Nontraditional Programs

The Arkansas Nontraditional Post Baccalaureate Doctor of Pharmacy Degree Pathway: Philosophy and Rationale. Walter J. Morrison, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. The philosophy and rationale for the elements in the nation’s most accessible and least expensive accredited program are summarized. When this College converted to the Doctor of Pharmacy degree, it had a responsibility to provide a realistic opportunity for its alumni and every other pharmacist licensed in Arkansas to earn this entry level degree. Since it is just an entry level degree, logic dictated a curricular pathway based upon differences in degrees (33 semester hours) rather than a traditional two year add-on curriculum. By design, this program was developed to satisfy the needs of every interested pharmacist; therefore, subject to a que, admission is available to every licensed pharmacist. This pathway is self-paced for off-campus completion, with faculty assistance as needed. Since the same faculty developed and provides both traditional and nontraditional clerkships which require the same competencies and employ the same evaluation instrument, parity is achieved. The orientation and evaluation phases of clerkships are completed at the preceptor’s site and the self-study, pharmacy practice phase is completed at the pharmacist’s practice site, with preceptor assistance as needed. A properly developed and implemented nontraditional pathway can generate the professional practice changes required to realize the promise of a contemporary professional education. The preceding required a faculty and administration dedicated to the proposition that each pharmacist in this state should have a realistic opportunity to earn this degree. Implemented in 1991, this program has 112 graduates and 335 pharmacists enrolled currently. At any time, as many as fifty out-of-state students can be enrolled in the first course.

Nontraditional PharmD Program Development: From Outcome Competency Statements to Educational Content. Paul J. Brooks, Elizabeth Simonetti Horner, William M. Ozburn, University of Georgia College of Pharmacy, and Mercer University Southern School of Pharmacy. The poster describes the development of the structure of a nontraditional PharmD program based on curricular outcome competency statements. A Task Force comprised of alumni practitioners from hospital, community, and home care pharmacy practice, and faculty from both schools of pharmacy worked for two years to develop the content, structure, format, and administrative guidelines for a nontraditional PharmD program. The program is designed so that each graduate of the program meets the same professional outcome competency requirements as those in the traditional PharmD program. Unique aspects of this program include portfolio assessment to document prior learning and credit for clinical experience completed at the students’ own practice sites. The Program consists of two phases: Prerequisite Courses and Disease State Modules. The Prerequisite Courses include continuing education courses, available to all pharmacists, particularly those interested in the nontraditional PharmD Program. Pharmacists enrolled in the program must then complete a series of Foundation Courses. After completing Phase One, students complete a series of Disease State Modules. The Modules are comprised of independent-study, application exercises, and clinical experience with patients. A Grand Rounds workshop is required for every Module. Projects are assigned throughout the Disease State Modules to complete the education. Faculty, including adjuncts and preceptors will create Disease State Modules using a standard development algorithm and each Module will be evaluated by the curriculum committee of each school.

Survey of Students’ Experience with a Nontraditional PharmD Program. Brenda S. Phelan and Vaughn L. Culbertson, Idaho State University, College of Pharmacy. A 13-item survey instrument was developed to assess nontraditional PharmD requirements based upon each student-practitioner’s perceived needs for attainment of minimum PharmD competencies. Nontraditional student-practitioners may have different views regarding the commitment necessary to fulfill PharmD competencies. The instrument was mailed to 189 students currently enrolled in the nontraditional program at Idaho State University. Student perceptions of program time commitment and clerkship requirements were collected and correlated with demographic and professional practice information. Student-practitioners were asked to identify a practice setting which most closely represented their career path at the time of admission into the program. Each student-practitioner was also asked to characterize their professional practice activities by estimating the percentage of time spent in the following responsibilities: drug distribution, administrative duties, direct patient care, patient counseling, and indirect patient care. Using a 10-cm continuous line between dichotomous variables, students were asked to indicate the relative disruption in lifestyle and perform a self-comparison of their professional skills and abilities to their colleagues. Students were asked about their preference for the structure of precepting and mentoring activities, optimal clerkship schedule, and time requirement. Additionally, students were asked to rank relative importance of global clerkship objectives for the nontraditional curriculum. A follow-up mailing to respondents was not necessary due to an acceptable response rate. A total of 101 students completed the questionnaire which represents a 54.3% response rate. All returned surveys were used in the data analysis.

