

AACP REPORTS

Strategic Plan Priority 1: Enriching the Applicant Pipeline

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This is the first in a series of viewpoints outlining the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy's (AACP) 2016-2019 Strategic Plan. This viewpoint outlines Priority 1 and the status of the steps taken and planned to achieve this important strategic priority.

Strategic Priority 1: Enriching the Applicant Pipeline

*AACP will partner with stakeholders to increase the Pharm.D. applicant pipeline to ensure there will be an appropriate number and quality of pharmacists to meet society's needs.*¹

This strategic priority is important to AACP's institutional members because an optimal number and quality of candidates in the applicant pool is necessary for enrollment of qualified candidates in adequate numbers at colleges and schools of pharmacy. AACP staff have worked diligently on this priority for many years, with an increased effort and focus in recent years. Much progress has been made, but additional effort and collaboration is needed to share the message with potential applicants that pharmacy is a diverse and rewarding career with opportunities in patient care, scientific research and innovation. Priority 1, Enriching the Applicant Pipeline, involves the following goals 1) expanding the applicant pipeline, 2) increasing the Pharm.D. applicant pool, and 3) appropriate measurement and increasing diversity (broadly defined) in the applicant pool.

Expanding the Applicant Pipeline

The objectives and actions under this goal support the *Pharmacy is Right for Me* (Pharm4Me) national recruitment campaign, including a messaging platform that is consistent with the "Pharmacists help people live healthier, better lives" campaign, Pharm4Me engagement

activities for schools, and a Pharm4Me social media strategy. Additional objectives include a creation of a coalition with other health education associations to endorse the inclusion of healthcare careers in the STEM professions, as defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics² and the National Science Foundation³.

Progress to date on this goal involves the following:

- The relaunch of the Pharm4Me website www.pharmacy4me.org including supplemental recruitment resources for colleges and schools of pharmacy on the AACP website at <http://www.aacp.org/resources/studentaffairs/personnel/PharmacyForMe/Pages/default.aspx>.
- AACP staff have been working with the Pharmacy Career Information Council, a collaboration of national pharmacy organizations committed to promoting the pharmacy profession and the pharmaceutical sciences, to launch the Innovation Challenge, a program where student pharmacists from AACP member institutions work with high schools in their communities to create innovative solutions to real world medication use problems. The program will launch in early 2017 and prizes for the winning teams will be awarded at the 2017 AACP Annual Meeting.
- AACP co-led the 2016 Health Professions Week, a partnership of nineteen health professions offering various online and live activities throughout the week for high school and undergraduate students to learn more about the different healthcare careers. With more than 4,000 participants in the inaugural year and a large social media presence, the 2017 planning team is already hard at work planning the next Health Professions Week with hopes for even more reach to potential applicants.
- Work on a social media strategy is currently underway and a consulting firm with expertise in this area and the middle school and high school target audiences will be selected to further develop the strategy.
- Work on the coalition to include healthcare careers in the STEM careers will begin later in 2017.

¹AACP 2016-2019 Strategic Plan <http://www.aacp.org/about/Pages/StrategicPlan.aspx>

²<https://www.bls.gov/oes/publications.htm>

³<https://www.nsf.gov/statistics/seind14/index.cfm/chapter-2/c2s3.htm#s3>

Increasing the Pharm.D. Applicant Pool.

The objectives and actions under this also goal support the Pharm4Me national recruitment campaign, including developing Pharm4Me Champions at colleges and schools of pharmacy and identification of resources to support Pharm4Me recruitment activities,

Progress to date on this goal involves the following:

- A request for each college and school of pharmacy to appoint a Pharm4Me Champion yielded over 100 champions who will commit to hosting one to two new recruitment events in their community in the next year targeting high school students with the purpose of educating them about the role of the pharmacist and the many diverse career paths available to pharmacists.
- AACP staff have begun implementation of a customer relationship management (CRM) tool to track participants in the Pharm4Me events. AACP will embark on a nurturing campaign, using the CRM that will continue to emphasize pharmacy careers for these participants throughout their education until they are ready to apply to pharmacy school.
- AACP staff have secured baseline support for the Pharm4Me campaign from OptumRx, and will continue to identify additional resources for the campaign.

Increasing Diversity in the Applicant Pool

The objectives and actions under this goal support collection of appropriate information about applicants' background to better assess diversity, engagement with AACP's health profession education partners in recruitment of diverse candidates, and education and training for colleges and schools of pharmacy about holistic review in admissions.

Progress to date on this goal involves the following:

- Implementation of the AACP Institute on Holistic Admissions in January 2017.
- AACP has enhanced our partnership with the Tour for Diversity, a grassroots effort to educate, inspire, and cultivate future healthcare professionals, and will work to recruit more student pharmacists and new pharmacy practitioners to participate in the tours.
- AACP is embarking on research necessary to allow for improvements to the application service, PharmCAS, to allow for collection of new information, such as socioeconomic status, which will provide additional information for colleges and schools of pharmacy engaging in holistic review of their applicants.

- AACP serves on the National Advisory Committee of the Summer Health Professions Education Program (formerly the Summer Medical Dental Education Program), a free summer enrichment program focused on improving access to information and resources for college students interested in the health professions, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Six of the thirteen sites funded for summer 2017 are officially listed as pharmacy participants and three additional sites will offer exposure to pharmacy careers to their participants.
- In fall 2016, AACP participated in the Association of American Medical Colleges Minority Student Recruitment Fair and Mentoring in Medicine initiatives and will continue to explore partnerships with other health education association initiatives.

While the beginning phase of the implementation of AACP Strategic Priority #1: Enriching the Applicant Pipeline has begun, next steps in the campaign are being thoughtfully and carefully planned. The 2016-2017 AACP Student Affairs Standing Committee was charged with researching and providing recommendations for the next phase of the national recruitment campaign and other recruitment-related strategies that will support this strategic priority.

What can AACP Members Do?

Each and every one of us in the profession and particularly in the academy, is an ambassador for the profession. AACP staff and leaders welcome ideas from the academy and other stakeholders on how we may continue this focus to bring the best and the brightest to the profession to become the future of pharmacy.

Some suggestions on how you can help:

- Share your creative recruitment ideas.
- Share how pharmacists help people live healthier, better lives in your communities.
- Reach out to area high schools and offer to participate in "career day" events.
- Work with your college leadership to assist in recruitment activities and events.
- Participate in AACP recruitment activities to teach prospective students what pharmacists do.
- Share the impact you make in your community through social media and other avenues.

Collectively, we must all share the message that *Pharmacy is Right for Me* #Pharm4Me.