

AACP REPORT

Address of the 2020-2021 President at the 2021 Virtual Annual Meeting of the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy

Anne Lin, PharmD^{a,b}

^a Notre Dame of Maryland University, Baltimore, Maryland

^b President, American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy, Arlington, Virginia

What a year! When I was installed as president last July, we were still in the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic. I introduced the themes of our work together for this year: transformation and grit. In developing these themes, I focused on the relationship of these two ideas to pharmacy education and practice. Little did I know that in the ensuing 12 months, the Academy and pharmacists would demonstrate tremendous grit, the combination of passion and perseverance. You also helped lay the groundwork for meaningful transformation in the image and practice activities of pharmacists across the country.

We have demonstrated our passion for educating the next generation of pharmacists and impacting the lives of the patients and communities that we serve. We persevered through uncharted waters and unknown dangers when pharmacists stayed on the front lines in the early days of the pandemic. Our administrators, faculty, and students did not hesitate to lead the charge in vaccinating as many people as we could.

So many schools of pharmacy have contributed in their communities and states that, if I began to call them by name, I would not have time to mention our other accomplishments this year. I am excited that our public messaging campaigns have been using these stories to increase vaccine confidence across the country. Hopefully, this has led to an increase in the percentage of eligible individuals who have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.

Beyond vaccination efforts, the faculty, the unsung heroes of our schools, adapted, learned and moved quickly to meet the educational needs of our students during this tumultuous time. Our experiential education faculty, with site changes that occurred within a matter of seconds, did what they had to do to provide the experiences our students needed. We should all be proud of what we have accomplished together.

While our attention was focused on the pandemic, the world around us did not stand still. The tragic deaths of George Floyd and too many other people of color, and the acts of violence against Asian Americans, brought to the forefront the persistence of systemic racism and its impact

on all of us. Personally, as a Chinese American, these events profoundly impacted my life this year.

The disproportionately high COVID-19 related death rate in people of color further highlighted the impact of racism on healthcare inequities and access issues. As these events unfolded, AACP did not remain silent. Together with 13 other national pharmacy organizations we stated publicly our stance against racial injustice. This was in addition to AACP's affirmation of our commitment to racial equality, equity and justice, and our condemnation of violence against the Asian American and Pacific Islander community.

As it is often said, actions speak louder than words. Beginning several years ago, AACP initiated a review of its processes for nominations for positions at all levels of the organization and strategies for developing a leadership pipeline that focuses on diversity, equity and inclusion.

The first AACP Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Institute was co-hosted virtually with the University of Mississippi School of Pharmacy in January 2021. The second institute will take place in January 2022, again in conjunction with the University of Mississippi.

Another important milestone in our EDI efforts is the successful application for AACP to become part of a national coalition of organizations called CEO Action for Diversity and Inclusion, a network that provides significant resources and networks to advance our efforts in this space.

Obviously, these are early examples of our commitment to address social injustice and achieve health equity. The work for diversity, equity, and inclusion will be woven into the fabric of our work at AACP; the 2021-2024 strategic plan raises EDI to a top priority for years to come.

Against this backdrop, the AACP staff, Board of Directors, Councils, Sections, SIGs and committees at all levels did not miss a beat this past year. While we all wished we could have been together in person, we also were able to achieve a great deal working virtually.

The Academic Affairs Committee, chaired by Dr. Andrew Bzowyckyj of Pacific University Oregon,

focused its attention on the impact of COVID-19 on pharmacy education and workforce development, and the changes that may need to continue beyond the pandemic. The committee's report highlights strategies that schools used to remain effective during this past academic year. This included recommendations for a meaningful way of sharing resources by schools beyond the simple exchange of course syllabi. Additionally, you will read about recommendations for how schools and colleges can engage in discussions about current and future workforce development needs, particularly in light of how the pandemic has changed healthcare delivery.

The Professional Affairs Committee, chaired by Dr. Gina Moore of the University of Colorado, focused on making the case for the integration of pharmacist patient care services, distinct from that of other healthcare providers, such as nurse practitioners and physicians assistants. The report includes examples of the effective models of integration of pharmacists' services beyond that of primary care, the focus of last year's Professional Affairs report.

The committee gathered a great deal of information regarding integration models and is developing an appropriate means of sharing and disseminating that information. Their work highlighted the need to develop and communicate a clear and consistent message about the unique and essential role and contributions of pharmacists in healthcare. In addition to a number of recommendations related to the committee's charges, there is a call to action in a number of items.

