A Student’s Perspective: Leveraging Campus Leadership

By Jan Di Kum, Third-Year Pharmacy Student

I cannot believe how fast my second-year of pharmacy school has flown! It seems like it was just last month that I was excited about starting my winter rotations at a psychiatric hospital, and now I am about to start my summer internship at a biopharmaceutical company in California.

Second-year has been memorable for me in many aspects: I formed stronger friendships with my classmates, learned the core of my profession, but most importantly, I learned self-discipline, time-management, and project development skills. I was able to develop these important skills outside the confines of the classroom by seeking leadership opportunities. From Executive Council to various organizations on campus, I held many leadership roles this past year. Some may call me an overachiever or others may simply call me crazy for juggling school and so many extracurricular activities, but I can tell you that it was all a conscientious decision.

It didn’t take me long to realize my passion for serving the student body, my classmates, and my community, which is definitely fitting for a future career in pharmacy. I pursued these leadership roles because I wanted to get involved and contribute. More importantly, I wanted to promote improvements to make our school experience an unforgettable one.

One of my favorite memories was coordinating the Health Fair, especially with the incorporation of a new children’s health section. Another special project dear to me was working with the Dean of Student Services to craft a campus-wide flyer about Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and how MWU accommodates students struggling from this disorder. This experience prompted me to pursue becoming ADHD Lead Chair and connect CCP students with community ADHD support groups.

Yes, being involved in extracurricular activities can be tough when trying to do well in school simultaneously. For me, this challenge has forced me to form effective study habits and utilize my free time wisely. There are times when I have asked myself how time spent investing in school activities may benefit me. I have come to learn that there is a long list of perks.

First, I worked closely with faculty advisors who not only served as mentors for me, but also have written strong letters of recommendations on my behalf. Second, with so many experiences under my belt, I was confident in applying for scholar programs and several scholarships. Third, my leadership experiences will help me build a
Student Chapters of National Pharmacy Organizations

Chicago College of Pharmacy (CCP) students have numerous opportunities to get involved on campus. The following are some of the national pharmacy organizations that are available for students.

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.

In October, CCP’s APhA-ASP chapter helped promote American Pharmacists Month in downtown Chicago. They were joined by student pharmacists from the University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago State University, Purdue University, and Cedarville University, all united to bring awareness of the profession of pharmacy to the public.

At this highly publicized event, student pharmacists were interviewed by a local TV network while advocating “Know Your Pharmacist, Know Your Medicine.” This fun event allowed CCP students to network and form friendships with five other pharmacy APhA-ASP chapters.

ICHP
The Illinois Council of Health-System Pharmacists (ICHP) is a state organization that works to advance the pharmacy profession through widespread acceptance of pharmacists as healthcare providers essential to healthcare teams. The student chapter of the Illinois Council of Health Systems Pharmacists is dedicated to helping students expand their pharmacy career choices.

ICHP helps pharmacy students learn about various practices in health systems at their annual Residency Program Director Panel hosted by ICHP’s academic advisors. Recently, more than 60 pharmacy students interested in pursuing post-graduate residency programs were given an opportunity to have their questions answered by Pharmacy Residency Program Directors from the area’s major medical centers, including Northwestern Memorial Hospital, Rush University Medical Center, Advocate Lutheran General, and Loyola Medical Center.

SNPhA
Student National Pharmaceutical Association (SNPhA) is an educational service organization that unites pharmacy students who are interested in pharmacy- and healthcare-related issues. SNPhA’s vision is to plan and execute programs that improve the health, educational, and social environment of the community and its members.

This year, SNPhA hosted several blood pressure workshops where students practice measuring blood pressure. These workshops were a great opportunity for students to exercise measuring basic vital signs, especially for those in their first or second year of pharmacy school.

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 a campus-wide event that promotes cultural diversity and highlights the cultural talents of students and faculty at Midwestern University.

This year, the evening was filled with unforgettable entertainment, including singing, dancing, and even stand-up comedy, as well as various ethnic foods prepared by MWU students. The more than 200 attendees appreciated the individual talents displayed by fellow students.

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strong resume, which will be especially useful when applying to residency programs. Finally, I am able to network not just within CCP, but with other programs in school, faculty, and even city leaders.

MWU is a very active campus with limitless opportunities to get involved with various pharmacy-related and campus-wide organizations, student government, research projects, and recreational activities. I know it’s cliché, but your experience in school will truly define your outlook in both your academic career, as well as your future profession. Most importantly, make lots of friends and enjoy your involvements in school activities, because I guarantee that years in pharmacy school fly by in a blink of an eye! ■
AHA
Asian Healthcare Association (AHA) is a campus-wide organization that seeks to promote health awareness in Asian communities. This year, AHA participated in the Chinatown Health Fair in Chicago. Nine MWU students collaborated with the University of Illinois at Chicago’s Asian Pacific American Medical Student Association to provide health education, as well as cholesterol and blood pressure screenings for more than 80 Chinese community members.

This event gave AHA members an opportunity to hone their communication skills and practice accurately measuring vital signs, which are important skills for practicing healthcare professionals. AHA plans to participate in similar events next year to bring health awareness in the under-served Asian communities.

P & P
As an organization that provides pediatric-focused community outreach, the Pharmacy & Pediatrics organization collaborated with College of Psychiatric and Neurologic Pharmacists to present “A Teacher’s Guide to Medication Use in School” at Lewis University.

