Analysis of the SSPPS Student Body, Tony Manoguerra

Class of 2013
- 1409 applicants, 280 interviews, 106 offers, 60 admitted, 2 of whom through BS/PharmD 7-year program
- 19 men, or 35%, and 41 women, or 65%
- Average age is 25, ranging from 21-38
- Average GPA is 3.69, 4 hold Masters Degrees, 1 is completing PhD, 1 holds BS

Class of 2009
- 56 graduates
- 37 of whom will be doing post-graduate training (31 PGY1 Residencies, 5 Industry/Academic Fellowships, 1 Graduate Program).
- 19 of whom have taken practice positions.

Site Certificates and Outstanding Teacher Awards, Charles Daniels

Site Certificates presented to
- Asian Pacific Health Center, represented by Binh Tran
- Health Net Pharmaceutical Services, represented by Linda Reynolds
- Institute for Palliative Medicine at San Diego Hospice, represented by Rosene Pirrello
- Scripps Mercy Hospital Chula Vista, represented by Sherry Watanabe

Outstanding Teacher Awards presented to
- Linda Dean, UCSD Medical Center Hillcrest
- Deborah Duwe, UCSD Medical Center Thornton
- Natalie Hall, Naval Medical Center San Diego
- Lisa James, UCSD Medical Center Hillcrest
- Francis Pham, CVS/Pharmacy #9165
- Richard Saylor, Costco Inc.
- Binh Tran, Asian Pacific Health Center

Student Professionalism, Schwanda Flowers

Dr. Flowers delivered a highly interactive and informative presentation on the topic of Student Professionalism. She identified ten traits of a professional: knowledge and skills of a profession, commitment to self-improvement, service orientation, pride in the profession, covenantal relationship with the client, creativity and innovation, conscientiousness and trustworthiness, accountability, ethics and leadership.

With the use of iClickers, she posed several questions and case scenarios. When asked to rate the professionalism of students in their programs, 7% responded “outstanding”, 30% responded “above average”, 59% responded “average” and 4% responded “poor”. This
was not a surprise to her as she shared that the immediate expectation to transition from “student” to “professional” can sometimes be difficult, and that behaviors that may seem natural and common sense-based to those already in the profession may in fact be new concepts to the students. One of the responsibilities of the pharmacist preceptor is to define professionalism by explicitly stating the expectations and role modeling the behaviors themselves.

Role modeling is an important behavior critical to the development of professionalism in students. Often, students become pessimistic and don’t take the concept seriously. They have shared, anecdotally, that professionalism was pounded into them by their school, but once they arrived at their sites, they witnessed behaviors opposite of what was drilled into them, resulting in inconsistent messages. It is important, therefore, that preceptors role model the behaviors they wish to see in their students.

In an effort to instill the concept of professionalism in its students early on, the University of Arkansas-College of Pharmacy implemented a voluntary leadership program. The students, who did not receive credit for any of these activities, volunteered their time by sacrificing lunch breaks to read books on leadership and participate in activities that honed their leadership skills. The program culminated in a group trip to the local 4-H Center where they engaged in exercises that further developed their leadership, professionalism and team-building skills.

The University of Arkansas-College of Pharmacy also addresses professionalism in its interview process for applicants. They role-play a case scenario in which somebody behaves unprofessionally and then ask the applicants how they would handle the situation.

Dr. Flowers presented the preceptors with several case scenarios and had them respond via iClickers as to how they would handle each situation. The group generated a healthy, interactive dialogue as they discussed the pros and cons of each approach.

Next, the preceptors were given a “How do you act in conflict?” self-test. Based on the results, preceptors were categorized into one of five conflict styles: 1) Withdrawing - “turtle”, 2) Forcing – “shark”, 3) Smoothing – “teddy bear”, 4) Compromising – “fox”, and 5) Confronting – “owl”. Each approach has its pros and cons depending on the situation. Knowing one’s own style, along with that of one’s co-workers, can aid in resolving conflict effectively without hurting relationships.

**Break-Out Sessions**

**Developing an Evaluation Tool to Help Preceptors Assess Student Professionalism**, facilitated by Sarah Lorentz and Marcie Lepkowsky-Harvey: A quick brainstorm of the types of lack of professionalism that the preceptors have witnessed included no-show, tardiness, appearance issues and peer-to-peer conflicts. When teaching professionalism, it’s important to note that while communication skills can be taught and learned, personality factors such as values can not. The preceptor cannot teach a student to value
and appreciate honesty, integrity, etc., but the preceptor can teach a student how to dress and behave while on rotation. It was agreed that professionalism needs to be addressed, taught and engrained throughout the student’s tenure at school, from the first year through the fourth year.

