

HOWARD UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF PHARMACY

# ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER



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FALL 2020

CONGRATULATIONS



## REASONS WHY THE CLASS OF 2024 CHOSE TO ATTEND HOWARD UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF PHARMACY

BY: NNEKA OPUTA

*1ST YEAR PROFESSIONAL STUDENT*

The decision to consider a career in pharmacy may have been an uncomplicated choice for some students but choosing a pharmacy school can be difficult. The influences and motivations to ultimately accept an offer of admission to a particular school extends further than an interest in a pharmacy career.

A survey was distributed to the 106 students attending interviews at Howard University College of Pharmacy (HUCoP) for the class of 2024. The factors that influenced students to accept the offer with HUCoP Class of 2024 included being an HBCU, the opportunities to network, reputation, and the history of the school amongst others.

Based on the survey results, the top influential factors for choosing HUCoP were: HUCoP being an HBCU, location, the Howard University legacy, and diversity. Additionally, students expressed appreciation for the dedicated faculty who care for students' success and the friendly environment of the college. According to the survey responses, the least influential factors when making their ultimate decision included tuition costs and HUCoP being the only school to extend an offer of admission. Essentially, the reasons why students chose to attend HUCoP vary, however, the Class of 2024 is proud to be a part of the Bison Pharmily.

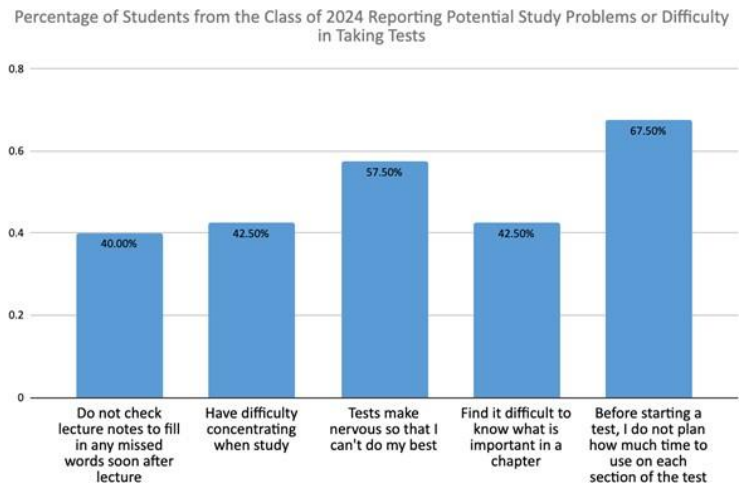
# STUDY SKILLS AND TEST-TAKING SURVEY

BY: DEVENE PRINCE

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One of the most important necessities as a pharmacy school student is having effective study and test-taking skills. Tests are the most common assessment tools in most of the educational systems in the world. Having good study skills increases confidence, competence, and self-esteem. Moreover, they help to reduce anxiety about tests and deadlines. Testing strategies help students translate their knowledge from classroom learning (McLellan & Craig, 1989). Students who have or acquire test-taking strategies or skills have noticed a positive increase in their testing proficiency and, hence, their academic performance.

Based on a student feedback survey conducted amongst current P1 students the goal was to assess their study and test-taking skills. The results showed that 67.50% of the students who completed the survey shared that before starting an exam, they do not plan how much time is required to complete each section. Furthermore, 42.50% of the students reported they have difficulty concentrating when studying and that they also find it challenging to know what is important in a chapter. A total of



40% of P1 students reported that they do not check lecture notes to fill in any missed words soon after the lecture ends.

In summary, some students do poorly on exams because of the lack of efficient study skills or simply the use of poor ones. These strategies have both direct and indirect effects on students' performance. Directly, these strategies aid students in improving their scores on exams through the effective use of their time, efforts, and test condition. Indirectly, using appropriate test-taking strategies and skills affect other related but important factors such as reducing test anxiety and improving students' attitudes toward tests.

Citations:

McLellan, J., & Craig, C. (1989). Facing the reality of achievement test. *Education Canada*, 36-40.

# DIVERSIFYING THE LEARNING TOOLKIT: A VARK QUESTIONNAIRE FOLLOW-UP

BY: KRISTIN ROBINSON, PHARM.D., AAHIVP

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Academic institutions utilize various strategies to ensure learners of all types are empowered during the learning experience. While there are several instruments used to assess the most desired approach to learning, the VARK questionnaire divides learning preferences into four modalities: Visual (V), Aural (A), Read/Write (R), and Kinesthetic (K). Upon administration to the first-, second-, and third-year professional students at the Howard University College of Pharmacy, most participants identified the Kinesthetic (K) modality as their preferred learning style. However, the results also revealed that most participants were classified as Multimodal learners. While this classification reflects over 50% of any population, learners often gravitate to the learning style that has traditionally worked best for them.

Well, what happens when the Kinesthetic learning modality may not be the safest approach in a pandemic – at least in its traditional form? Settings designed for this learning style (e.g., laboratories, simulation centers) must operate in a limited capacity, and students are forced to learn in a virtual environment. This can result in frustration and burnout, as the virtual platform has challenged the traditional approach to Kinesthetic learning.