The Nontraditional PharmD Option at the University of Kentucky. Peggy Piascik, Barbara Brandt, Lisa M. Hart, and William C. Lubawy, University of Kentucky College of Pharmacy. The Nontraditional PharmD Option (NPO) began as a pilot program in 1986. Current students number 118 with 86 graduates as of May, 1997. Practitioners in Kentucky, out-of-state Kentucky alumni, practitioners in border cities and selected cohorts of pharmacists are eligible for the program. Collaborative arrangements exist with the University of Tennessee and Virginia Commonwealth University. A statistics prerequisite, 26 credit hours of videotaped instruction and/or written modules, and 32 weeks of clerkship experience make up the basic coursework. The format of the coursework is currently under revision with increasing emphasis on integrating courses into disease based modules and providing course access via the world wide web. Clerkships are scheduled at sites commutable from students’ homes whenever possible and may be completed on a full-time or part-time basis. Novel clerkships include projects developed prospectively in the student’s worksite and physician-precepted clerkships. Students must complete a minimum of two clerkships outside of their employing institution. A portfolio, prepared according to guidelines established by the NPO, is reviewed by student request to determine whether the student qualifies for up to four months of clerkship credit on the basis of prior professional experience. The admissions process uses the same criteria as the on-campus program with less emphasis placed on the undergraduate GPA and more emphasis placed on activities and achievements since graduation. Tuition is the same for on-campus and nontraditional students. A mandatory fee of $45/credit hour is assessed to cover the additional expenses of a distance education program.
The Nontraditional Doctor of Pharmacy Pathway at the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy. Mary Lynn McPherson, University of Maryland School of Pharmacy. The University of Maryland School of Pharmacy offers the PharmD degree as the entry level degree, with one “pathway” of the program being designated nontraditional for pharmacists returning to obtain the degree. Criteria for admission to the pathway include pharmacists who are residents of Maryland or a surrounding state, who are in practice with access to patients. This thirty credit pathway is designed for pharmacists to continue practicing while they are completing the program. Didactic coursework is completed at the School, and include courses such as “Principles of Pharmaceutical Care,” “Therapeutics,” “Principles of Literature Evaluation,” “Integrated Science,” “Prior Learning Assessment,” “Pharmacotherapy,” “Practice Management,” and “Patient Assessment.” Experiential rotations are largely designed to be completed at the pharmacist’s practice setting, working with a faculty mentor, and these include “Longitudinal Care,” “Drug Information,” “Pharmaceutical Care,” “Practice Management Planning,” and “Clinic/Institutional Assignment” (students are assigned to a site in their area). The unique aspects of this program include the ability for practitioners to petition for up to 10 academic credits for prior learning, and completion of the experiential requirements in their practice, while working with a faculty mentor. This degree option has been in existence for not quite five years, currently has over two hundred and fifty students enrolled, and approximately fifty graduates anticipated by May 1997.

Experiences in the First Year of a Nontraditional PharmD Pathway. Nancy A. Huff and John R. Reynolds, Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Allied Health Sciences. In response to the educational needs and interests of New England area pharmacists, a part-time, nontraditional pathway of the PharmD program was initiated at MCP/AHS in September, 1996. The pathway curriculum is based on the same educational outcomes and competencies as those used in the full-time entry-level PharmD program. However, nontraditional delivery methods are employed throughout the three distinct phases of the pathway. Problem-based learning and small-group discussions are incorporated throughout all pathway courses. Full-day sessions are held every other Saturday at the MCP/AHS campus in Boston throughout the year. The first phase of the pathway consists of a course entitled Principles of Pharmaceutical Care which must be successfully completed before a student is considered for matriculation into the pathway. The second phase is comprised of courses in clinical pharmacokinetics, drug literature evaluation and pharmacoepidemiology. The third phase is a series of organ system modules that are completed over eight semesters. These modules require students to complete at least ten hours of experiential education per week at their sites of employment, provided the sites are approved by the College. Monitoring of student experiential work will be accomplished through on-campus student reports, submission of written documentation, and site visits conducted by pathway coordinators. Evaluations administered to students have indicated high levels of satisfaction with the pathway offerings. Plans are underway for a second offering of Phase I, scheduled to begin in September, 1997, in Boston and at a site in Western Massachusetts.

