2009 Preceptor of the Year

by Kim Echert

Midwestern University’s Chicago College of Pharmacy (CCP) named Thomas Gochenour, Pharm.D., BCPS, a veteran preceptor based in nearby Oak Park, as the recipient of the 2009 Preceptor of the Year Award. This is a distinction specifically designed to recognize a preceptor with greater than five years of experience at CCP who has made a significant contribution to the education of pharmacy students. Associate Dean Avery Spunt presented Dr. Gochenour with this prestigious honor at the recent CCP Graduation Banquet.

Dr. Gochenour has been in community practice since the 1970’s and has served as a preceptor for CCP students for over ten years. He practices at Rush Medical Office Building at Rush Oak Park Hospital in an outpatient pharmacy. His practice is compound driven with an emphasis in three areas (hormone replacement therapy, pain management, and sports medicine), and he typically mentors one or two students per rotation. In addition to having a well-rounded community practice experience, Dr. Gochenour encourages his students to look beyond the facility’s walls, to think about the evolution of the pharmacy profession and where it is going.

Dr. Gochenour has impressive credentials in that he is one of a few community pharmacists who are BCPS certified. In addition, he is a NAMS certified Menopause Practitioner. A typical day for a student working at Dr. Gochenour’s site includes compounding five or six prescriptions and non-sterile compounds such as topical pain medications, hormone replacement topicals, suppositories, troches, capsules and drops. They also fill approximately 75 non-compounded prescriptions and consult with premenopausal and menopausal women about their concerns. Students are fully integrated into the practice and become a part of the team.

Dr. Gochenour urges pharmacy students to take an active role in their profession, to stay current on therapeutics, complete their continuing education through a PSAP program, and keep a current Goodman and Gillman’s textbook handy and read a chapter every month. He credits IPhA as being the most accessible professional group and encourages new pharmacists to become leaders in the industry.

CCP is proud to present this honor to Dr. Gochenour as he exemplifies excellence, professionalism and leadership in the profession of Pharmacy. He is and has been an outstanding preceptor because he cares deeply about his patients, his students, and his profession.
New Preceptor Excellence Award Winner for 2009

by Kim Echert

Justin Schmidt, Pharm.D., Assistant Professor in Pharmacy Practice, has been named the recipient of the Chicago College of Pharmacy (CCP) New Preceptor Excellence Award for 2009. He was presented with an award plaque by Associate Dean Avery Spunt at the recent CCP graduation banquet on March 4, 2010. This was the inaugural year for the award which was created to recognize the talents of preceptors who have less than five years experience here at CCP or elsewhere.

Dr. Schmidt, who is an alumus of CCP, joined the faculty in 2007 after completing a PGY-1 Pharmacy Residency at Hines VA Hospital and a PGY-2 Pharmacotherapy Residency with CCP. His practice site is on an internal medicine service at Hines VA Hospital in suburban Maywood where he routinely precepts 12 pharmacy students and 7 PGY-1 residents annually. In a relatively short time, Dr. Schmidt has established a strong reputation as an excellent preceptor. He finds creative mechanisms to aid student learning and has been proactive in embracing new technologies to reach his students. Students and residents alike have rated Dr. Schmidt very highly for his concern for student learning and his ability to provide high quality feedback to them. “Dr. Schmidt was a great preceptor,” reports one of his former students, “I experienced true evidence-based medicine on this rotation … he truly cares about pharmacy practice and his patients.”

In an interview with the honoree, Dr. Schmidt describes his typical day as follows: He and his pharmacy (PGY-1) resident and two pharmacy students arrive one to two hours prior to patient rounds (which generally start between 7:00-9:00 AM depending on the patient load). Dr. Schmidt reviews interventions that students identify and they determine the need for any changes. Rounds take place until approximately 11:00 AM. Afternoons are occupied by topic discussions, journal clubs, patient case presentations, student questions, and various administrative and committee duties. Students’ patient presentations can take an hour per patient, with thorough discussion of the patient and his or her medications. The preceptor strongly encourages student participation in opportunities for additional education (e.g. medical school morning report, local seminars, workshops at CCP, etc.) as time permits.

When asked about the biggest challenge in precepting, Dr. Schmidt replies, “providing quality feedback. While it takes time to address individual issues, it can be challenging to organize and prioritize feedback while providing guidance for improvement in the future.” The biggest rewards, however, are “receiving constructive feedback from the students and being challenged with alternative points of view.”

Dr. Schmidt offered one piece of advice applicable to all pharmacy students when he stated, “A little curiosity will go a long way. Seek to attain not only knowledge, but the tools to acquire it and the abilities to apply it to patients.” The honoree modestly credits his colleagues for his success by stating that he is “fortunate to be surrounded by exceptional colleagues who are always willing to lend an ear!”

