AACP REPORTS

Strategic Priorities for AACP: Address of the 2015-2016 President-elect to the AACP House of Delegates

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It is my privilege to serve as the next President of AACP. I have been a member of the Association for many years and have seen firsthand the positive impact that AACP has had on our profession, on health care, and on the careers our faculty members and our graduates. As incoming AACP President I look forward to working with you, our members, the Councils, Sections, and SIGS over the next year.

We all recognize that the pace of change we are now experiencing in health care and higher education is unprecedented. And planning for an uncertain future presents unique opportunities and challenges for our times. We are compelled both by the changes in the traditional practice of pharmacy and the unmet health care needs of society to ask the tough questions about what it is that pharmacists should do, and what we should do as educators, practitioners, and scientists.

Some of the changes we are seeing are cause for concern. However, I am optimistic about the role of pharmacists in health care today and the future of our profession, and I fully recognize the importance of what we do as pharmacy educators. There is need to solve problems related to medicines, problems that will not be solved any time soon. These problems provide opportunities for our profession to serve valuable roles within our health care system. The problems with adherence, medication safety, medication expense, and prescription drug abuse remind us each day about the need for pharmacists in health care. With a focus on societal needs, today's graduates have more opportunity for exciting careers than past graduates of any era.

With this in mind, we have taken on the task of revising AACP's strategic plan to examine and expand the role that our Association, as our partner, will play in the future. A question for all of us is what can we accomplish together as an association that we cannot accomplish as individuals or within our schools and colleges independently?

As a part of this strategic planning process we have proposed a new vision statement:

"We envision a world of healthy people through the transformation of health professions education."

What this says to me is that we believe we have, and can continue to have, a significant impact on the health of our society here at home and around the globe. To see this vision become reality will require pharmacists to be better promoters of wellness and managers of chronic diseases. And, we acknowledge that the nature of health professions education is changing dramatically. Pharmacy is no longer in its silo. We will influence the education of other health disciplines and they will influence us, for better health care.

I have been a runner for a few decades now. It is an important part of my physical, social, and professional life. In fact, over the years I have enjoyed morning runs at meetings with many of you. This habit influences my perspective and thinking about how we interact as a profession, an association, and as a society. I think about what it is like to go out in the morning and run; just an average morning run. Many of us do it all the time. We plod along with no particular goal. In my case, running alone is always a mediocre performance. And contrast that with the opportunity to run with 30,000 people, as I did in March in Richmond. There is something special about running in large groups of people that brings out the best, a competitive spirit; it's a shared experience that we feed off and that motivates us. With that perspective in mind I think about how our Association can motivate us to accomplish much more than when we are acting alone or in our isolated work settings. This shared experience and accomplishment is fundamental to AACP.

So back to my question: What can we accomplish as an association that we cannot accomplish as individuals, or independently within our schools and colleges? The answer requires that we change our thinking of our relationship to and within AACP. Not just that we are members who benefit from the services AACP provides. It is that we can accomplish big things in partnership within AACP that are not possible by each of us working separately. Take our big questions and issues that we wrestle with in pharmacy education. Which of these challenges are best tackled by all of us working together?

This question has led to the priorities for the new AACP strategic plan. Perhaps the major issue of these

times: how can we assure sufficient numbers of high quality students coming into our PharmD and graduate programs? This is strategic plan priority number one. It is an issue of utmost importance to all of the profession, not only schools and colleges of pharmacy. This is about enriching the applicant pipeline.

“AACP will partner with stakeholders to increase the PharmD applicant pipeline to ensure there will be an appropriate number and quality of pharmacists to meet society’s needs.”

To address this issue we need to look forward, not backward to some “good old days”. And it is not just about increasing the *numbers* of applicants. Our efforts should aim to attract the very best, most talented and motivated students to our profession and graduate programs.

We all have an obligation to combat the myths that we are losing jobs in pharmacy, or that most pharmacists are not happy with their careers. In my state of Virginia, the Department of Health Professions recently released a workforce study of all licensed pharmacists documenting a 1% unemployment rate and a 90% satisfaction with their jobs.¹ We need to get the word out. Within AACP we will need to talk about how schools and colleges participate in this national recruitment effort.

We also need to assure representation in our classes and among our faculty from all segments of our society. Keep in mind that when some in our society are not well represented in pharmacy schools, we are missing out on opportunities to improve health equity. Our Task Force on Diversifying our Human Capital will be working again this year to identify barriers to diversity, as well as game-changers in higher education that will inform our work. The Task Force will develop strategies for academic pharmacy to improve the diversity of all of our human capital.

Working in tandem with that task force to address this and other issues we have formed a new committee, the Student Affairs Committee. The Student Affairs Committee will provide recommendations to the Board as part of a national awareness campaign to enhance the visibility of the pharmacy profession and pharmacy education to potential students and other stakeholders. AACP is already doing a lot to fill the pipeline. Check out the web site www.Pharmacy4me.org for a great resource to help support your recruitment efforts.

