



Students Interest and Involvement in Student Organizations: A Survey of First Professional Year Pharmacy Students

Nneka Oputa¹, Secret Wagner¹, Bisrat Hailemeskel^{1*}, Fekadu Fullas²

¹College of Pharmacy, Howard University, 2300 4th Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20059, USA

²UnityPoint Health-St. Luke's Hospital, Sioux City, IA 51104, USA (Retired). Current Address: 1409 Jackson, Rd, Silver Spring, MD 20904

***Corresponding author:** Bisrat Hailemeskel, B.Pharm., MSc, Pharm.D., RPh, Professor & Vice Chair Clinical & Administrative Pharmacy Sciences, College of Pharmacy, Howard University 2300 4th Street, NW Washington, DC 20059. Email: bhailemeskel@howard.edu

Citation: Oputa N, Wagner S, Hailemeskel B, Fullas F (2021) Students Interest and Involvement in Student Organizations: A Survey of First Professional Year Pharmacy Students. Ad Nurs Sci Resear: ANSR-113.

Received Date: 02 July, 2021; **Accepted Date:** 08 July, 2021; **Published Date:** 15 July, 2021

Abstract

The College of Pharmacy, Howard University has established a total of 19 student organizations to encourage students to join then and take active roles. Despite known benefits of these professional organizations, no study was done to determine the levels of student's interest and involvement. A survey was conducted among 44 Howard University professional first-year College of Pharmacy students to find out how they felt about extra-curricular organizations. The majority of the students (70.5%) thought that participating in student organizations is important to them, with over 63% of respondents admitting that their prior involvement in student organization had positive impact on their attitude. About 95% of the participants responded that involvement in their first year would help them build networks and enhance their professional growth. A total of 24 respondents (36.4%) did not feel confident about taking student organization leadership roles, since they thought it would interfere with their course work. A significant number of survey participants (34; 77.3%; $p = 0.0023$) felt that neither school related obligations and work, nor family commitments would affect their plan to join organizations. The majority (59.1%) responded that joining student organizations would take away time from their studying hours. Gender and age are predictors of interest in seeking leadership positions in these associations. Older age is also a predicting factor of interest in planning to join a student organization. There is also a significant of those who agreed on how confident they feel in taking leadership roles. Members of student organizations prior to joining the pharmacy program were significantly motivated in joining a pharmacy student organization.

Keywords: Student organizations; leadership role; network; Likert score; Fisher exact test.

Introduction

A student organization is defined as a group of students who unite to promote a common interest [1]. It is further defined by the Howard University College of Pharmacy Fall 2020 Handbook as: all student-related professional organizations associated with the pharmacy profession [2]. Pharmacy student organizations provide students with opportunities for professional development and networking. Student organizations are perceived to be beneficial, but the extent of involvement of first year pharmacy students has not been explored.

According to a study conducted at University of Arizona, 75.8% of the students surveyed were involved in extracurricular organizations. The researchers concluded that students participate in organizations to improve their communication skills and broaden their network. Additionally, the researchers concluded that the top reason

students do not participate in organizations is because of the lack of time [3]. What drives students to participate, or the reasons for not being interested to get involved in organizations in the first year of pharmacy school is an area that needs investigation.

The College of Pharmacy, Howard University has established the following 19 professional student organizations encouraging students to join and take an active role. However, despite known benefits of these professional organizations, no study was done to determine the level of student's interest and their level of involvement.

American College of Clinical Pharmacy (ACCP): ACCP Student Chapters provide students with a local connection to the national organization.

Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy (AMCP): The Howard University Student Chapter of the Academy of

Managed Care Pharmacy provides students with the tools and resources to begin a rewarding career in Managed Care Pharmacy. AMCP's goal is to empower its members to serve society by using sound medication management principles and strategies to improve health care for all.

American Pharmacists Association Academy of Students of Pharmacy (APHA-ASP): The Howard University student branch of the Academy of Students of Pharmacy of the APhA was established in 1972. The principal objective of this organization is to serve as a liaison between the pharmacy student body and the American Pharmacists Association. Members receive professional journals and newsletters and are provided opportunities to participate in projects and meetings of the college branch and of the national organization.

