ADDRESSES

Recruitment, Retention, and Renewal With a Little Respect

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It is tempting to simply rattle off the approaches, activities, and accomplishments of the past year. However, this would be boring and take a long time since we have such a hard-working, productive staff and dedicated volunteer members who contribute on varied levels, such as in elected and appointed positions at the Board of Director, Council, SIG, and Section levels. Other outcomes are manifested via Journal contributions, meeting presentations, and attendance and participation at various sessions. The Board received a report at our April meeting in which Staff detailed the programs, products, services, and other activities for each of the 11 AACP goals to advance the quality of pharmacy education. It was an impressive list indeed. I will refer to only a portion of these outcomes this morning and Executive Vice President Lucinda Maine will provide additional details and examples.

A session titled, “The Top Ten Reasons to Pursue an Academic Career,” was presented at the 2004 ASHP Midyear Clinical Meeting. Variations of this program have been presented at previous midyear meetings. The proceedings of this highly attended session have been turned into a manuscript which has been submitted to the Journal.

The 2004-2005 Academic Affairs Committee provided a number of strategies to promote academic careers to professional degree students, graduate students, residents, and fellows. Wal-Mart provided $10,000 to support annual conference scholarships to student-faculty pairs. The Board of Directors matched this amount due to the high level of interest. The AACP Institute was held in late May with a focus on evolving a contemporary and relevant professional curriculum where 28 teams made up of 146 educators converged at the National Conference Center.

The Academic Practice Partnership Initiative (APPI) with support from Merck & Company funded 3 projects to advance the quality of experiential education. These projects include assembling practice profiles of exemplary programs, developing a resource library, and conducting a summit, which was held June 17-18 in Chicago.

The 2004-2005 Professional Affairs Committee focused their work on developing the human capital on the academic side of the experiential partnership. The Academic Leadership Fellows Program grooms promising pharmacy faculty members for roles as future leaders in the academy. Thirty fellows have just completed their program and another 30 will soon embark on theirs.

It is tempting to think (wish?) more can be accomplished in a year’s time than is reasonable. Decisions have to be made about what really are the priorities. Yet, continuity must be maintained as well. Work of commissions, committees, groups, and even individuals may not be able to be completed in the confines of 1 year. There are core issues which require sustained attention.

Please consider the following: “The need for well-trained faculties in the colleges and schools of pharmacy is of paramount concern to the future of the profession.” “It is self-evident that the effectiveness of the education and training for the profession of pharmacy is determined chiefly by those who teach.” “Furthermore, there are no available trained reserves from which to meet the immediate teaching needs due to the greatly enlarged enrollment of students.”

Based on these observations, “pharmacy must develop a systematic program designed to establish a continuous balance of the supply and the demand for new teaching personnel. This is a manpower issue of the first order.”


Obviously, aspects of the 3 R’s for pharmacy faculty (recruitment, retention, and renewal), have been a concern for quite some time. Maybe we are missing the fourth R, that is Respect. Or as Buck Rodgers said, “There are countless ways of achieving greatness, but any road to achieving one’s maximum potential must be built on a bedrock of respect for the individual, a commitment to excellence, and a rejection of mediocrity.” This fourth R permeates all 3 Rs and I will exemplify: resources, encouragement, shared goals, people, empathy, communication, teamwork.

In a very interesting management text, The Southwest Airlines Way, Jody Hoffer Gittell details using the power of relationships to achieve high performance. Professor Gittell has developed a theory of relational coordination—coordinating work through relationships
of shared goals, shared knowledge, and mutual respect based on frequent, timely, and problem-solving communication. Operationalizing this seemingly simple and self-evident theory required a set of 10 organizational practices “that are neither simple nor self-evident” and required Southwest to place “intense focus on the quality of its relationships and its willingness to forego quick solutions to invest long-term in the maintenance of relationships among managers, employees, and business partners.” Their reward? Sustained profitability when many competitors are in bankruptcy.

Conversely, many relationships among other airlines’ personnel, health care providers, or say design, production, and sales functional groups, lack shared goals, shared knowledge, or respect for others’ roles.2

No matter what your discipline is, what you are teaching in the curriculum, what your research focus or productivity is, or what type of service you provide—be it patient care, intramural, extramural, or all of the above— appreciate the efforts of everyone in the shared goals of your institution and pharmacy education in general. One way of accomplishing this is via the most important aspect of communication: listening.

