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STATEMENTS

New Pharmacy Faculty Enculturation to Facilitate the Integration of Pharmacy Disciplines and Faculty Retention

James P. Kehrer, PhD,[a] Wayne Kradjan, PharmD,[b] Robert Beardsley, PhD,[c] and Robin Zavod, PhD[d]

[a]Washington State University College of Pharmacy
[b]Oregon State University College of Pharmacy
[c]University of Maryland School of Pharmacy
[d]Midwestern University Chicago College of Pharmacy

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Faculty retention is an important determinant of the supply of faculty members. In 2005, the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP) formed the Task Force on Faculty Workforce to identify factors that may influence the supply of and demand for pharmacy faculty members. This paper describes one specific strategy deemed as being of exceptional importance: targeted orientation programs to educate new faculty members lacking a professional pharmacy background and/or degree in pharmacy. Most universities have new faculty orientation programs, and although a number of pharmacy schools supplement or replace these with their own orientation programs, the primary purpose is still to assist the faculty member in becoming established within the university. Including material in these program that would facilitate the enculturation of new faculty into academic pharmacy would have significant benefits in terms of (1) enhancing new faculty members' understanding about the pharmacy profession and the role their scientific disciplines play within the profession, and (2) orienting them to the breadth of teaching, service, and scholarly activities within their schools and colleges of pharmacy. Approaches that can assist with this enculturation process include providing new faculty members access to appropriate literature, developing collaborative mentoring activities, encouraging involvement in AACP and student activities, creating effective shadowing opportunities, organizing opportunities for interaction among all faculty members, and maximizing the effectiveness of faculty committee assignments. Making new faculty members feel connected to the profession and to the academy is expected to increase the likelihood that they will remain within the academy.

Corresponding Author: James P. Kehrer, PhD, 105 Wegner Hall - PO Box 646510, Pullman, WA 99164-6510, Phone: 509-335-4750. Fax: 509-335-2530. E-mail: Kehrer@wsu.edu

A general orientation to "life as a faculty member" is widely needed by all new faculty members, and those in our colleges and schools of pharmacy are no exception. Yet such an orientation is frequently left to informal hallway conversations or other unstructured processes. This discrepancy came to the attention of the AACP Council of Faculties/Council of Deans Task Force on Faculty Workforce during its examination of factors that influence faculty recruitment and retention. It became apparent that in order to enhance retention, schools and colleges need to pay attention to how they orient their faculty members to pharmacy practice and education. Without proper orientation, faculty members may not feel connected to the profession or to the academy and thus, may leave. This document provides several suggested approaches that should be incorporated into orientation programs in order to ensure that all faculty members have an appreciation of: (1) the evolving role of the pharmacist, (2) the educational objectives of the PharmD curriculum, and (3) how the integration of disciplines (the basic, pharmaceutical, social/administrative, and clinical sciences along with clinical practice) contributes to the educational continuum.

Doctor of pharmacy curricula typically start with the basic scientific understanding of a wide spectrum of concepts relevant to pharmacy, and then eventually integrate (translate) information from the sciences into pharmacy practice. Curricula then allow students to apply their scientific and clinical knowledge in a variety of experiential training opportunities. In order for PharmD students to successfully integrate their science knowledge into clinical practice, it would be ideal (however unrealistic) that they be taught by faculty members with strong backgrounds in both the sciences and pharmacy practice. Today many colleges of pharmacy employ a diverse faculty composed of both scientists and pharmacy practitioners, each with their respective strengths and weaknesses. It is therefore important that faculty members across

disciplines appreciate that a solid foundation in both the sciences and clinical application is crucial for professional doctoral-trained students. All faculty members should be able to comfortably converse with each other, as well as with other pharmacy stakeholders, including pharmacy students and practitioners, and have at least a general appreciation of the practice environments into which their students enter. Among other things, this will enable them to include more realistic examples of application of their course content in their teaching. Faculty members with innovative research programs or practice models also make excellent ambassadors at alumni, donor, and stakeholder functions by describing exciting new research and practice programs within their disciplines.