American Society of Consultant Pharmacists (ASCP): American Society of Consultant Pharmacists (ASCP) student membership provides students with the tools they need to begin a successful career in senior and long-term care. The student chapters are focused on providing information to students on employment, providing information on consultant senior care and long-term care, as well as information on starting their own practice.

American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP): Howard University College of Pharmacy is in its initial phase of establishing a student chapter for the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP). This component of the ASHP is known as "ASHP Pharmacy Student Forum".

Black Apothecary: Pharmaceutical publishing is an area of pharmacy that is rarely explored and highly rewarding. A lot of cultures and tradition have survived on ink and paper and this is what we hope to achieve here with the Black Apothecary, survival of our traditions and cultures at Howard University College of Pharmacy and also be a voice amongst students, faculty and the outside world.

Drug Information Association: Participation in a Student Chapter allows students to join a global network of thought leaders, and access knowledge, all towards the purpose of serving the needs of students for multidisciplinary networking and information exchange.

College of Pharmacy Student Council (CPSC): College of Psychiatric & Neurologic Pharmacists (CPNP): The Howard University Chapter of College of Psychiatric & Neurologic Pharmacists (CPNP) was established in 2011. The mission includes providing information and tools that prepare pharmacy students to evaluate and prepare for a career in psychiatric and neurologic pharmacy. Members of CPNP enjoy the benefit of receiving education opportunities through the CPNP Annual Meeting and CPNP University, job and residency opportunities. Members also receive current industry and psych/neuro specialty news through the CPNP e-news distributed exclusively to CPNP members.

Howard University Student Pharmacists Outreach Team (HUSPOT): Howard University Student Pharmacists Outreach Team (HUSPOT), founded in 2007, is a dynamic organization made up of student pharmacists dedicated to

providing pharmaceutical care to under-served and under-privileged communities.

Industrial Pharmacists Organization (IPhO): Industrial Pharmacists Organization (IPhO) is the only pharmacy organization dedicated exclusively to advancing the careers of industry-based pharmacists.

The Alpha Pi Chapter, Kappa Epsilon Fraternity, Inc.: was established in the School of Pharmacy in 1984. Its objectives are to: unite women students in pharmacy; cooperate with the faculty of the College of Pharmacy where chapters are established; stimulate in its members a desire for high scholarship; foster a professional consciousness; and provide a bond of lasting loyalty, interest and friendship among its members.

Kappa Psi Fraternity (KP): The Delta Kappa Chapter, Kappa Psi Fraternity, is the oldest and largest pharmaceutical fraternity in the United States. Many of the past and present leaders in pharmacy are members of Kappa Psi. The fraternity seeks and offers membership to men and women who desire to: Participate in activities that promote and advance the profession of pharmacy; Develop and maintain pride in the fraternity and the profession of pharmacy; and Develop and participate in college and community programs.

National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA): National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA) student membership provides students with the tools they need to begin a successful career in independent pharmacy. NCPA is dedicated to the continuing growth and prosperity of independent retail pharmacy in the U.S.

Pharmacy Initiative Leaders (PILs): The PILs program was founded in May 2013 and is a mentoring and ambassador association made up of upper-class student pharmacists who provide mentoring to pre-pharmacy level and P1 level students.

Phi Delta Chi Fraternity (PDC): Phi Delta Chi is a coeducational multi-cultural national pharmaceutical fraternity formed in 1883 at the University of Michigan. More than 35,000 students have become brothers since that time.

Phi Lambda Sigma (PLS): Phi Lambda Sigma Pharmacy Leadership Society is a professional organization that recognizes and honors the leadership achievements of Pharmacy students and faculty.

Rho Chi National Pharmacy Honor Society: Beta Sigma is the Howard University Chapter of the Rho Chi National Pharmacy Honor Society, which was established in the School of Pharmacy in 1960 to promote the advancement of the pharmaceutical sciences through the recognition and advancement of sound scholarship. High standards of intellectual and scholarly attainment are required for election to membership in Rho Chi.