I will mention one here that certainly was not in my mind when I charged the committee: that we must stop referring to pharmacists and other healthcare practitioners as mid-level practitioners. As the committee noted in their report "pharmacists are medication experts and there is nothing mid-level about our training and expertise in this area."

The Student Affairs Committee, chaired by Dr. Kristin Janke from the University of Minnesota, continued their work on professional identity formation. They offer a framework for how professional identity is formed. In addition, using an implementation science model, the committee developed a robust list of potential actions that can be taken by schools and colleges. This work provides an excellent guide for how schools and colleges can begin to integrate professional identity formation into their programs.

Dr. Kimberly Garza from Auburn University, chair of the Research & Graduate Affairs Committee, continued the work of last year's committee and developed a competency framework for graduate education and training in implementation science. While graduate education is important, we need to ramp up our capacity to use

implementation science in practice and education. The committee considered other strategies such as the formation of interdisciplinary research teams to pursue practice transformation projects; a badge or micro-credentialing program built around open access modules that can serve as a resource for schools; as well as synchronous learning that consists of lessons and guided exercises with implementation science experts.

Strategic engagement by the Academy is critical to practice transformation. The Strategic Engagement Committee, chaired by Dr. Jennifer Adams of Idaho State University, identified a number of areas within the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy's (NABP's) current model practice act, as well as in the National Alliance of State Pharmacy Associations' (NASPA's) recommendations on collaborative practice agreements to help schools' and colleges' efforts to advocate for changes in laws and regulations to accelerate practice transformation. The identification of a strategic engagement advocate at each school is noted as an important action step. The committee has also begun the process of identifying additional ways in which AACP can partner with our nursing and medicine education colleagues to further advance interprofessional education and interaction among faculty from the three disciplines beyond our own campuses.

Finally, the Argus Commission, chaired by Dr. Cynthia Boyle of the University of Maryland Baltimore Campus, focused its work on the impact of COVID-19 on health care delivery. The commission identified telehealth, health disparities, and value-based performance payments as areas that are expected to have important implications for academic pharmacy as well as the pharmacy profession. Additionally, the pandemic has clearly shown that healthcare education and training can and must be more efficient and streamlined, as well as the critical need for interprofessional practice. The report identifies a number of areas that need to be explored by the Academy, as well as actions that AACP can take to move us forward.

I am excited to share the progress toward practice and education transformation that was recommended in the Argus Commission report from 2019-2020. Building on all six committees' action recommendations in last year's report, the commission recommended the formation of a center built within the current AACP staffing structure to be the hub of action for the Association. The Center to Accelerate Pharmacy Practice Transformation and Academic Innovation, commonly called "The Center," was approved as part of the current fiscal year budget. Earlier this month, a search was initiated for a new senior director to lead the Center, and additional staffing was dedicated to the Center's work.

Among other Year One priorities for the new center, AACP is planning to convene individuals and organizations committed to working with the Academy to critically examine our current models of education and postgraduate training in early 2022.

The Bridging Pharmacy Education and Practice Summit will be held simultaneously in six regional locations on campuses not yet selected. More information about the summit and the opportunity to apply to be a campus host location will be available in August.

As I said at the beginning of my remarks, it has been quite a year. You will see evidence of the outcomes of this year's work throughout the meeting. I am grateful for the hard work of the committees, which I believe provides clear guidance and direction for the Academy to transform pharmacy education and practice. It was wonderful for me to be able to meet with the committees, virtually of course, and hear their thoughts over the course of this year.

The AACP staff and Board of Directors have focused their energies not just on the "now," but also on where we need to go. They have worked incredibly hard this year. To these individuals, I owe you much gratitude for your support throughout this year. One tangible outcome of their efforts to look ahead is the draft 2021-2024 AACP Strategic Plan.

To our members, I sincerely thank you for your support and belief in me to lead this great organization. It has been an honor to serve as your 2020-2021 president. This year is not the end of the path, but another step in our journey. To achieve what we believe pharmacy education and practice should be, it will take grit and a commitment to transformation. I urge everyone to ignite your passion and fortify the perseverance that it takes to succeed. Despite setbacks and challenges we have all experienced throughout the last year, you all have certainly demonstrated your ability to succeed!