What Do You Need To Know? A Problem-based Nontraditional PharmD Program. Gary D. Theilman, Brian Crabtree, H. Joseph Byrd and Marvin C. Wilson, University of Mississippi School of Pharmacy. In 1995, the School radically revised the didactic portion of its post-BS Doctor of Pharmacy program. Traditional lecture-based courses were eliminated in favor of problem-based, small group discussions held thrice weekly. During these two-hour meetings, 6-8 students discuss a patient case and develop a list of questions (learning issues) they feel need to be answered in order to solve the patient’s problem. A faculty facilitator attends the group meetings but does not lecture or answer questions. Between group meetings, students research the learning issues. Problem-based learning requires that students take responsibility for their own learning and develop the problem-solving and information management skills they will need as pharmacists. This model has been applied to a nontraditional PharmD program. The same patient cases are used. When practical, meetings are held once a week in a location near the student’s home or workplace. If students are unable to participate in a “face-to-face” group, meetings are held via Internet Chat. Students are encouraged to exchange information on a web-based asynchronous discussion forum. One day meetings are held on campus every 3-6 months to cover topics that cannot be taught at a distance (i.e., patient assessment). Exams, which are the same for both full-time and nontraditional students, are distributed via the world-wide web or e-mail. The experiential component will consist of a combination of patient management at the student’s practice site and supervised evaluation of clinical skills at a preceptor’s practice site. The tuition for this program is among the lowest in the nation.

An External Doctor of Pharmacy Program in a Rural State. Gayle A. Cochran, The University of Montana. The University of Montana School of Pharmacy and Allied Health Sciences will initiate the External Doctor of Pharmacy Program in Fall 1997, simultaneously with the start up of the entry level PharmD. The external PharmD Program is composed of 25 didactic credits (Therapeutics I, II, III and IV; Clinical Literature Evaluation; Pharmacoeconomics; and Physical Assessment) and 28 clerkship credits (seven 4-week rotations). Two inpatient clerkship rotations and two ambulatory care clerkship rotations are required; the other three clerkship rotation are selective. The didactic courses will be delivered via distance media, using a combination of print materials, case studies via teleconferencing, and e-mail communication between instructor and students as well as among students. The didactic course work is designed to be completed in four semesters; students can take up to four years if needed. After students have completed one inpatient clerkship and one ambulatory care clerkship in the school’s traditional clerkship sites, the opportunity will exist for the student to return to his home work site to complete the remaining rotations. Students will be encouraged to perform their final rotation in their practice site, implementing a pharmaceutical care program. The clerkship is designed to be completed in one year; students can take up to two years if needed. Almost half of the 1997 BS graduates will transition into the External Doctor of Pharmacy program, creating the first class which will graduate in late 1998.

