

You Belong Here:

AN INCLUSIVE STUDENT RECRUITMENT GUIDE

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This second edition of “You Belong Here: An Inclusive Student Recruitment Guide” is an incredibly important resource for all AACP members—faculty, professional staff and leaders. While it is focused on how we recruit new student pharmacists into our colleges and schools of pharmacy and our profession, its implications are much more far reaching and impactful. While the guidance provided has very specific strategies for successfully recruiting the best candidates to our programs, it is equally important when considering how we treat our current matriculated student pharmacists, and how we interact with our colleagues and patients. Everyone deserves to feel they belong where they learn, teach, receive care, and live... and this guide provides a pragmatic approach to thinking about our individual behaviors and how they make others feel. I believe it should be required reading for all faculty and professional staff—for anyone who interacts with candidates or current student pharmacists—to help us all improve in the way we create an inclusive environment and ensure that everyone feels they belong.

I’m grateful to the members of the AACP Student Access and Success in Pharmacy Education Advisory Committee, and to Danielle Stubbs Kirkland, AACP Director of Student Recruitment and Belonging, for their work on this essential guide.

Lee Vermeulen

AACP EVP and Chief Executive Officer

About AACP

AACP Mission

Advance pharmacy education, research, scholarship, practice and service, in partnership with members and stakeholders, to improve health for all.

AACP Vision

We envision a world of healthy people through the transformation of health professions education.

AACP Inclusiveness and Belonging Statement

The Association affirms its commitment to fostering an inclusive community and leveraging our differences in thought, background, perspective, and experience to advance pharmacy education and improve health.

2nd Edition Updates: Alignment with ACPE Standards

As an enhancement to this guide, the committee has aligned each strategy with the relevant Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) standards. This addition underscores that the strategies presented are not merely aspirational—they are essential for institutions striving to meet accreditation requirements. By directly connecting practices that support student belonging to ACPE standards, the guide reinforces the critical role these strategies play in ensuring program quality, accountability, and student success.

To make these connections clear, each strategy in the guide includes a header listing the specific ACPE standards it supports. Additional details about the standards and their relevance can be found in the Appendix at the end of the guide.

Meet The Authors

Trenika R. Mitchell, PharmD

Clinical Associate Professor | Associate Dean
University of Kentucky College of Pharmacy

Juan J. Bustamante, PhD

Instructional Associate Professor of Pharmaceutical
Sciences and Director of Recruitment
Texas A&M Irma Lerma Rangel School of Pharmacy

Jennifer L. Clutter, MA

Director of Advising
West Virginia University School of Pharmacy

Christine Ann (Dimaculangan) Parikh, PharmD, BCACP

Clinical Assistant Professor of Pharmacy Practice
Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy, Rutgers University

Patricia Jumbo-Lucioni, MD, PhD

Associate Professor
Samford University McWhorter School of Pharmacy

Sean Nebergall, PharmD, RPh

Assistant Professor - Division of Pharmacy Education
& Innovation
The Ohio State University College of Pharmacy

Heather Nyman, PharmD, BCPS

Associate Professor (Clinical) and Assistant Dean for
Academic Culture & Community
University of Utah College of Pharmacy

David Jesse Sanchez, PhD

Professor, Biotechnology and Pharmaceutical Sciences;
Director of Humanism for the College of Pharmacy
Western University of Health Sciences College of
Pharmacy

Tyan F. Thomas, PharmD, MSME, BCPS

Clinical Pharmacy Practitioner – Women’s Health

Danielle Stubbs Kirkland, MEd

Director of Student Recruitment and Belonging,
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
Corresponding Author
Contact pharm4me@aacp.org with questions

Contributors

Sally A. Arif, PharmD, BCCP

Professor of Pharmacy Practice
Midwestern University, College of Pharmacy

Committee Charges & Objectives

Charges

The Student Access and Success in Pharmacy Education (SASPE) Advisory Committee will provide counsel and collaborate closely with Association staff and designated governance groups to support strategic priorities focused on student recruitment, retention, and progression. Its overarching goal is to foster the success of all students pursuing pharmacy education. This work aims to better align educational pathways with workforce demands and the evolving needs of our patient populations.

Objectives

- Continuously identify and develop actionable strategies to address cross-cutting issues that negatively impact the success of pharmacy learners.
- Advance strategies to align with healthcare workforce needs to support broader participation in pharmacy education while nurturing student potential of all learners.
- Develop programs, policies, and resources to support all pharmacy educators, staff, and learners.

Addressing Healthcare Disparities

The Imperative for an Inclusive Healthcare Workforce, With a Focus on Pharmacy Education

While healthcare disparities arise from a combination of issues such as but not limited to access to services, geographic shortages, communication barriers, and the availability of clinicians who understand the needs of various patient communities, workforce composition is a major contributor to these gaps. Across all health professions, a more inclusive healthcare workforce is imperative to achieving health equity.

Across pharmacy education, differences in who applies, enrolls, advances through programs, and/or joins the faculty—vary across groups. These variations highlight ongoing challenges in drawing students and educators from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences.^{1,2,3,4,5}

Evidence shows that when learners and practitioners engage with colleagues who bring different viewpoints and life experiences, the result is improved cultural awareness, stronger communication skills, and reduced bias in clinical interactions.⁶ Supportive learning environments also help individuals navigate personal and professional identity-formation, strengthening the overall readiness of the healthcare workforce to meet patient needs.^{7,8}

A student body with a broad mix of experiences benefits all learners by better preparing them for care delivery across varied patient communities. Patients, in turn, often report greater comfort and clearer communication when working with clinicians who share similar language skills or lived experiences. Clinicians from medically underserved communities are also more likely to return to those areas to practice, helping address long-standing shortages in access to care.^{9,10,11,12}

It is thus of interest to the Academy and individual pharmacy institutions to give considerable attention to the challenge of recruiting student pharmacists from all backgrounds.

Recruiting Students Through The Lens of Belonging

“You can’t tell someone they belong. They can only determine that based on the choices of inclusion made for them in their environment.”

