A Student’s Perspective: Opportunities Outside the Classroom

By Andrea Beall, Fourth-Year Pharmacy Student

Ask a student what he or she remembers most about college, and you will see a pattern. Most would say something about extracurricular activities. Pharmacy school is no different. While academics are important, involvement in student organizations offers students the opportunities to get to know classmates better, network, advance the profession, learn through leadership, enhance their resume, and show school spirit by proudly wearing Midwestern University logos on sweatshirts and T-shirts.

Midwestern University has many student organizations that host extracurricular activities. Each college has organizations focused on some aspect of their profession, and other organizations are campus-wide, which allows for interprofessional relationship building. This issue of Script for Success is dedicated to the pharmacy organizations on campus. Throughout this issue, you will learn about a variety of events that our students organize and participate in. Every quarter (except summer), each student organization has one general student meeting, one fundraising event, and one philanthropic event; each must also host a professional event sometime during the year.

Throughout my three years on campus, I have had a blast making new friends, buying cookies and T-shirts, giving back to the Downers Grove community, and advancing the pharmacy profession. I will never forget talking to my elected representatives during ICHP’s Legislative Day in Springfield during my first year. I will always laugh to myself when I think of my friend and me scrambling to get ready at the last minute for the Chicago College of Pharmacy (CCP) formal. Lastly, I will cherish the friendships I made that would not have become a reality without participating in these events.

If you are looking to make new friends through fun activities, learn more about pharmacy, or just add a cool sweatshirt to your wardrobe, the best place to start is during the first week of class when Midwestern hosts the All Campus Student Organization Fair. This is when representatives from all of the student organizations can give you detailed descriptions of their activities and events. Be sure to attend the fair, join organizations, and ensure that your four years—and your classmates’ four years—are the best possible.
CCP Executive and Class Student Councils

Each pharmacy class is led by the class’s Student Council, as well as the overall Chicago College of Pharmacy (CCP) Executive Student Council. These groups give a voice to the CCP students, but they also host outside speakers, hold fundraisers, and host other events that support their classmates during their three years on campus. (Fourth-year pharmacy students are off campus attending their full-time experiential education, also called, "rotations.") The following are a few examples of student council-led events that took place during the recent academic year.

One such event is the annual Midwestern University Community Health Fair that is spearheaded by the CCP Executive Student Council. Both students and faculty from all four colleges at the University provided free flu shots, as well as blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood glucose screening to more than 150 Downers Grove community residents, including the mayor! Held off campus for the first time at the Downers Grove Park District’s main gym, 27 Midwestern student organizations took part in this event, which also included a variety of informational booths ranging from Medicare Part D and Alzheimer’s awareness, to smoking cessation and herbal medicine.

Each class also hosted various events for the benefit of their own classmates and the community. The Class of 2017 (first-year pharmacy students) fought the chill of winter when they hosted a clothing drive that benefited those less fortunate. Midwestern University students were asked to drop off new, packaged socks to one of the collection bins set up throughout the campus. Their cleverly named event, “Sock it to Winter,” ran from January 27th to February 7th. The class council donated their collection of 150 pairs of socks to the People’s Resource Center of DuPage County.

The CCP Class of 2016 class council hosted a speaker on campus who provided up-to-date healthcare information for the 40 students who attended. On February 21st, Nancy Lee, Pharm.D., CCP Class of 2013 alumnus, talked with the pharmacy students in attendance about the Affordable Care Act and how it could impact their profession.

On the morning of January 17th, the Class of 2015 class council provided free coffee and donuts to their classmates conveniently outside the classroom of their 8:00 AM class. According to Danielle Smith, Vice President of the class, “As class officers, we really appreciate using the pick-me-up event as a reason to bring our class together, even if it’s just for something small like this,” she said.

Student Chapters of National Organizations

APhA-ASP

The American Pharmacists Association (APhA) is the largest pharmacy organization in the nation. While it works to advance the profession of pharmacy overall, the Academy of Student Pharmacists (ASP) division gives a voice to pharmacy students. According to the Midwestern APhA-ASP Chapter President, Anna Bieniek, “The chapter focuses on promoting patient-centered care and advocacy for our profession.”