The grading system used at the school might influence the student’s level of effort and professionalism on site. Pass and fail are the only two options. With no incentive to push oneself to exceed, the student may perform at a minimal level and do only what’s required to pass. How do you encourage the student to exceed when exceeding isn’t necessary to pass, and average is okay? Perhaps revisiting and re-evaluating the grading system would be beneficial. Another suggestion was to somehow “weed out” the minimalists during the application process, however, it was duly noted that everyone is on their best behavior during interviews and this might not be effective.

The school’s current evaluation tool (the Summative Evaluation) was evaluated in context of grading professionalism. The evaluation consists of four sections, one of which is “Communication and Professional Behavior”. Professionalism itself is represented by only one line item: “Demonstrates Professional Behavior. – attire, demeanor and conduct – maintains patient confidentiality – independent, but not autonomous – collaborates, respectful of others”. Having just one line item on professionalism could inadvertently send a message to the students that it’s not as important a concern as some of the other criteria. Also, because it represents a minor fraction of the overall grade, failing the student due to serious lack of professionalism is difficult. A potential solution is to modify the current evaluation by creating a fifth section called “Professionalism” with line items such as punctuality and attendance issues; interaction with patients, staff and healthcare professionals; presentations; etc. This would make professionalism one-fifth of the total grade rather than a small fraction of one section. In addition to this new section, anyone interacting with the student could contribute to the evaluation, eg., patients and staff. These changes would send a message to the student that professionalism is serious. Another suggestion is to create a new evaluation from scratch.

The preceptor plays a role in the student’s level of professionalism. On day one, expectations should be explicitly stated, and continuous, ongoing feedback should be given. Students should be prepared by the school to accept constructive criticism from their preceptors regarding professionalism.

Developing a Professionalism Seminar for Students, facilitated by Rosene Pirrello: The group first noted that the concept of professionalism needs to be reinforced on an ongoing basis beginning in the first year and ending just before they begin their fourth-year rotations, with emphasis placed on rotation-specific aspects of professionalism. The students should feel empowered to discuss professionalism expectations (eg., dress code) with their preceptors. Preceptors should spell out consequences if expectations are not met, with an understanding of cultural differences taken into consideration, eg., religious traditions.
In a Professionalism Seminar for students, topics should include the following:

- **Activity in Professional Associations**: Not only should the seminar point out the resume benefits, but it should also explain the fulfillment one gets through these activities.
- **Definition of Professionalism**: What it is and what it isn’t.
- **Documentation**: The seminar should discuss documentation regarding their journals, portfolios, how they chart their observations and how they interact with patients, staff and other healthcare professionals.
- **Emphasize self-learning, self-growth, self-care.**
- **Transition from student to colleague**: This piece could cover basic etiquette issues, such as using “please” and “thank you”. Discuss how they would like to be perceived by patients, staff and other healthcare professionals.
- **Feedback**: Let them know that feedback is part of the rotation experience and they should expect to receive it. Preceptors should make the students aware that feedback is coming by using phrases such as “Are you ready for some feedback?” or “Is now a good time to discuss your performance so far?”
- **General respect for self & others**
- **Ethics & law**: Make the differences between job responsibilities of pharmacists, interns and technicians clear.
- **How to handle unforeseen situations with patients**
- **Personal responsibility**: Discuss what it is and how to prioritize.
- **Giving back – generate a legacy**: P4s can be good role models for P1s.
- **General listening & communication skills**
- **The Summative Evaluation**: Present the Summative Evaluation and review grading criteria.
- **Re-review interviewing skills**: CV writing, appearance, communication.
- **Seeing each patient as ‘your patient’**

The most provocative suggestion from the group: Implement an in-class dress code to reinforce professionalism on a daily basis.

The two break-out session groups reconvened and shared their results with each other. The preceptors would like to be updated on the discussion and implementation of their suggestions by the school. They stressed the importance that the discussion should not end with the conference, but that action steps should be taken to improve professionalism among our students. With some closing thoughts from Charles Daniels and Schwanda Flowers, the 5th Annual Preceptors Conference drew to a close.