This guide provides recruitment strategies through the lens of creating belonging. But why belonging, specifically? Belonging plays a huge role in our lives. Our need to belong is what drives us to seek stable, long-lasting relationships with other people. It also motivates us to participate in social activities such as clubs, sports teams, religious groups, and community organizations. In Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, a sense of belonging is part of one of his major needs that motivate human behavior.¹ In this guide, we define belonging as “the feeling that results from inclusion” (the latter comprising actions taken by the institution to foster belonging). Sally A. Arif, PharmD, BCPS, BCCP, Professor of Pharmacy Practice at Midwestern University College of Pharmacy shared this apt definition of belonging, “Belonging...is usually defined as a sentiment or feeling of being connected and accepted in which a person can thrive and is reinforced by the organization’s culture. You can’t tell someone they belong. They can only determine that based on the choices of inclusion made for them in their environment; the extent to which individuals feel valued, accepted, and a legitimate/important member of their environment.”²

Studies on college students have found a positive link between a sense of belonging and greater happiness and overall well-being, as well as an overall reduction in poor mental health conditions including anxiety and depression.³ Further, belonging is crucial to the success of college students, with research demonstrating that it impacts academic self-confidence, motivation, perceived value of tasks, engagement in student activities, organizational skills, and feelings of social acceptance.³ Students want to know they

matter. There are multiple aspects that influence a student's sense of belonging, including interactions with faculty and peers, campus involvement, and their perceptions of the institution's climate. For example, research shows that positive and supportive interactions with peers and faculty correlate with an increased sense of belonging.⁴ Unfortunately, historically underserved student populations are more likely to report a lower sense of belonging.^{5,6,7,8,9}

While a sense of belonging has largely been studied in the context of retention, research shows that belonging also plays a crucial role in recruitment, as it is an important factor in the college decision-making process for students. In a study conducted by Winter and Chapleo¹⁰, a participant summed it up powerfully, "I am looking around to see if people are like me...It is a conscious decision to see if I fit in. You need to see how students [at that university] are behaving... whether you see yourself as that kind of person and you want to be around people like that." It may help to think back to when you were touring colleges. Before deciding to attend your alma mater, what role did feeling that you belonged play in your decision to enroll?

This guide focuses on belonging-centered recruitment strategies because it is the responsibility of pharmacy schools to cultivate a feeling of belonging by prioritizing, appreciating, and enhancing the voices, viewpoints, and wide variety of characteristics of prospective students right from the beginning. In essence, belonging is not solely the student's responsibility; rather, it underscores the dynamic relationship between the individual and the institution.^{5,11}

Nonetheless, it is important to emphasize that recruiting more students by itself is not enough. There are limitations of relying solely on numeric demographic measures as indicators of progress in building a culture where everyone feels valued and supported. For example, the Rooney rule, originally implemented in the NFL to broaden the pool of candidates considered for leadership roles, did not lead to substantial progress due to its focus on numeric targets without addressing underlying biases. There is a need for comprehensive reform efforts and sincere organizational commitment to fostering inclusivity and a sense of belonging. While measuring demographics statistically is important, it alone may amount to virtue-signaling rather than meaningful progress without broader cultural changes within organizations. While this guide focuses on recruitment, we want to emphasize that true inclusivity starts with foundational cultural shifts within organizations rather than solely focusing on recruitment practices.¹²

Creating belonging also means ensuring that all areas of pharmacy education are visible and accessible to students, including pathways in pharmaceutical sciences and graduate education. By raising awareness of these opportunities early and presenting them in an inclusive, approachable way, institutions can help prospective students see themselves not only in PharmD programs but also as future researchers, educators, and leaders in the profession.

How To Use This Guide

Each contributing author brings their voice on this topic while also bringing a unique set of experiences.

The first step toward effectively using this guide is to accept that not every part of this guide is the best next step in your institution's path to creating a belonging environment. That means this belonging guide will be useful to every institution in different ways. In addition, the landscape of belonging often includes topics of inclusiveness and parity, which are constantly evolving in and of themselves. Keep an open mind and apply this guide in the manner that best supports the needs of your institution.

Reflecting on where you want to go with this guide, either individually or as a team, is an important next step. Look at ways that your institution is currently creating an inclusive environment and identify places or processes that may be causing a gap between your institution and being a place where people feel they

belong. You may have existing data that shows the climate of the institution and identifies rifts, or there may be anecdotal accounts. All potential discontinuities are worth considering.

Reading through the different sections will provide insight into different ideas and perspectives on belonging. Each contributing author brings their voice to this topic and their unique set of experiences. When reviewing each section, consider whether the suggested approach addresses a meaningful gap or if it aligns with existing programming that could be expanded to further strengthen a sense of belonging. Either way, look for experiences that seem feasible for you and your institution.

When selecting strategies to implement, consider whether each one fulfills the purpose of this guide—helping ensure that students you seek to recruit will feel a genuine sense of belonging at your institution. Do not attempt to implement a strategy that feels forced or superficially portrays a single moment of belonging. This guide aims to help bring real change or highlight real belonging. Do what you believe is best to show the real environment at your institution. Recruiting students with strategies that do not give a genuine view of your institution can have the consequence of bringing students into the wrong space. This can ultimately lead them to leave the field if they come to feel that they do not belong there.

Recruitment Strategies

While this guide focuses on recruitment, we want to emphasize that true inclusivity starts with foundational cultural shifts within organizations rather than solely focusing on recruitment practices.

Uncover The Hidden Curriculum

ACPE Standards: 1.3.b 1.4.d, , 4.1.c 4.1.g, 4.2.a, 4.3.c, 4.3.f (for more details, please see the Appendix)

Background

The hidden curriculum refers to unspoken social, behavioral, cultural, and professional expectations in the educational environment. The hidden curriculum is usually the result of institutional culture and values and thus differs between institutions.¹ It is transmitted by those who are part of the institution via implicit behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs, often unintentionally and unbeknownst to the transmitter. Another way to put it is, “Every word we speak, every action we perform, every time we choose not to speak or act, every smile, every curse, every sigh, is a lesson in the hidden curriculum.”² Education does not only entail the transfer of knowledge but also the transmission of social norms and values, “or more specifically, definitions of what constitute appropriate and inappropriate attitudes and behaviors.”²

How It Relates to Recruitment

The hidden curriculum, or unspoken social norms, is perceived by prospective students through an institution’s implicit and explicit values, which are embodied by those who represent it, such as faculty and staff. Thus, it is imperative during recruitment events, such as school tours, information sessions, and workshops, that all faculty and staff are aware of the kind of messaging they convey to prospective students. Interactions with prospective students extend beyond admissions personnel to all individuals who might encounter them. This encompasses both verbal and non-verbal communication, including body language and overall demeanor. Prospective students are inclined to admire, be drawn to, and mirror those who show them respect and caring. Therefore, the attitude and conduct toward students hold significant sway over who will join the pharmacy profession in the future. It is helpful to recognize that the attitudes, beliefs, and values behind our actions, words, inactions, and silences can shape the perspectives of prospective students and influence the decisions of those considering a career in pharmacy.²

Additionally, recruitment materials such as brochures, social media, and websites can send an implicit message reflective of the hidden curriculum, depending on the students featured or program aspects highlighted. If a program is touted repeatedly as “rigorous” and “selective,” it can give off an air of exclusivity that may turn away prospective students who struggle with imposter syndrome or who otherwise do not see themselves as “good enough.” These signals of the hidden curriculum also become apparent during live recruitment events. Perhaps all current students present at the open house are in white coats, and all faculty are in suits. Perhaps admissions staff use a variety of acronyms or industry jargon during information sessions. If those components of the hidden curriculum are not explained, then prospective students can become confused and, thus, intimidated. This may be exacerbated if there is a lack of an inclusive environment that does not encourage asking questions (see section “Build an Inclusive Environment”).

