

## AACP REPORT

### Address of the 2021-2022 President-elect at the 2021 Virtual Annual Meeting of the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy

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Good afternoon and thank you for giving me this opportunity to share with you the committee charges for the coming year, and the new strategic plan for *your* Association that we developed over the past year, a plan that will guide our actions for the next few years. It is truly an honor and privilege to serve this Association. I know together, collectively, we can forge a bright future.

Every president declares a theme for her or his presidential year. Something that sets the tone and, hopefully, stirs people toward action. This year's theme is "Rejoice and Rejuvenate! The Academy Resets, Recovers, Reimagines, and Recommits."

During the 12 months that have transpired since our last annual meeting, we have faced many challenges. But adversity and disruptions lead to opportunities. I have heard from many of you about how you've successfully addressed these challenges. And I'm so proud of the key role that our colleges and schools of pharmacy — our faculty, staff, and students — have played during the COVID-19 pandemic.

So, it's time to "Rejoice and Rejuvenate"! We've worked hard. We all need a little time to reset and recover. But when the new semester starts in August or September, I hope that each of you will use your new knowledge and experiences to reimagine what you do ... and how you do it. And let's recommit to our mission and values to make the world a better place.

Over the past few years, I've become increasingly drawn to ancient wisdom traditions, particularly Stoicism. I think the ancients have a thing or two to teach us about how to live a good life. Cicero, one of Rome's greatest orators and a famous Stoic, called upon his fellow citizens using this phrase: *summum bonum*. In Latin, it means "the highest good."

In Stoic philosophy, the highest good is virtue. They believed that everything we face in life is an opportunity to respond with virtue. Not only during the good times or during times of plenty, but most importantly during challenging times, when things are difficult. If we act virtuously, they believed, everything else would follow: happiness, success, meaning, reputation, love. "The man

who has virtue," Cicero said, "is in need of nothing for the purpose of living well."

The Stoics believed there were four virtues: wisdom, temperance, courage, justice. Wisdom is the ability to know what is within our control and what is not: to discern what is the good and virtuous action to take. Temperance is about avoiding excess, curbing desire, and using your resources wisely. Courage is having the strength to do what's right. It's about holding to your principles and insisting on truth. And lastly, justice. Justice is considered the most important of the Stoic virtues because it is the source of all virtues. Justice is about our duty to one another and doing our part to contribute to the common good.

The Stoics had a radical idea — at least it was radical for their time — they called it *sympatheia* — a belief in the mutual interdependence among everything in the universe. "What injures the hive injures the bee," Marcus Aurelius wrote in his book *Meditations*. His stoic teacher, Epictetus, once said, "Seeking the very best in ourselves means actively caring for the welfare of other human beings."

I believe our work as individuals, as institutions of learning, and as an Association must be about *summum bonum*, the highest good. Achieving the highest good, however, can only be accomplished through purposeful action. Every four years or so we take stock, scan the environment, and envision new ways we can advance our mission and values. That's why I've asked this year's Argus Commission, chaired by Joseph DiPiro from the Virginia Commonwealth University, to critically examine the social forces that will likely have a significant impact on population health in the United States over the next 10 to 20 years. These forces include such things as disparities in healthcare access and delivery; demographic trends, including global migration; and climate change. And then to advise AACP leadership and our member institutions on how best to prepare for these trends, including the role that the Academy and the profession of pharmacy should play in addressing them.

Nearly 50 years ago, the AACP House of Delegates was created. It was created to serve as a deliberative body

to formulate the Association's policy and to build consensus on the important issues the Academy faces. Much has changed in the past 50 years. The number of colleges and schools have more than doubled. Technological advancements enable us to collaborate in ways that were never imagined back in the early 1970s. The role and responsibilities of pharmacists now focus on patients, not medications.

That's why your incoming speaker, Dr. Gloria Grice, and I have empaneled a blue ribbon commission, chaired by Cynthia Boyle, to carefully examine the procedures for electing or appointing delegates, the roles and responsibilities of the delegates, and the methods and procedures for conducting the business of the House.

The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commission to Reimagine the AACP House of Delegates will be preparing a set of recommendations for you to consider next summer. The work of the Commission will have lasting implications for the Association in the years to come. One of my personal goals is to engage our delegates and our member institutions more intentionally in the implementation of our strategic plan.

Hopefully, each of you has seen and reviewed our new strategic plan. I believe it addresses the critical issues that our Academy faces today.

Strategic Priorities 1 and 2 are interrelated and connected to the core of who we are. AACP, along with our partners, hopes to lead the transformation of pharmacy practice to ensure that every patient has access to a range of services that ensure medications are used wisely. This includes mechanisms to finance and pay for those services.

That's why I've asked the Professional Affairs Committee, led by Karen Gunning from the University of Utah and Alan Zillich from Purdue University, to develop resources for member institutions and faculty regarding payment for pharmacist services. This includes models for payment and value-based payment structures that can be successfully used to support the practice-related activities of faculty.

Closely related to this work, I've asked the Strategic Engagement Committee, chaired by George McKinnon from the Medical College of Wisconsin and Vice Chair Kyle Turner from the University of Utah, to develop resources for AACP and our member institutions to advocate for payment for practice-related services from both state and federal programs. The focus of this charge is, again, on payment for patient care services delivered by faculty employed by colleges and schools of pharmacy.

