

## BACKGROUND

- Increasingly more institutions are offering dual degrees in align with their respective programs of pharmacy, with the most common dual degree being a dual doctor of pharmacy (PharmD)/ master of business administration (MBA)
- Despite this growing popularity, studies have shown room for improvement in bridging the two separate programs of a dual PharmD/MBA degree and providing additional mentoring to students enrolled in the program

## OBJECTIVE

- To measure and assess current student perspectives of a prospective mentorship program for a dual PharmD/MBA program
- To develop an unprecedented dual mentorship program to help provide guidance to students on the complementation of both degrees in the workforce

## METHODS

### Study Design

- Descriptive Survey (Cross-Sectional)

### Study Population

- P2, P3, P4 students currently enrolled in the dual PharmD/MBA program at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville School of Pharmacy (SOP)
- P1 students were excluded from the study because enrollment in the dual degree program begins in the P2 year

### Study Measures

- Electronic survey sent through Qualtrics to 48 students in the dual PharmD/MBA degree at SIUE SOP to identify preferences for a mentorship program
- Responses were anonymized to help prevent response bias and remove any hesitation regarding true thoughts and/or opinions about a dual PharmD/MBA mentorship program
- Survey respondents were given approximately three weeks to respond at the beginning of the Fall 2019 semester

### Data Analysis

- Sample was described using frequencies/percentages and 5-point Likert scale scoring

## RESULTS

- Twenty-five of 48 students surveyed (52%) submitted the electronic survey
- Of the 25 respondents, 8 were P2 students (32%), 8 were P3 students (32%), and 9 were P4 students (36%)
- Twenty-four (96%) respondents favored the availability of a mentorship program for the PharmD/MBA program
- Twenty respondents (83%) expressed an anticipated participation in 50% or more of mentorship program events
- To refine student preferences for a mentorship program, survey questions were objectively measured with the scoring of a 5-point Likert scale, with scores closer to 1 indicating responses closely aligned with “Strongly Disagree” and scores closer to 5 indicating responses closely aligned with “Strongly Agree”
- All results can be seen below in Table 1, with the highest scores related to exploring different career options for PharmD/MBA students (4.75) and presenting networking opportunities to PharmD/MBA students (4.67)
- The lowest score of the survey was related to required participation for enrolled PharmD/MBA students (2.21)
- Online meetings (3.5) were found to have a slight preference over in-person meetings (3.29)
- The survey also included one optional question to place any comments; one P4 student noted the importance of online meetings for students on APPEs

**Table 1: Survey Results with Likert Scale Scoring**

	n*
Participation in the PharmD/MBA mentorship program should be required for all students enrolled in the dual degree program.	2.21
The new PharmD/MBA mentorship program should include opportunities that explore career options for PharmD/MBA students.	4.75
The new PharmD/MBA mentorship program should include professional development opportunities (i.e. communication, interpersonal skills, leadership, speech writing/delivery).	4.04
The new PharmD/MBA mentorship program should include opportunities that are management-focused (i.e. training and development, scheduling, strategic planning, sales).	4.17

## RESULTS

**Table 1 (continued)**

The new PharmD/MBA mentorship program should include a “buddy” system, matching a student with a professional practicing in a leadership position.	4.08
The new PharmD/MBA mentorship program should include a “buddy” system, matching a student with an upper classman.	4.04
I am willing to serve as a “buddy” for a student(s) in the program.	3.96
The new PharmD/MBA mentorship program should include guest lecturers.	4.12
The new PharmD/MBA mentorship program should include networking opportunities.	4.67
The new PharmD/MBA mentorship program should include field trips or shadowing opportunities.	4.25
Additional academic and financial aid advising for the PharmD/MBA program should be included in the mentorship program.	3.83
I prefer that the program consist of in-person meetings or lectures.	3.29
I prefer that the program consist of online meetings or lectures.	3.5
*Score of 5.0 equals 100% Strongly Agree.	

- To balance both preferences for in-person and online meetings, a program structure alternating between the two formats was decided upon by the researchers
- The meetings held in 2019 focused on the results of the survey, different career options for those holding a PharmD/MBA degree, and best networking practices

## CONCLUSION

- Results support the need of a dual PharmD/MBA mentorship program in institutions that offer a dual PharmD/MBA degree
- Our results further specify the student preferences for a mentorship program at our site, as preferences may vary slightly per individual institution
- Plans to further evaluate the degree of impact made by current and future interventions related to the implementation of the mentorship program are in place to follow in the 2020-2021 academic year