

Development and evaluation of an introduction to pharmacy seminar for faculty, staff, and graduate students

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Abstract

Objective: To develop, implement, and evaluate a pilot “Pharmacy 101” seminar designed to provide faculty, staff, and graduate students with an overview and orientation to the pharmacy profession and academic pharmacy.

Design: Objectives and specific topics for inclusion for the seminar were developed and refined based on input from the Office of the Dean as well as Chairs of both College Departments.

Assessment: The seminar has been offered on three separate occasions. The first two offerings were open to the entire college community, whereas the third session was delivered as part of the college of pharmacy’s new graduate student orientation. At the initial offering, participants voluntarily completed an initial evaluation and a postseminar evaluation 60 days later. For the second and third sessions, all participants were asked to complete an initial evaluation and a 15-item pre and post multiple-choice test instrument. Fourteen individuals completed the initial seminar offering, seven the second, and 15 participants took part in the graduate student section. Responses to initial evaluations from all three cohorts were positive and constructive. The pre and post test instruments used in the second and third cohorts demonstrated consistent learning.

Conclusion: This seminar appeared to meet its objectives. Similar seminars can be developed to improve faculty, staff, and graduate student productivity and job satisfaction. Future considerations include expansion into a required component of orientation and as a requirement for teaching assistant training.

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Introduction

Academic pharmacy is currently in an era of expansion. Rapid growth in both the number and sizes of pharmacy schools has been well documented over the past decade.^{1,2} As the number of pharmacy colleges and schools continues to grow, so will competition for qualified and competent faculty and staff. Colleges may classify staff as either administrative support personnel or as “professional” employees such as academic specialists and/or department admin-

istrators. All types of staff will likely be affected by more competitive and smaller applicant pools, although “professional” staff may be more likely to be disproportionately at risk. Contributing to the shortages in talent is the “graying” of pharmacy faculty, as well as the increased availability of other professional opportunities that often are more financially attractive.^{1,3} In addition, retention and training of these personnel will likely become critical objectives for colleges and schools as resource pools shrink. Effective and consistent training and education of college employees, as well as socialization to professional and academic roles, is often difficult to accomplish.⁴ Employees of colleges may be assigned to various departments and units with more defined missions and objectives so the development of an encompassing program becomes challenging. The selection of specific topics for training and development programs

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Table 1
Seminar objectives

Describe terminology commonly used in the profession of pharmacy.
Define common professional organizations within the pharmacy profession.
Explain the processes involved in pharmacist licensure and board certification.
Describe the drug approval process and the role of pharmaceutical industry in practice.

can be arduous. In addition, for many organizations it is often unclear what official should be charged with the responsibility of designing and executing these programs.

Training and development programs can contribute significantly to the success of academic units and colleges. Faculty and staff who lack experience and fundamental knowledge regarding the infrastructure of a specific college, as well as the profession of pharmacy may perform suboptimally. Lack of knowledge may also contribute to work-related stress and job dissatisfaction. Perhaps the most significant incentive to colleges regarding the development of training programs is the likelihood that these offerings will contribute positively to the day-to-day responsibilities of employees and improve faculty and staff productivity. This paper describes the development, implementation, and evaluation of a pilot “Pharmacy 101” seminar that was designed to provide faculty, staff, and graduate students with an overview and orientation to the pharmacy profession and academic pharmacy.

Design and implementation

The concept for a pharmacy seminar came from recognition that both new and existing College employees often may lack a full understanding of and appreciation for the roles and responsibilities of pharmacists in contemporary practice. In addition, the terminology and nuances related to the profession may be completely new to this population. Because these deficiencies can compromise work quality and satisfaction, a pilot “Pharmacy 101” seminar was developed with the goal of introducing these new and existing employees to various aspects of the pharmacy profession. Initially, the “Pharmacy 101” seminar was made available to all College employees on an elective basis. The most recent offering was executed as part of the College’s orientation process for new graduate students. All graduate students are expected to serve in some capacity as teaching assistants (TAs). Faculty often comment anecdotally that the majority of TAs have a poor understanding of the pharmacy profession and that this contributes to a lack of teaching effectiveness. With few Doctor of Pharmacy alumnae pursuing graduate school (particularly in the basic sciences), there continues to be concern regarding the origin of the next generation of pharmacy-based educators. In addition,

it will be increasingly essential to provide nonclinically trained basic scientists forums and avenues to gain a clearer understanding of the profession of pharmacy. Through cooperation and assistance from the Director of Graduate Studies, the seminar was a requirement for all new graduate students. Faculty and staff were recruited through communication with area supervisors, deans, and department chairs.

Specific objectives were developed for the seminar, which was intended to be three hours in length (Table 1). Topics for the seminar were drafted and modified based on feedback received from the Office of the Dean, the Director of Graduate Studies, and the Chairs of the College (Table 2). Notices of the seminar were disseminated to all college employees via e-mail. Potential attendees were informed that the seminar would take place in both the upcoming and subsequent semesters. In addition, seminar announcements were made at college-wide and departmental faculty meetings. The seminars were scheduled to begin at the noon hour on a day thought to be most conducive to attendance by the greatest number of employees. Delivery of content was accomplished using a computer slide show with an accompanying question and answer session. A complimentary lunch was provided for each attendee.

Specific programmatic content was designed to be broad and multifaceted. A literature review was conducted to identify similar types of seminars and/or content from various orientation programs.^{4–8} Feedback from attendees who participated in the initial offerings was used to modify seminars for future semesters. A key goal was to define discipline-specific abbreviations and various training and credentialing avenues within the profession (e.g., differentiation of graduate degrees and the PharmD degree, residencies, board certification). The seminar was also designed to review aspects of the drug development process and the role of industry within medicine. A more complete list of seminar topics can be found in Table 2.

Table 2
“Pharmacy 101” seminar topics

The History of Pharmaceutical Education
Accreditation of US Colleges and Schools of Pharmacy
Overview of the University of Kentucky College of Pharmacy Curriculum
Pharmacy Licensure and Board Certification Process
Pharmacy Residencies
Prescriptive Rights (physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants)
Prescription Drug Insurance Programs
Contemporary Pharmacy Practice and Career Opportunities
Drug Development Process and Brand versus Generic Drug Names
Overview of the Pharmaceutical Industry
Pharmacy and Pharmacy Student Organizations
Regulation of Pharmaceutical Products (prescription versus nonprescription)

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