Student National Pharmaceutical Association (SNPHA): The Howard University Chapter of the Student National Pharmaceutical Association (SNPHA) was established in

1972 by two student from Howard University (Sharon Rockmore) and Florida A&M University (John Scrivens). The principal objective of this organization is to provide a forum for minority pharmacists in the communities they serve.

Campus Pals: The Campus Pals is an organization of undergraduate students who assist incoming students with their adjustment to Howard University. To become a member of this organization, one must apply through the Campus Pals Office.

The goal of this study was to help membership promoters adjust their marketing techniques to recruit and retain members in the organizations, while also planning and scheduling events that are beneficial to its members. It is hoped that the results of this study would help to identify factors that motivate pharmacy students to join organizations, and whether other responsibilities or obstacles affect their level of involvement in such organizations.

Methods

Demographic data were collected on gender, age, states of residence, work history, such as type of work, years worked, annual income and highest education levels attained prior to starting pharmacy. The main part of the survey consisted of seven questions. The first three questions focused on why students join organizations, the next two questions focused on the level of involvement

students prefer to have in organizations, and the remaining two questions focused on obstacles that hinder students' involvement in organizations. The survey questions were constructed using Qualtrics and distributed via email to the class of 2024. This study was conducted as a part of the Drug Information course, which is a mandatory course for first year pharmacy students. The survey was sent to 44 students and all of them responded (100% response rate). The data was rated on a 4-point Likert Scale (1= strongly agree; 2 = somewhat agree; 3 = somewhat disagree and 4 = strongly disagree). The average Likert score was computed for each of the seven major survey questions. The agree responses were aggregated and compared with the disagree responses. A two-tailed Fisher exact test was applied to determine the significance of the differences. A descriptive analysis was conducted using SPSS software.

Results

As shown in the pie chart (Figure 1), a total of 44 students participated in the survey (34 females [77.3%], 10 males [22.7%]). The majority (25; 58%) were in the 18-24 years age group, while 18 (42%) were in the 25-34 years age group (Figure 2). The home residences of 25 participants (56.7%) were in Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia (Table 1). Prior to joining HU College of Pharmacy, 95.5% of the respondents had been employed, with various annual incomes. The majority worked in pharmacy-related type of work. The length of years worked ranged from as short as less than a year to as long as over five years (Table 1).

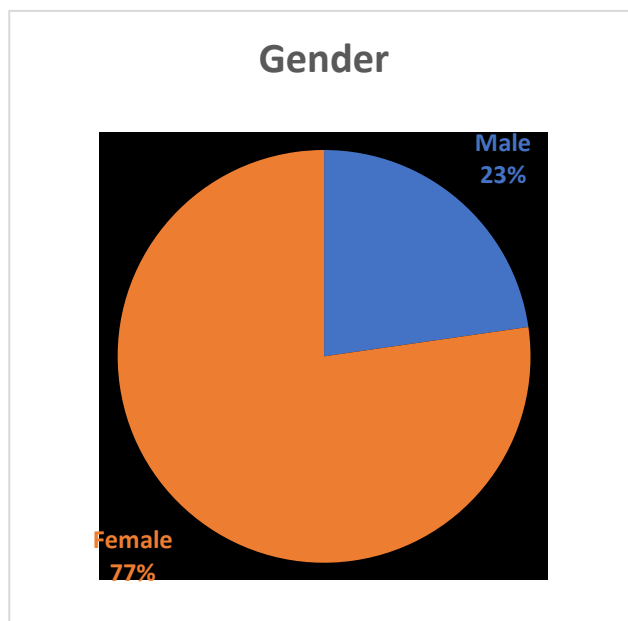


Figure 1: Gender breakdown of respondents.

