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Han Pham
Ohio Northern University

Dalen Foster
Ohio Northern University

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Student Self-Developed Wellness Goals before and during COVID



Han Pham, Pharm D Candidate 2023, Kelly Shields, PharmD, Dalen Foster, Class of 2022, Yong Wang, Ph.D.,
Ohio Northern University; Ada, OH 45810

Background

- Wellness is defined today in the dimensions of mind, body, and spirit. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has identified eight dimensions of wellness to focus on to optimize health, which include: emotional, spiritual, intellectual, physical, environmental, financial, occupational, and social.
- The COVID-19 pandemic started in 2020 has led to many changes to the educational settings and living conditions of college students. Many of these changes have been shown to increase stress, anxiety, and feelings of isolation (1). At the same time there has been increased concern in pharmacy academia about student.
- Burnout, a psychological syndrome, appears as a response to chronic stress without relief for a long period of time. Three key dimensions of burnout are an overwhelming exhaustion, feelings of cynicism and detachment from the job, and a sense of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment. (2)
- This study provides insight into student wellness and could help the institution better address students wellbeing goals

Objective

This study aims to investigate the change over time in student developed well-being related goals based on "The 8 dimensions of wellness". It is expected that the changes experienced by students during the COVID 19 pandemic will impact the type of wellness goals students develop for themselves.

Methods

- This project was approved by the ONU IRB.
- All pharmacy students at ONU are required to complete an annual goal setting assignment as part of their co-curricular requirement each academic year (P1-P5 year in a direct entry program). Personal goals were extracted from submissions from 2019 to 2021.
- Students were provided with a prompt "Develop one professional goal for this year. Identify/explain potential strategies to achieve these goals". These goals are reviewed with the students' academic advisor. Students are free to develop goals that they feel are most important to their success in the academic year.
- Student developed goals were classified into six categories (emotional, financial, intellectual, occupational, physical, social, spiritual, and time management)
- An additional category termed time management was also added due to the number of students who indicated that as a specific goal. The definitions are listed in Table 1 with the example from student' goals
- There were some categories removed from the 8 dimension of wellness- ex the environment, financial and spiritual wellness category was removed because there were only 2, 55, and 22 responses (indicating 0.15%, 1.4% and 0.6%) categorized respectively.
- There were 8 submissions were not included in analysis because investigators were unable to classify the goal into any category

Methods (continued)

- A beta-test was conducted by principal investigator and responsible investigator to confirm definitions were consistently interpreted between raters. At initial review there was a 95% match in categorization. Once definitions were confirmed, the student-developed goals were categorized first by the principal investigator. A second investigator randomly categorized a sample of goals to confirm consistent interpretation of definitions.