Members of both organizations donated their time to make presentations on childhood disease states, such as diabetes, asthma and anaphylactic reactions, to education majors at Lewis University. PowerPoint presentations, brochures and interactive booths were available to attendees who learned how to use insulin, testing devices, inhalers, and EpiPens®. This event allowed the volunteers to impact education majors before they enter the workforce. Due to a decreasing number of nurses in school districts, the responsibility of helping children manage their various medical conditions at school relies more and more upon teachers in the classrooms. The goal of this interactive presentation was to help future teachers feel prepared in medical situations involving students with diabetes, asthma, or anaphylaxis.

CPNP
Student pharmacists interested in developing skills and learning to improve health outcomes for patients with psychiatric and neurologic disorders are encouraged to join the College of Psychiatric and Neurologic Pharmacists organization.

This year, CPNP co-hosted an Expressive Therapy Speaker & Drum Circle Demonstration by Victoria Storm, MM, MT-BC, an expressive therapist at Oak Park Music Therapy. They were joined by other psychology-focused student organizations on campus including Behavioral Medicine Club (BMC) and Midwestern Psychiatry Association (MPA). As such, roughly 70 pharmacy, medical, and psychology students attended the event, had the opportunity to network with one another, and learn ways to relieve stress and express themselves musically through drum circle.

NCPA
New to campus this upcoming fall is CCP’s student chapter of the National Community Pharmacists Association, who represents the professional and proprietary interests of independent community pharmacists.

With its inception, the NCRA hopes to provide students with resources to pursue careers in an array of different pharmacy settings including home infusion, compounding, specialty, nuclear, community, and long-term care. Unique to this new organization is their plan to provide business and entrepreneurial aspects of pharmacy for anyone looking to start their own pharmacy business or create a unique career path that can truly make a difference in the healthcare field. A few notable benefits that the club hopes to implement are APPE experiential rotation opportunities, scholarships, independent pharmacy matching services, and mentor networks.

MWU Chapters of National Pharmacy Organizations

- Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy (AMCP)
- American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists (AAPS)
- American Pharmacists Association—Academy of Student Pharmacists (APhA-ASP)*
- American Society of Consultant Pharmacists (ASCP)
- Asian Healthcare Association (AHA)*
- Association of Indian Pharmacists in America (AIPhA)*
- College of Psychiatric and Neurologic Pharmacists (CPNP)*
- Community Pharmacy Club (CPC)
- Illinois Council of Health-System Pharmacists (ICHP)*
- Middle Eastern Pharmacists Association (MePA)
- National Community Pharmacy Association (NCRA)*
- Pharmacy & Pediatrics (P & P)*
- Polish American Pharmacists Association (PAPA)
- Student National Pharmaceutical Association (SNPhA)*

* Featured in this issue.
Professional Pharmacy Fraternities

CCP has several chapters of national pharmacy co-ed fraternities on campus. They include:

- Alpha Chi Sigma (medicinal chemistry)
- Kappa Psi
- Phi Delta Chi
- Phi Lambda Sigma (pharmacy leadership - invitation only)
- Rho Chi (pharmacy academic excellence - invitation only)
- Rho Pi Phi

**Kappa Psi**

As the oldest and largest professional pharmacy fraternity, Kappa Psi Pharmaceutical Fraternity’s fundamental purpose is to develop industry, sobriety, and fellowship to advance the profession of pharmacy.

Midwestern University’s chapter hosted a biannual meeting to unite surrounding chapters of the fraternity in Downers Grove, Illinois. More than 250 Kappa Psi members visited Midwestern University for the weekend, kicking off with a philanthropy event where members played volleyball and bags tournaments to benefit Be The Match Foundation, an organization that recruits potential bone marrow donors. This was a wonderful opportunity to encourage fellow members to support a great cause by registering as potential donors.

Kappa Psi also put on a successful Career Kappa Psi Alumni Roundtable where Kappa Psi alumni in various pharmacy careers were available to answer questions about their respective fields. Members of the MWU chapter hope to form lasting friendships through networking opportunities and fostering close relationships with nearby chapters.

**Rho Pi Phi**

Rho Pi Phi (RPP) is a co-ed international pharmaceutical fraternity dedicated to the pharmacy profession and values the ideals of friendship, professionalism, and community service. They strive to build positive relationships in the community, and they also host fun-filled events to strengthen the bonds of brotherhood that will continue on after graduation.

One of RPP’s main services to the community is their dedication to Community Health, which is the largest volunteer-based clinic in Illinois that provides free medical care to the underserved and low-income residents in the Chicago area. Inside the main facility of Community Health, the MedAccess Chicago Pharmacy fills prescriptions for underserved patients. RPP has found this to be a great opportunity for members to help the less privileged while gaining experience and learning first-hand the workings of the pharmacy world. Several of the members are now regular volunteers, each spending at least two 4-hour shifts per month assisting as pharmacy technicians.

**Phi Lambda Sigma**

Phi Lambda Sigma (PLS) is a leadership society that is devoted to recognizing the contributions that pharmacy student leaders bring to their classmates, college, community, and the profession. Membership is by invitation only and based on previous leadership roles at the University.

Every quarter, PLS hosts a professional workshop that helps pharmacy students develop professional skills. Each workshop focuses on a topic, and guest speakers are invited to present an informational lecture and answer students’ questions. A few of the topics covered this year were: developing CV-writing skills, honing professional networking skills, and learning how to effectively prepare for rotations. All pharmacy students are invited and highly encouraged to attend.

Calendar

- PharmCAS online application, fees and transcripts due - **March 1, 2016**
- Dual Acceptance Program applications due - **February 15, 2016**
- PCAT scores and Letters of Recommendations due to MWU Office of Admissions - **April 1, 2016**

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 admissIL@midwestern.edu.