Student Opportunity for Success (S.O.S.): An Academic Recovery Program

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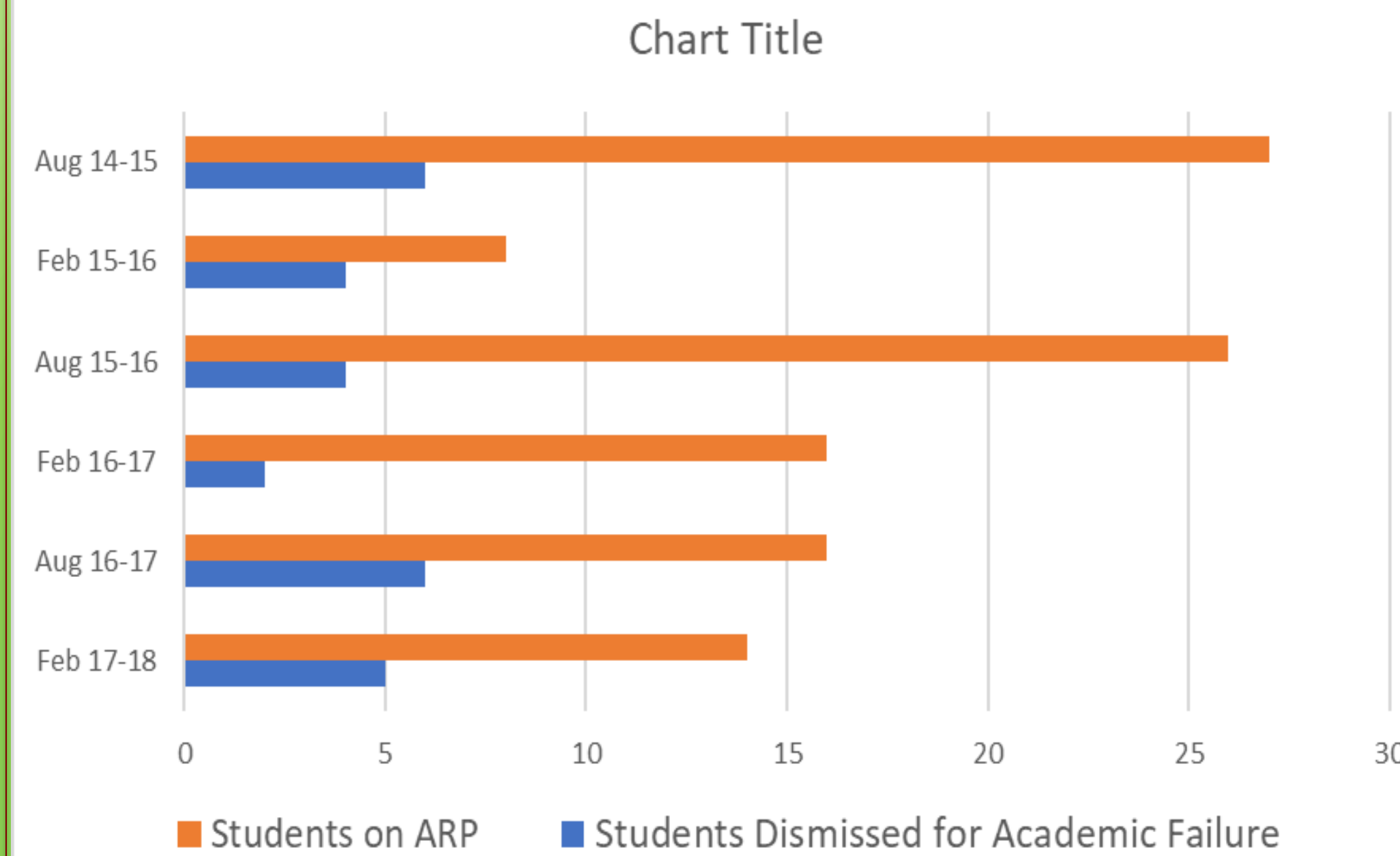
Introduction

