

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ACROSS THE ACADEMY

Lessons Learned and Brighter Opportunities for Pharmacy Education Amid COVID-19

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For pharmacy administrators, educators, staff members, and students, the pandemic caused by the coronavirus identified in 2019 (COVID-19) has been like no other time in our academic careers. In the course of several weeks in spring 2020, pharmacy education underwent more significant changes than it arguably had experienced in the previous decade. The changes were often made on a daily basis as we realized the depth and breadth of the problems caused by the pandemic. These problems challenged our assumptions about processes we had in place (both those established over decades and those implemented in recent years) for providing educational programs at all levels in our colleges and schools of pharmacy. This pandemic has also disrupted the fundamental elements of community, time, and place that we used as foundations for the success of our institutions. Pharmacy faculty and staff members and students have had to quickly adapt to new situations, including how we educate and learn, how and where we work with others, and how we balance our professional and personal lives.

It is often the most challenging situations in our lives that become the most powerful and empowering lessons. The editorial team and editorial board of the *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education* (AJPE), in conjunction with key leaders in pharmacy education and accreditation, believe it is critical for us to take the time to reflect on the profound changes and lessons learned from this pandemic as they can form the foundation for a successful future of the educational, research, and clinical activities of our programs. As a scholarly journal, our publication timeline is usually dictated by the months required for writing, peer review, revisions, editing, and printing, making it impossible for AJPE to compete with the instantaneousness of social media and television news. However, in these

extraordinary times, we felt it was imperative to generate this special issue on the COVID-19 pandemic as quickly as possible in hopes that the Academy might find the contents, written by their peers, helpful, comforting, encouraging, and even inspiring.

Topics in this issue focus on the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on revolutionizing educational programs and distance learning, providing emergency response, and changing experiential education. The pandemic has also had significant effects on our postgraduate programs that need to be considered in current and future planning. Discussing how COVID-19 has affected our students and their wellbeing, as well as faculty development and faculty and staff wellbeing was also important. At the individual college and school level, the last few months have led to profound changes in how we think about leadership from the perspective of enrollment policies, finance, and management. It was also important for us to hear from the leadership team of the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP) on how the pandemic is challenging our thinking about the continued success of our Association and the interaction of AACP with other professional organizations. We also look at how the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) is working with our colleges and schools to ensure the quality of pharmacy programs.

The AJPE editorial team realizes that this special COVID-19 theme issue contains only the first of many outstanding scholarly articles that will be written on the challenges, experiences, and opportunities presented by the pandemic in the months and years to come as the Academy continues to navigate through and beyond the current situation. Our Academy has demonstrated commitment, resilience, and a forward-looking growth mindset during other transformational and turbulent times as documented by articles published in the *Journal* throughout most of the 20th century and into the 21st century. Our faculty members, staff members, and students will learn from the COVID-19 pandemic and use these experiences and lessons to continue to improve

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pharmacy education, advance the critical role of pharmacists in patient care, and conduct the scholarly research needed for future advances in patient care. Challenging situations often lead to new, brighter realities and the

COVID-19 pandemic is no exception as we identify new, innovative, and better opportunities for our schools and colleges of pharmacy to prepare our students to impact their communities, their country, and the world.