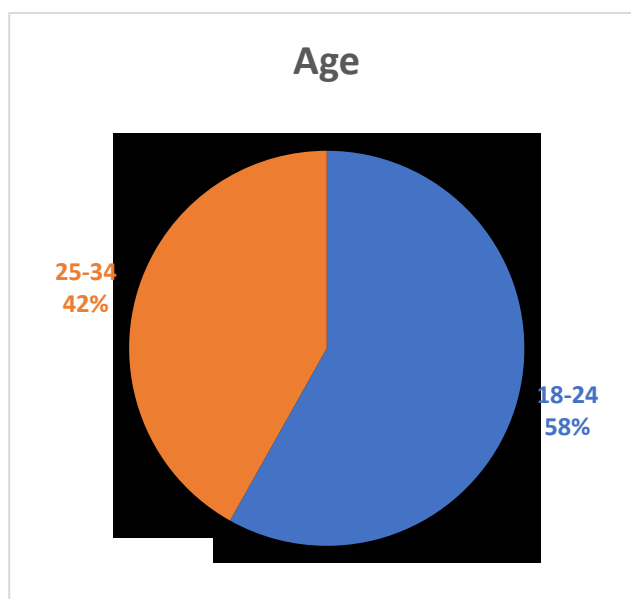


Figure 2: Age groups (in years) of respondents.

Characteristics	Respondents (n, %)	95% CI (% range) ¹
Age (years) ²		
18-24	25 (58.1)	43.4-72.9
25-34	18 (41.9)	27.1-56.6
Gender		
Male	10 (22.7)	10.3-35.1
Female	34 (77.3)	64.9-89.6
States		
Washington, D.C.	4 (9.1)	0.6-17.6
Maryland	12 (27.3)	14.9-42.8
Virginia	9 (20.5)	8.5-32.4
Others	19 (43.2)	28.6-57.8
Work prior to college of pharmacy		
Yes	42 (95.5)	89.3-100
No	2 (4.5)	0.0-10.7
Annual income ²		
< USD 10,000	17 (39.5)	24.9-54.2
10,000-19,000	7 (16.3)	5.2-27.3
20,000-29,000	3 (7)	0.0-14.6
30,000-39,000	8 (18.6)	6.9-30.2
40,000-49,000	3 (7)	0.0-14.6
>49,000	5 (11.6)	2.1-21.2
Type of work ²		
Pharmacy related	27 (62.8)	48.3-77.2
Non-pharmacy related	9 (20.9)	8.8-33.1
Non-pharmacy, non-or healthcare related	7 (16.3)	5.2-27.3
Years worked		
None	1 (2.3)	0.0-6.7
< 1	7 (15.9)	5.0-26.7
1-3	14 (31.8)	18.1-45.6
4-5	11 (25)	12.2-37.8
>5	11 (25)	12.2-37.8

Education		
Some college	12 (27.3)	14.1-40.4
2 years of college	2 (4.5)	0.0-10.7
4 years of college	26 (59.1)	44.6-73.6
Professional	4 (9)	8.5-32.4
¹ CI = Confidence Interval; normal approximations of binomial exact values.		
² In each of these categories, one participant did not provide answers.		

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents.

Questionnaire items	Strongly Agree (n, %)	Somewhat agree (n, %)	Somewhat disagree (n, %)	Strongly disagree (n, %)	Average Likert score ¹	<i>p</i> ²
Being a member of student organizations in my first year is important to me (n = 44)	15 (34.1)	16 (36.4)	8 (18.2)	5 (11.4)	2.07	0.7416
My involvement in student organizations at previous institutions compels me to join organizations in my first year (n = 44)	9 (20.5)	19 (43.2)	11 (25.0)	5 (11.4)	2.27	1.000
Participation in student organizations in my first year of pharmacy school will help me to build network and grow professionally (n = 44)	25 (56.2)	17 (38.6)	2 (4.6)	0 (0.0)	1.48	0.1808
I am satisfied with just being a member and not taking any leadership roles within this organization (n = 44)	5 (11.4)	15 (34.1)	17 (38.6)	7 (15.9)	2.59	1.000
I feel confident in having a leadership role in an organization while also keeping up with course load (n = 44)	11 (25.0)	17 (38.6)	14 (31.8)	2 (4.6)	2.16	0.0891
I am not planning to join organizations because of non-school related obligations and family commitments (n = 44)	0 (0.0)	10 (22.7)	15 (34.1)	19 (43.2)	3.20	0.0023
Joining organizations as a first-year pharmacy student will take time away from study (n = 44)	9 (20.5)	17 (38.6)	14 (31.8)	4 (9.1)	2.30	0.5069
¹ Average Likert scores were calculated by multiplying each score by the number of responses, adding up the total and then dividing by the number of respondents.						
² <i>P</i> values < 0.05 are considered significant. The combined strongly agree and somewhat agree responses were compared with the respective combined somewhat disagree/strongly disagree answers.						

