New Clinical Skills and Simulation Center Opens

Midwestern University recently opened the new Auditorium Building that features the new Clinical Skills and Simulation Center (CSC). This new suite includes 13 clinical exam rooms, four simulation suites, two operating suites, one labor & delivery room, and a 16-station scrub room. These spaces are designed to mimic outpatient and hospital-based environments including an intensive care unit, emergency/trauma room, hospital floor, and pediatric floor.

The simulation suites and operating room house eight high-fidelity simulator mannequins (four adults, two pediatric patients, and two birthing mother-and-child simulators), and the suites are equipped with software that enables simulation of a variety of physiological states, including arrhythmias and cardiac arrest. Students practice their skills in cardio-pulmonary resuscitation, intravenous drug delivery, and defibrillation.

"The use of the CSC provides students the opportunity to encounter human patient simulation activities in a safe educational environment prior to their fourth-year Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experience courses, also known as APPEs," said Nancy Fjortoft, Ph.D., Dean and Professor, Chicago College of Pharmacy.

Actors, also known as standardized patients, are trained to portray a patient case as students conduct interviews and physical exams, and practice their communication skills and physical assessment techniques. Scenarios are planned, so students practice interviewing and relating to standardized patients in interchangeable mock exam and patient rooms, and discuss medication adherence. During these patient interactions, students have the ability to phone the patient’s physician or pharmacy to provide medication recommendations.

As students work in teams, faculty may monitor student interactions and provide feedback about their clinical skills and techniques. The

Simulation tools help this student accurately measure blood pressure.

Students respond to simulated vital signs and symptoms on simulator mannequins.

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CCP Students Attend Planning Meetings in Washington D.C. for APhA-ASP Academies

By Lauren San Juan, Third-year Pharmacy Student

The American Pharmacists Association (APhA) Academies Leadership Meeting (ALM) was held April 24th-26th in Washington, D.C. The purpose of ALM is for each of the three APhA Academies to convene and plan the year for their respective division, which are the:

- Academy of Student Pharmacists (ASP)
- Academy of Pharmaceutical Research & Science (APRS)
- Academy of Pharmacy Practice & Management (APPM)

Within APhA-ASP, there are five national committees: Policy, Communications, Awards, Education, and International. Each consists of five people: four are appointed, and the fifth is one of the members from the current National Executive Committee.

I had the opportunity to attend the meeting through my appointment to the Policy Committee. Eileen Hang, a fellow third-year pharmacy student, also attended through her appointment to the Communications Committee.

When Eileen and I arrived on Friday morning, we went to the APhA Headquarters to obtain our materials needed for our Capitol Hill visits, then we headed over to the House and Senate buildings. We had appointments scheduled with our Senators and Representatives to discuss Senate Bill 314 and House Bill 592, respectively. These bills are the "Pharmacy and Medically Underserved Areas Enhancement Act," commonly known as the "provider status" bills, which would allow pharmacists practicing in medically underserved areas to be recognized as healthcare professionals.

A Student’s Perspective: Your Future in Pharmacy

By Greg Hakala, Third-year Pharmacy Student

When I first started pharmacy school, anxiety was trying to take over and intimidate me about this new chapter of my life. All my undergraduate friends warned me of the high levels of stress, sleepless nights, and fear of failure. However, within the first few days of class, I learned that my imagination had taken over to form a false image of the pharmacy program.

As an undergraduate, you are competing with fellow students for a spot into professional school. Once you get to pharmacy school, it all changes for the better. At Midwestern University, the professors and classmates form a support network that can help you with whatever struggles you might encounter, whether it’s a tough subject, balancing the workload, questions about career choices, or wherever you need assistance.

Time management is of utmost importance, and you will become a professional at it. Between balancing 18 credit hours, extracurricular activities, and work, you will constantly need to manage the limited amount of time you have. At first, it will be rough and you may need a coffee pot running at all times. Then, you will develop strategies like using the calendar on your phone, setting aside time right after class for studying, or even reading notes while on the treadmill. If done correctly, you will be able to go out in the city with classmates and still binge watch a few television series.

The best advice is to reach out to other students a year ahead of you in the program. They have all been there before and are eager to give advice and their own reflections. In the end, you will develop your own personal routine that will aid in being successful in this program.