Creighton University’s Nontraditional Doctor of Pharmacy Degree Offering. Kenneth R. Keefner and Sidney J. Stohs, Creighton University School of Pharmacy and Allied Health Professions. Since its initiation in 1994, the Creighton University Nontraditional Doctor of Pharmacy Degree has attracted numerous pharmacists desiring a doctorate. Convenience and the ability to maintain existing pharmacy practices are the primary hallmarks of participant interest. The curricular program consists of 54 semester credit hours. Curricular composition consists of 30 hours of didactic course work and 24 hours of clerkship activity. Currently, most course content is provided through videotapes or printed class materials. To date, one didactic course is available via the Internet. Plans are in process to make all nontraditional offerings available through computer access on the Internet. Students interact with faculty by telephone, e-mail and fax. Roughly only half of the enrollees register for courses in any one enrollment period. Personal or professional obligations affect enrollment statistics. The participant profile consists of 176 enrollees, hailing from 38 states, with the majority practicing in an institutional setting. There is a 2:1 ratio of men to women, with 12% being graduates of Creighton University. Several participants possess additional or advanced degrees, such as associates degrees, masters degrees in business administration, hospital pharmacy, health care administration, as well as one Juris Doctorate. About one-third of the participants are active in state or national professional organizations. As of December, 1996 six participants have completed the program.
Curriculum and Delivery of the Nontraditional Doctor of Pharmacy Program at Albany College of Pharmacy. Lynn Radonic Patton, Albany College of Pharmacy. The Albany College of Pharmacy Office of Postgraduate Professional Education, in conjunction with the Department of Pharmacy Practice, has offered a nontraditional post-baccalaureate Doctor of Pharmacy degree for the practicing pharmacist since the spring of 1994. The course content is identical to the two year full time program, with a different method of delivery. Most pharmacists continue to work their regular hours while completing didactic courses, and alter their schedule while completing clerkships. They should complete the program in 4 to 5 years. The eight didactic courses (33 credits) are presented using reading materials and audio tapes of the lectures from the traditional program. Students interact with faculty via computer bulletin board, e-mail, phone, or fax. A computer with Internet access is required for the Journal Club portion of Drug Information/Literature Evaluation/Biostatistics. One of the nine clerkships (5 credits each) must be completed in Albany as a five week full-time rotation. Eight rotations may be completed as either five week full-time rotations or ten week half-time rotations. The five required rotations are: two in internal medicine, two in ambulatory care, and one in either clinical pharmacy or drug information. Pharmacists may apply for credit for life experience/learning for a maximum of three clerkship rotations by submitting documentation for evaluation. Pharmacists certified by the Board of Pharmaceutical Specialties will receive credit for one to three of the seminars (5 credits each) must be completed in Albany as a five week full-time rotation. Rotation rights may be completed as either five week full-time rotations or ten week half-time rotations. The five required rotations are: two in internal medicine, two in ambulatory care, and one in either clinical pharmacy or drug information. Pharmacists may apply for credit for life experience/learning/auditing for a maximum of three clerkship rotations by submitting documentation for evaluation. Pharmacists certified by the Board of Pharmaceutical Specialties will receive credit for one to three clerkship rotations by submitting documentation for their certification. The four credits of seminar are completed by both providing presentations and by attending and evaluating presentations of others. Each pharmacists must present three seminars, one while in Albany for the clerkship rotation.

Ohio Northern University Nontraditional Doctor of Pharmacy. Metta Lou Henderson, Raabe College of Pharmacy, Ohio Northern University. ONU’s nontraditional PharmD program will begin Fall 1997. With the same goals and objectives as the entry-level degree given on campus, the pharmacist will be able to complete the program without leaving home. Admission is open to pharmacists, with a valid current license and a minimum of two years of practical experience. The curriculum consists of 32 quarter hours of didactic modules. The teaching methods for these courses include self-study, videotapes and computer programming. The clerkship portion consists of 4 rotations (four required and two elective) for a total of 35 quarter hours. A pharmacist may participate on a full- or part-time basis. Based upon experience, the pharmacist may be able to challenge two rotations and two may be completed at the pharmacist’s workplace. Didactic courses must be completed in a maximum of three years and the program completed in five years.

Educating Pharmacists Via Distance Education. Farid Sadik, John Voris and Tim Mullenix, University of South Carolina, College of Pharmacy. The mission of the distance program at U.S.C. is to create the opportunity for practicing pharmacists to earn the Doctor of Pharmacy degree. Admission requirements include a BS degree in pharmacy (ACPE accredited), license to practice, and a minimum of 2 years experience. The application process includes evaluation of professional work experience and activities, honors/awards, community and professional involvement, references and previous academic achievement. The curriculum consists of 32 semester hours (20 hours of didactic, 32 of clerkship). The courses included are: Therapeutics I (3 hrs); II (3 hrs); III (4 hrs); Case Studies (2 hrs); Clinical Assessment (2 hrs); Pharmacokinetics (4 hrs); and, Seminar (2 hrs). The clerkship component consists of 8 four week equivalent rotations (4 hours each). The clerkships may be completed via the following 3 formats: 1. 40 hours/week X 4 weeks; 2. 20 hours/week X 6 weeks; or, 3. directed live case studies (maximum of 2 rotations). Each student may apply for credit for up to 2 clerkships. The student completes an application that describes their expertise in a specific practice area. If the application is approved, they may sit for a comprehensive exam in the subject area. A total of 150 students have enrolled over the last 4 years. The average student has been out of school for 12 1/2 years (up to 26 years). One-half work in hospitals, and one-fourth in community pharmacies. Forty percent of students expect either a new job or a greater job security upon completion of their degree.

