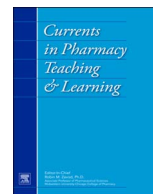


Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](#)

Currents in Pharmacy Teaching and Learning

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/cptl

Letter to the Editor

Transitioning from pharmacy practice into administration

Kurt A. Wargo

Wingate University School of Pharmacy, Hendersonville Regional Campus, Hendersonville, NC

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Administration
Pharmacy practice
Career
Transition

ABSTRACT

Transitioning from a pharmacy practice faculty member into an administrator will offer new challenges you have never faced in your career. Whether you are currently considering a transition in your career or have recently made such a transition, many questions will come up along the way. Through this commentary, I offer some advice from my own personal trials and errors as I continue on my administrative journey, and I hope this will help you in yours.

Introduction

Pharmacy practice faculty who have achieved the rank of Associate or Full Professor are oftentimes faced with the dilemma of continuing in practice or transitioning their careers into administrative leadership roles within schools of pharmacy. In spring 2015, after twelve years as a practicing faculty member, I made the decision to accept a new role as the regional dean of a school of pharmacy. I had previously held leadership roles within school of pharmacy committees, including the chair of subcommittees within our school's curriculum committee and the chair of the entire curriculum committee. Furthermore, I held offices within a practice research network (PRN) of the American College of Clinical Pharmacy and had chaired subcommittees within PRNs as well. All of these leadership roles helped prepare me for the position I had just accepted; however, I was about to face challenges I had never seen before. With this commentary, I hope to offer advice to any reader considering a similar transition based upon the trials and tribulations I personally faced.

Why change now?

In the midst of my eleventh year as a pharmacy practice faculty member a series of events occurred that made me question if I wanted to continue as a practice faculty member. I had contemplated changing positions before in my career, but kept coming back for my love of students, my love of teaching them the finer points of internal medicine, and seeing “light bulbs” go off with an “ah ha” moment when things they previously learned started to make sense. I loved teaching medical students and residents who were like sponges, soaking up as much pharmacology knowledge as you can throw at them. I loved rounding with the attending physicians who often relied on me to assist them in split second decisions on diagnosing and managing patients. I took joy in conducting practice-based research and presenting findings at national conferences and publishing them in the medical literature. All of those things brought me a great sense of pleasure. So why make the change? Several factors played a role in this decision; it wasn't just one thing. First, I was starting to get bored. Not that I didn't love teaching, but more and more, I was doing the same thing every rotation. From a practice standpoint, our medical service lost the ability to see patients in the intensive care unit (ICU) of the hospital; instead there was an ICU-specific team that “rounded” on a list of 15–20 patients in a mere hour. I tried rounding with them, but the idea of only taking one hour to discuss and care for critically ill patients was absurd to me. Losing the variety in the acuity of illness of patients was a factor I could not overcome. For my students, this was not an issue because rounding in the hospital with a medical

E-mail address: k.wargo@wingate.edu.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cptl.2017.02.006>

1877-1297/ © 2017 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

team was a novel concept to them; but for me personally, I began to lose my passion.

Second, I felt the school of pharmacy I was associated with was heading in a direction that I did not necessarily want to go professionally. I will never say a bad word about the school that granted me the ability to launch my career, but I was not seeing eye-to-eye with some of the administrative decisions that were being made. From that perspective, I found myself wanting to escape and disengage from the school. I was creating a toxic environment for my coworkers because of my personal displeasure; therefore, removing myself was for the greater good of the institution.

The final factor was an event that was so troubling to me personally, it became the proverbial “straw that broke the camel’s back.” It was an event that caused the writing on the wall to become crystal clear. After that one event, my search for a new position began. What was not clear to me at the time was if I wanted to make a “lateral move” for a similar position or begin to transition my career to focus my efforts on helping faculty and campuses thrive. After searching and interviewing for a variety of positions across the country, along with a lot of soul searching, discussions with my wife, and reading of leadership books, it became clear that I was ready for the career transition. It was July 2015 was the beginning of a new chapter in my career. I was seeking more of a challenge, and well, I got one!

