How can academic educators rethink teaching and learning to better support student wellbeing?

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Mental Health of Medical Students in the US: A Somewhat Grim Picture

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Depression rates 20-30%

Anxiety and burnout rates greater than 50%

Suicidal ideation rate 11%

Saint Louis University Medical Student Mental Health

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Moderate- Severe Depression Symptoms (Percent of Class) at end of year

	MS1	MS2
2008 Pre-change	27%	28%
2009 Pre-change	27%	35%

Saint Louis University Medical Student Mental Health

Moderate- Severe Anxiety Symptoms (Percent of Class) at end of year

	MS1	MS2
2008 Pre-change	56%	58%
2009 Pre-change	54%	61%

The SLU SOM Medical Student Mental Health Initiative

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Changes implemented over the past seven years- were guided by students' perceptions of stressors and were evidence-based whenever possible

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- 2014- Confidential tracking of depression and anxiety
- 2015- Focused support of second year students facing their national board exam

Impact of Curricular Changes in Years 1 and 2

**Moderate- Severe Depression Symptoms (Percent of Class) at end of year**

	MS1	MS2
2008 Pre-change	27%	28%
2009 Pre-change	27%	35%
2010 Post-change	19%	17%
2011 Post-change	18%	18%
2012 Post-change	11%	16%
2013 Post-change	14%	17%
2014 Post-change	8%	21%
2015 Post-change	4%	20%
2016 Post-change	6%	6%

Impact of Curricular Changes in Years 1 and 2

Moderate- Severe Anxiety Symptoms (Percent of Class) at end of year

	MS1	MS2
2008 Pre-change	56%	58%
2009 Pre-change	54%	61%
2010 Post-change	44%	61%
2011 Post-change	30%	39%
2012 Post-change	31%	46%
2013 Post-change	43%	44%
2014 Post-change	23%	47%
2015 Post-change	14%	47%
2016 Post-change	14%	20%

End-of-year 1 Depression Scores
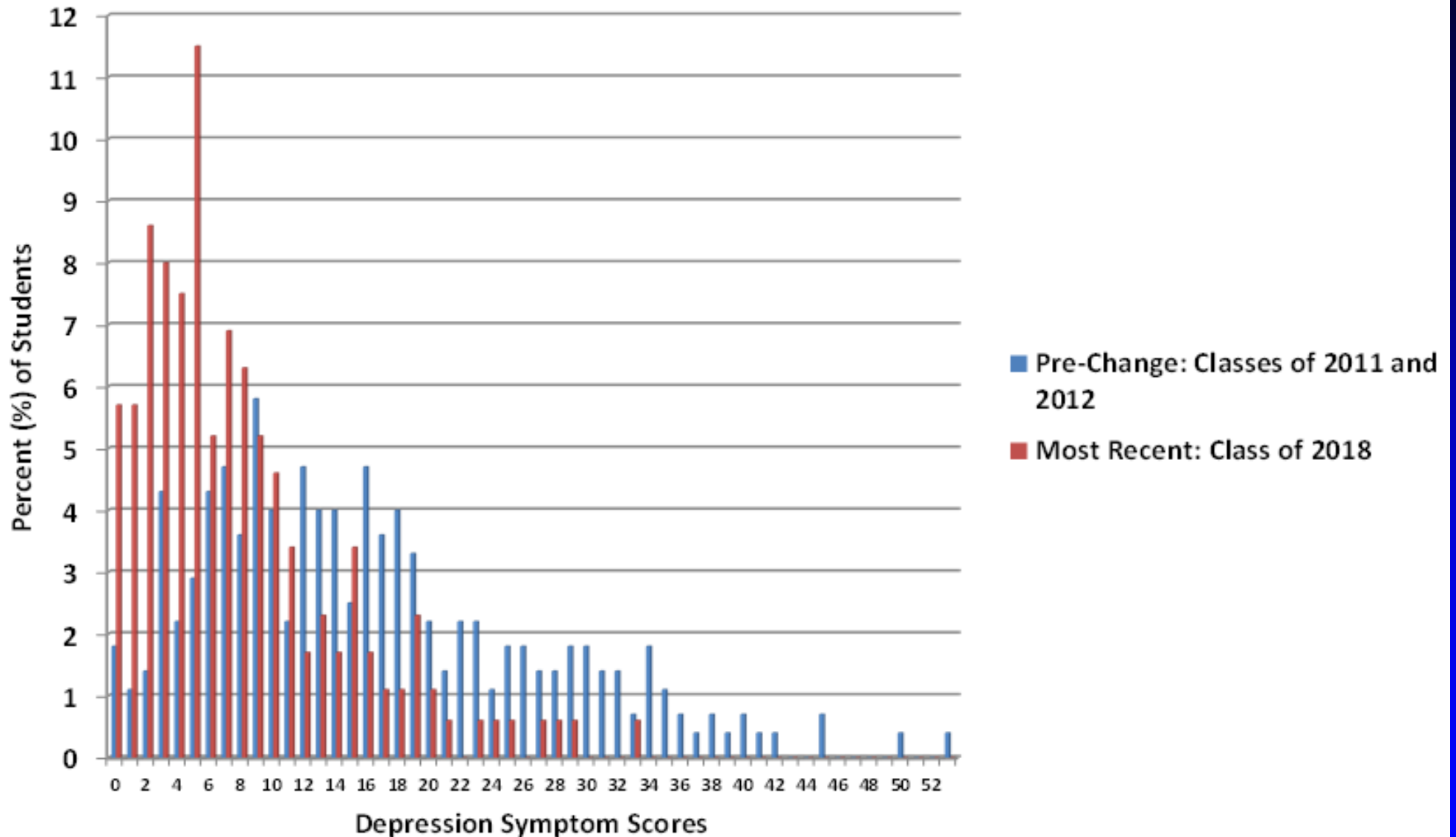
External Bench-marking
Association of American Medical Colleges
Year 2 Questionnaire

