Midwestern University’s Chicago College of Pharmacy (CCP) offers students various opportunities to learn about and participate in research. These include coursework, as well as working on research projects with faculty members.

“Students keep us excited as faculty members. They bring their own creativity to projects and continually challenge our ideas,” says Marc Scheetz, Pharm.D., Associate Professor of Pharmacy Practice, who has received funding for research projects through the NIH and other organizations. “Students are directly able to see the fruits of their labor in medical literature that can guide patient care. Many former student research colleagues of mine are already pushing the envelope as highly functioning clinicians or junior scientific investigators.”

In addition to coursework that focuses on research, students may opt to do an independent study course mentored by a faculty member. In most cases, students network with faculty to find research areas that are of interest to them. In recruiting student assistance, faculty will provide a brief description of their project or research, as well as the method of evaluation and expected outcome from student involvement. Research may also be led by the student, with faculty assistance.

For independent study, students may receive elective credit of one to two hours per quarter. Or students may choose to participate through the Federal Work Study Program, where up to $3,000 per year may be earned to offset their student loans. For student-led research, they may apply for the CCP Student Research Award, which supports students’ participation in a meaningful research experiences. The results from such projects are presented in poster form at the Kenneth A. Suarez Research Day each spring, where awards are presented for the best posters.

The efforts of faculty to instill intellectual curiosity and research skills have resulted in a significant increase in the number of students presenting posters at national meetings. During the past year, CCP students have presented 27 different posters from...
Preceptor Pearl: Two Quick Ideas for New Preceptors

Editor’s Note: This month’s Preceptor Pearl comes from Brooke Griffin, Pharm.D., BCACP, an Associate Professor at Midwestern University and Chair of the Center for Teaching Excellence Committee. She practices at the DuPage Medical Group at the BreakThrough Care Center in Lombard, providing MTM services.

New preceptors are eager to provide a meaningful and challenging rotation for students. Here are a couple of quick ideas to help you enhance that experience:

Allow your students to lead patient and provider encounters.
It is only natural to be apprehensive about allowing a student to counsel a patient on his/her own, especially if you know this student has not had much patient interaction. Build in time for he or she to shadow your patient encounters, then step back and become the observer. You will be surprised at how many students will rise to the occasion if given the opportunity.

And if the ship starts sinking? You are there to jump in and help. Afterwards, provide feedback to the student after the patient has left, and give this student another chance. And another chance. And another chance.

Same advice for provider encounters. Your healthcare team may only be familiar with your recommendations and your style of communication. Allow your student to observe you, then next time, review the recommendation with the student. Give the student the opportunity to practice presenting to you as a role-play to boost confidence, adjust wording, and just get the kinks out.

Become involved in your institution and professional organization of choice.
Your hospital is starting a community rooftop garden? You hear about an upcoming health fair that is after hours? Volunteer!

When I joined the Recycling Committee at my previous hospital, I thought I would finally be able to voice my opinion about the use of Styrofoam in the cafeteria. What I didn’t expect was to get to know Frank from Waste Management and Sue, the RN from the 9th floor. They asked about my role as a clinical pharmacist, and I learned why nurses needed battery recycling stations.

The point is, join something that you feel passionate about, and you may find yourself advocating on behalf of your profession’s needs to a larger audience. What does this have to do with precepting? To students, becoming involved in your institution or professional organization shows your willingness to do something “extra,” your interest in your community, and your ability to interact with other health care professionals. Isn’t that what we want of our students?
Ask the Office of Experiential Education
by Avery Spunt, RPh, M.Ed., FASHP

Dear Avery,

In your last “Ask Avery” article, you discussed the process by which the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) will be changing the standards for Pharm.D. education. From these proposed changes, which do you foresee may have the biggest impact and challenges for pharmacy preceptors?

Dear Preceptor,

The two proposed requirements that I believe could be the most challenging to address for all stakeholders will be the philosophy that all graduates will be “practice-ready” upon graduation, as well as establishing quality assurance standards in all experiential education.

To address the “practice-ready” ideal, we will first have to define what practice-ready means. Does it mean ready to practice in one area of pharmacy practice, or ready to practice in all areas? Or does it mean the graduate has all the basic cognitive and affective skills that make him or her ready to enter the profession as a lifelong learner? And if the graduate is theoretically ready to practice, why does he or she need the additional education of a residency? This will definitely be an ongoing discussion as the proposed standards’ review process continues.

