



Opinion

Description and perspective of an academic learning experience for a pharmacy practice resident

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Abstract

Introduction: An elective academic learning experience was designed for a pharmacy practice resident who was also enrolled in a teaching certificate program. The resident's responsibilities focused on the three domains of a full-time faculty position.

Description: As part of a Veterans Affairs Medical Center PGY-1 residency program, a six-week learning experience in academia was incorporated based on the interests and goals of a pharmacy practice resident. The learning experience, first offered in Spring 2010, was modified for a 2011–2012 resident to expand and refine the skills of academia. There were a variety of experiences, including didactic teaching, small group facilitation, service requirements through committees, and scholarship activities for publication.

Conclusion: This learning experience benefited a pharmacy practice resident through additional skills and knowledge of the three domains of teaching, service, and scholarship while preparing for an academic position.

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Background

Postgraduate pharmacy education allows an individual to focus on clinical patient care and research, along with management and leadership skills. Desired outcomes, goals, and objectives are determined by the accreditation organization for pharmacy residencies—the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP).¹ Based on these standards, pharmacy practice residents should also provide effective education in large or small groups, as well as in an experiential setting using appropriate communication techniques.¹ Candidates for pharmacy practice residency programs may seek programs with teaching certificate

programs or academia-based learning experiences to further this residency component. There are no standardized requirements for teaching certificate programs within pharmacy practice residency programs. Specific program requirements of teaching certificate programs have allowed pharmacy practice residents to gain skills and abilities to teach in a variety of educational settings, such as didactic, small group, and experiential.^{2–7}

As of July 2012, the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP) reported 124 full or candidate status colleges and schools of pharmacy within the United States. There are five additional schools with pre-candidate status.⁸ Clinical science or pharmacy faculty positions were 48.1% vacant during the 2010–2011 academic year.⁹ The increasing number of new schools and class sizes will result in a continued need for pharmacy educators in the future. A pharmacy practice resident may desire to have additional experience with the three main domains of an entry-level faculty position—teaching, scholarship, and service.

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At Shenandoah University School of Pharmacy, there are four affiliated pharmacy residency programs with eight residents. Each resident has the opportunity to participate in the residency teaching certificate program based on the resident's interests and career goals. This program provides formalized training in didactic, small group, and experiential teaching along with opportunities and experiences to strengthen skills and gain confidence as a pharmacy educator. The teaching certificate program provides specific, but limited opportunities. Because of these limitations, a pharmacy practice resident may want additional experience in pharmacy education.

An elective academic learning experience was offered at a Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) postgraduate year 1 (PGY-1) pharmacy practice residency through the school of pharmacy. This learning experience, first offered in April 2010, was for a PGY-1 resident who was also enrolled in the teaching certificate program. The experience was four weeks in length, which limited exposure to the three domains of a faculty position. Requirements of the teaching certificate program accounted for a majority of this resident's responsibilities. There were no additional teaching experiences, minimal scholarship and service opportunities, and therefore provided no benefit other than the concentrated academic learning experience. This learning experience, with resident feedback, was expanded to a six-week rotation during the 2011–2012 residency year. Our report describes the structure and activities of a concentrated, six-week academic learning experience for a PGY-1 resident also completing a teaching certificate program. This learning experience was in collaboration with a pharmacy practice residency at a VAMC and a private school of pharmacy.

Description of the academia rotation

Overview

During the 2011–2012 residency year, a six-week academic learning experience was designed to offer unique and challenging duties and projects to a PGY-1 resident. The purpose of these modifications was to provide a valid, structured experience and facilitate the development of the necessary skills for transition into an entry-level faculty position (i.e. Assistant Professor). Experiences from the three common requirements of a full-time faculty member—teaching, service, and scholarship—were meticulously chosen and assigned to the resident. Table 1 provides a comparison of the school's teaching certificate program with the concentrated academic learning experience. To satisfy residency obligations, the resident was required to fulfill scheduled weekend staffing at the VAMC and was given time to prepare for presentation of a practice-based research project at a regional meeting throughout this rotation. The ASHP PGY1 outcomes selected for this learning experience included leadership and practice

management, project management skills, medication and practice-related education, utilization of medical informatics, pharmacy practice research, drug information to health care professionals, and competencies to contribute to working in the health care environment. Table 2 provides a list of outcomes selected for this learning experience. The preceptor completed the evaluation through ResiTrak™.

The preceptor of record for this learning experience is a full-time faculty member at the school of pharmacy with a practice site at the VAMC. In addition to the preceptor, one additional faculty member volunteered to serve as a mentor to oversee the resident's activities and requirements during this learning experience. The mentor was also the course coordinator for the renal therapeutics course. Other faculty members offered service opportunities for the resident, but did not oversee or evaluate the activities during this learning experience. Together, the preceptor and mentor shared knowledge, skills, information, and perspective in order to foster the resident's personal and professional growth. The resident received a schedule with a description of each activity based on the domains of a faculty position. When necessary, the preceptor emailed weekly schedules and activity changes. The resident was given verbal feedback on a continual basis from both the preceptor and mentor. Formal evaluations consisted of a midpoint and final review based on the selected ASHP goals and objectives. The resident met with the preceptor and mentor weekly for formal discussions on various domains of a faculty position and for evaluation of the resident's performance. Discussions focused on the domains of an academic position and the current process and requirements of promotion at the school of pharmacy. The *Clinical Faculty Survival Guide* from the American College of Clinical Pharmacy¹⁰ was used as a reference for the resident.

The resident expressed how this academic learning experience exceeded the opportunities afforded to residents in the teaching certificate program. As a newly licensed practitioner, the resident explored avenues for a future career in academia. Since an academic rotation was not part of their fourth year advanced pharmacy practice experiences, this learning experience was a welcomed opportunity. The shared focus on teaching, service, and scholarship offered new insights and perspective in the academic environment, which were otherwise unavailable.

Teaching

During the teaching certificate program, resident exposure to teaching is often limited to precepting students on clinical rotations, grand round presentations, limited didactic lectures, or small group facilitation. For the academic learning experience, the resident was provided with a wide range of teaching experience within two therapeutic core courses, an elective course, and a case-based patient assessment course. The exposure to different learning environments gave this resident the opportunity to

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