Faculty members who have pharmacy degrees have varying levels of appreciation of the sciences, ranging from basic classroom exposure during their professional curricula to research training in postdoctoral clinical fellowships. At the other end of the spectrum are the increasing numbers of pharmacy faculty members who do not have pharmacy degrees. Also, those faculty members who do have pharmacy degrees may have pursued research-oriented training after graduation from pharmacy school (eg, PhD) and therefore have only limited exposure to clinical practice. Recognizing this continuum of talents, ''cross-training'' should become part of the orientation process for new faculty members. Those with limited research or laboratory exposure may want to share experiences with researchers, while those who do not have pharmacy degrees or did not practice pharmacy after receiving their degree could benefit from an orientation to pharmacy practice. There can be numerous benefits from such an approach. For example, faculty members in different departments and at larger schools can get to know each other better. This can, in turn, help them learn more about how to structure their own teaching relative to what their colleagues are doing, thereby becoming more effective instructors. In addition, the cross-discipline relationships that develop can lead to collaborative research or simply to a better understanding of their colleagues.

SUGGESTED APPROACHES

There are several mechanisms whereby nonpharmacists, or those with limited pharmacy practice experience in the United States can learn more about the profession of pharmacy and, conversely, practice-oriented faculty members can become more familiar with the skills and expectations of science-oriented faculty members. It is up to individual colleges/schools and faculty members to determine which of these enculturation techniques is most appropriate for their particular institution and meet the interests of individual faculty members.

Using Appropriate Literature

As part of an orientation package, organizers should provide selected articles that describe practice pathways, the vision for future practice, and current issues in pharmacy education. At an appropriate time, new science-oriented faculty members could meet with their dean or the pharmacy practice department chair to discuss the orientation materials, including readings on the profession of pharmacy and definitions of terminology particular to the school and profession (for example, bachelor's degree versus doctorate degree training, graduate versus professional student, tenure track versus non-tenure/clinical track faculty members, role of clinician preceptors, introductory versus advanced experiential education, clerkship versus internship, and residency versus fellowship). In most cases, this orientation should occur early after appointment. For other faculty members, it may be more realistic to wait until they have established their research laboratories or practice sites. Realizing that it may be difficult to assimilate all of this information with just one exposure, it may be advantageous to have these discussions spread over several meetings. In most cases, short articles should be used and at least some of these discussions should occur before faculty members start their first classroom assignment, and possibly at intervals thereafter. Potential resource materials are provided in Appendix 1. In addition, the 2007 Accreditation Standards and Guidelines for PharmD Programs[1] provides excellent background information for new faculty members on the standards that must be met. This document, along with some discussion of the accreditation process, should be provided to all new faculty members.

Collaborative Mentoring

In addition to the mentoring that faculty members receive in their own discipline, new science-oriented faculty members should work with their dean and/or department chair to identify a practice-focused faculty member with a practice and/or clinical research emphasis relevant to their discipline (eg, cardiovascular disease, infectious disease, neurological disorders, general internal medicine) who can serve as a second mentor, depending on the person's needs and interests. The science-oriented faculty member could be exposed to the person's practice site or prescribing issues in the local community as a part of the formal mentoring charge. A series (eg, monthly or quarterly) of meetings between mentor(s) and the new faculty member should be scheduled, with the dean or department chair checking in quarterly with the mentors to discuss needs/issues. If there are several new faculty members, another option is for them to meet as a group on a regular basis to share lessons learned and common issues.

Getting Involved

Based loosely on faculty interests, each new faculty member, regardless of his/her background, should identify one student group or student activity with which to become involved immediately. One good way to learn about pharmacists' activities is to join students at diabetes or blood pressure screening events or flu vaccine clinics. Faculty members could also accompany students who are giving talks at elementary or high schools about a topic within the faculty member's area of expertise. Faculty members could also function as liaisons for groups, such as the Rho Chi honor society, Kappa Psi, Phi Delta Chi, or a substance abuse awareness committee (eg, a neuropharmacologist).

Joining AACP

To sensitize new faculty members to broad educational issues facing the academy, colleges/schools should provide funding for new faculty members to attend one or more new faculty workshops at an AACP meeting. By the same token, AACP should consider developing expanded programming for new faculty members.