Colleges and schools of pharmacy should provide as much transparency as possible by disclosing not only admissions requirements but preferences, as well (e.g., the characteristics a school prefers “ideal” candidates to have that are not officially required), and accurately representing the school’s culture, mission, and values, “... lest they succumb to gaining applicant trust only to match them into an environment that does not, in fact, protect them.”¹

Recommendations

- Reflect honestly on the institution's hidden curriculum and the unintended messages it may convey.⁴ Begin by asking if all the norms reflected by institution staff, faculty and students are easily understood by outsiders.
- Take a critical look at institutional policies, particularly admissions policies, to identify any biases resulting from the hidden curriculum that impede the recruitment and admission of students from all backgrounds.
- Be direct and transparent about unspoken expectations, values, and beliefs with prospective students, letting them know what the institution is looking for in an applicant and future colleague. For instance, Cummins et al³ suggest that institutions offer a pre-visit introduction letter that clarifies the interview structure, includes the names and photos of panel interviewers, and provides other useful details to enhance transparency, such as the interview format and the general topics covered in interview questions.
- Institutions should be transparent with faculty and staff about the hidden curriculum and the consequences of the resulting messaging so that faculty and staff can be mindful of the values and attitudes they convey to prospective students.¹

Examples

- Are there admissions criteria that are preferred by the institution that are not explicitly required? Perhaps there is a hidden preference that applicants submit a letter of recommendation from a pharmacist that creates an unconscious bias against students who do not meet that hidden preference.
- How do the institution and the admissions team define professional dress, especially admissions interviews? Not all students have the same definition, and if applicants are expected to dress a certain way for the admissions interview, that should be disclosed early on during the recruitment process.

Build Relationships

ACPE Standards: 1.4.d, 1.5.c, 4.1.g, 4.2.d, 5.1.a, 5.1.b, 7.2.c (for more details, please see the Appendix)

Background

Building relationships between the institution and prospective students is paramount. It is an institution-wide effort that includes not only admissions staff but faculty, current students, and alumni, as well. These relationships provide prospective students with valuable insights into college culture, academic program offerings, research opportunities, potential career paths, and general tips for success, helping them make informed decisions about their educational journey. Secondly, establishing rapport with faculty, in particular, fosters a sense of belonging and connection to the institution, enhancing the likelihood of enrollment and ensuring retention. Additionally, these relationships can serve as a foundation for mentorship and academic support, offering guidance and encouragement to students as they continue navigating their academic pursuits. Moreover, institution-student interactions contribute to a vibrant and inclusive campus community, where all perspectives are valued and celebrated. Ultimately, investing in relationships between institutional members and prospective students benefits everyone, as it enriches the prospective students' experience and strengthens the fabric of the institutional community as a whole.^{1,2}

How It Relates To Recruitment

By leveraging the influence of current students and alumni, institutions can effectively bridge the gap between prospective students and the campus community, ultimately improving recruitment outcomes. For example, the use of personalized communication channels, such as phone calls, texts, or personalized emails from faculty members, current students, and alumni, provide valuable information but also create a sense of community and belonging among prospective students.³ Every touchpoint, no matter how small, can leave a lasting impression on a prospective student and impact their decision-making process.

Recommendations

- Engage Current Students and Alumni: Enlist the help of current students and alumni to connect with and build community among groups of prospective students. Their firsthand experiences and insights can resonate with potential enrollees, positively influencing their decision-making process.
- Create community-building platforms: Use platforms, such as GroupMe, Facebook, etc., where current PharmD, pharmaceutical sciences, and graduate students can engage with prospective students. This allows prospective students to connect with peers who share different academic and career interests and helps broaden their view of opportunities in the profession.
- Facilitate Q&A sessions, meet & greets, and advice-sharing sessions to foster a sense of belonging and connection before students arrive on campus.
- Send regular updates to prospective students via newsletters that are designed to help students prepare for and stay informed of required materials for pharmacy school. The student newsletter may also include current events, student activities, and/or blog content from current students detailing campus life.⁴
- A pre-matriculation program, along with peer mentoring, can help students transition to the rigors of graduate or PharmD education while also learning about student/life balance as professional student pharmacists or research trainees.⁵
- Ensure all institutional members faithfully reflect the institution's values and mission (see the following sections of the guide to learn more about effective and authentic communication strategies). In particular, by involving PharmD, pharmaceutical sciences, and graduate faculty, staff, and students, institutions can demonstrate that all pathways within pharmacy education are equally valued and welcoming.

Build an Inclusive Environment

ACPE Standards: 1.3.a, 1.3.b, 1.5.c, , 4.1.c, 4.1.d, 4.1.g, 4.1.h, 4.2.d, 4.3.b, 7.2.c.
(for more details, please see the Appendix)

Background

Inclusion represents the deliberate and continuous effort to guarantee individuals from varied backgrounds and identities can actively engage in all facets of an organization.¹ Inclusivity, as a feeling, is not quantifiable. Inclusion requires the establishment of recruitment, admission, and retention strategies that make students feel welcome, heard, and valued. Thus, building an inclusive environment involves creating an atmosphere that encourages all populations to thrive, which promotes a sense of pride and belonging in the college community.² An inclusive institutional environment encourages students to bring their whole identity, both professional and personal, which, in turn, fosters a safe environment to sustain students on their professional identity formation paths.

How It Relates To Recruitment

An inclusive environment fosters a sense of belonging that allows students to feel comfortable asking questions and expressing their thoughts and feelings during recruitment efforts. For example, college representatives should explain industry jargon and abbreviations if they need to be used and not assume what prospective students know. Often, as members of the Academy, faculty and staff rely on the use of industry jargon to display expertise and knowledge. It is essential to recognize that use of industry jargon to prospective students and their families may create a less-than-welcoming environment, which may adversely impact their decision to pursue education at your institution. An inclusive environment requires cultivating trust and meeting students at their individual points of understanding and comfort.³ Providing a welcoming framework will instill in students this feeling of belonging. When students feel that they are in the place they are meant to be and with people they are meant to be with, engagement, connection, and

comfort will ensue. Ultimately, the goal is to create opportunities for students to envision themselves in every area of pharmacy, including pharmaceutical sciences and graduate education, by raising awareness of these pathways early and ensuring they are presented as accessible, welcoming options for all.