Table 1: Student goal type and definition

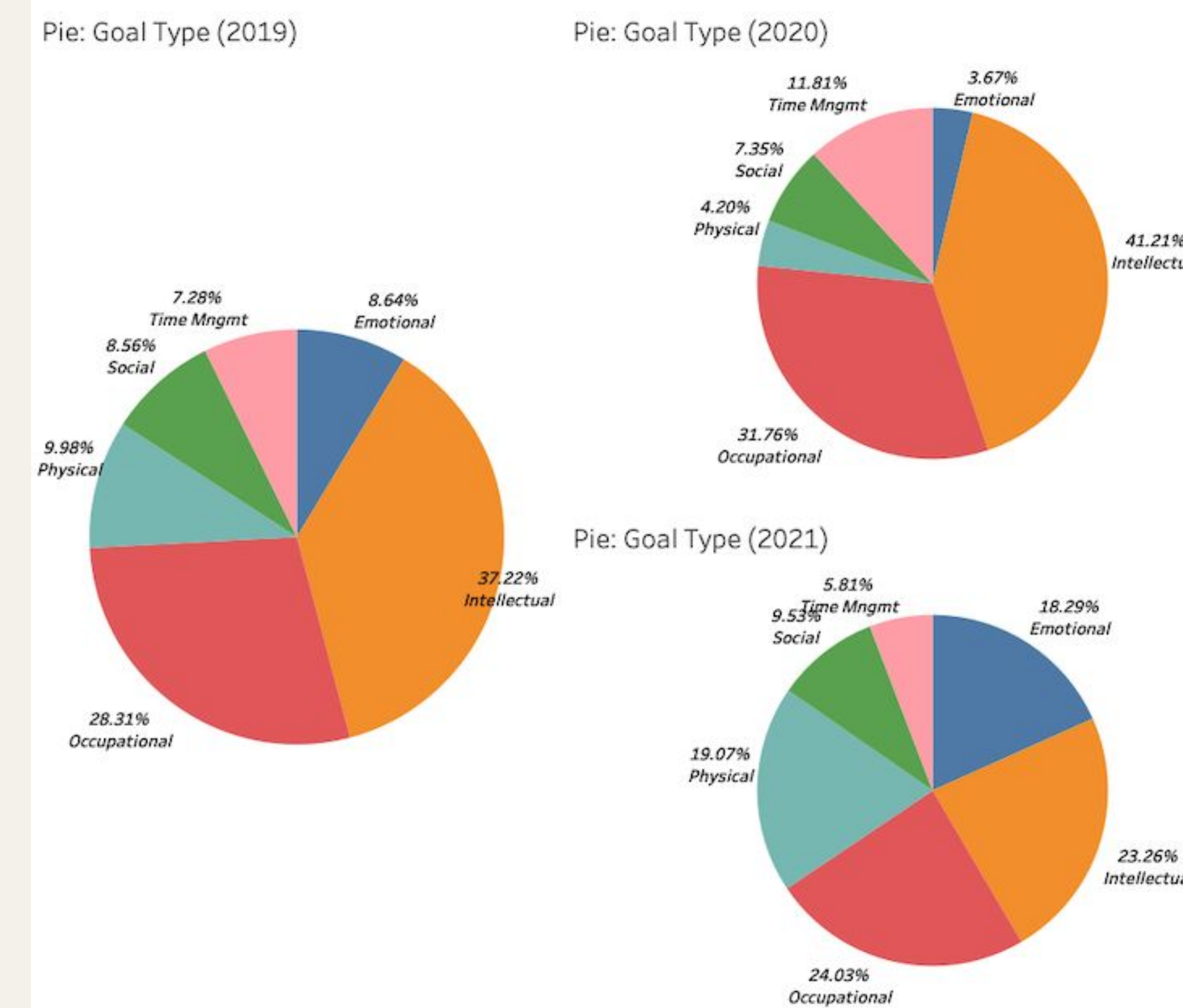
Goal	Characteristic	Example
Emotional	Coping effectively with life and creating satisfying relationships	"My goal is to schedule time once a week to focus on myself and my mental health. I will be able to set a specific time during the week to relax and do what makes me happy".
Intellectual	Recognizing creative abilities and finding ways to expand knowledge and skills	"One professional goal I have this year is getting A/B's in my classes".
Occupational	Personal satisfaction and enrichment from one's work	"I will learn more about the world of pharmacy by finding a pharmacy mentor and talking to them once a week. I will do research on finding a pharmacy mentor that I can talk to and make sure that I keep in touch with them regularly".
Physical	Recognizing the need for physical activity, healthy foods, and sleep	"I would like to maintain a healthy lifestyle while on campus this semester by working out at least 3 times a week and having healthy eating habits".
Social	Developing a sense of connection and belonging; and having a [good] support system	"This year I want to develop relationships with my professors and really get to know them. It's always good to make connections in the professional world, so this is perfect practice for my future".
Time management	Organizing and planning how to divide time between different activities	"I would like to improve my study habits this semester. I will set a specific time each day to study and stick to it".

- To see if the proportion of goals in each category changed over time, a Pearson Chi-Square test was completed. Then a series of two proportion Z-test with Bonferroni correction was conducted to adjust for multiple testing.
- Category of goals for first year students versus continuing students was assessed by a Breslow-Day test for homogeneity. A subsequent Chi-Square test was performed to determine whether the association between student cohort and goal type was homogenous for each year. Then a follow up test with a series of two proportion Z-tests with Bonferroni correction was performed to adjust for multiple testing.