Creating Effective Shadowing Opportunities

Colleges/schools should make available one or more half days when nonpharmacist faculty members can shadow a practicing pharmacist faculty member or preceptor. Some sites provide a more general view of what ''a day in the life of a pharmacist'' is like (eg, community pharmacy and inpatient hospital pharmacy) and could be scheduled shortly after the person has read background resource materials. However, it may be more effective to delay some visits until teaching assignments have been made so that faculty members visit specialty sites that are most relevant to their topic areas. A repeat visit every few years can be helpful to understanding changes in ''best practices'' or prescribing patterns that have occurred in the interim. Possible sites to include are:

- Progressive independent and/or chain community practice site
- Hospital or other institutional centralized pharmacy (dispensing area and intravenous laboratory)
- Ward-based clinical practice (general medicine or subspecialty related to faculty members' assigned teaching)
- Ambulatory care pharmacy specialist (anticoagulation clinic)
- Long-term care or home care

Similar shadowing opportunities should be made available for practice faculty members to learn more about the work of science faculty members by visiting their laboratories or developing joint research programs. The goal is for practice faculty members to have an appreciation for the crucial role that the sciences play in laying the foundation for our profession. More specific activities could include:

- Attend lectures that pertain to their area of expertise to provide better integration of information across the curriculum.
- Observe how science faculty interact with students in and outside of the classroom.
- Attend laboratory group meetings to observe interactions with graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and other research personnel.
- Attend grant-writing workshops, identify funding opportunities to advance their scholarly activities, and explore research collaborations with research-active faculty.
- Review each other's research grant applications.

Organizing Interaction Opportunities

Institutions should utilize programming at annual faculty retreats to facilitate interaction of practice- and science-oriented faculty members. For example, faculty members who teach in specific areas of the curriculum across years get together at retreats specifically to review what is taught in each year and how topics should follow one another. In addition, having practice-based faculty members identify senior students' strengths and weaknesses in various topics would help science-based faculty members learn which areas need more emphasis. Interdisciplinary seminar series should also be used to introduce contemporary clinical and community topics in the profession of pharmacy to more science-oriented faculty members and for more practice-based faculty members to be exposed to researcher activities.

Effective Committee Assignments

Schools/colleges should avoid assigning new faculty members to committee work during their first year. Instead, all new faculty members should be invited to attend a selected meeting of each college/school committee and/or meet with each committee chair in their first year, thereby providing an overview of the purview and workings of each committee and the internal workings of the college/school. These visits will also provide a basis for making committee assignments of greater interest to new faculty in subsequent early years of an appointment. Having a better understanding of the roles of the pharmacist and trends in practice will help faculty members provide more informed input into certain committees, such as the curriculum committee.

Recruiting Graduate Students

To help recruit future academicians, orientation courses should also be developed for graduate students in the pharmacy PhD programs. In addition to topics on pedagogy and research techniques, these courses could include an orientation to pharmacy practice. Shadowing and site visits could also be part of the PhD curriculum.

SUMMARY

Most universities have new faculty orientation programs that have the primary purpose of assisting new faculty members with becoming established within the university. Although some pharmacy college/schools already supplement or replace these university-based programs with their own programs, adding material facilitating the enculturation of new faculty members into academic pharmacy would add significant benefits. The purpose of these orientation programs should be to (1) enhance the understanding of new faculty members about the pharmacy profession and the role their disciplines play within the profession and (2) address the broader issue of orienting all faculty members to the breadth of teaching, service, and scholarly activities within their schools and colleges of pharmacy. The key is to make new faculty members feel connected to the profession and the academy so that their teaching is enhanced and the likelihood that they will remain within the academy is improved. New faculty members have numerous time commitments establishing their practice, teaching, and research agendas. Thus, these orientation sessions must be organized in an efficient manner. Ultimately, the amount of time spent in these activities will probably save faculty time as, by participating, they will understand how to function more efficiently in their academic environment.

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Appendix 1. Resource Materials for Pharmacy Faculty Orientation Programs

A. Overviews of the Pharmacy Profession (Developed for prospective students but could be used for new faculty as well.)

American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy. Pharmacists: Unsung Heroes: http://www.wliw.org/pharmacists/ (a one-hour documentary that explores the indispensable link pharmacists have between health care and patient medication use. A 20 minute synopsis is also available that would probably be more useful.)

APhA Pathway Program: http://www.aphanet.org/pathways/pathways.html.

September/October 2002 issue of the APhA-ASP "Pharmacy Student" journal with focus on student professionalism.

APhA-ASP article on Student Professionalism http://www.aphanet.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Professionalism_is_a_Lifelong_Committment_September_October_2002&Template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=5427.

Berlex Careers in Pharmacy Guide: http://www.berlex.com/html/career/pharma/index.html.

Pharmacy, A Prescription for a Rewarding Career: PowerPoint slide set from AACP. http://www.aacp.org/Docs/MainNavigation/ForStudentsApplicants/6326_Pharmacy.ppt?DocTypeID=12&TrackID=&VID=1&CID=686&DID=474.

B. White Papers on the Future of the Profession

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