Recommendations

- Focus on building trust and meeting prospective students where they are in their professional and academic journey.
- Encourage prospective students and their families to ask questions, emphasizing that additional clarification is happily given at any time.
- Facilitate meaningful personal interactions in person or online to accommodate prospective students' needs. Personal interactions have shown to be instrumental in fostering a sense of "university fit".⁴
- Refrain from using industry jargon that may cause confusion or may be intimidating to those new to the field of pharmacy (such as high school students or first-generation students, for example).
- Be honest and transparent about the challenging nature of a pharmacy education but avoid using descriptors such as "rigorous" (alternative terms: "thorough," "comprehensive," "challenging") and/or "weed out" classes that may cause intimidation or imposter syndrome.
- Explain aspects of your program plainly and in multiple ways, if necessary.
- Promote awareness of all programs, including pharmaceutical sciences and graduate education by engaging students early through outreach, mentorship, and research opportunities to broaden pathways into advanced careers.
- Consider implementing storytelling techniques, using relatable personal narratives so that students can better envision themselves at your institution.⁵
- Ensure consistent messaging across the campus community.
- Refer to the "Highlight Support Resources" section for further recommendations regarding campus and community resources that can aid in fostering a sense of belonging for potential students.

Use Inclusive Language

ACPE Standards: 4.1.c, 4.3.f (for more details, please see the Appendix)

Background

Words matter. Language is powerful, and it can be polarizing or uniting. The goal with language should be to create safe, respectful, inclusive, and welcoming environments for the students that we are seeking to educate and teach.¹ The Linguistic Society of America states that inclusive language "... conveys respect to all people, is sensitive to differences, and promotes equal opportunities."² Using inclusive language is critical in preventing harm or offense. Something as simple as using the correct pronouns that an individual has identified for themselves or putting in the effort to correctly pronounce a person's name sends a clear message that their identity, experiences, and uniqueness matter. Not doing so can cause irreparable damage and send the signal that their identity is not being acknowledged or does not matter. This is especially important when we discuss the role inclusive language plays in recruitment and admissions.

How It Relates To Recruitment

In the setting of higher education and recruitment, intentional use of inclusive language is imperative. Outreach and recruitment of prospective students in higher education should aim to engage a broad range of individuals and ensure that all interested students feel welcomed and encouraged to apply. It is

shown that students report less discrimination in institutions where they perceive a stronger institutional commitment to inclusion and belonging.³ Using inclusive language can help broaden an applicant pool by promoting a sense of belonging and a more enriching environment for all students. Something to keep in mind is that language is fluid and constantly evolving. It is everyone's individual responsibility to keep an open mind and be willing to learn and adapt.

Recommendations

- How one identifies themselves will vary from one individual to the next and one should not assume. Best practice is to take cues from the individual themselves.
- Avoid statements that perpetuate stereotypes and “norms.”
- Be intentional with examples and choice of terminology. Highlight a variety of success stories across PharmD, pharmaceutical sciences, and graduate programs so students see multiple avenues to belong.
- Consider person-first vs. identity first-language (see page 9 of the Inclusive Language Guide for more details).¹
- Avoid microaggressions in conversations, which are subtle, often unintentional, comments or actions that can negatively impact or marginalize individuals. Avoid making assumptions about people. For example, do not assume that all prospective students are only interested in the PharmD pathway; some may be drawn to graduate-level opportunities in the pharmaceutical sciences.
- Create an environment in which everyone is empowered to speak and feel confident that their voices will be heard.
- Use name badges with pronouns and phonetic spelling of names (PharmCAS applicants have the option to add phonetic spelling of their names on their application).
- Ensure consistent messaging across the campus community.
- Refer to the “Highlight Support Resources” section for further recommendations regarding campus and community resources that can aid in fostering a sense of belonging for potential students.

Examples

- Use pathway instead of pipeline - as the latter is “a term that is considered offensive to Indigenous communities as a result of oil companies transporting crude oil through the sacred lands of Native Americans or Alaska Natives and contaminating their water supply.”¹
- Use older adults instead of the elderly to “avoid language that promotes stereotypes that ‘other’ older adults. However, please note that, in certain cultures, the term “Elder” is considered an honorific.”¹
- Use persons with disabilities rather than special needs - “Use person-first or identity-first language as is appropriate for the community or person being discussed.”¹
- For more examples, see the [APA's Inclusive Language Guide](#)

Normalize Difficulties

ACPE Standards: 4.1.f, 4.1.h (for more details, please see the Appendix)

Background

Students of all levels of preparation and backgrounds may face academic challenges and social difficulties when entering college. Students who do not recognize that such burdens are normal tend to think that their struggles are an indicator that they do not belong in college. Students whose backgrounds have historically faced structural barriers in accessing and progressing through higher education may encounter negative assumptions about their abilities. Because of these experiences and their lower representation within many college environments, these students may be more likely to interpret academic or social challenges as signs that they do not fully belong, even when their talents and potential are clear.¹

Normalizing difficulties is the intentional communication to all students that everyone, regardless of background, faces difficulties at some point along their college journeys. Another component is reminding students of available resources and encouraging them to use them when needed. Normalizing difficulties is an important link between recruitment and the broader goal of retention.

Self-awareness and self-efficacy are key non-cognitive factors associated with college persistence and on-time graduation.² Normalizing difficulties, even during the recruitment stage of the student's college experience, is a building block of a foundation that positions students to become self-aware learners and professionals.

How It Relates To Recruitment

The recruitment process is often a student's (and their family's) first introduction to your college's culture. Students from backgrounds underrepresented in higher education and health professions education may come to the recruitment process with a low level of confidence in their ability to successfully complete the program; a less-than-welcoming recruitment process may reassert these doubts. Creating a welcoming environment during the recruitment process can help students feel comfortable identifying difficulties and seeking help to address those difficulties during their matriculation. Conversely, creating an unwelcoming environment during the recruitment process may make students feel out of place and may result in their not applying to the program.

Recommendations

- Reflect on your institution's culture: ask yourself and your faculty and staff if the culture established in your program aligns with a "struggle is normal" outlook that you intend to portray. Refer to the section titled "Build an Inclusive Environment".
- Provide a welcoming, comfortable, and private environment for students to inquire about potential resource needs.
- When discussing resources available to students, be transparent about the costs to access them. Refer to the section titled "Highlight Support Resources."
- Use story-telling and personal narratives: consider having faculty/instructors/professional staff who have navigated challenges and difficulties during their educational and training programs (and who are comfortable and willing to share their stories) talk to potential students. Include students who have used support services in recruitment events and share their testimonials in recruitment materials.
- Take care not to perpetuate stereotypes when selecting students to give testimonials. Look for students of all backgrounds to provide testimonials
- During recruitment sessions, discuss the college's approach to fostering wellness and personal well-being.

- Model your commitment to wellness and personal well-being by scheduling breaks during the day to allow students and their families to attend to emotional, physical, and spiritual needs.
- Remind students that you anticipate they will experience “life happens” events that they will need help navigating while completing their studies.
- Communicate that you want them to reach out when these events happen. “Life happens” events include personal relationship break-ups, severe illness or deaths of family members and friends, parental divorce, etc.
- Err on the side of giving too much information (students/families may not know what questions to ask, especially first-generation college students).
- Avoid the use of terms that may be interpreted by students that you have a “weed-out” program that they cannot successfully complete. Refer to the section titled “Use Inclusive Language”.