While students and educators are navigating through this virtual platform together, we must introduce new tools from our respective toolkits to carry out the learning process. Multimodal learners may have a bimodal combination (e.g., aural and kinesthetic [AK]), or a combination of all four modalities. Although humans are considered “creatures of habit,” students can capitalize on additional modalities to diversify their learning strategies. For example, Multimodal learners with a high aural component may gravitate to hearing information if a learning experience does not include problem-solving or application activities. While the lack of face-to-face interaction also impacts aural learners, recommendations for pre-class preparation and studying include virtual study groups, podcasts, lecture recordings, and summarizing notes aloud to self or via voice recordings). Additionally, Q&A segments during lectures and virtual office hours work well for feedback and discussion purposes. By combining recommended strategies from various modalities, students will be further equipped to navigate through virtual learning environments.

Citations:

1. Fleming, N.D. & Mills, C. (1992). Not Another Inventory, Rather a Catalyst for Reflection. *To Improve the Academy*, 11, 137-155.
2. The VARK Modalities. Retrieved from: <https://vark-learn.com/introduction-to-vark/the-vark-modalities/>

# REMEDIATION RATES AND FACTORS AFFECTING MATRICULATION

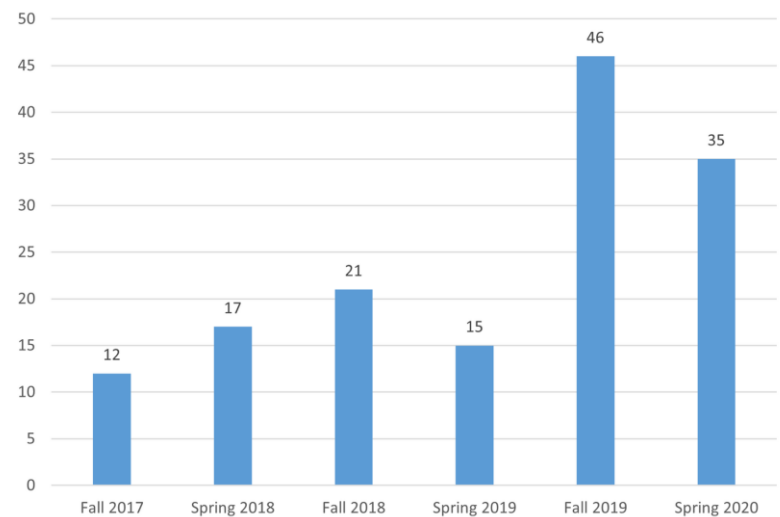
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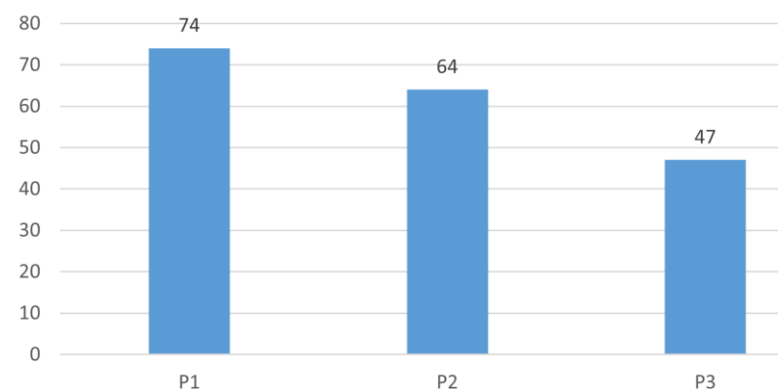
ACPE requires colleges and schools of pharmacy to implement some process of remediation. Here at the College of Pharmacy, a student who has a class average between 65-69% after the final exam and has adhered to all conditions stipulated by the course coordinator are eligible to remediate. Also, students will be allowed to take no more than 2 remediation exams per semester with a maximum of 8 in the entire pharmacy program.<sup>1</sup> Even though ACPE requires remediation it has been found that students who remediate have a lower first-time pass rate on the NAPLEX.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the COP Assessment Committee wanted to know the effects of the remediation process on our students. A survey was conducted to look at the COP students who remediate from 2017-2020. We examined the following:

- Likelihood of being academically dismissed by remediation attempts
- The number of remediation attempts by academic year
- The number of remediations per semester
- Likelihood of failing at least one remediation exam by the number of remediation exams taken

Remediations by Semester for HUCOP



Number of Remediations by Academic Year for 2017 to 2020



These surveys informed us of a few things, students took more remediation exams in fall 2019 (n= 46) and the least in fall 2017 (n=12). In addition, most remediation exams were taken the first year of pharmacy school and the number taken decreased as students matriculated through the program (P1=74, P2= 64. and P3=47).

# REMEDIATION RATES AND FACTORS AFFECTING MATRICULATION CONTINUED

This high number of remediation exams taken by P1s can be explained by the students becoming adjusted to the rigor of the pharmacy school curriculum. Another finding identified was the correlation with the number of remediation exams taken (1,2,3 &>4) decreased the likelihood of a student completing the program (84%,77%, 44% respectively). Also, the increase in the number of remediation exams (5 exams) increases the likelihood of failing at least one exam (100%). However, one good finding from the surveys showed if a student takes 1 remediation exam there are less likely to take another in the program (56 students took 1 exam, but 9 students need to take >5).

## Citations:

1. College of Pharmacy Remediation Policy 2020.
2. Madden MM, Etzler F Schweiger, T. The Impact of Pharmacy Students' Remediation Status on NAPLEX First-Time Pass Rate. *Am J Pharm Edu.* 2012, 76, 191.