The organization did just this on October 2nd, when they worked with the Village of Downers Grove in dedicating October as American Pharmacists Month in the Village. The Mayor read the proclamation at the regularly televised Village Council meeting; the reading was followed by a short speech by Ms. Bieniek. Members of CCP’s chapter of APhA-ASP, along with Nancy Fjortoft, Ph.D., Dean of CCP, and Mary Lee, Pharm.D., Vice President/Chief Academic Officer, attended the reading of the proclamation, as well as enjoyed a photo opportunity promoting the profession.

ICHPh

The Illinois Council of Health-System Pharmacists (ICHPh) is a state organization that works to advance the pharmacy profession through widespread acceptance of pharmacists as healthcare providers and essential to healthcare teams. Each spring, pharmacy students throughout the state gather in Springfield for ICHP’s annual Legislative Day. This is the students’ time to make a difference in the future of their profession by talking to their districts’ legislators about current or future pharmacy and healthcare issues. To prepare for this event, Scott Meyer, Vice President of ICHP, came to the school to talk with the Midwestern students who were participating this year.

SNPhA

The Student National Pharmaceutical Association (SNPhA) is dedicated to the education of healthcare providers and minority representation in the healthcare profession.

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Student Chapters of National Organizations cont’d

field. From February 3rd to February 7th, Midwestern’s SNPhA chapter promoted awareness around the campus about heart disease. They participated in the American Heart Association’s “Go Red for Women” campaign, in which they wore red, and they passed out heart healthy recipe cards, lollipops, stickers, and bookmarks to raise awareness. They donated money from their cupcake sale and red dress pin donations to the American Heart Association.

AIPhA
Midwestern’s chapter of the Association of Indian Pharmacists in America (AIPhA) hosts one of the most anticipated events of the year for Midwestern students and faculty. Cultural Night is an annual event held on campus in the beginning of April, and is cohosted with Midwestern’s Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine’s organization, Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI). This event is also open for the local community to enjoy. The night included students showing off their talents of singing and dancing, as well as a faculty fashion show. Cultural Night was not only enjoyed by 150 to 200 people in attendance, but funds raised also benefited the Akshaya Patra Foundation, a foundation that feeds underprivileged children in India.

ASCP
The American Society of Consultant Pharmacists (ASCP) is a national organization dedicated to improving the lives of older adults through medication management. Each quarter, Midwestern’s student chapter hosts a Bingo night at the DuPage Convalescent Center, a long-term care facility. Members volunteer to facilitate the game for the Center’s 60 to 75 residents who participate, and provide assistance in playing when needed. Midwestern’s ASCP chapter donates money to be distributed to the winners. According to Laura Schmidt, Midwestern ASCP president, volunteers not only enjoy the event but also can learn from it. “Although it is important for pharmacy students to practice their clinical skills, it is also important to build relationships with our future patient population. This event allows pharmacy students to connect with the geriatric population outside of a clinical environment,” she said.

AMCP
The Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy (AMCP) is a national organization with the goal to improve healthcare while reducing costs. Each year, Midwestern’s chapter hosts its annual Pharmacy & Therapeutics (P&T) Committee Competition. The P&T competition gives a team of four pharmacy students the opportunity to act as a hospital’s pharmacy and therapeutics committee, to determine if a drug should be added to a hospital’s drug formulary by evaluating literature and analyzing its cost. The 20 self-created teams searched for trials and journal articles that discussed the efficacy of the given drug, how it compares to similar drugs, and whether or not a hospital should add the drug based on their findings and cost. The organization invited judges to view the teams’ presentations and select a winner. Each year, the winning team advances to compete in the National P&T Competition at the AMCP Annual Meeting for monetary prizes.