Texas Southern University College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences’ Postbaccalaureate Doctor of Pharmacy Programs. Doris Jackson, Ifeanyi Egbanike, Nora Osemene and Pedro Lecca, Texas Southern University. Texas Southern University College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences implemented a nontraditional doctor of pharmacy program in 1989 and has expanded access to the program using available technology for implementation in 1998. The students enrolled in our nontraditional program complete the same courses as our traditional track students which includes completion of a 67 semester hours. Twenty eight semester hours are didactic courses and laboratory including clinical therapeutics, biostatistics, clinical drug literature evaluation, advanced pharmacology, advanced chemotherapeutics, applied pharmacokinetics, and physical assessment. Classes start after 1 o’clock. Experiential training component include seven pharmaceutical care clerkships, four hours of seminar and six hours of research. The curriculum is designed to strengthen the student’s knowledge base with emphasis on critical thinking, problem-solving skills and communication. For years, we have sought to offer greater access to our program to pharmacy practitioners outside the Houston area. With currently available technology, we hope to offer our courses through the internet and satellite programming. Students will be able to access our courses through the internet and participate in interactive class discussions via satellite. All classes will be offered in the evening after 5 o’clock and on weekends. However, students will still complete all semester hours requirement as set forth by our post baccalaureate doctor of pharmacy program. Credits for previous clinical pharmacy experience will be considered toward the completion of the degree requirement.

A Pharmacotherapeutics Workshop Preparation Manual. Stanley S. Weber, University of Washington and Washington State University, Wayne Kradjian, University of Washington. The External PharmD program in the State of Washington is nontraditional in several ways. We would like to highlight pharmacotherapeutics. We have divided pharmacotherapeutics into nine modules. Each consisting of a self-study knowledge component, and a two-day workshop emphasizing the integration and use of drug therapy knowledge in professional practice. Students must demonstrate mastery of the knowledge component before attending the workshop by either passing an examination, or by becoming board-certified in pharmacotherapy (BCPS). Other programs similarly provide pharmacotherapeutics, but without the required workshops. It is our belief that the workshops are the best way to model and teach problem-solving skills, communication skills, and discipline specific skills necessary for a successful pharmacy practice. The workshops are based on the idea that students learn best when they are actively involved. The process used during these workshops is critical to their success. These are not lectures-we define activities where the students instruct each other. Faculty are facilitators who are also content experts. To assist the faculty, we have designed a manual to help develop a meaningful educational experience for the workshop. It aids in identifying the knowledge and skills necessary and, more importantly, it helps define the process-the activities-which help the participants learn. It consists of three parts, an instruction sheet, an idea sheet to spark creativity, and two types of work sheets to help get ideas on paper. We will display this manual.

The Nontraditional PharmD: The University of Wisconsin Experience. Ruth H. Bruskiewitz and Alan L. Hanson, The University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Pharmacy. Beginning in the Fall of 1997, the University of Wisconsin School of Pharmacy will offer
a Nontraditional Doctor of Pharmacy program that provides the opportunity for licensed pharmacists to earn the PharmD degree. The majority of courses will be available for home study and/or on a regionalized basis in Wisconsin. Planning has been ongoing for a number of years. However, heightened activity occurred in early 1996, when a Nontraditional PharmD Implementation Team was formed to plan for the implementation of the Nontraditional Doctor of Pharmacy degree. Implementation Team members were School of Pharmacy Faculty and Wisconsin pharmacist practitioners. The Team designed an innovative program to meet the needs of returning adult students as they earn the Doctor of Pharmacy degree on a part-time basis, while ensuring that the integrity and educational outcomes of the nontraditional degree are comparable to the on-campus Doctor of Pharmacy program. Recommendations of the Implementation Team and the subsequent development of the program will be presented. Distinctive aspects of the program include delivering didactic course work via distance education, unique approaches to completing experiential course work on a regionalized basis and the opportunity to partially fulfill professional elective requirements with the Certificate Training Program in Clinical Skills, a program offered for continuing education credits by Extension Services in Pharmacy at the University of Wisconsin School of Pharmacy.