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Leadership Development of Students through an Integrated Student Organization Structure in a College of Pharmacy

By: T. Joseph Mattingly II, Joseph L. Fink III and T. David Marr

Pharmacy is a profession that requires those who practice to be very well educated within their specialty. However, it is equally important for pharmacists to conduct themselves as professionals in all that they do so they can retain the trust of the public and the professionals with whom they deal on a daily basis. In addition, pharmacists are frequently called on to serve in leadership roles in several forums – professional associations, civic clubs, health-related voluntary organizations and a wide variety of other community or religious organizations.

Student organizations can play an integral role in the development of leadership and professionalism within pharmacy. Various national pharmacy organizations have acknowledged the importance of this.^[1-3] Indeed, the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy has identified six tenets of student professionalism that relate to leadership:^[4]

Altruism	Duty
Accountability	Honor and Integrity
Excellence	Respect for Others

Recognizing the importance of collaboration between the different pharmacy organizations and attempting to meet this challenge should be a top priority for pharmacy education programs. Indeed, the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education affirmatively acknowledges this and embodies the expectations in its accreditation standards for Pharm.D. degree programs. [Appendix A]

An earlier report described the student organization structure in place at the University of Kentucky College of Pharmacy prior to 1999.^[5] In that year, students at UKCOP developed an integrated student organizational structure to serve as what can be viewed as a joint venture to advance the profession by further developing leadership skills in future practitioners. The impetus for this development was that a vibrant, effective set of organizations existed but coordination

of initiatives and programming was a bit of a challenge. The creation of an “umbrella” organization in 1999, called the Kentucky Alliance of Pharmacy Students (KAPS), has allowed students to work together on projects to advance different facets of pharmacy practice. Membership in KAPS entitles the student pharmacists to membership in the American Pharmacists Association Academy of Student Pharmacists, the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists, the National Community Pharmacists Association and the state affiliates Kentucky Pharmacists Association and the Kentucky Society of Health-System Pharmacists. Through this structure, students have the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of patient care and professional outreach events in community and clinical settings providing them with valuable experience that may enhance their career path or expose them to unexplored opportunities.

The Structure

Initially, an assessment of the current student organizations offered helped determine the best avenue for the development of an umbrella organization. In the University of Kentucky example, KAPS membership covers the three major national associations for pharmacists and two affiliated state organization memberships. Students pay one fee to obtain a membership in KAPS and that fee is used to pay for dues to the respective associations within the metaphorical umbrella. This saves students the hassle of completing paperwork associated with joining the individual organizations, thereby lowering potential barriers to membership, and also creates exposure to different aspects of pharmacy in which the student may have originally had no interest.

Once the organizations were selected to be included in the new structure, the composition of an Executive Committee was established. Equal representation from the individual associations has worked well at the University of Kentucky. The President and Presi-

dent-elect of each organization serve as voting members of the KAPS Executive Committee. The KAPS organization also elects a Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary and Director of Committees. Advisors to each organization within KAPS serve as *ex officio* non-voting members of the Executive Committee.

The Constitution

In order for a structure like this to work, it is important to develop an official constitution for the organization. There needs to be a document for students and advisors to consult and cite when issues arise. The KAPS constitution addresses membership issues like eligibility and voting status. It also includes officer definitions and duties, the election process and details of how to handle situations, such as when student officers are not able to complete their term of office. While such an organization is in its infancy stage, it may be a good idea to start with a simple constitution, but plans should be made for this to be a dynamic document, based on reviewing and updating the document on a regular basis.

Once KAPS developed its constitution to create the broad framework for the organization, attention became focused on the bylaws which are much more operational in orientation.

After those documents were in place and officers were elected, it was possible to pursue institutional recognition of KAPS as an official student organization at the University.^[6] This creates opportunities to secure funding from the Student Government Association for various initiatives.