Ask the Office of Experiential Education

by Avery Spunt, RPh, MEd, FASHP

Dear Preceptor,

You are correct to recognize that the teaching and learning environment can have a profound impact on student performance. Students learn best when they are in an environment in which they feel emotionally safe. For our PharmD. candidates, their sense of comfort in the experiential environment is critical so that they can safely take risks and maximize their learning. Experiential education involves students asking questions and brainstorming ideas to figure out answers and apply concepts to real patients. They should be encouraged to take risks in front of their peers and their preceptor. However, let me be clear on this point. This is not about taking risks by giving “shoot from the hip” information to other health care providers or patients. This relates solely to dialogue between the student pharmacist and his or her preceptor. Students who are afraid to offer an incorrect answer to their preceptor will remain quiet and refrain from participating in discussions, and thereby stifling their learning. Additionally, when this occurs, it becomes more difficult for the preceptor to determine if the students truly comprehend the material being discussed. On the contrary, when preceptors invite and identify students’ misconceptions, they can use this information accordingly to guide their instruction.
Therefore, it is useful to review the ground rules you have set at your site and reflect upon your communication style. How do you interact - verbally and nonverbally - with your students? Learners shouldn’t fear that every question asked is being graded. When they answer incorrectly or have misconceptions, they shouldn’t be berated or embarrassed. You should never raise your voice to them or give nonverbal signs that convey disapproval of their answers. Preceptors can create a safe environment for Pharm.D. candidates and still have them master the expected outcomes without compromising standards. A safe environment is really beneficial for all involved in experiential education as it leads to a more pleasant and effective training experience. Allowing and even inviting “mistakes” early on and in a controlled setting can yield huge dividends in the ultimate education of our students.

Presentation Pointers - Tips for Creating a Powerful Presentation (Part 1)

by Timothy J. Todd, PharmD, RPh

In past issues, a number of articles related to projects have been presented in this newsletter, but possibly the topic which causes the most anxiety is giving oral presentations. The purpose of this article is to address this concern and provide some helpful preparation tips that will minimize the inevitable stress.

It is frequently stated that practice makes perfect, but practice is actually the last step in preparing for a presentation. The first step is simply gathering information. When asked to provide a presentation, one should ask the following important questions?

- Who is the primary audience?
  The presentation will be quite different for various audiences – students, the general public, or fellow health care professionals.

- How long should the presentation be?
  This will depend on the time allocated and the audience. The schedule should allow time for questions and discussion.

- Is A/V access available?
  Knowing what tools are available and how to use them will result in a more engaging presentation.

- Should a handout be included? If yes, should it be a “stand alone” piece or copies of slides that are distributed?
  Consider the intended use of the handout, and whether the audience will benefit from note taking during the talk.

The answers to these questions can help develop one’s talk and provide valuable direction to ensure that the presentation best serves the needs of the intended audience. Once expectations are clearly defined, preparing the presentation can begin. It is easiest to work from a basic outline. Essentially, the outline should have three key components: the introduction, the core, and the conclusion.

The outline should start with an introduction that covers the background of the project. Believe it or not, this is often missed! People tend to become so involved in their projects that they forget to introduce it to their audience. One useful tip is to create an introduction that clearly explains the project to a non-medically oriented friend. This will ensure that the talk starts at a basic level and can then build from there. The introduction should include only enough detail of the methods of the project so that the audience gets the “basic idea” of what was done.

After the introduction is created, it is time to develop the core of the outline. This should be the three to five key points or results of one’s project. For this area, the speaker should focus on data/results that addressed the primary objective and/or gave unexpected results. Thought should be given as to how these items can be presented most effectively. Often charts or graphs can summarize a large amount of material in a concise and easy-to-understand format.

Lastly, there is the conclusion. This section should tell the audience what they learned and how they can utilize this information in the future. Some choose to compare their results to those of other studies to either support their findings or to highlight what was unique about their outcomes.

Once the outline has been created, it is easy to develop the actual presentation and plan the audio-visual materials. These areas will be discussed in the next edition of this newsletter.

Chicago College of Pharmacy
Center for Teaching Excellence Committee

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*Be Involved*

Interested in **precepting** in either Introductory Pharmacy Practice Experience (IPEE) or the Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experience (APPE)?

Contact Associate Dean Avery Spunt at 630-515-6399 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 Association**?

Contact CCP Dean Nancy Fjortoft at 630-971-6417 or nfjort@midwestern.edu

Interested in **interviewing prospective pharmacy students**?

Contact CCP Assistant Dean Paula Giometti at 630-971-6417 or pgiome@midwestern.edu

Interested in **participating in outreach events at local high schools or colleges or in diversity recruitment activities**?

Contact Kim Echert, Assistant to the Dean, at 630-515-7314 or kechert@midwestern.edu

**Calendar**

15th Annual CCP Student Award Gala - Friday, April 16, 2010 - 6:00 pm - Downers Grove Campus

**Contact Us**

With any questions, concerns or future submissions, please contact Kim Echert, Assistant to the Dean, at 630-515-7314 or kechert@midwestern.edu

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**Signs of Spring …**

*New Neighbors on Campus*

*Mother Great Horned Owl …* … and Baby