Passing the Torch
Stephanie Phelps, PharmD
Associate Dean, Academic Affairs

Not many people have had the opportunity I was given to serve as director of experiential learning for one of this country’s most outstanding colleges of pharmacy and arguably one of the top departments of clinical pharmacy in the nation. Our position of strength in experiential education can be directly attributed to the quality of our part-time faculty and to our partner institutions. Our students are privileged to learn from individuals committed to producing pharmacists who can not only work with other professionals to prevent disease and manage therapy, but who have a desire to be an advocate for the patient and for the profession.

The last decade has presented many challenges and opportunities in experiential education. The college has almost doubled its class size, moved from a predominately Memphis-based training program to a presence in Tennessee’s major cities and counties, and has witnessed the evolution of new colleges of pharmacy in and around our state. And then there has been the ACPE’s Standards 2007 and the requirements for so many new experiential program mandates.

Without question, the best part of my job has been the opportunity to renew and establish relationships with so many outstanding individuals across our state. As preceptors, you are wonderful role models for our students and possess such an enthusiasm for the profession and its future. You have challenged me to be better and I cannot tell you how much I have personally appreciated your time and your support of our educational programs.

I have and will continue to be a tireless advocate for high standard in student pharmacist’s academic performance and professional behaviors and have encouraged preceptors to hold our student responsible and accountable. For almost a decade, I have challenged preceptors to teach our students about excellence in practice by validation and discrimination of their performance through the grades we assign and will continue to do so in the future. I look forward to working with you in my new capacity as Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and leave knowing that Dr. Rex Brown will carry on the college’s traditions of excellence in experiential education.

Continuing in Excellence
Rex Brown, PharmD
Executive Vice Chair; Director, Office of Experiential Education

I am excited about taking on this new position in our College. I know it will be challenging, but I look forward to that part of the position. I have been in charge of academic appointments in the Department of Clinical Pharmacy for years, so I have worked side-by-side the Office of Experiential Education during that time. Also, I have made numerous site visits with Drs. Phelps and Helms around the state over the years. Hopefully, this will help in the transition to this new responsibility. Simplifying the appointment process for prospective faculty and the rotation selection process for students are among the goals I have for the Office of Experiential Education. I look forward to working with you over the next several years.
Encouraging Professional Growth and Development

Max D. Ray, PharmD, MS, LHD

(Dr. Ray is Professor of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Health Outcomes and Policy Research Division. This paper is based on a presentation he gave at the August 20, 2008 orientation program for preceptors. He chaired the College of Pharmacy “think tank” group on which this presentation was based.)

In 2007, Dean Gourley appointed a “think tank” group, composed of faculty members, students, and practitioners, to study the issue of student professionalism and to develop recommendations for strengthening the professional growth and development of our students. This group devoted several months during the 2007-2008 academic year to this assignment.

It became obvious to this group that building a culture of professionalism in the College would require close collaboration between students, full-time faculty, and part-time faculty (preceptors). It was acknowledged that faculty members (all categories) set the pace for students’ professional growth and development through the models that they (the faculty) provide. Because of the special opportunities that preceptors have to help contribute to this goal, we provide here a few key points from the final report of the “think tank” group.

“Professionalism” defined

What is “professionalism”? What is “non-professionalism”? Is “professional” behavior simply the absence of “non-professional” behavior, or is it more?

One definition for “professionalism” is a mind-set held by a member of a profession that reflects the embodiment of the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and behaviors expected of one engaged in that profession. “Professionalism” is reflected in behaviors that can be observed by others (clients, colleagues, or the public).

Levels of professionalism in pharmacy

There are five distinctly different levels of professionalism that are required in pharmacy.

The first is simply that set of behaviors that one expects of any good citizen: honesty, integrity, compassion, moderation, respect for the dignity of all persons.

The second level involves habits of mind and deed that engender social respect and trust: dress, grooming, speech, etiquette, and other aspects of personal deportment.

