AACP REPORTS

Spread, Scale and Sustain: Report of the Executive Vice President to the House of Delegates

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As I embark on my 15th year as your Executive Vice President it is a privilege to have this time to share my report to the House of Delegates. Each year I try to both reflect on key elements of the year just ended and also project forward to emphasize my excitement about all that we have and will accomplish together. You have heard many reports from the leaders of AACP and hopefully have taken the time to review the bountiful material we forward to delegates in preparation for your important work Sunday and today.

As delegates I also hope that you have or will take the time to communicate about the work of the Association with your colleagues back home. AACP has been focusing on the construct of knowledge management for the last 18 months. Dana Thimons, first our Sewell fellow and now our Associate Director of Knowledge Management, has worked to understand all the information assets we have in the Association and more broadly in the Academy. I hold up the reports of the three Councils as an example. The leaders of the nine sections and three councils accomplish significant projects year after year. Add to that all the creative work in teaching, service and research done on 138 campuses, plus your satellites and we have, as my APhA colleague Tom Menighan likes to say, “an embarrassment of riches”!

Our goal with knowledge management is to provide you the systems and information tools to make all of these assets accessible through simple and intuitive search strategies. We want all of you to approach each project with a first question, sort of a Drew Dudley strategy! “What resources can I find through AACP to help me with this project?” The failure to offer a robust KM system conscripts us all to inefficiencies and rework we can ill afford. The introduction of AACP Connect as a community-building tool and a redesigned website in 2017 are strategic components of this plan.

And speaking of plans, I am truly pleased with both our process of development and the outcome of the proposed AACP Strategic Plan. It is clear from the comments and feedback from delegates and others that we nailed your top priorities.

But the question can be called – what is really new about this plan? We were called to create a plan that is

bold and visionary, yet our priorities are ones that have been part of prior plans, programs and activities. Build a strong applicant pipeline; advocate for appreciation of the roles our graduates are prepared to assume; accelerate change in education and practice; strengthen research and graduate education. These have been priorities of AACP likely since our founding.

So, I want to share what I think is different about this plan and our execution of it – I think it is attitude and specifically attitude about spread, scale and sustainability. It is also a matter of timing, and the timing of this plan is near perfect.

On Sunday, Robert Tucker shared his simple yet powerful keys to innovation and spoke to how important innovation is to the success of organizations. This is equally true for your schools and for AACP. There are fantastic examples of innovation to be discovered across the Academy whether we are speaking of the discovery of new drugs, the establishment of excellent new patient care services, or the delivery of powerful public health services to underserved populations.

But if that is true, why then are we in what some would call a crisis situation in terms of the applicant pipeline? Why are we still calling for practice transformation more than 20 years after the release of the AACP Janus Commission call to action for colleges and schools to be the engines of practice innovation for the profession? Spread, scale and sustainability are answers to those questions.

I’ll illustrate this point with a bittersweet reflection from an interprofessional summit I attended in April. The meeting was hosted by the American Psychological Association, whose president Susan McDaniel has long championed the need for more effective integration of behavioral health services into primary care. I was the lone pharmacy voice there and found myself in conversation with several physicians during breaks. One relatively senior medical association presidential officer spoke of how valuable he and his colleagues found the pharmacist and students to be when a local college of pharmacy “gifted them” a faculty person for their family practice clinic. He was sorry when circumstances changed and the college no longer supported that FTE! No sustainability there.

Now I certainly don't know the backstory on that situation from the perspective of the sponsoring school, but I suspect virtually every school in the country could identify similar stories of the failure to sustain an innovative practice that was actually working for the clinicians and patients, not to mention our students. This is where the issue of timing comes into play. Part of priorities 2 and 3 in the new strategic plan will create synergies aimed at spreading excellent patient care practice models across numerous types of settings, scaling up the number of these through our preceptor relationships and authentic faculty practice, and identifying the strategies through payment for services and performance measurement to make these practices sustainable. The time for this spread, scale and sustaining effort is NOW!

The great news is that we have the prototypes. We also have talent within the Academy that fully understand both public and private payment systems that can be implemented by faculty and preceptors across the country. Our researchers have published the supporting evidence that when pharmacists engage in our Entrustable Professional Activities to the full extent of their knowledge, skills and abilities, people live healthier, better lives. Healthy starts here!

When the top four priorities of the plan were crystallized I realized that one element of the bold in the plan was

the synergy between the priorities. We won't fix the pipeline until the public better appreciates the contemporary roles and contributions of pharmacists. Our work to change public opinion mandates that we scale and sustain the value-added practice of pharmacy across all settings and in every community. Innovation in teaching and learning to match the millennial and next-gen needs of students is also essential to attract the best learners to our Pharm.D. and graduate programs.

Soon-to-be President DiPiro made an interesting observation in early June when he and Cynthia Boyle and I were discussing the plan. "This represents a different approach to our work," he said, and he made reference to this on Sunday. Previous plans focused mostly on what AACP would do, drawing largely on the work of our leaders and staff. This plan suggests that when we blend the right elements of national leadership and collaboration with partner organizations like JCPP, with strategic contributions of dedicated champions and brand ambassadors at every AACP member institution, we will accomplish so much more in the next several years. We will spread innovation, scale it to reach every community we can, and then sustain our progress fortified by the recognition that the integration of excellent pharmacy services in all models of care delivery truly does help people live healthier, better lives! Let's get to work!