The purpose of this presentation is to inform educators on the need to decrease attrition and increase retention of nursing students by instituting a program that promotes successful academic achievement. The program offers faculty guidance and support to nursing students, in a variety of methods, to accomplish their goal of successful completion of a Practical Nursing Program. Nursing student attrition is a persistent problem worldwide and promotion of a positive educational outcome benefits the profession of nursing and the patients that nurses car for (Jeffreys, 2014). With aging populations and increasing demands in the healthcare arena, increasing not only the number of students enrolled in a nursing program, but also those who make it to completion is an urgent need. The goal of early intervention strategies is retention and successful progression with a profession integration of faculty engagement (Shellenbarger, 2016). According to Lizzio & Wilson (2013) retention and success are drastically reduced with an early faculty intervention of academic recovery methods, especially in those students who may not seek out support on their own. The question for research related to the retention of nursing students is: **Does the implementation of an Academic Recovery Program (ARP) impact the attrition rate of the PN student?**
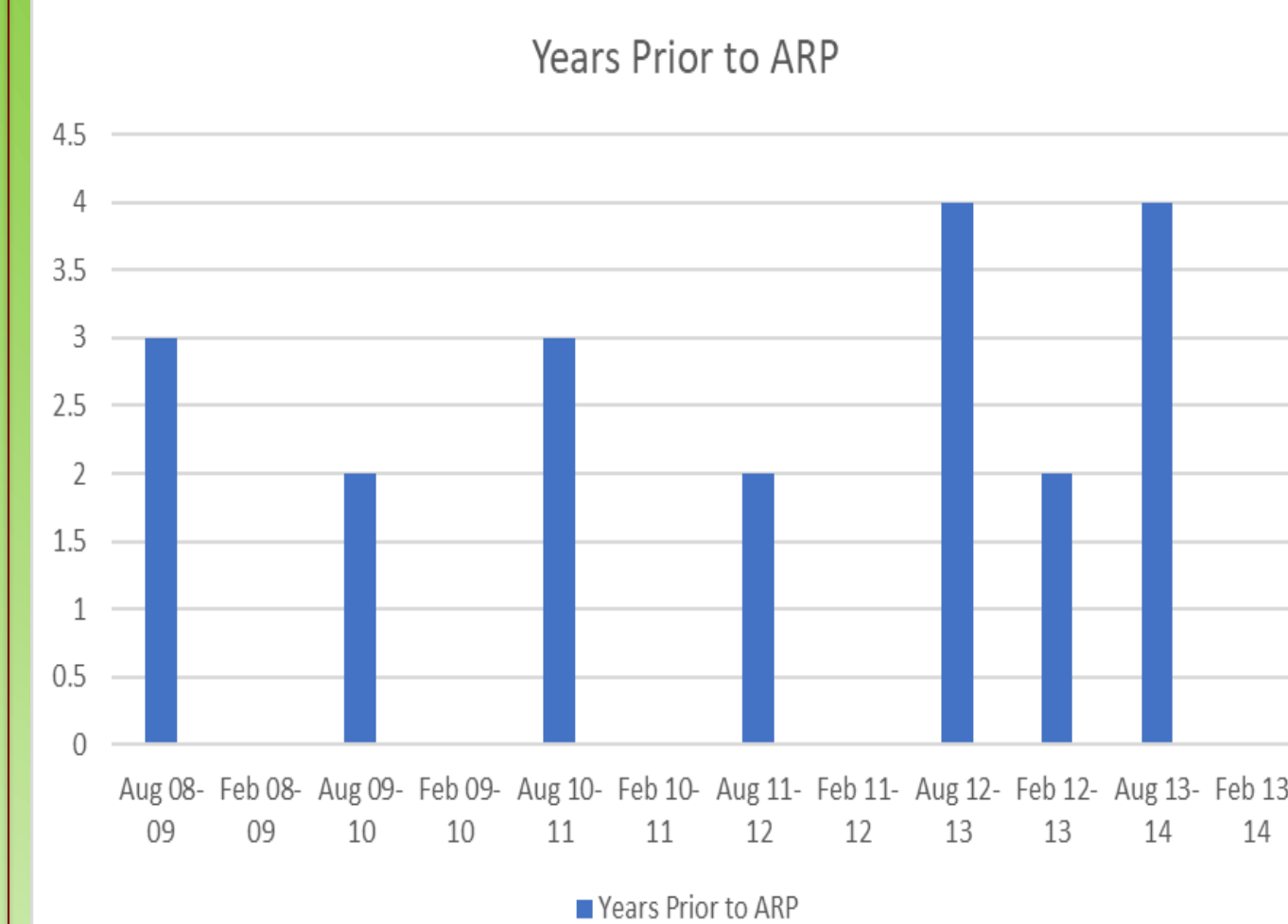
Methods

