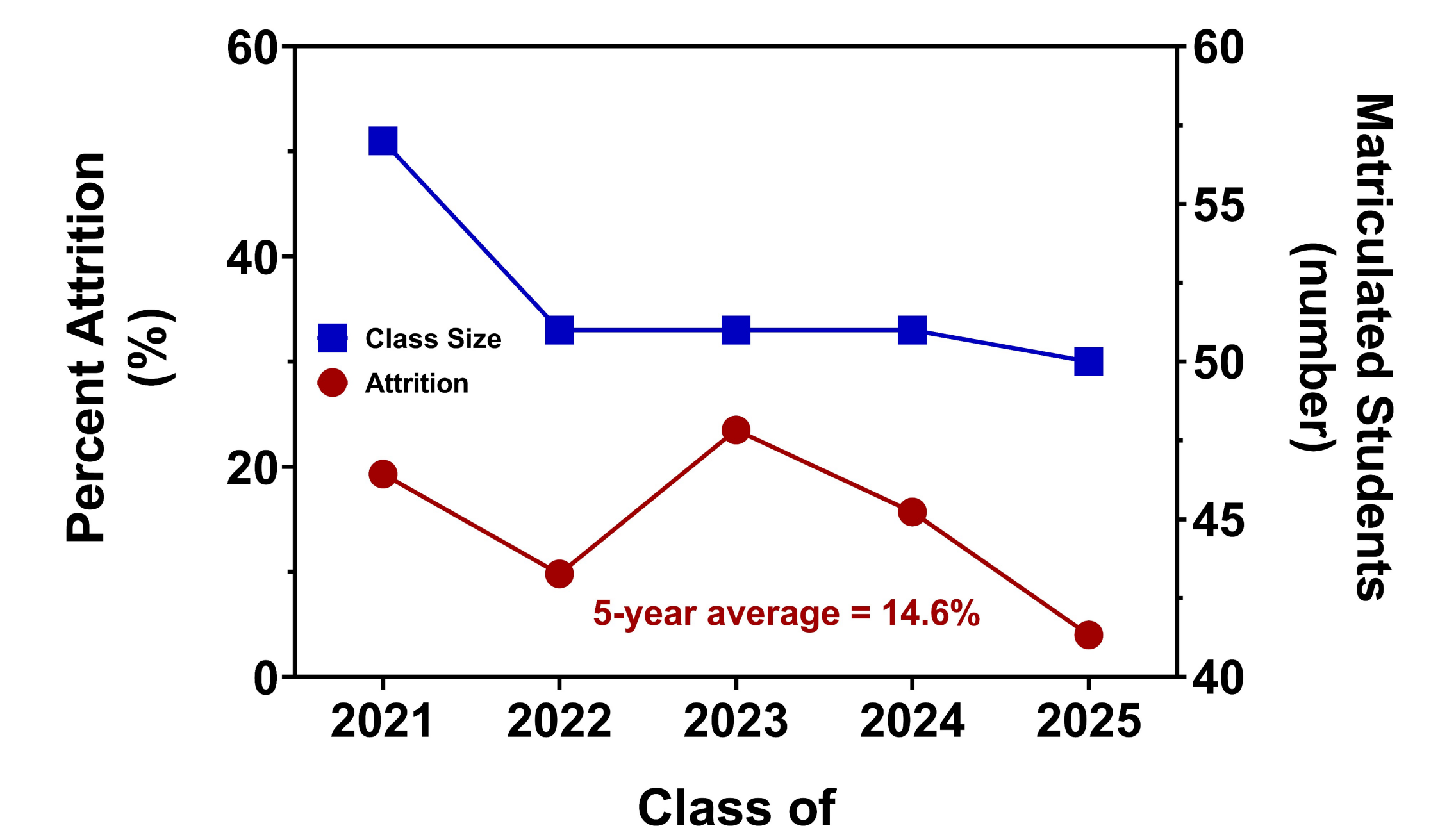
- Faculty members mentor students longitudinally, beginning from the time that they matriculate into the program until graduation.
- Mentoring provides students with an advocate who can help them navigate academic challenges and foster professional growth partly through discussion of co-curricular activities.
- Additional benefits of the student mentoring program include:



Trust-based mentor-mentee relationship	Connection and social support	Opportunities for reflection and self-awareness
Motivation and empowerment to set and accomplish goals	Perspective and guidance from experienced mentors	Quarterly evaluations of well-being

IMPACT

Student attrition has steadily and robustly declined since the matriculation of the Class of 2023.



KEY TAKEAWAYS AND FUTURE EFFORTS

- The implementation of multiple retention approaches has reduced attrition.
- A pre-matriculation program to bolster student readiness as it pertains to foundational knowledge and professional identify formation is currently under development.