

AACP Excellence in Assessment Award Application Abstract

The integration and assessment of professionalism in PharmD programs is a critical challenge facing pharmacy educators today. Emphasis on student pharmacists demonstrating professionalism through an inter-professional lens is evident in the CAPE outcomes and the ACPE standards. The University of Georgia PharmD program engaged in a two-year process evaluating professionalism within its curriculum and culture.

Ideally, assessment of professionalism involves simply developing outcomes, coming up with a perfect intervention to achieve the outcomes, evaluating them, telling the world, and celebrating perfection. However, our experience evolved from the less than ideal. Faculty members noticed disintegration in professional behavior. Students noticed to and came to us wanting to do something. Our experience demonstrates how excellence in assessment can evolve and emerge from a realization of disconnections between standards and culture. Responding to real needs identified by students and faculty led to transformations in our culture and curriculum. This experience reminds us that listening to students is vital to the assessment cycle. Students shared their concerns about poor student attitudes towards professionalism and the lack of accountability. These same concerns emerged in committee meetings as part of our assessment cycle.¹

Concerned students worked with a faculty member and the Director of Assessment to administer a professionalism survey to students. Survey data was shared with key administrators, faculty members, and PharmD students. The data offered insight into student perceptions of professionalism. However, it was evident that continued exploration of themes that emerged was warranted.

The Dean created a Professionalism Task Force and charged the group with conducting a comprehensive review of the College of Pharmacy's definitions, policies, culture, and evaluation of professionalism. The task force met regularly for a year. The task force developed follow-up surveys, utilized focus groups of the faculty and students, analyzed literature, and sought feedback from other institutions with comparable situations in an effort to be thorough.

As a result, the task force developed recommendations for implementing new programs and initiatives around professionalism and the implementation is a college-wide effort led by the Assistant Dean for Strategic and Academic Initiatives.

The core recommendations from the task force that are now being implemented into practice include the following:

1. Developed a working definition with an acronym for seven components: RX DAWGS
2. Include this working definition in all syllabi, policies, and handbooks

¹ A visual representation of our assessment cycle is in Appendix A.

3. Build orientation for new students around RX DAWGS
4. Introduce and emphasize RX DAWGS in the recruitment and admissions process
5. Incorporate RX DAWGS into the expectations of all co-curricular organizations and offer awards
6. Develop training for preceptors around RX DAWGS
7. Develop an Essentials of Pharmacy Practice course that is taught each semester that focuses on small group interaction and simulations related to essential pharmacy skills with an emphasis on professionalism in an inter-professional context.

The first 4 recommendations were implemented during the 2013-14 academic year and the last three will be implemented as part of a new curriculum set to launch during the 2015-16 academic year.