One thing I was unaware of before I started pharmacy school was all of the endless opportunities that are available to us as pharmacists. Previously I was only aware of retail pharmacy, hospital pharmacy, and the pharmaceutical industry. With provider status being granted for pharmacists in some states, as well as the growing inter-professional healthcare model, the field of pharmacy is expanding quickly. In order to discover of all these emerging opportunities, I would highly suggest getting involved in pharmacy organizations and establishing relationships with the professors, faculty members, and upperclassman. Pharmacy is a small world and you never know who can help you reach your career goals.
Student Resources for Careers in Pharmacy

Students at the Chicago College of Pharmacy (CCP) have several resources they may utilize to research the many career choices in pharmacy.

Alumni Networking Breakfast
There are several opportunities and events where our students are able to connect with our CCP alumni, who number nearly 3,500 and practice in all 50 states. One such opportunity is our annual Alumni Networking Breakfast. Each year, approximately 20 CCP alumni who practice in various pharmacy careers return to the Downers Grove Campus for the opportunity to mentor current third-year CCP students. Over breakfast, they meet with students and offer their insights and experiences in the job market.

In round-table formats with two alumni at each table, the CCP alumni speak about their careers in community pharmacies, different clinical settings, consulting, corporate research and development, and residencies. Students ask questions and engage in dialog with the alumni, and then change tables every 15 minutes to meet more alumni mentors.

Annual CAREERxPO in October
Each year, the CCP hosts this event for our students. Dozens of recruiters from national and local pharmacy companies attend, and they represent companies and institutions from a wide variety of pharmacy practice settings, including community pharmacy, hospital pharmacy, managed care, long-term care, and the armed forces. Residency and fellowship opportunities are also showcased. This is a unique opportunity for all of our pharmacy students to learn more about their career options and summer internships, as well as begin to make post-graduation decisions.

On the second day of this event, most of our fourth-year pharmacy students interview with many of these national recruiters for full-time careers and residency positions.

Year-Round Resource: CareerQuest Blackboard Site
Accessible to all CCP students, this site hosts numerous online resources, such as:
- Various career and residency search databases
- Alumni and student insights
- Job search strategies

As they become available, there are also current postings for:
- Full-time pharmacy careers
- Residencies and fellowships
- Summer internships
- Part-time jobs
- Networking opportunities & seminars

Faculty Advisors
When students begin their studies on our campus, they will meet with their faculty advisor, who will be their mentor throughout their studies at CCP. Advisors are faculty members in the College, who are very knowledgeable about various careers in pharmacy and can describe their pathways to success. For students who have an idea of a pharmacy career path they’d like to pursue, advisors can offer guidance. For those who are not sure, advisors can help students sort through various options. Advisors are available to help our students succeed as they begin their careers in pharmacy.

New Clinical Skills and Simulation Center cont’d
standardized patients are also trained to provide written and verbal feedback to students about their interpersonal communication skills and evaluate step-by-step performance of certain physical assessment techniques such as blood pressure measurement. “Our student pharmacists become well-versed in the importance of relationships with patients and other healthcare providers, as they develop their clinical skills,” says Dr. Fjortoft.
Overall, choosing to go to pharmacy school was the best decision I ever made. I have challenged myself more than I thought possible and overcame any challenges that came my way. Whether it was getting elected as president of two student organizations, starting my own tutoring program, or doing my own research project, Midwestern University offers numerous opportunities to prepare you academically and professionally.

Saturday was the most inspiring and fulfilling day of the trip. We began with programming along with the other academies, but most of the day was dedicated to working with our respective committees. In these smaller meetings, we set our goals for the year, then planned the projects and initiatives to be incorporated in all of the APhA-ASP chapters throughout the country.

It is crazy to think that in this one weekend, we had accomplished planning for the entire year, and that this would be the only time all five of us would be together in person, until the 2016 APhA Annual Meeting and Exposition when our terms end, and we transition the incoming committee members. The majority of our work was completed by dividing tasks amongst ourselves, and we planned monthly conference calls to regroup and create new deadlines.

On Sunday morning, all of the committees reconvened to give a report on their plan of action for the year, and then we said our goodbyes. Although this was our first time meeting the other student pharmacists, we bonded over our common passion to advance the profession of pharmacy. As we departed Washington, D.C., we felt recharged and inspired to continue active involvement in professional associations. We are excited to see our work unfold through our APhA-ASP Chapter this year!

If you are interested in applying for an APhA-ASP National Standing Committee for next year, visit http://www.pharmacist.com/apha-asp-standing-committees to learn more.