Highlight Support Resources

ACPE Standards: 1.3.b 1.4.d, 1.5.c, 4.1.b, 4.1.d, 4.1.f, 4.1.g, 4.1.h, 4.2.a, 4.3.f, 5.1.a, 5.1.b, 6.2.c, 7.2.c, 7.4.a
(for more details, please see the Appendix)

Background

For the purposes of this document, the AACP Student Access and Success in Pharmacy Education Advisory Committee authors are broadly defining support resources to include any supportive entity, office, individual, or organization, on or off campus, that aids students in addressing challenges or barriers to their success, belonging, and active well-being.

How It Relates To Recruitment

Resources tailored to student needs signify that the institution is understanding, welcoming, and committed to the success of students from all backgrounds. For example, if a student previously utilized exam or attendance accommodations for a disability, evaluating the accessibility of similar resources at a new institution may influence their decision on where to attend. Similarly, if a student on a campus visit does not see or hear of students and faculty with whom they identify, they may not expect to find a sense of belonging on that campus. Campus visits, social media postings, websites, and other electronic recruitment mechanisms should include introduction to affinity groups, student organizations, and both campus and surrounding community resources.^{1,2}

Once recruited, research shows that student retention from underrepresented groups is impacted by student relationships, sense of belonging, and engagement with resources. By communicating about student resources early and often, institutions can proactively address some of these needs.

Recommendations

The first step to implementing a full array of student resources is to survey the availability and suitability of resources currently offered by your institution.^{3,4} Such a survey should examine both successes and failures of the existing support structure. In addition to exploring the views of current students, it’s important to review available information regarding student attrition and utilization of resources to determine where additional or improved supports are needed.

Examining success metrics in light of identity-based engagement may also provide insight.⁵ Once the current status is understood, a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) model analysis may be valuable in planning for needed changes. When structuring supports, colleges should consider potential student concerns related to scheduling, travel, finances, and emergency needs to ensure programs are truly accessible to all students. Examples of potential resource areas to consider may be found below.

One barrier students may encounter is simple lack of knowledge: the best support programs can do no good if students are unaware of what resources exist. Clear communication regarding standards, expectations, and available support systems to meet these standards is vital to the effectiveness of the support programs and to student success.⁴ Ensuring student awareness of available resources begins prior to admission. Support options relevant to application and admissions must be widely communicated alongside application materials. Notification of acceptance to the program could include communication about assistance with planning, travel, and acceptance fee waivers, along with contact information for the institution's available support professionals.

Once students arrive on campus, an introduction of available resources must be included early – during orientation or the first weeks of the program. This should include both direct links to services or agencies they may need, and examples of how to contact student affairs professionals who are tasked with assisting students with various processes. For students who do not have family support or experience in higher education, simply providing contact information may not be sufficient. Including concrete examples of who to contact and how such contact can be initiated may remove some of these barriers. Additionally, as some students may not immediately be aware of what difficulties they will face over time, repetition of this information is needed periodically – for example, if there are points in the curriculum where students tend to struggle, that would be a good time to revisit discussion of both academic and emotional supports. Other reminders of resources should be included in course syllabi, student handbooks, and faculty and staff should also be versed in and consistently communicate the availability of entities that can support students' sense of belonging.

However, knowledge of and access to resources is not sufficient. Institutions must also work to ensure students can utilize those resources without fear of stigma or judgment. Research has shown that students may avoid seeking formal support based on peer, faculty, and general societal perception that the need for support implies a deficit in the person's ability or character. For example, students with learning disabilities who perceive less stigma in the learning environment are more likely to engage with faculty, which in turn leads to improved learning outcomes.² This is especially salient in areas carrying greater societal stigma such as mental health, learning disability, food or housing insecurity, and substance use disorders.^{6,7,8,9,10,11,12}

One potential strategy to overcome these barriers is to focus on social norming of said resources. For example, one author has found that student uptake of accommodations increased after a class discussion in which they listed examples of various accommodations and how these have previously been applied to specific class activities. Another necessity is to continually educate ourselves regarding the challenges faced by students. An instructor who promotes available mental health resources for students, for example, but uses words such as “crazy” or “insane” to indicate shock or disapproval, may unintentionally be reinforcing the stigma that dissuades students from the use of these resources. A faculty member using the outdated language “special needs” to refer to disabled individuals may perpetuate the view of disability or use of accommodations as an individual deficit, rather than a societal barrier.

Another potential strategy to overcome the perceived stigma of resource utilization is to partner with local support resources not affiliated with the university. External options may provide an additional measure of privacy for students seeking support around sensitive or stigmatized topics.^{2,6,7,10,11} This also allows for broader coverage of needs, for example, when the type of support sought is not offered at a given institution.

Intersectionality is an often-overlooked aspect of support service utilization. Intersectionality refers to “overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage” based on various social identities.¹³ Institutions must take care not to silo needed services, which may perpetuate the exclusion of those holding multiple marginalized identities. “Specific to the work of cultural centers, many function primarily as single identity spaces, including [2SLGBTQIA+ Centers]. As such, more should be done in these spaces not just to acknowledge the fact that students hold multiple converging identities, but to change their practice in relationship to how students navigate life on campus.”¹⁴ There are no simple solutions here - intersectionality is a huge topic and one that has, historically, been neglected, and it doesn't have an easy answer. A culture of open dialogue at all levels of administration, intentionally creating space for all voices to be heard, would be a good place to start.

Examples

Types of support offered may include, but are not limited to:

- **Academic:** tutoring, bridge programs, academic coaching, advising
- **Career/employment:** on campus, off campus jobs while in school, CV/resume assistance, interview preparation, job placement, career fairs
- **Disability accommodations:** accessibility services, academic accommodations, adherence to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), ADA advisors, faculty training and supports
- **Emergency needs:** referral to a variety of emergency services
- **Emotional:** counseling, wellness programming
- **Financial:** food banks, financial counseling, scholarships
- **Health:** available healthcare providers on campus and off, providers reflective of student identities, addiction resources, mental health services, pharmacist recovery networks, rape crisis services, domestic violence centers, health departments, and free clinics
- **Identity-based:** affinity groups, mentoring, student organizations, community-based organizations, and campus units that specifically serve students from historically underrepresented backgrounds
- **Legal:** student legal services that may aid with landlord-tenant issues or for other legal referrals
- **Logistical:** who to contact for help with what issue, advocacy, coursework extensions, concerns or questions about policy
- **Military:** veterans services, campus resources, policies supportive of active duty/reserve duty students
- **Neurotype-related:** autism support programs, ADHD support programs, executive functioning education and supports
- **Personal safety:** Clery Reports, campus security, equitable community policing
- **Practical:** childcare, lactation rooms, caregiving, commuting/transportation, out-of-state or international student concerns, housing (some institutions offer living and learning communities based on majors or identities), services for multilingual learners (peer learning groups, faculty awareness, English as a second language [ESL] courses)
- **Spiritual:** houses of worship, student organizations, prayer facilities
- **Title IX:** office, procedures, supportive services, mandatory reporting

Send an Authentic Message

ACPE Standards: 4.1.b, 4.2.b, 4.3.b, 4.3.c, 4.3.f (for more details, please see the Appendix)

Background

“Don’t write a check that you cannot cash.” The translation of this old colloquialism is that you should not say or promise something that you cannot deliver. Authentic is defined as “worthy of acceptance or belief as conforming to or based on fact” or “true to one’s own personality, spirit, or character.”¹ A message is “a communication in writing, speech, or by signals” or “an underlying theme or idea.”² Authentic messaging provides a genuine representation of who you are as an institution and a community and is a critical aspect of promoting a sense of belonging.