The approach to the supportive academic program begins by identifying a student that demonstrates low academic achievement. Retention in a nursing program can be impacted by many factors including stressful external personal factors, finances, and being unprepared for the rigors of the academic program (Mooring, 2016). In the Academic Recovery Program (ARP), faculty will alert the student when a score on any type of test or written assignment falls below an 80%. Faculty will assist the student to recognize issues that may be interfering with understanding theory concepts. It is the student's responsibility to begin self-identification of learning difficulties so the faculty can better assist the student. The next step is to collaboratively develop a plan with the student that will guide the student to academic success. Continual monitoring of the student's progress will take place until the student demonstrates three consistent tests or written assignments with scores of 80% or better. If the student is unable to achieve a 75% by the end of the course the student will dismissed from the program. Student progression to graduation is imperative to enable the student to take the licensure exam, and begin working in the healthcare field. Data from the implementation of the ARP (2015) through Aug. 2017, was gathered, coded, and put into a SPSS system. A retrospective study was used to analyze the data.

Results

Years of ARP implementation

Chart Title — horizontal bar chart with categories Aug 14-15, Feb 15-16, Aug 15-16, Feb 16-17, Aug 16-17, Feb 17-18; axis 0 to 30. Legend: Students on ARP, Students Dismissed for Academic Failure.

Years prior to ARP

Years Prior to ARP — bar chart with categories Aug 08-09, Feb 08-09, Aug 09-10, Feb 09-10, Aug 10-11, Feb 10-11, Aug 11-12, Feb 11-12, Aug 12-13, Feb 12-13, Aug 13-14, Feb 13-14; axis 0 to 4.5. Legend: Years Prior to ARP.

Average Number of Academic Dismissals both prior to, and with ARP implementation:

3.31

Discussion

The impact of attrition has a far-reaching impact on the lives of nursing students. Successful completion of a nursing degree will allow a greater income, greater job opportunities, and provide a benefit to the surrounding communities by providing the workforce with a qualified healthcare provider (Wray, Aspland, & Barrett, 2014). Initiating an environment of coaching and guidance, a collaborative approach can be taken to develop of comprehensive plan of action for the struggling student. Looking at individual learning styles, promoting the use of technology, and offering supplemental learning resources, can aid in the persistence and progression of the student. As nurse educators, we must take on the responsibility to implement initiatives that will help our students achieve their goals, to be competent and skilled.

The data that has been analyzed up to this point indicates that when student numbers on ARP are compared to those dismissed for academic failure, the percentage is drastically different. It appears at face value, that ARP is a positive intervention. However, the numbers of overall academic dismissal remain high. When academic failures are compared to previous years without ARP, the numbers indicate that success of the student was higher prior to ARP. Other factors need to be looked at such as a change in the curriculum at the time the ARP was implemented, and NCLEX pass rates.

Further research is necessary to determine if in fact the ARP is effective or if the program needs to be revised.

References

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