Results

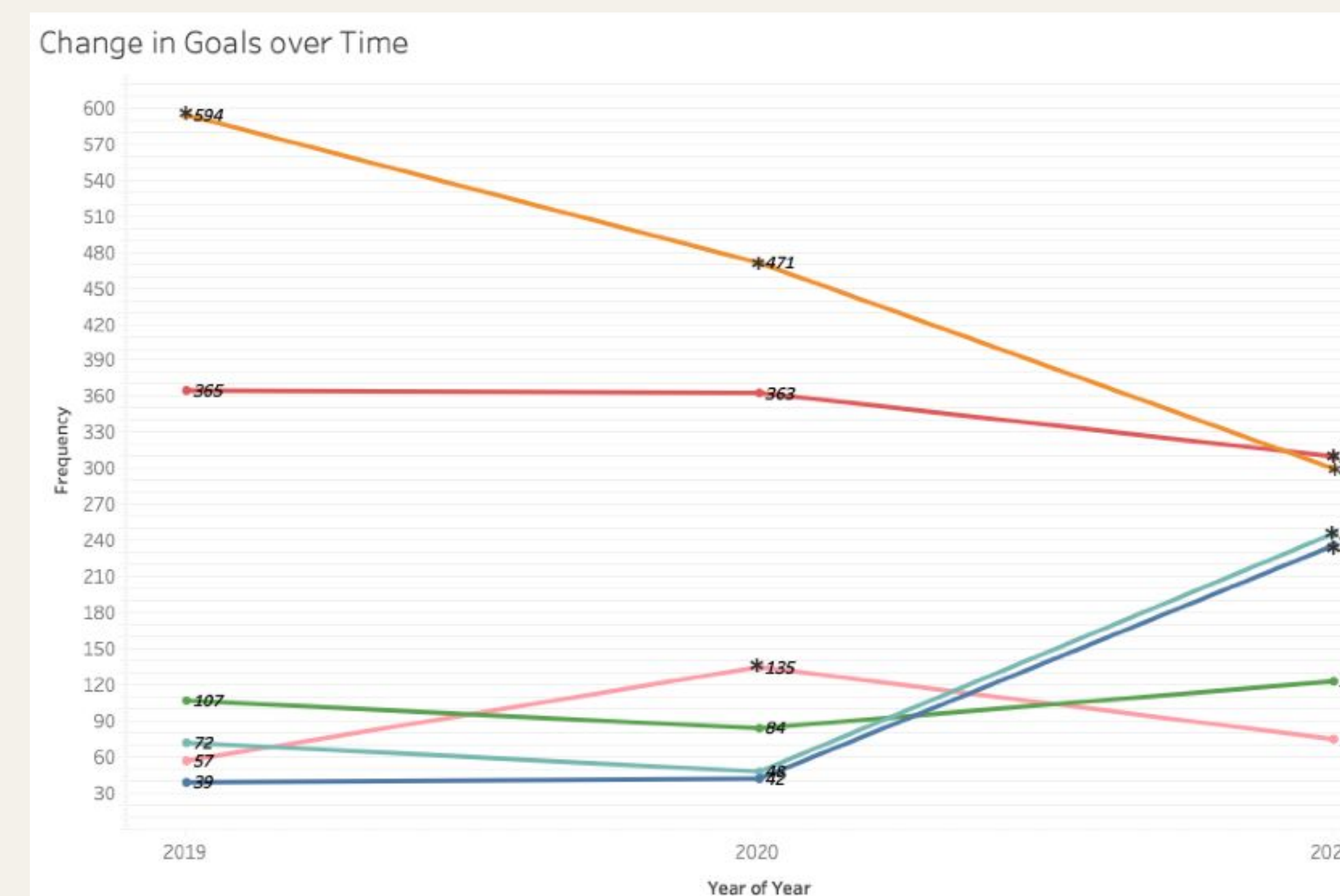
- The study sample consisted of 3667 total goals which were separated by calendar for 2019, 2020, and 2021 and sorted into 6 categories.

Figure 1. Categorization of Goals by Calendar Year



- Comparing goal types in 2019 vs 2020, the proportions of intellectual goals was significantly less in 2020 and time management goals was significantly greater in 2020.
- Comparing goal types in 2019 vs 2021, the proportions of emotional and physical goals were significantly greater in 2021, and intellectual and occupational goals were significantly less in 2021.
- Comparing goal types in 2020 vs 2021, the proportions of emotional and physical goals were significantly greater in 2021, and intellectual, occupational, and time management goals were significantly less in 2021.