Regarding the proposed quality assurance issue, there are two components in Standard 10.13 that pose challenges. Requirement #2 proposes that there should be “standardized key components of experiences across all sites offering the same experiential course.” Requirement #3 asks to establish “consistency of student performance assessment.” These will be the most difficult to make operational.

Agreed, standardization of practice and evaluations are essential for the betterment of the profession. However, getting preceptors, faculty, college administrators, and site managers to all agree on how this standardization will look across various practice sites, as well as how the evaluations will be performed, will be a major undertaking. This may require beginning this discussion now on a local level, perhaps by state invitational conference or at a preceptor/faculty training program. I know we will all have to work together, and potentially make compromises, to make this happen for the advancement of pharmacy practice and pharmacy education.

If you have any suggestions, comments, additional questions or concerns please call me at 630-515-6477.

Avery Spunt, RPh, M.Ed., FASHP
Target’s Student Competition for Scholarship Awards

The CCP Student Scholarship committee recently hosted its second annual Target Pharmacy Case Study Competition, which was open to PS-II and PS-III classes. Students organized themselves into teams of four students each. A total of ten teams participated in this competition that challenged students to deliberate, contemplate and develop a program and formal presentation that addressed a given pharmacy business scenario.

According to Target Corporation, the competition is designed to evaluate students’ abilities to develop a program that can help enhance the company’s reputation as a leader for guest health and wellness. Members of the winning team were each awarded a $1,000 scholarship and later recognized at the Annual CCP Awards Gala in April.

The winning team (self-named “The Red Team”) included Ayesha Abrar, PS-3; Nabiha Mahmood, PS-3; Mohammad Pothiawala, PS-3; and Alexandra Shubat, PS-3.

The competition was judged by three CCP Scholarship Committee members, as well as three Target associates. The preliminary round included all 10 teams, then the top three competed in the final round where the winning team was selected. Finalist teams also included “Targeters of Greater Outcomes”: Veeral Vyas, PS-3; Joshua Artlip, PS-3; Thomas Dorn, PS-3; and Loreto LoBosco, PS-3; as well as “Apothecary Avengers”: Alina Sirotinsky, PS-3; Anna Bieniek, PS-3; Caroline Ruhlig, PS-3; and Nick Root, PS-3.

College Connection

Interested in precepting in either Introductory Pharmacy Practice Experience (IPPE) or the Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experience (APPE)? Contact Associate Dean Avery Spunt at 630.515.6100 or aspunt@midwestern.edu

Interested in teaching and facilitating workshops or laboratories? Contact Dr. Susan Winkler, Department Chair of Pharmacy Practice, at 630.515.6115 or swinkl@midwestern.edu, or Dr. Shridhar Andurkar, Department Chair of Pharmaceutical Sciences, at 630.515.6399 or sandur@midwestern.edu

Interested in getting more involved in the CCP Alumni Council? Contact CCP Dean Nancy Fjortoft at 630.971.6417 or nfjort@midwestern.edu

Interested in interviewing prospective pharmacy students? Please contact CCP Assistant Dean Paula Giometti at 630.971.6417 or pgiome@midwestern.edu

Calendar

Continuing Education: 3rd Annual Updates in Diabetes and Related Chronic Care Topics
Saturday, June 21, 2014; 7:30AM - 5:00PM
McDonald’s Campus in Oak Brook, IL
Information & Registration: www,midwestern.edu/programs-and-admission/il-pharmacy/continuing-pharmacy-education.html

Keep in Touch

Let us know what’s new with you or update your contact information. You may contact Damienne Souter, Assistant to the Dean, at 630-515-7373 or dsoute@midwestern.edu or the Office of Development and Alumni Relations at 800-962-3053 or alumni@midwestern.edu.

You may also go to www.midwestern.edu and click on MWUNET to access the Alumni Directory, check the Job Finder, or update your contact information. Simply login the same way you did when you were a student. Still need some assistance? Then feel free to call the IT Help Desk at 630-515-7361 from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM CST.

Contact Us

With any questions, concerns or future submissions, please contact Damienne Souter, Assistant to the Dean, at 630-515-7373 or dsoute@midwestern.edu.

The winning “Red Team,” pictured front row (from left), Ayesha Abrar and Alexandra Shubat; back row (from left), Target Corporation award presenter David Pokrywiecki, Pharm.D. (CCP Alumnus Class of 2011), Mohammad Pothiawala, and Nabiha Mahmood.