External Bench-marking
AAMC Year 2 Questionnaire Results

	National	SLU
Emotional Climate	9.2	10.8
Student-fac. Interaction	14.8	16.0
Quality of life	40.1	45.5
Perceived stress	5.8	4.7
Disengagement	9.7	8.2
Exhaustion	11.8	9.3

Association of American Medical Colleges
Year 2 Questionnaire

My medical school has done a good job of fostering and nurturing my development as a person.

Strongly agree to strongly disagree

Year 2 Questionnaire

My medical school has done a good job of fostering and nurturing my development as a person.

Strongly agree or agree

National- 70.7%

SLU- 92.3%

Impact of Curricular Changes
in Years 1 and 2

But what happened to academic performance???

Impact of Curricular Changes in Years 1 and 2

Performance in Years 1 and 2

No decrease in mean exam scores or increase in failure rate in courses.

Mean national board scores have shown significant increase

Mindfulness, Metacognition, and Resilience

Mindfulness

Paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally.

Mindfulness

How to cultivate
    Formal practice
    Informal practice

Metacognition

Resilience

Resilience

Cognitive restructuring

Resilience

Cognitive restructuring
    Risks of maladaptive perfectionism

Resilience

Cognitive restructuring

Negativity bias

Resilience

Cognitive restructuring
Negativity bias
Optimistic versus pessimistic explanatory styles

Resilience

Cognitive restructuring
Negativity bias
Optimistic versus pessimistic explanatory styles
Positive emotions

Resilience

Cognitive restructuring
Negativity bias
Optimistic versus pessimistic explanatory styles
Positive emotions
Emotional self-regulation

Resilience

Cognitive restructuring
Negativity bias
Optimistic versus pessimistic explanatory styles
Positive emotions
Emotional self-regulation
Investing in well-being

Resilience

Cognitive restructuring
Negativity bias
Optimistic versus pessimistic explanatory styles
Positive emotions
Emotional self-regulation
Investing in well-being
Finding meaning in life

Lessons Learned

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Need for measurement of mental health

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Need for measurement

Can't resilience our way out of this

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   Need to look at and change the environment

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Help students develop skills of meta-cognition

David Foster Wallace
Kenyon College Commencement Address

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"I have come gradually to understand that the liberal-arts cliche about "teaching you how to think" is actually shorthand for a much deeper, more serious idea: "Learning how to think" really means learning how to exercise some control over how and what you think. It means being conscious and aware enough to choose what you pay attention to and to choose how you construct meaning from experience."

Lessons Learned

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Help students find meaning in their lives

Viktor Frankl

Viktor Frankl

"There is nothing in the world, I venture to say, that would so effectively help one to survive even the worst conditions as the knowledge that there is a meaning in one's life. There is much wisdom in the words of Nietzsche: "He who has a why to live for can bear almost any how.""