This issue, the student pipeline, is directly linked to a second major issue, the lack of branding of the profession of pharmacy. We all understand that most people do not know much about what a pharmacist does, or about the career opportunities in pharmacy. So, most students who are considering their education choices and careers don’t know enough about pharmacy and don’t consider it as an option. This leads to our second strategic priority, creating a new portrait of pharmacists and pharmacy careers.

“AACP, in collaboration with stakeholders, will seek to raise the profile of pharmacy as an essential health care profession.”

We can do this better as an association working with other organizations than we can working alone. We need to make better use of many positive stories in the mass media related to pharmacy and link better to social networking to help inform people about the profession.

Perhaps you have seen our profession on the front pages of the New York Times, or the article published in May in the Wall Street Journal – *How to Make Hospitals Less Deadly – that recommended “Bring in the Pharmacists.”*² Last month in the New York Times Education Life section, a graphic showed pharmacy among the most favorable careers, in terms of unemployment and underemployment.³ We need more stories like these, and young people and their families need to see them.

We will actively collaborate with other pharmacy organizations, foundations and corporate entities to craft and fund a national campaign to raise awareness about careers in pharmacy. And we are asking each one of you to become a brand ambassador for our profession. Our Advocacy Committee will study and report on opportunities for schools and colleges to advocate for their institutions and the profession at the local and state level. They will determine a list of core activities that lend themselves to successful community-engaged partnerships.

Ingrained in our DNA is a drive for innovation in education and practice. And so, our third strategic priority is: “to lead and partner with members and other health professions in the transformation of innovative health professions education and practice.”

Our efforts will build upon nearly a decade’s work to advance interprofessional education in partnership with our peer associations. But for interprofessional education to produce meaningful results there must be a transition into authentic interprofessional practice when our team-ready graduates leave our schools. Our schools and colleges have led innovation in practice for decades, and we will continue to do so.

The current environment is more challenging, as the primary questions about the profession are no longer “Can a pharmacist provide patient care?” Or, “Can a pharmacist effectively manage a patient with one or more chronic diseases and complex medication regimens?” We know the answers to those questions. But now, “How will pharmacists be paid as we continue to expand patient focused care?” While we push for provider status in existing fee-for-service models, we need to establish financial models for pharmacists in teams that are paid for quality of care.

This past year’s Council of Deans and Council of Faculties Task Force on Accelerating Change identified

the aim that all schools and colleges will teach and assess competencies associated with Joint Commission of Pharmacy Practitioners Pharmacist Patient Care Process. They also recommended formation of accelerating change transformation teams (ACT2 teams) to transform the aim to a campaign with structured change management approach. These efforts will facilitate AACP members in rapid change that is needed.

Our Academic Affairs committee will continue the important work on the entrustable professional activities (EPAs). In the months ahead they will compile comments and input about draft EPAs from a broad range of stakeholders. They are also charged to develop potential uses and applications of EPA statements in pharmacy education and to create a roadmap for implementation of EPAs across the member schools and colleges.

Our Professional Affairs Committee will continue to examine the role of preceptors within our schools and colleges and recommend to the Board an approach to increase the number of non-faculty preceptors as AACP members. They will examine AACP membership from a value perspective of preceptors. The academy is so dependent upon this significant army of practitioners, and we need to enhance our support of them.

For the future, AACP and all of us in our schools and colleges will continue to face the issues of instructional efficiency and cost of education, including student debt load. We will need to examine how we can implement the ultimate in “precision teaching” and reduce cookie-cutter instruction.

Research and graduate education will always be important missions for our academy and these are the focus of our fourth strategic priority.

“AACP will enable innovation to sustain high impact research/scholarship and graduate education.”

Everyone is aware of CAPE competencies for PharmD students. This year the Research and Graduate

Affairs committee will prepare a “CAPE Competency” document for graduate students in the pharmaceutical sciences. Also, they will recommend curricular development in collaborative research methodologies that schools and colleges could implement.

The success of our PhD and MS graduates over many decades is astounding. But it is a story that is not widely known outside of our universities. We must change that. We should be better connected to national research efforts such as the Precision Medicine Initiative and the Cancer Moon Shot. The Argus Commission (with 5 past presidents as members) will consider these and other major health-related initiatives to determine how AACP should be more involved. Be assured that many of the topics I have mentioned today are also being addressed by AACP councils, sections, and committees. There is a lot of important work going on.

This is truly a pivotal moment for our members, for our profession, and for the advancement of health care for everyone in our country. We, AACP staff and leadership, can’t do it alone. But imagine what we can accomplish working together. We need every one of you to commit to this challenge. We need your dedication, your energy, your drive. We are 5,000 strong, and we are running this race together.

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