



# Expanding the Pharmacy Pipeline with a Novel Freshman Course on Medications for Future Healthcare Professionals



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## Background

- The University of Texas (UT) at Austin requires freshman to take an undergraduate signature course (UGS), designed to expose students to university life with upper-division faculty
- UT Austin undergraduate body is increasingly diverse
  - >9,000 freshman
  - 23.4% first generation
  - 68.4% non-white
  - 28.2% Hispanic/Latinx
- Recognized need in the academy to promote pharmacy and recruit a diverse student body<sup>2</sup>
- In 2020, pharmacy faculty members created a UGS entitled Medications for Future Healthcare Professionals that explores basic pharmacy knowledge and practice skills

## Course Objectives

- Identify the top 50 common drugs and perform medication calculations
- Develop empathy for patients with complicated disease states and medication regimens
- Understand the role of health care professionals in patient medication adherence
- Foster critical thinking skills through the identification and analysis of drug information resources

## Course Design

Figure 1. Course Topics



## Course Design

Figure 2. Core Course Elements



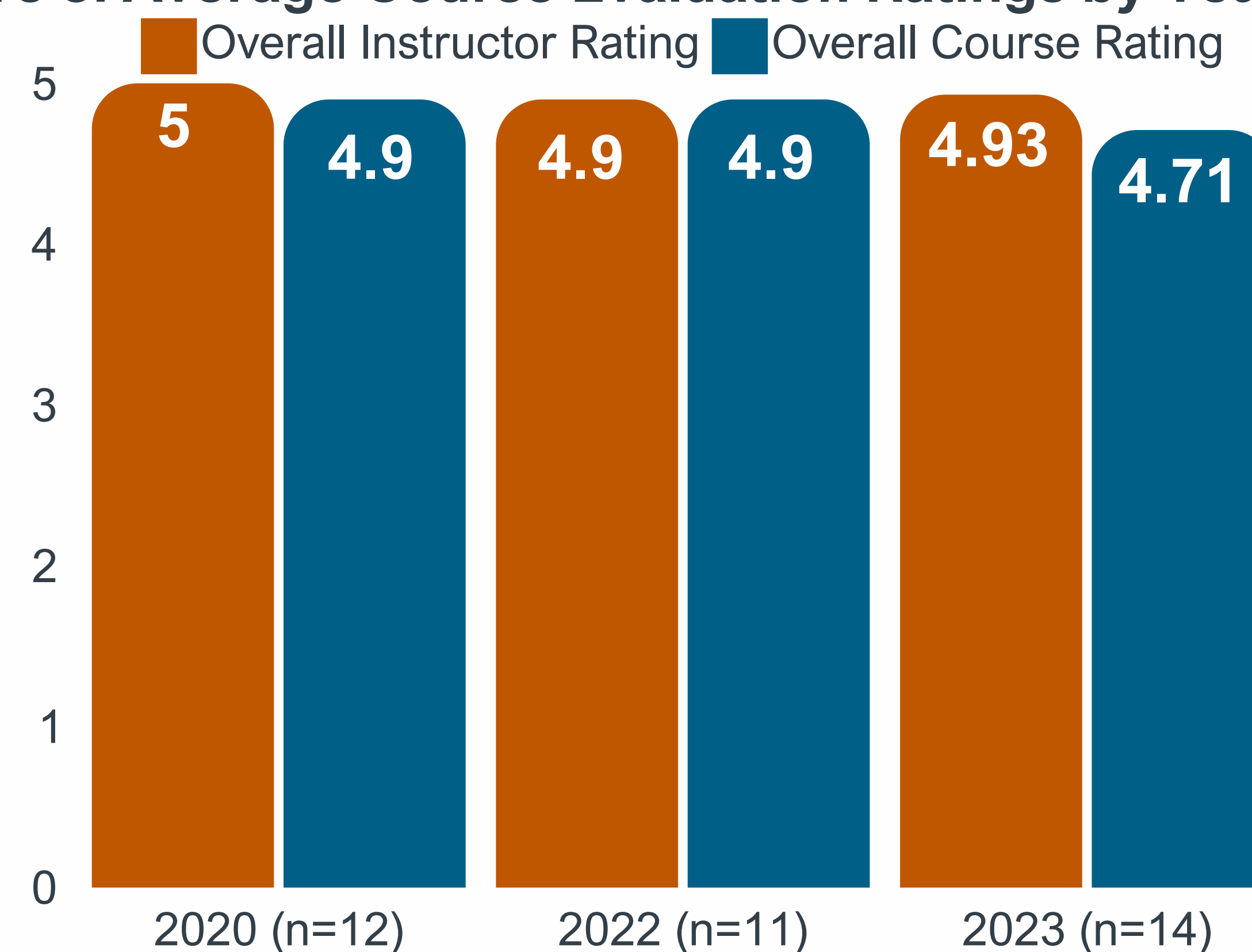
## Student Course Comments

- "It was really interesting to learn about drugs and their effect...I loved the on-hand class activities, especially if you are pre-med since it gives you insight of what to expect. As a neuroscience major, I was able to put in practice what I learned in both classes and explain further why that happens."
- "I really enjoyed the in class activities that allowed me to see and interact with the medical devices we were learning about"
- "The lesson plans and assignments were relevant to learning the course material and improving our writing and presentation skills. I enjoyed the interactive activities [the instructor] included to allow us to familiarize ourselves with her and other students."
- "I loved the after lecture activities because they helped drive home the main points of the lectures and made me apply knowledge that we learned during lecture."

## Results

- 53 students have completed the course, with 70% response rate for course evaluations
- Average overall instructor rating was 4.94 (UT average = 4.4), and average course rating was 4.83 (UT average = 4.2)

Figure 3. Average Course Evaluation Ratings by Year



## Conclusion

- Student feedback about the course was largely positive and highlighted the hands-on approach to learning, the engaging and personable teaching style of the primary instructor, and enjoyable/exciting content
- Engaging freshman courses could increase interest/exposure to pharmacy and expand the pipeline for pharmacy applicants
- Further study is warranted to analyze students' motivations to enroll in the course and to measure career impact on students

## References

- The University of Texas at Austin. *Trends in student data*. <https://reports.utexas.edu/spotlight-data/students>. Accessed July 1, 2024.
- American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy. *Diversity student recruitment guide*. May 2020.