CPNP
The College of Psychiatric and Neurologic Pharmacists (CPNP) promotes the value of pharmacists’ involvement with mentally ill patients. On October 23rd, CPNP partnered with Midwestern’s Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine and Clinical Psychology Programs to bring Victoria Storm, a music therapist from Alexian Brother’s Behavioral Health Hospital to speak on campus. She described how she uses music to get patients to express themselves. Ms. Storm gave examples and stories on her success in treating eating disorders, self-harm, and Alzheimer’s patients to the students in attendance.

AHA
On October 20th, members of the Asian Healthcare Association (AHA), a campus-wide organization that’s based in CCP, set up an event at the Living Water Alliance Church, in Naperville, IL. They educated and provided screenings for 75 church members on diabetes, hypertension, and chronic kidney disease through blood glucose testing, blood pressure monitoring, and educational posters. This was the first year that AHA put on this event, and they hope to continue it next year.

Community Pharmacy Club
The Community Pharmacy Club summed up their year of hosting various panels and speakers by setting up their annual networking event where students could apply the advice they had gained. In the relaxed atmosphere, the 30 students who attended could talk with pharmacists one-on-one from Walmart, CVS, Jewel-Osco, Target, Walgreens, and Mariano’s about their companies and the future.
Professional Pharmaceutical Fraternities

Kappa Psi
The Kappa Psi Pharmaceutical Fraternity is the oldest and largest pharmacy fraternity in the world. Midwestern’s Kappa Psi chapter spread some holiday cheer during the month of December with their volunteer work at the Family Shelter Service in Downers Grove, an organization that serves women and children who are homeless due to domestic abuse. Members of Kappa Psi baked cookies, decorated the Christmas tree, put up lights, wrapped presents, and played games with the children. As explained by chapter Regent (or President) Kailey Murphy, “Spending time with these children and bringing light to some of the very darkest times of their lives is something you can’t really describe. Those families, each in their own way, have found their way into our Kappa Psi family and have permanently found a place in our hearts.”

Phi Delta Chi
A pharmaceutical fraternity that encourages leadership, Phi Delta Chi, also has a chapter at Midwestern. This chapter participated in Phi Delta Chi’s nationwide program, Prescription for Hope, to benefit St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital. Members gathered on campus on April 30th to write letters to family and friends encouraging donations to the hospital. The organization provided food, music, and raffle prizes, and they plan to expand this event next fall. The chapter aided other chapters throughout the country in raising more than $500,000!

Rho Pi Phi
The professional international pharmacy fraternity of Rho Pi Phi brought back a beloved high school math class tradition on March 14th. You guessed it! Pi Day or Pi Day according to the organization. Either way, Midwestern students loved receiving a free slice of pie during lunch. Rho Pi Phi’s annual celebration of every math major’s favorite number used this event to collect donations for the Make-A-Wish Foundation. They gave out slices from more than 20 pies to the grateful students.

Rho Chi
The Rho Chi Society is an academic honor society for pharmacy, and membership is by invitation based on academic performance. On Monday afternoons during set hours, Rho Chi members offered tutoring assistance for any students.

Phi Lambda Sigma
Phi Lambda Sigma is a society that recognizes leaders in pharmacy, and membership is by invitation based on demonstrated leadership at Midwestern. During the year, the Phi Lambda Sigma chapter at Midwestern hosted a leadership series for all pharmacy students. In the fall, they focused on common problems in a CV or curriculum vitae. In the winter, Dr. Fjortoft, Dean of CCP, gave a presentation addressing public speaking and communication skills. Finally, during the spring quarter, Jennifer Philips, Pharm.D., BCPS, Assistant Professor of Pharmacy Practice and Phi Lambda Sigma advisor, talked about preparing for job and residency interviews. Participants were then given the opportunity to practice their skills in mock interviews, as they prepared for their future.

Calendar
PharmCAS online application, fees and transcripts due - January 5, 2015
Dual Acceptance Program applications due - February 15, 2015
PCAT scores and Letters of Recommendations due to MWU Office of Admissions - March 1, 2015

Contact Us
For any questions relating to your application and/or admission, please call the Midwestern University Office of Admissions at 800/458-6253 or admisill@midwestern.edu.