How It Relates To Recruitment

Students seek authenticity. In today's world of instant information, the ability to fact-check the accuracy of the statements we make verbally, via social media, on our brochures and handouts, through texts or emails, or through any other form of communication our institutions may utilize is directly at their fingertips. Students can seamlessly communicate with current and former students, read professor reviews on websites such as 'Rate My Professor,' research the demographics of your state, city, and institution, and receive unfiltered comments concerning your environment on websites like Reddit or replies to your institution's social media posts.^{3,4}

Therefore, it is critical to be honest. One of the determinants of perceived authenticity is disclosure in personal narratives, experiences, and opinions.⁴ If there has been an incident (especially one that has received national attention), it is better to own it and openly communicate your institution's well-developed and measurable action plan to create change. The pictures of individuals on your website should accurately represent the range of individuals who comprise your institution's community. If your institution is not yet where it hopes to be in welcoming and supporting students from backgrounds that have been historically less represented in higher education, clearly communicate your commitment to creating an environment where all students feel they belong, along with the concrete steps you are taking to broaden outreach and strengthen access.

Authentic messaging is mutually beneficial for the student applicants and the institution. When your institution sincerely expresses its values and represents its environment genuinely, it will attract and excite students who align with those values and thrive in its unique environment.^{5,6} For example, if there is a heavy focus on and commitment to research, residency-bound students versus students who desire to immediately seek the job market upon graduation, community versus institutional pharmacy, etc., the institution should reflect those characteristics in their promotional materials. Each institution should know its strengths, build upon them, and market them.⁷

Recommendations

Authenticity is paramount. Institutions should know who they are (values, priorities and focus areas, strengths, weaknesses) and present their true selves to the public. Students are savvy consumers who can quickly determine if the institution's projected and private personae are in line with one another. Be aware of how you are perceived.

- Review responses to your social media posts or reviews given online.
- Host focus groups to seek advice and opinions from your most important critics – your current and former students (which can include students who left prior to degree completion).
- Obtain feedback from potential students who visit your campus and/or participate in recruitment activities.
- Conduct climate surveys to determine how students, staff, and faculty feel about the environment in your institution. Work together to create actionable solutions when areas of improvement are discovered.
- Ensure everyone involved in recruitment efforts is knowledgeable about your institution and provides the same messaging.

Conclusion

(Re)commit to Belonging

Everyone in your school plays a role in creating a belonging environment. It is empowering to recognize that what each person does—what you do—makes a difference.

This guide highlights a number of areas where schools may target efforts to cultivate belonging in recruiting. As stated earlier, not every section in this guide will be the best next step for each school. Our hope is that this guide provides a framework for assessing your institution’s recruiting efforts through the lens of belonging. A thoughtful and honest assessment may be as simple as individual or group reflections on the strengths and weaknesses of your institution for the recruitment strategies covered. Anecdotal reports of student experiences in the recruitment process, focus groups, or survey data can be used in this assessment process as well, if available. A commitment (or recommitment) to student belonging includes creating an action plan as well as a plan for ongoing assessment.

Everyone in your school plays a role in creating a belonging environment. While acknowledging this can feel overwhelming for those who would like to see cultural change happen within their institutions, it is also empowering to recognize that what each person does—what you do—makes a difference.

The concept of shared equity leadership as defined by the American Council on Education is where “equity becomes everyone’s responsibility.”¹ Importantly, the first step toward the shared equity leadership model is the individual “journey toward critical consciousness, in which leaders develop or strengthen a commitment to equity through their identity, personal experiences, or relationships and learning.”² Hence, the individual journey lays the foundation for institutional work. Your own individual journey and your individual commitment to fostering student belonging is a vital component of the culture of your institution.

While this guide has focused on recruitment, the impact of these practices may have far-reaching implications. Ultimately, we are training a wide-ranging group of healthcare professionals – pharmacists, pharmaceutical scientists, researchers and more- to serve a community of patients with varied backgrounds and needs, and to drive discoveries that strengthen health outcomes for all. As we model our commitment to belonging, we may empower our students to take this same commitment into the communities where they work, providing them a necessary tool to advance health equity.

Thank You

We trust that you will find this guide both insightful and valuable. In our ongoing efforts to enhance future editions, we would greatly appreciate your feedback and suggestions. Kindly submit your comments using the [Feedback Form](#).

If you have any questions, please reach out to:

Danielle Stubbs Kirkland
Director of Student Recruitment and Belonging
AACP Student Affairs
dstubbs@aacp.org

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Appendix

The Appendix provides a detailed mapping of ACPE Standards to the strategies outlined in the Belonging Guide, illustrating how each strategy supports accreditation expectations.