Table 2: Questionnaire and Answers of Respondents on a 4-point Likert scale.

Discussion

Most of the first-year pharmacy students (70.45%) agree or somewhat agree that being a member of student organizations in their first year is important to them ($p = 0.7416$), with a weighted average Likert score of 2.07 leaning towards the somewhat agree response. Majority of the students (63.63%, $p = 1.000$; average Likert score = 2.27) agree or somewhat agree that being a member of organizations at previous institutions compels them to also seek membership in organizations in their first year.

The majority of the students (95.46%, $p = 0.1808$, average Likert score = 1.48) strongly agree that their participation in organizations their first year of pharmacy school will

help them build a network and grow professionally. About half of the students (54.55%, $p = 1.000$, average Likert score = 2.59) disagree that they are satisfied with just being a member of the organization and not taking on any leadership roles within the organization. About two-thirds of the students (63.64%, $p = 0.0891$, average Likert score = 2.16) agree that they feel confident in having a leadership role in an organization while also keeping up with their course load. Over three-fourths of the first-year pharmacy students (77.27%) significantly disagree ($p = 0.0023$, average Likert score = 3.20) that they are not planning to join organizations because of non-school related obligations, including work and family commitments. Over half of students (59.09%, $p = 0.5069$, average Likert score =

2.30) agree that joining organizations as a first-year pharmacy student will take time away from studying.

Age and gender seem to be predictors to determine about interest in having a leadership position in these associations. Younger age ($n=18$; 48.6% vs Older age $n=6$; 10.2%; $p=0.0032$) and Females significantly show interest in and confidence in taking leadership positions (Male: $n=3$; 8.1% vs. Female: $n=21$; 56.8%; $p=0.032$). Age is also a risk factor interest in planning to join a student organization. Older participants have significantly had more interest than their counter parts ($n=6$; 16.2% vs. 2; 5.4%; $p=0.022$ respectively).

There is also a significant difference those who say they strongly agree/somewhat agree and strongly disagree/somewhat disagree when it comes how confident the feel in taking a leadership role ($n=28$; 63.8% vs $n=16$; 36.2%; $p=0.0356$ respectively). Those who said that their previous experience motivated them to join an organization in a pharmacy program also varies significantly between those who agree or disagree ($n=25$; 56.8%; vs. $n=19$; 43.2%; $p=0.0092$ respectively).

Conclusion

First year professional pharmacy students surveyed at HU College of Pharmacy strongly agree or somewhat agree that participating in organizations in their first year of pharmacy school is important. The majority agree that prior organizational involvement provided them an impetus to wanting to join student organizations in the first year of pharmacy school, and they believed their

participation will help them build network, as well as enhancing their professional growth. However, the majority believed that joining organizations in their first year will take time away time from studying. Nearly 55% of survey participants disagreed in response to the question whether they were satisfied with just being a member without taking organizational leadership roles, while the majority expressed confidence that they can still keep up with course work even if they take leadership roles. A significant number of respondents felt school-related obligations, work and family commitments were not reasons for not joining organizations.

References

1. Student Organizations Defined [Internet]. The University of the South. Available from: <https://new.sewanee.edu/offices/the-college-of-arts-sciences-offices/student-life/the-office-of-campus-activities/student-organization-handbook/section-1/>. Accessed on October 24, 2020.
2. Howard University College of Pharmacy Handbook 2020. [Internet]. <https://pharmacy.howard.edu/sites/pharmacy.howard.edu/files/2020-10/COP%20Handbook%20Fall%202020.pdf>. Accessed on October 24, 2020.
3. Hegedus CM. [Internet]. Available from: <https://www.leadershipeducators.org/Resources/Documents/Conferences/Lexington/Hegedus.pdf>. Accessed on October 24, 2020.