As we educate and train pharmacists and pharmaceutical scientists, we must continually look for ways to improve and optimize our curricula. That's why I've asked

the Academic Affairs Committee, led by Scott Stolte from Wilkes University and Melissa Medina from the University of Oklahoma, to update the Center for the Advancement of Pharmacy Education (CAPE) Outcomes and entrustable professional activity (EPA) statements for new pharmacy graduates, and provide guidance on how CAPE Outcomes and EPA statements should be used by member institutions, faculty, preceptors, and students.

While awarding degrees will remain an essential part of what we do, at least for the foreseeable future, that is not our primary business. We are institutions of learning and discovery. Similar to cathedrals and temples and other places where spiritual communities congregate, we must invite learners to interact, engage, and congregate with us in our learning community throughout their lives.

Strategic Priority 3 is critically important. As institutions of higher learning and as health professionals, we have a special obligation to lead diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism efforts. The events of the past several years have exposed the inequities that continue to exist in our society. Institutions that are welcoming and diverse, those that seek and value a wide range of perspectives, are more likely to be successful in the years to come. We must actively seek to dismantle those things that perpetuate racism in our society.

To this end, I've asked Lynn Crismon from the University of Texas at Austin and Donna West Strum from the University of Mississippi to lead the Research and Graduate Affairs Committee. The committee will examine the barriers that hinder underrepresented groups, particularly Black and Latinx students, from pursuing advanced degrees and research-related career paths in the pharmaceutical, social and behavioral, and clinical sciences.

Strategic Priority 4 is all about wellbeing. Not just our physical health, but our emotional, social, and spiritual wellbeing. Even before the pandemic, there was growing evidence that our lives are filled with more stress and anxiety. And despite the interconnectedness of our world today, many of us feel more isolated. Rates of loneliness and suicide have skyrocketed. Many of our students and colleagues are disillusioned and burned-out. These feelings are not unique to pharmacy; they are pervasive in our society. So, working with our partners in health care, we should strive to understand and address the root causes.

That's why I've asked our Student Affairs Committee, chaired by Brent Reed from the University of Maryland and Cheryl Durand from MCPHS University-Worcester/Manchester, to advise AACP and our member institutions on strategies to holistically address the wellbeing of students, faculty, and staff. This includes new programs and services that AACP can provide to support member institutions in these endeavors.

Strategic Priority 5 is about our financial health. As enrollments in colleges and schools of pharmacy have dropped, as the employment opportunities for our graduates have shrunk, our financial health has become precarious. Without new sources of revenue, many institutions, including your Association, will face significant cutbacks in the years to come. We must envision new and creative products and services that add value. As any good financial manager will tell you, we must diversify our portfolio. That's why I've asked every committee this year to suggest new products and services that might generate revenue for the Association, as well as ways that the Association might reduce costs and be more efficient.

Lastly, Strategic Priority 6 is about running an efficient and effective organization — to recruiting and retaining a diverse, dedicated, and determined staff.

Our new strategic plan specifies a set of strategic areas on which we will focus our collective attention over the next few years. It outlines a number of goals and a list of objectives crafted by a lot of very smart people in this virtual room. It's well organized and well worded. It's measurable. And actionable. And timebound. And I believe it's feasible. All the things that every good strategic plan should have. It's *smart*.

What may not be readily apparent in this written document, are the virtues, values, and moral imperatives that this plan embodies. We have an obligation to society to continually strive to address the problems that impact the health and wellbeing of everyone in this interconnected world. We must continually recommit to achieve our calling as a profession to exercise wisdom when using medications, maximizing their potential benefits and minimizing their potential harms. We must also ensure that medications are available and accessible to those who need them.

As educators, we must continually reexamine what we teach, how we teach it, and how we deliver it. We have an obligation to attend to our wellbeing, both as individuals and collectively as organizations. And we have an obligation to attend to the wellbeing of our colleagues, our students and our patients. It's not just about achieving a state of good physical health, which, frankly, isn't always possible. It's about leading a flourishing life. Everyone should have the opportunity to lead a flourishing life.

We have an obligation to intentionally seek and welcome those who have beliefs and experiences different than our own. In doing so, it will help us to see and more effectively address problems as a profession and organization. Equity and inclusion are not just about being fair, they are about seeking justice, not in the legal sense of the word, but in the way the Stoics understood the word. Antiracism is about the courage to acknowledge the wrongs of the past and a sense of responsibility to make things right.

Lastly, we have an obligation to exercise temperance, to use our resources wisely. To ensure that AACP is meeting your needs. That we have products and services that enable our members, both individuals as well as our member institutions, to achieve our mission and vision.

AACP exists to advance pharmacy education, research, scholarship, practice and service, in partnership with members and stakeholders, to improve health for all. We envision a world of healthy people through the transformation of health professions education. But to do that, the AACP staff, some 30 people strong, can't do it alone. They need us. Their job is to organize, catalyze, and convene. But it's up to us to do the work.

So, let's rejoice in what we've accomplished. Let's rejuvenate by taking time this summer to reset and recover. But let's not forget the important work ahead. With imagination and commitment, we can live our values and achieve the highest good.