| ACPE Standards | Belonging Strategies & Explanation |
|--|---|
| <p>Standard 1. Organization and Governance The college or school is organized and staffed to advance its vision, mission, and strategic plan; meets all stated degree-granting eligibility and reporting requirements; and provides an environment and culture that promotes self-directed lifelong learning, professional behavior, and collaboration.</p> | |
| <p>1.3.a Inclusive process The strategic plan is developed through an inclusive process, including faculty, staff, students, preceptors, practitioners, and other relevant constituents, and is disseminated in summary form to key stakeholders.</p> | <p>Build an Inclusive Environment: This strategy supports the intentional creation of environments where all individuals—students, faculty, and staff—feel welcomed, respected, and included. By including all members of the institutional community in the development of policies, and practices, institutions ensure that their processes reflect and reinforce an inclusive environment, which is central to meeting the expectations of an inclusive process.</p> |
| <p>1.3.b Appropriate resources Elements within the strategic plan are appropriately resourced for implementation.</p> | <p>Highlight Support Resources: This strategy underscores the importance of informing prospective students about available support systems, such as academic assistance, mental health services, and financial aid. Effectively implementing this approach requires allocating adequate resources to maintain and promote these services.</p> <p>Build an Inclusive Environment: Creating a welcoming atmosphere involves, but is not limited to, investing in training, inclusive policies, and accessible facilities, materials, content, etc. Ensuring these elements are well-resourced is crucial for fostering a sense of belonging among all students.</p> <p>Uncover the Hidden Curriculum: Addressing unspoken norms and expectations necessitates resources for curriculum development and faculty training. Proper investment in these areas ensures transparency and equity in the educational experience.</p> |
| <p>1.4.d Authority, collegiality, and resources The college or school administration has defined lines of authority and responsibility, fosters organizational unit collegiality and effectiveness, and allocates resources appropriately.</p> | <p>Uncover the Hidden Curriculum: By identifying and addressing unspoken norms and expectations, schools can ensure authority structures are transparent and all students understand the pathways to success, promoting organizational effectiveness.</p> <p>Build Relationships: Encouraging connections among students, faculty, and staff fosters a collegial environment where collaboration and mutual support are prioritized.</p> <p>Highlight Support Resources: Clearly communicating available resources ensures they are appropriately allocated and accessible, supporting both student success and institutional effectiveness.</p> |
| <p>1.5.c Culture of collaboration The college or school develops and fosters a culture of collaboration within subunits of the college or school, as well as within and outside the university, to advance its vision, mission, and strategic plan, and to support the profession.</p> | <p>Build Relationships: This strategy emphasizes establishing connections with prospective students, current students, alumni, and other stakeholders. By engaging with various communities and creating partnerships, colleges can enhance their collaborative culture, supporting both recruitment and professional development efforts.</p> <p>Build an Inclusive Environment: Creating an environment where all individuals feel valued and included encourages open communication and teamwork. Such an atmosphere naturally fosters collaboration among students, faculty, and staff, aligning with the goal of advancing the institution’s mission through collective efforts.</p> <p>Highlight Support Resources: By actively promoting available support systems, institutions demonstrate a commitment to student success and well-being. This approach not only aids individual development but also strengthens the collaborative fabric of the institution, as students and staff work together to utilize and enhance these resources.</p> |

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| <p>Standard 4. Students and Student Services The college or school has an appropriately staffed and resourced organizational element dedicated to providing a comprehensive range of services that promote student success and well-being.</p> <p>The college or school develops, implements, and assesses its policies and procedures to promote student success, resilience, and well-being; ensures the selection of a qualified student body into the program; and supports student progression through the Doctor of Pharmacy curriculum.</p> | |
| <p>4.1.b Financial aid The college or school provides students with financial aid information and guidance by appropriately trained personnel.</p> | <p>Highlight Support Resources: Ensuring students are aware of financial aid opportunities, scholarships, and grants to promote equitable access.</p> <p>Send an Authentic Message: Clearly communicating institutional commitment to financial accessibility and support for students from all backgrounds.</p> |
| <p>4.1.c Nondiscrimination The college or school establishes and implements policies that ensure nondiscrimination as defined by state and federal laws and regulations.</p> | <p>Use Inclusive Language: Ensures communication is respectful and free from bias, reinforcing nondiscriminatory practices.</p> <p>Uncover the Hidden Curriculum: Identifies and addresses implicit biases or unspoken norms that may create inequities.</p> <p>Build an Inclusive Environment: Establishes a culture where all individuals, regardless of background, feel valued and respected.</p> |
| <p>4.1.d Disability accommodation The college or school provides accommodations to students with documented disabilities that are determined by the University Disability Office (or equivalent) to be reasonable and do not violate the professional and technical standards or prevent students from meeting the educational outcomes of the program and provides support to faculty in accommodating students with documented disabilities</p> | <p>Highlight Support Resources: This strategy ensures that students are aware of available accommodations and support systems, improving accessibility and inclusion for those with disabilities.</p> <p>Build an Inclusive Environment: Supports this standard by fostering a culture that proactively considers the needs of students with disabilities, ensuring equitable participation in academic and campus life.</p> |
| <p>4.1.f Wellness and well-being The college or school offers students access to wellness and resilience programs/services.</p> | <p>Normalize Difficulties: Encourages open discussions about challenges students face, reducing stigma and promoting mental well-being.</p> <p>Highlight Support Resources: Ensures students are aware of wellness programs, mental health services, and other resources that support well-being.</p> <p>Build an Inclusive Environment: Fosters a supportive culture where students feel safe seeking help and prioritizing self-care.</p> |
| <p>4.1.g Advising and mentorship The college or school provides academic advising, mentorship, curricular and career-pathway counseling, and information on post-graduate education, credentialing, and training opportunities adequate to meet the needs of its students.</p> | <p>Build Relationships: Encourages strong faculty-student and peer connections, which are essential for effective advising and mentorship.</p> <p>Uncover the Hidden Curriculum: Helps mentors and advisors guide students through unspoken academic and professional expectations.</p> <p>Highlight Support Resources: Ensures students are aware of advising and mentorship programs available to them.</p> <p>Build an Inclusive Environment: Creates a welcoming space where students feel comfortable seeking guidance from mentors and advisors.</p> |

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| <p>4.1.h Student services access The college or school ensures that all students have equitable access to a comparable system of individualized student services (e.g., tutorial support, counseling, etc.) regardless of pathway.</p> | <p>Highlight Support Resources: Ensures students are aware of and can easily access available services, such as academic support, mental health resources, and career counseling.</p> <p>Normalize Difficulties: Encourages open discussions about challenges students face, reducing stigma and making it easier for them to seek support services.</p> <p>Build an Inclusive Environment: Creates a culture where all students feel comfortable accessing student services without fear of exclusion or judgment.</p> |
| <p>4.2.a Student information The college or school produces and makes available to enrolled and prospective students updated information of importance, such as: governance documents, policies and procedures, professional and technical standards, academic calendars, handbooks, catalogs, curricular and pathway information, and other resources appropriate to the student experience.</p> | <p>Highlight Support Resources: This strategy ensures that students have clear, accessible, and transparent information about available academic, financial, wellness, and career support services.</p> <p>Uncover the Hidden Curriculum: Identifies and addresses unspoken norms and expectations that may disadvantage certain student groups, promoting transparency and equity.</p> |
| <p>4.2.b Complaints policy The college or school develops, implements, and makes available to students a complaints policy that includes procedures for how students may file complaints within the college or school and also directly to ACPE regarding their college's or school's adherence to ACPE standards. The college or school maintains a chronological record of such student complaints, including how each complaint was resolved.</p> | <p>Send an Authentic Message: A clear and transparent complaints policy requires institutions to communicate their commitment to fairness, accountability, and responsiveness. Sending an authentic message ensures that students trust the institution's commitment to addressing concerns equitably and without retaliation.</p> |
| <p>4.2.d Student representation The college or school considers student perspectives and includes student representation, where appropriate, on committees, in policy development bodies, and in assessment and evaluation activities.</p> | <p>Build an Inclusive Environment: Emphasizes creating spaces where all student voices are heard, valued, and included in decision-making processes.</p> <p>Build Relationships: – Supports student representation by fostering meaningful connections between students, faculty, and administration, ensuring that student perspectives are actively considered in shaping institutional policies and practices.</p> |
| <p>4.3.b Admission procedures A duly constituted committee of the college or school has the responsibility and authority for the selection of students to be offered admission. Admission criteria, policies, and procedures are not compromised regardless of the size or quality of the applicant pool. All admission policies including early assurance and transfer should be detailed and readily available.</p> | <p>Send an Authentic Message: This strategy focuses on communicating a clear, honest, and authentic message about the institution's values, commitments, and practices. By ensuring that admissions procedures reflect these values and transparently communicate what the institution stands for, it supports equitable and inclusive access to the program.</p> <p>Build an Inclusive Environment: An inclusive environment begins at the point of entry—through clearly communicated criteria, unbiased policies, and the equitable application of procedures. This strategy encourages institutions to ensure that all prospective students, regardless of background, have access to accurate information and equitable consideration. By fostering inclusivity in admissions communications and practices, schools uphold the integrity of the process while ensuring it reflects the institution's commitment to belonging.</p> |