Budget Operations and Guidelines

A critical issue of concern when integrating different organizations into a new structure is the handling of fundraising and finances. The KAPS organization has one budget and the members of the Executive Committee vote as a board to make decisions concerning

the revenues and expenses in the KAPS budget. As a member of the umbrella organization, each represented association forfeits the ability to have an independent budget. This situation sacrifices flexibility in exchange for the advantages of participating in a much larger budget. As individual association chapters decided to restructure within one integrated organization, it was important to determine the process for financial decision making.

An Additional Advantage

For well over 30 years, the College of Pharmacy at the University of Kentucky has designated one hour per week when no classes are scheduled so that a college-wide convocation can be held for all to attend. Student leaders have responsibility for identifying

convocation topics, identifying and inviting speakers as well as hosting them when on campus. Subjects for consideration at this forum often complement and expand classroom material. Due to the integrated nature of the KAPS approach to coordination of student organizations, no interest group or specialty is left out of such opportunities to present programming related to their interests.

KAPS takes the lead on this

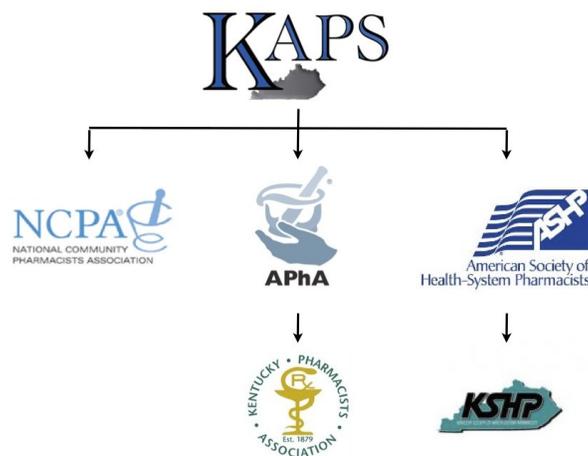
initiative and, as in all it does, strives to be inclusive and even-handed.

Other synergisms can be identified as:

- Community service projects can draw upon KAPS members from all constituent organizations;
- Coalescing of financial resources;
- Accumulation of “KAPS points” earned through community service projects can enhance participation in those undertakings and create additional reimbursement for travel to professional meetings; and the existence of KAPS creates additional leadership development opportunities for student pharmacists.

The Process of Making it Work

Having success in an umbrella organization is challenging in that each association has its own agenda



and priorities. First, it is important for each member of the Executive Committee to recognize and value the differences between the individual groups and make an effort to become more knowledgeable about all the associations represented on the coordinating Executive Committee. In order to facilitate this process, the KAPS Executive Committee meets bi-weekly to discuss agenda items and receive reports from each constituent association. A recent development has been to invite the co-chairs of one programming committee to provide an update at each meeting of the Executive Committee. This has facilitated communications as well as accountability.

It is also important to have strong leadership from the Chair of the Executive Committee. The KAPS Chair at the University of Kentucky is a crucial position for success of the collaboration puzzle. This position requires a leader who can constructively deal with the priorities and egos of the different Chapter Presidents and continuously encourage a group approach to issues and challenges. One challenge noted with the position of KAPS Chair is that the importance and significance of this position has limited recognition outside of UKCOP. Chapter Presidents of the different associations, like the American Pharmacists Association and the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists, have more contact and networking opportunities with regional and national leaders in the associations. This may be something to be considered when determining the selection process of the Chair of the organization.

Contributions to the College

Existence of this integrated organizational structure to facilitate and enhance student leadership development is consistent with and supportive of several elements of the current strategic plan of the College of Pharmacy. Those specific provisions are:

- Train and empower individuals to become change agents with skill sets to influence patient outcomes and advance the practice of pharmacy.
- Produce leaders across all areas of the pharmacy profession. These leaders will practice at the highest level of pharmacy and have the capability of functioning as change agents.