Third, there are those attitudes, values and behaviors which are expected of all professional people:

- mastery of requisite knowledge and skills
- adherence to a code of ethics
- membership and participation in professional associations
- support of and adherence to all pertinent rules, regulations and laws
- lifelong learning and self-renewal

The fourth level encompasses those attitudes, values and behaviors expected of anyone in the healing arts. These include:

- respect for human life
- compassion and empathy for each patient
- provision of personalized care
- providing comfort to patients and their families
- a mature view of death and dying

The fifth level is pharmacy-specific—it includes the specific attitudes, values and behaviors expected of a professional pharmacist. These include an understanding of:

- the theoretical basis of pharmacy practice
- the history, culture and traditions of pharmacy
- the pharmacist’s code of ethics
- the scientific and professional literature in pharmacy
- the contributions of “pharmacy heroes”
The Minute Preceptor

Our goal as pharmacy educators, mentors and preceptors is to help our students achieve all five levels of professional development required for pharmacy practice.

Behaviors we expect in our students

What are the observable behaviors that we expect our students to demonstrate? These include the following, at a minimum:

- a positive attitude
- attendance and punctuality
- being prepared
- courtesy
- appropriate dress, grooming and deportment
- initiative
- curiosity
- completion of all assignments
- responsibility and accountability

These expectations are communicated to our students consistently, beginning at their orientation and continuing throughout the curriculum. As faculty, we attempt to model the behaviors that we expect students to emulate. And we create opportunities for active professional involvement, such as through student professional organizations. It is reasonable, then, for preceptors to expect that students will demonstrate the fundamental behaviors of professionalism we list above.

Roles of preceptors in encouraging student professional growth and development

There are at least the following four essential roles that we expect of our volunteer faculty:

1. Providing a model for professional behavior. We are confident that all those preceptors invited to serve as volunteer faculty in the College of Pharmacy are excellent models of professional behavior. We might all need to be reminded from time to time that students are continually observing our behaviors, and that we therefore have opportunities that we are not always aware of to influence the professional outlook our students.

2. Engaging students in discussion about their professional responsibilities. It’s a very powerful message for students when their mentors and preceptors demonstrate that professional responsibility is important enough to talk about.

3. Providing regular feedback to students about their professional behavior. Students need to have it pointed out to them on a regular basis when their behavior is non-professional. It is also important to reinforce positive behaviors through praise and recognition.

5. Formal (written) evaluation. Each rotation is an important part of the student’s curriculum. And in each rotation there are opportunities (and expectations) for professional growth and development. It is important that the College have an accurate record of how effectively the student performs in each component of their experiential program. The earlier the faculty can detect patterns of poor performance, the more effectively we can deal with those performance issues.

In closing...

We are very grateful for the valuable contributions of all preceptors and volunteer faculty members who participate in the education and training of UT pharmacy students. We freely acknowledge that we would not be able to achieve the goals of professional growth and development of our students without your continued dedication and participation.
Free Drug Information Resources Available on the Internet

Anne Hurley, PharmD
Assistant Professor, UT COP

A wealth of free information is available on the Internet. It has been our experience that some health care professionals are not aware of relatively reliable websites that contain health information. This review will highlight several, but not all, valid drug information resources that are available free of charge to students, healthcare professionals, and the lay public. Brief descriptions of information contained within websites associated with the government, organizations, and institutions will be discussed. Although the length of this article does not allow for detailed or a comprehensive listing of reliable Internet health information resources, many of the individual websites contain a description of their contents and will direct the reader to other relevant sources.

PubMed/Medline- www.pubmed.gov

PubMed is the U.S. National Library of Medicine’s (NLM) database of biomedical citations and abstracts.¹ This is one of the most comprehensive resources for finding evidence-based information in the primary literature. The site is user-friendly, allowing searches with key words or Medical Subject Headings (MeSH). This website not only allow searches for journal articles and abstracts, but also authors, protein sequences, structures, genomes, and taxonomy.¹ The text form version may be downloaded and used on hand-held devices. Although the reader may review the abstracts of many published articles, they may not be able to review the entire paper without a subscription.

Medline Plus – www.medlineplus.gov

Unlike Medline, Medline Plus contains information at an appropriate level of understanding for the lay public in 40 languages. This website has information on over 750 topics, including an illustrated medical encyclopedia, interactive patient tutorials, drug information, surgery videos, access to the latest news about healthcare, and directories of physicians, dentists, and hospitals.² Many health check tools are available on this site, including several calculators and self-assessment quizzes. The site provides useful links to population-specific health information and several different health care organizations. An eight minute tour is also available to assist with searching for specific information.