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| <p>4.3.c Program description and quality indicators The college or school produces and makes available to the public, including prospective students: (1) a complete and accurate description of the Doctor of Pharmacy program requirements (pre professional and professional); (2) the program’s current accreditation status; and (3) ACPE-required program performance information as defined in the ACPE Policies and Procedures manual.</p> | <p>Send an Authentic Message: This strategy focuses on communicating a clear, honest, and authentic message about the program’s requirements and practices. By ensuring that the program description accurately reflects these values and transparently communicates what the program requires, it supports equitable and inclusive access to pharmacy education.</p> <p>Uncover the Hidden Curriculum: Identifies and addresses unspoken norms and expectations that may disadvantage certain student groups, promoting transparency and equity.</p> |
| <p>4.3.f Admission materials The college or school produces and makes available to prospective students the criteria, policies, and procedures for admission to the program. All admission materials clearly state academic expectations, required communication skills, types of personal history disclosures that may be required, and professional and technical standards for graduation.</p> | <p>Send an Authentic Message: This strategy focuses on communicating a clear, honest, and authentic message about the institution’s admission criteria, policies, and procedures. By ensuring that admissions procedures are transparently communicated, it supports equitable and inclusive access to the program.</p> <p>Uncover the Hidden Curriculum: Identifies and addresses unspoken norms and expectations that may disadvantage certain student groups, promoting transparency and equity.</p> <p>Highlight Support Resources: By proactively sharing this information with prospective students, institutions not only promote transparency but also help applicants identify the support resources they may need to meet program requirements. This strategy ensures that students can make informed decisions and feel supported from the very beginning of their pharmacy education journey, reinforcing a sense of preparedness and belonging.</p> <p>Use Inclusive Language: When colleges and schools clearly communicate academic expectations, required skills, disclosures, and professional standards using inclusive and bias-free language, they signal that all qualified applicants are welcome and valued. This approach helps ensure that admissions materials do not unintentionally discourage or exclude individuals and instead foster a sense of belonging from the very first interaction with the institution.</p> |
| <p>Standard 5. Faculty and Staff The college or school has a cohort of faculty and staff with the qualifications and experience needed to effectively deliver and evaluate the program.</p> | |
| <p>5.a.1.b Sufficient faculty The college or school has a sufficient number of core faculty members to effectively address the following programmatic needs (see ACPE Standards 2025 for full list).</p> <p>5.a.2.b Sufficient staff The college or school has a sufficient number of staff to effectively address the following programmatic needs (see ACPE Standards 2025 for full list).</p> | <p>Build Relationships: This strategy emphasizes fostering strong connections between faculty, students, and staff. Ensuring that faculty and staff are not only sufficient in numbers but also deeply engaged in mentorship and student relationships helps create a supportive academic environment. This supports the goal of having sufficient faculty and staff who are committed to the success and well-being of students.</p> <p>Highlight Support Resources: This strategy emphasizes ensuring that students have access to adequate support resources, which directly relates to having sufficient faculty and staff to provide guidance, mentorship, and assistance in various areas. This includes academic advising, mental health services, and other support systems that require sufficient faculty and staff to function effectively.</p> |

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| <p>Standard 6. Resources The college or school has adequate and appropriately equipped physical and educational facilities to achieve its mission and goals. The college or school has current and anticipated financial resources to deliver the program and accomplish its mission and strategic plan.</p> | |
| <p>6.2.c Equitable allocation The college or school has sufficient funds to maintain equitable facilities (commensurate with services and activities) across all program pathways.</p> | <p>Highlight Support Resources: This strategy ensures that all students, regardless of their background or needs, are aware of and can access the support resources available to them. It promotes fairness in how resources are distributed, ensuring that all students have the necessary tools and assistance to succeed, thereby supporting equitable allocation across different pathways and student groups.</p> |
| <p>Standard 7. Assessment The college or school develops, resources, and implements a plan to assess achievement of its mission, strategic plan, and attainment of educational outcomes to ensure that graduates are prepared to enter practice. Assessment data should be used for continuous quality improvement of the program.</p> | |
| <p>7.2.c Organizational culture The college or school assesses the culture of the program. Contributing factors such as collaboration; diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging; leadership; and professionalism should be considered.</p> | <p>Build an Inclusive Environment: This strategy focuses on creating an environment where equity, inclusion, and belonging are central to the organizational culture. By fostering inclusivity within the campus culture, institutions align with ACPE’s emphasis on cultivating a positive, collaborative, and inclusive organizational culture that supports all members of the community.</p> <p>Build Relationships: Strong relationships among students, faculty, staff, and leadership promote trust, open communication, and a sense of community—all essential components of a healthy organizational environment. By emphasizing relationship-building, institutions create the foundation for professionalism, collaboration, and shared accountability.</p> <p>Highlight Support Resources: When institutions regularly communicate and normalize the use of support services—such as academic advising, mental health counseling, peer mentoring, and wellness programs—they foster a culture of care, collaboration, and inclusion. Highlighting these resources signals to students that their well-being is valued and supported, which directly contributes to a stronger sense of belonging and an inclusive organizational culture.</p> |
| <p>7.4.a Student services assessment The college or school assesses the quality and quantity of student services to address the programmatic needs for healthcare, wellness, advising, and academic support in line with key elements 4.1e to 4.1.h.</p> | <p>Highlight Support Resources: This strategy emphasizes the importance of identifying, promoting, and assessing the availability and effectiveness of student support services. It directly relates to evaluating student services such as health care, wellness, advising, and academic support, ensuring they meet the needs of all students. Highlighting these resources and assessing their impact supports a more inclusive, supportive environment.</p> |