Or as said by Larry Winget, the pitbull of professional development, “Shut up and listen.” Listen to others, your “customers.” In our case, this means patients, clients, students, or co-workers. Also listen to those who know more than you do, to the experts, to great music, to yourself, and to God. Although labeled as confrontational, direct, and irrational, Winget still emphasizes love and service to others with admonitions of stop whining, take responsibility, and get a life in his self proclaimed “kick-butt” approach to a better life.3

When you have listened enough to know someone needs your encouragement or direction, provide mentoring. At some points, this is more obvious than others. Pharmacy and graduate students need mentoring early and often; as do junior faculty members. Also food for thought are the differences and tensions between the Boomers (1945-1962) and Generation X (1963-1981) and the implications for faculty recruitment and development. In a recent Academic Medicine article, Bickel and Brown suggest strategies to deal with inadequate and inexpert mentoring, work-life conflicts, and low faculty morale, including the differences in expectations and communication styles between the generations and consideration of mentoring as a core responsibility.4

But mentoring needs to continue to take place through the academic life cycle. At this juncture, I will borrow anecdotes from the world of college basketball because, as I tell my students, nearly everything in life can be reduced to a sports metaphor, and then I use the phenomenon of the “sophomore jinx” to define regression to the mean, and how fortuitous that the topic falls mid-basketball season. Only one team wins the national championship. Think of all the game wins, successful plays, and coaching victories throughout the season of all the teams! This brings to mind the lesson Roy Williams learned from his mentor, Dean Smith, after North Carolina won the national title in 1982, on how not to let a national title or lack of one define a coaching career. “I was relieved after we won the national championship,” said Williams, who was Smith’s assistant when he won his first title. “I had tears rolling down my face. I said, ‘I’m so happy because it will shut those people up.’ Smith told him it did not matter. ‘I’m not that much better a coach now than I was two and a half hours ago,’ Williams said Smith told him. ‘You sit back and think about it, and he really wasn’t.’”

In trying to break free of the criticism that Michigan State could not beat anybody who mattered, Coach Tom Izzo took a motivational tack. During a team meeting prior to the unveiling of the 2005 NCAA bracket, he put a sledgehammer to 2 game videotapes, 1 a loss and 1 a win. He said, “we’re smashing it all. All the (stuff) that we can’t win the close games, that we can’t do this and we can’t do that,” Izzo told his players, “So get it out of your heads right now because it’s over.”

After knocking off Duke and then Kentucky, Izzo said the idea came from predecessor and mentor Jud Heathcote. “He gave me a call,” Izzo said, “He knows me like a book. He knows my strengths and weaknesses. He came up with the tape idea—the idea that you have to put the season behind you. Izzo had to be convinced. Heathcote told him to get the players to believe, so Izzo took the advice and took it another step to make the impact.” So even a two-time national coach of the year continues to benefit from a mentor’s advice.

And from the legendary John Wooden of UCLA comes guidance relevant to building a winning organization. However, building a sports dynasty was not his goal, rather it was his desire to teach his players to become the best team they could be in what he terms, “competitive greatness.” He states that “balance is crucial in everything we do.”

He valued practice sessions more than games, because in practices he gained his greatest joy and satisfaction, “where teaching, coaching and leadership existed in a wonderful and pure form.” He recommends use of the most powerful four-letter word: LOVE. Of all the numerous qualities one could list of a leader, Coach Wooden calls for yet one additional quality. That is, “you must have love in your heart for the people under your
leadership.” And he did. To Wooden leadership was a sacred trust.5

Thank you for placing your trust in me. I do have a love in my heart for the profession of pharmacy and pharmacy education. Last year I said I was confident that this year would bear fruits based on the efforts of staff, standing committees, councils, and individual members. My confidence was not misplaced.

However, we must all put the components of respect to work as we continue to address recruitment, retention, and renewal of pharmacy faculty as it is still as it was labeled 55 years ago by Elliott, “of paramount concern to the future of the profession.”

REFERENCES