Additionally, the KAPS Chair serves as a member of the Student Advisory Council of the College. This

group provides a forum of student leaders “that acts as a voice for its student constituency.”^[7]

Selected Evidence of Outcomes

Over the years since this integrated, coordinated structure has been in place, there have been a number of developments in the form of national recognitions and awards for the affiliated organizations and UK student pharmacists in leadership roles. Recent examples include:

- 2006 – UK student receives ASHP Student Leadership Award
- 2008 – UK students served as APhA-ASP Speaker of the House, Regional Delegate and Member-at-Large as well as an ASHP Student leadership Award
- 2009 – UK student receives ASHP Student Leadership Award
- 2011 – UK student received ASHP Student Leadership Award
- 2012 – UK student receives APhA National Leadership Award
- 2012 – UK student receives ASHP National Leadership Award

These student accomplishments reflect great credit not only on the individuals selected but on the College, the University and the Commonwealth.

Conclusion

Nearly all faculty will readily acknowledge that a great deal of learning occurs outside the classroom, the teaching laboratory and the experiential rotation site. To continue expanding the role of the pharmacist on the health care team and promoting the full contribution of pharmacists to the well-being of patients, the profession of pharmacy needs to foster leadership development among students and new practitioners with an emphasis on promoting collaboration. Integration of the individual student organizations provides many opportunities for different student leaders to work closely together, creating a team environment. This collaboration also promotes leadership development, as the leaders of the different organizations can learn from each other as they advance the profession.

References:

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Appendix A: Accreditation standards related to student leadership development

Accreditation Standards and Guidelines for the Professional Program in Pharmacy Leading to the Doctor of Pharmacy Degree (Version 2.0), Adopt-

ed January 23, 2011, Effective February 14, 2011, Accreditation Council on Pharmacy Education (emphasis added)

STANDARDS FOR STUDENTS

The purpose of the standards in this section is to ensure that the college or school has adequate resources, fair and equitable policies and procedures, and capabilities to support student admission, progression, personal and professional development, and input into programmatic quality improvement.

Standard No. 22: Student Representation and Perspectives

Standard No. 22: Student Representation and Perspectives

The college or school must consider student perspectives and include student representation, where appropriate, on committees, in policy-development bodies, and in assessment and evaluation activities.

Guideline 22.1

The college or school should have a student government as well as suitable committees, such as a student/faculty relations committee, to develop student leadership and professionalism, to ensure a forum for student dialogue, and to ensure adequate communication of student opinions and perspectives.

Standard No. 23: Professional Behavior and Harmonious Relationships

The college or school must provide an environment and culture that promotes professional behavior and harmonious relationships among students, faculty, administrators, preceptors, and staff. Faculty, administrators, preceptors, and staff must be committed to developing professionalism and fostering leadership in students and to serving as mentors and positive role models for students.

Guideline 23.2

The college or school should foster and support opportunities for students to participate in student self-government.

Continued on Page 35

Continued from Page 25Guideline 23.3

The college or school should support students, faculty, administrators, preceptors, and staff participation in, as appropriate, local, state, and national pharmacy, scientific, and other professional organizations.

Standard No. 26: Faculty and Staff Continuing Professional Development and Performance Review

The college or school must have an effective continuing professional development program for full-time, part-time, and voluntary faculty and staff consistent with their responsibilities. The college or school must review the performance of faculty and staff on a regular basis. Criteria for performance review must be commensurate with the responsibilities of the faculty and staff in the professional degree program.

Guideline 26.1

The college or school must have or provide support for programs and activities for faculty and preceptor continuing professional development as educators, researchers, scholars, and practitioners commensurate with their responsibilities in the program.

In general, the programs and activities for full-time and part-time faculty, as well as for volunteer faculty where appropriate, should:

provide strategies to develop consistent socialization, leadership, and professionalism in students throughout the curriculum

ACPE Standards Appendix B - Additional Guidance on the Science Foundation for the Curriculum

Practice Management

development of leadership skills