Mayo Clinic – www.mayoclinic.com

The Mayo Clinic has provided a useful website with information and tools that allow patients to manage their health more efficiently.³ This site offers helpful and quick references to information about chronic diseases and conditions, healthy living centers, recipes for weight management, and calculators for target heart rate, body mass index (BMI), pregnancy due date, daily caloric intake, and skin type. In addition to providing drug and other health information, the Mayo Clinic also lists guides to assist with treatment decisions for specific disease states, allows patients to submit questions to specialists in various fields, and provides podcasts.


Medscape is specifically designed for healthcare professionals and students. Its mission is to “provide clinicians and other healthcare professionals with the most timely, comprehensive, and relevant clinical information to improve patient care.”⁴ Medscape offers medical specialty homepages, news reports, continuing education information, news on genomics medicine, adverse drug event reporting, and access to selected journals and other clinical references.

Food and Drug Administration –
www.fda.gov/cder/index.html

The United States Food and Drug Administration’s Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (FDA-CDER) is dedicated to ensuring that safe and effective drugs are available to the American public.⁵ This website
provides fact sheets about medications in English and Spanish, drug shortage information, the national drug code directory, regulatory information, an inactive ingredient database, and the electronic Orange Book. Links are provided to information on specific brand and generic drugs, labeling, and drug approval histories. MedWatch, the reporting system for adverse drug events, may also be accessed through the FDA’s website. If information cannot be located on the website, a contact email address and phone number for the FDA’s Drug Information Center is available.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—
www.cdc.gov

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), an agency of the Department of Health and Human Services, focuses on promoting “health and quality of life by preventing and controlling disease, injury, and disability.” 6 This website provides free access to medical journals (i.e. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report and Emerging Infectious Diseases), health statistics, and highlights current issues concerning the general public. The CDC also provides information on immunizations, emergency preparedness, travelers’ health, workplace safety, environmental health, and health goals for the general public.

Drugs.com- www.drugs.com

Drugs.com offers drug information for consumers and health care professionals for over 24,000 prescription drugs, over-the-counter medicines, and natural products. Tabs allow for easily locating information on new drugs, drug news, drug interactions, and tablet identification. If the name of a particular medication is not known, searches may also be performed by medical condition. A medical encyclopedia on the site allows for a search comprised of 3600 articles and including 2000 illustrations. 7 Access to Stedman’s Medical dictionary allows for free searches of medical definitions. Registration is free and optional, but is required for access to professional information, newsletters, the iPhone edition for health professionals, and FDA drug alerts.

National Guidelines Clearinghouse
www.guideline.gov

The National Guidelines Clearinghouse (NGC) provides summaries and full-text clinical practice guidelines. There are links to PDA downloads, bibliographies, and recent FDA information. This website also has a unique tool available to compare guidelines on similar therapeutic areas. A free subscription to this website allows for the user to receive email alerts when new information is available. Information on Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) initiatives may also be found on this site. 8


The National Institute of Health (NIH) is the primary federal agency for conducting and supporting medical research. 9 The agency is a part of the United States Department of Health and Human Services. This site contains links to 27 institutes and centers that make up the NIH including the National Cancer Institute, National Institute of Mental Health, and the Center for Scientific Review. In addition, links are available to NIH grant and funding information, a list of toll-free health information hotlines, health topics, and clinical trials.

National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine – nccam.nih.gov

As one of the 27 institutes and centers that comprise the National Institutes of Health, the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) is the federal government’s lead agency for scientific research on complementary and alternative medicine (CAM). 10 The NCCAM website provides information regarding disease states treated with CAM, various CAM therapies, and research and clinical trials in the CAM field. This site also offers access to NCCAM’s quarterly publication and e-bulletin.

Google Scholar-  www.scholar.google.com

Although typically not the first choice of search technique when searching for medical literature, Google Scholar allows searches of clinical literature available on the web from academic publishers as well as professional societies, including peer-reviewed papers, theses, books, abstracts, and articles. The search results are weighed and based on the availability of the full-text of the article, the author, the publication in which the article appears, and the number of citations of the article from other literature. 11

The websites described in this article all contain health information and are available free of
of information contained in these websites cannot be guaranteed and should be interpreted with caution, health care professionals and consumers may find these resources to be beneficial sources of health information.

References


If you have tips on clinical education that you would like to share with other preceptors, e-mail them to agarner3@utmem.edu. We will publish these in each issue of The MinUTE Preceptor newsletter.

Useful links

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Rotation Residency Showcase Memphis

The Office of Experiential Education would like to thank everyone who made Rotation Residency Day a Success! We apologize for not being able to feature everyone who attended.
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