A day in the life

Prior to the loss of caring for ICU patients, it is safe to say that no two days were ever the same in the world of medicine. A similar thing can be said of being an administrator in a school of pharmacy. Today for example, I have completed and submitted two manuscripts for consideration of publication, had a meeting regarding a big event we are planning for the community, discussed with other faculty members concerns they had for a student in academic difficulties, attended a student presentation, then was notified by a colleague that she needed to take a medical leave of absence. While medicine and administration are completely different with respect to the content (I have never addressed some of these issues in my career), having a background in internal medicine has helped me juggle many different problems at the same time. Even though the act of juggling is not the difficult part of the transition into administration, the problem lies in the content being juggled and the self-confidence about that particular content. Depending on the particular position you may be considering, your role may be pretty well defined. As the Dean of a regional campus, however, there are many different “hats” that are worn depending on the situation. One moment you can be the Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs, while the next you can be the Resource Development Officer. As in medicine, the regional dean must be the “jack of all trades,” ready at a moment’s notice to wear any given hat.

As you consider a transition into an administrative role, you must carefully consider your willingness to give up the patient care and teaching components of your current role. While some positions may afford you the opportunity to teach or maintain a practice site, most do not. In my position, it has been difficult at times because I sometimes long for the days of rounding with a medical team. However, with so many other responsibilities, it is impossible to maintain any semblance of an internal medicine service. I still have an opportunity to teach in the classroom on occasion, but not to the extent to which I did prior to making the transition. Therefore, if you find your passion still lies in teaching both in the clinical setting and the classroom, the transition into an administrative role may not yet be quite suited for you.

Who are you, again?

As an inpatient internal medicine practitioner, I never knew what my day was going to bring with respect to the variety of patient cases. That was not a concern of mine because, not to sound arrogant, I was good at what I did. Furthermore, I established great rapport with the physicians with whom I worked. They sought me out for advice as to how to treat patients and often asked for my input in diagnosing patients. They *trusted* me. My students and residents complained often about the hours of the rotation, but they loved the learning experience. They knew I would provide education and prepare them to practice in any setting. They *trusted* me.

One thing that surprised me upon my transition to this administrative role was having to re-establish my credibility so that I could be trusted once again. I had been in practice a long time, had established many great relationships, and people had come to know what to expect from me. In this new position, I felt as though I had to start over from scratch. Sure, my new colleagues could examine my curriculum vitae and hear things via word-of-mouth in order to form opinions of me, but the one thing that cannot be formed as you walk through the door of your new position is rapport. Your new colleagues do not *really* know you. They do not know your motivating factors, personal and professional values, nor your visions.

We all like to believe that we are trusting individuals, but if you enter into an administrative position, a supervisory role, you encounter individuals who just do not trust the “suits.” They will observe all your moves, especially early on, and question if you are here for your own personal gain or to truly help and lead them. Therefore, establishing trust early on is of utmost importance. Trust needs to be established among those whom you supervise, those in your administrative circle, and those who are above you. If your colleagues or subordinates do not trust you, you cannot lead them.

In order to overcome any of the distrust my new colleagues may have had of me early on, the first thing I did was lose the “suit.” The last thing I wanted to do was to create an air of superiority by dressing differently. I did not want to appear to be above them in any respect, including my choice in clothing. As silly as it sounds, I opted to go back to what was comfortable to me so that I would appear welcoming to them: khakis, shirt, and tie. There was also one other thing I could not abandon: “Bow Tie Friday’s.” There is something about a bow tie that allows people to open up, smile, laugh, and take you less seriously. To me, this is an important aspect of being a good leader, being able to fit in with your employees and share a smile and a laugh.

Another thing I did early on in an effort to establish trust was to show vulnerability. I talked to those on my campus about some

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/4938043>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/4938043>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)