

White Paper on the Role of Schools and Colleges of Pharmacy in Developing and Administering Combined/Dual Degree Programs

June 2005

Background:

The professional curriculum in pharmacy is designed to produce generalist practitioners of pharmacy. Most programs are highly structured, allowing little time for students to develop expertise in other areas of interest. Combined/dual degree programs may allow students to obtain two degrees (e.g. PharmD/MBA, PharmD/PhD) in less time than it would take to obtain each degree separately. Thus, one of the likely benefits of some of these programs would be to help alleviate the shortage of pharmacy faculty. Successful dual degree programs must possess a high degree of coordination in order to meet the standards of quality required for completion of each degree. According to information collected by AACP on dual degree programs anticipated being offered during the 2005-06 academic year (Table 4 in *Pharmacy School Admission Requirements 2005-06*, pp. 99-100), 41 Schools and Colleges of Pharmacy either offer, or plan to offer, a dual degree program. Three schools offer non-licensure eligible pharmaceutical sciences degree programs, and one of these is combined with an MBA. Table 4 is attached to the report as *Appendix 1*.

Council of Deans and Council of Faculties Joint Taskforce Committee:

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Richard Jackson (Mercer), COF
John Murphy (Arizona), COF
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Charges:

1. Gather information that best describes the state of combined/dual degrees at our member institutions.
2. Use this information to make recommendations in the form of resolutions requesting actions by the AACP Board of Directors.

Report:

With the help of AACP staff member Dr. Ken Miller, a survey tool was developed and distributed to all ACPE accredited Schools and Colleges of Pharmacy in March 2005. A copy of the survey tool is provided as *Appendix 2*. The survey was divided into two main parts. The first part surveyed dual degree programs where students are enrolled concurrently in both degree programs. The second part was a survey of programs that prepared students to enroll and complete a second degree after graduation from pharmacy school. A summary of the results of the survey, along with charts, is attached as *Appendix 3*.

A total of 53 Schools and Colleges of Pharmacy responded to the survey, out of which 23 said that they presently offered a dual degree, and 14 schools responded that they offered programs that prepared students to enroll and complete a second degree after graduation from pharmacy school. Graduate degrees combined with the PharmD degree that are being offered include MS and PhD degrees in medicinal chemistry, pharmaceuticals, pharmacology, social/administrative/economic sciences, and clinical sciences, as well as one MS program in Gerontology, one MS program in Pharmaceutical Engineering, one MS program in Library Science, and one MS program in Health Management. Professional degrees combined with the PharmD include MBA, MPH, MPA, JD, and PA degrees. Of these programs, the most subscribed to are PharmD/MBA programs (246 students currently enrolled, 119 graduates over the last three years) and PharmD/PhD programs (38 students currently enrolled, 13 graduates over the last three years).

The status of PharmD/PhD programs in Schools and Colleges of Pharmacy was recently assessed (May 2004) by a group at the University of Tennessee headed by Dean Dick Gourley. Dean Gourley kindly provided a draft manuscript entitled "Status of PharmD/PhD Programs in Colleges of Pharmacy: The University of Tennessee Dual PharmD/PhD Program" authored by D.R. Gourley, C. Rowell, L. Wingate, C.R. Yates, G.K. Gourley and D.D. Miller, to our Task Force Committee. Results of the study indicate that there is wide variation in the level of the PhD concentrations offered and in the level of integration of various programs. Attrition rates were approximately 20%, and the most frequent profession of graduates of the programs was academia (approximately 48%). Thus, these programs have the potential to help alleviate the present and projected faculty shortages in the sciences.

The status of PharmD/MBA programs has not been as well characterized, particularly in regards to positions taken by graduates of these programs and job trajectories. Anecdotal responses to our survey indicate that a greater percentage of these individuals take their first position in managed care organizations and the pharmaceutical industry, and that it may help them in obtaining second positions with more managerial responsibilities. Few, if any, of these graduates appear to take positions in academia.

Remaining dual degree programs enrolled far fewer students, and no information was available on what positions graduates of these programs took.

For those Schools and Colleges who responded to the survey, the most important reasons they offered dual degree programs were to provide an additional means to attract and recruit excellent students and to prepare graduates for either an academic pharmacy career or an alternative non-academic pharmacy career (refer to Survey Results, *Appendix 3*, question 5). The major reasons students enroll in dual degree programs is that it permits them to complete two degrees in less time and broadens their employment opportunities (refer to Survey Results, *Appendix 3*, question 6).

Recommendations :

1. WHEREAS only one PharmD/PhD dual degree program has been fully characterized;

Resolved that the AACP Academic Affairs Committee or Research and Graduate Affairs Committee obtain more complete information on other PharmD/MS and PharmD/PhD dual degree programs from institutions who enroll two (2) or more students/year into these programs regarding major limiting factors for students enrolling in these programs at their institutions, program requirements, additional costs and funding of the programs, time to degrees, success rates, and career trajectories and present positions of graduates of the programs.

- 2, WHEREAS there are a large number of students either enrolled or who have graduated from PharmD/MBA programs;

Resolved that the AACP Academic Affairs Committee establish a Task Force to obtain more complete information about PharmD/MBA programs regarding major limiting factors for students enrolling in these programs at their institutions, numbers of students admitted each year and admissions criteria, program requirements, additional costs and funding of the programs, time to degrees, success rates, and career trajectories and present positions of graduates of the programs.