VIEWPOINTS

Advancing the Academy’s Agenda Through Volunteer Service

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The Association Agenda Process

Member volunteer participation in leadership roles, committee and task force service, and programming advances the Academy’s agenda. It is through members’ initiation of thoughtfully crafted charges to committees that the work of the Association—guided by strategic planning, presidential translation into agendas for action, and Board of Directors commitment of resources—is accomplished. Since 2000, a number of related recommendations and agenda items for discussion and action put forth by multiple Association sections, special interest groups, standing committees and task forces connect by a common thread—a focus on improving the comprehensive system of partnerships between the education and practice communities, learning experiences, and interprofessional relationships that support quality professional experiential education.

Agenda for Improving Experiential Education—Setting the Stage

The Association Scholar in Residence program (2001-2002) supported a comprehensive analysis of the financial, personnel, and curricular characteristics of advanced practice experience programs. Under a multi-year joint task force (2000-2003), committees of the Section of Teachers of Pharmacy Practice and the Professional Experience Program Special Interest Group (PEP SIG) assessed needs for preceptor training, documented the status of available training resources, identified unmet needs and proposed strategies for action. The 2001-2002 Argus Commission recommended collaboration with practitioner organizations to plan strategies for the development of exemplary practice sites and preceptors and the 2003-2004 Argus Commission called for AACP to convene an invitational conference of key stakeholders to plan coordinated efforts to enhance the quality and capacity of experiential education. The Association included models for academic-practice partnerships as one of the focus areas in the Call for Successful Practices (2002-2004).

Translating Agenda to Action

Three successive Association presidents (Barbara G. Wells, 2002; Robert “Buzz” Kerr, 2003; Jolaine R. Draughal, 2004) charged the Professional Affairs Committee to work on complementary elements of the experiential education issue. Committee analyses and recommendations taken together amount to an aggressive action agenda for enhancing overall educational and patient care quality, administration of program delivery, and partnerships with the practice community.

The 2002-2003 standing committees worked jointly on leadership needs of the Academy. Professional Affairs specifically addressed leadership issues concerned with the academic-practice partnerships that provide the environment for experiential education. The work of the 2003-2004 Professional Affairs Committee provides a framework for discussion and strategy planning to meet the experiential education needs of today’s students to address the practice needs of tomorrow. This report offers recommendations for ensuring exemplary standards in advanced practice experiences, taking into consideration the practice environment, the practitioner educators recruited to serve as preceptors, and development of an outcomes-based curriculum of learning experiences. This committee concluded that to ensure quality, experiential education should be monitored by a separate standard in the accreditation process. The Board of Directors included such in input provided on behalf of the Association to ACPE as part of the standards and guidelines revision process. The 2004-2005 committee considered the development needs of the college-based faculty members and administrators involved in clinical teaching and delivery of the advanced practice experiences. This committee proposed an administrative structure, complete with suggested position descriptions for a team approach to delivery of experiential education. They also recommended strategies for clinician faculty member development to support them in meeting their clinical and faculty role expectations and identified criteria suggestive of...
successful academic-practice partnerships and alliances to support experiential educational programming.

**Action Leads to Outcomes**

AACP was successful in securing grant support from Merck & Co, Inc. to fund 3 projects under the Academic-Practice Partnership Initiative (APPI) during 2005: an online library of educational resources for use by experiential program personnel, development of quality criteria for profiling exemplary patient care learning environments for student placements, and the Summit to Advance Experiential Education in Pharmacy.10 The Summit proceedings, an extensive bibliography and meticulous recording of participant recommendations will be published for wide dissemination within and beyond the academy. These products provide a rich data source for planning with value for employers, practice associations, academic programs, and practitioners.

The June 2005 draft revision of ACPE Standards for the Professional Doctor of Pharmacy Degree proposes a separate standard to ensure quality in experiential education.11 The AACP Institute, designed to promote leadership and continuous improvement of pharmaceutical education, in 2006 will invite teams of faculty and administrators responsible for the delivery of experiential education to focus on quality administration and teaching/learning. Two special supplements are proposed for the American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education in 2006 on pharmacy student experiential education in community and health system pharmacies.

Viewed collectively, the dedication and cumulative work of volunteer members serving on Professional Affairs, Section of Teachers of Pharmacy Practice and PEP SIG committees and task forces supported by the sustained commitment of the AACP Board of Directors, have resulted in significant progress over time in the interest of enhancing quality, effectiveness, and efficiency in experiential education. This work has influenced the ACPE standards revision, the AACP Strategic Plan revision (2004), has committed staff and resources to involving key stakeholders outside the academy to work with the Association on issues of capacity and quality improvement, and has resulted in programs, products, services and future plans to assist Association members to be successful. It took the sincere effort of many members, Board direction and resources, commitment of staff and time, but the results speak volumes. Committee work makes a difference. It is how we accomplish our goals.

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**REFERENCES**