Figure 2. Change of Goal Types Over Time

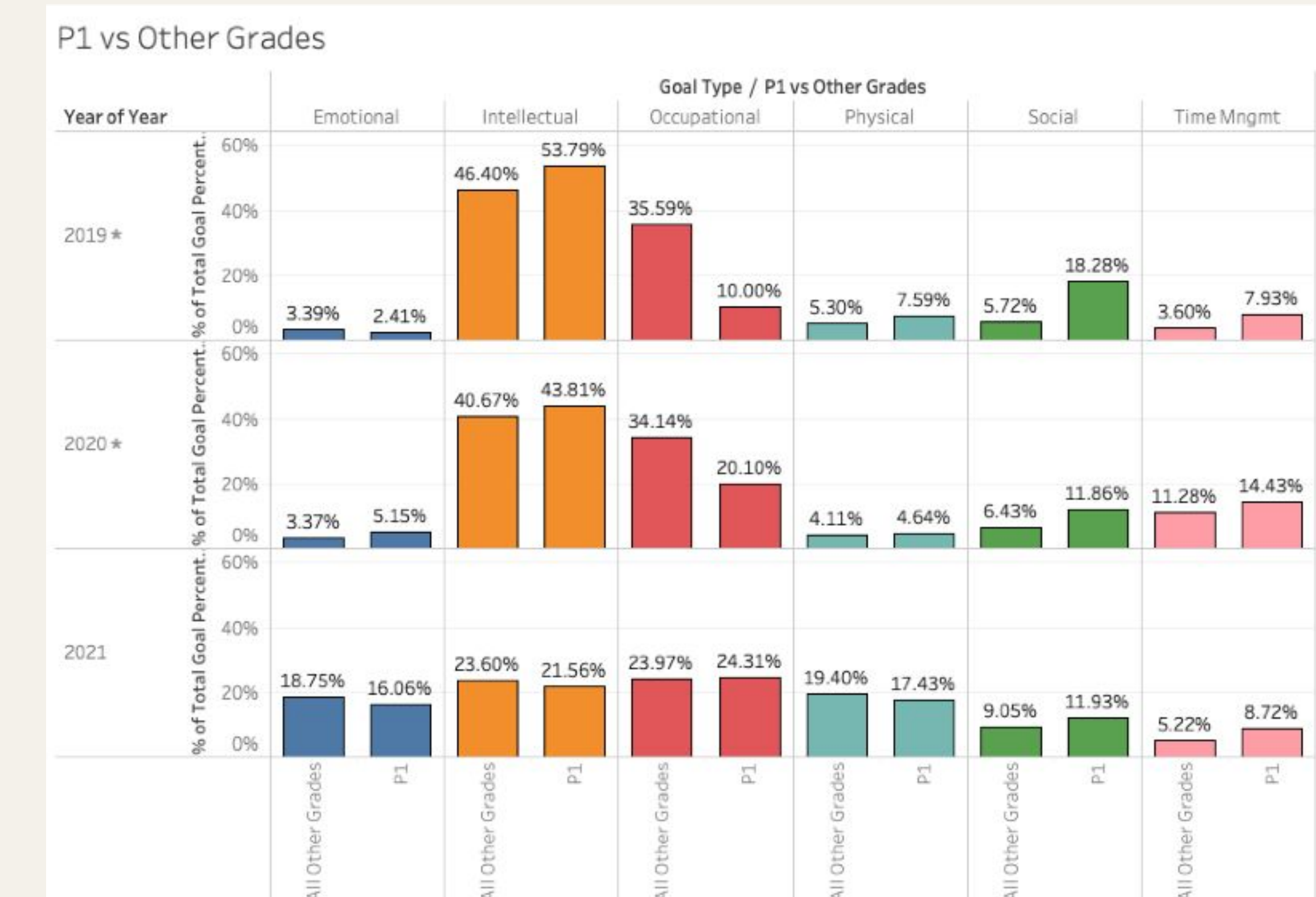


* indicates a significant change at an alpha of 0.05 compared to another year

Results (continued)

- Goals categorization of first year vs continuing students was compared to determine if goal distribution was the same across all students in a calendar year.
- There is significant evidence that a difference in proportion of goals for first year students compared to all other students existed in at least 2 out of 3 years, found to be 2019 & 2020.

Figure 3. Comparison of Goal Types for First Year Students vs All Other Students in Each Year



* indicates a significant change at an alpha of 0.05 compared to another year the left column represents second through fifth year students, the right column represents only first year students

Conclusion & Implication

- Overall, proportions of goals in each category changed over 3 years. Although the proportion of intellectual and occupational goals were greater than other type of goals in all 3 years, but in 2021, the proportions of emotional and physical goals were significantly greater compared to both 2019 and 2020. This result may have been explained by the Covid-19 impact on student well-being, students seem to need more emotional and physical support during pandemic.
- In addition, first year student seems to need more social support and time management compared to all other cohorts
- Recognition of difference in goals could aid the College in providing differentiated support for student achievement of their goals at different points in the program. Programming could also be better targeted toward students in different years of the program.
- This could better optimize resource allocation to match student needs.

References

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