University of California San Francisco
UCSF
School of Pharmacy

Creating a Culture of Professionalism

THE FIRST STEP IN A LIFELONG JOURNEY

University of California, San Francisco

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Objective

To cultivate a culture of professionalism as student pharmacists enter the PharmD program.

Background

- Professionalism is a foundation of the UCSF PharmD program. Begins with admission and extends throughout the curriculum.
- Culture—A group's assumptions, values, beliefs and expectations. Manifested in behaviors, norms, rituals and symbols.

Dimensions of Culture	
Behavior	language, customs, traditions
Group Norms	standards and values
Espoused Values	published/announced values
Formal Philosophy	mission
Rules of the Game	policies, procedures, conduct, rules of society
Climate	climate for individual and group interactions
Embedded Skills	professional competencies
Group's Shared Meanings	goals and objectives, purpose, commonly held definitions
Symbols	associated signs, designs or emblems, images that represent the group
Source: Schein,1992	

- Traditionally, orientation programs have been "information rich, but culturally poor"
- Faculty have been concerned about a lack of "professional" behavior by students
- Faculty have assumed that students knew School's expectations
- Students and alumni have lacked a strong linkage
- Foundation for developing professional skills—communication, collaboration, consensus building, problem-based learning—needed to be strengthened
- Entering student pharmacists' pride, motivation, and enthusiasm can be captured and cultivated

Methods

- First steps in building professionalism begin prior to arrival
- Implement orientation initiatives throughout first quarter to:
  - Encourage awareness and reflection on professional issues
  - Facilitate integration into School's academic and professional cultures
  - Create an environment that supports professional behavior
- Build upon core concept of the "student pharmacist"

Alumni Board of Directors' Calls

- Alumni Board of Directors call and e-mail admitted student pharmacists in the early summer
- Discuss profession, campus, what to expect and respond to questions about the profession
- Provide pharmacy careers guide

Purpose:
- Welcome student pharmacists to the UCSF School of Pharmacy family
- Help student pharmacists identify alumni as partners, resources in their education and professional life

Faculty/Student Pharmacist Breakfast

- Instructors of first-year classes and faculty leaders are invited to have breakfast with entering student pharmacists during orientation
- No agenda—focus on informal interaction

Purpose:
- Encourage student pharmacist/faculty interaction
- Establish norm for informal student pharmacist/faculty contact

"Becoming a Pharmacist" Panel

- Panel of faculty, 4th-year student pharmacists and pharmacy practice residents discuss their development as professionals and the academic/professional climate and expectations at UCSF
- Prior to the session, entering student pharmacists respond to the question: "What does it mean to be a professional?"
- Panelists discuss entering student pharmacists' responses

Purpose:
- Discuss pharmacy school as beginning of "professional journey"
- Initiate discussion of professionalism
- Discuss how the professional-level academic experience—and expectations—differ from undergraduate education

Oath of a Pharmacist Workshop

- Oath of a Pharmacist is distributed prior to session; student pharmacists are asked to review and be prepared to discuss
- Opening session—background on Oath; workshop goals
- Small group sessions (10 students) are led by clinical faculty
  - Review the Oath of a Pharmacist and discuss its meaning
  - Discuss the Oath's implications for student pharmacists and professional education
- Report out as large group; each small group summarizes discussion on one statement in the Oath

Purpose:
- Introduce student pharmacists to Oath they take during White Coat Ceremony; provide for reflection on its meaning
- Discuss values expressed by Oath; implications for student pharmacists
- Forum for discussion of faculty expectations of student pharmacists

Student Leadership Session

- Second- and third-year student pharmacists introduce student professional organizations
- Community service projects are highlighted
- Student pharmacists receive guide to leadership positions and involvement opportunities

Purpose:
- Orient students to student chapters of professional organizations
- Highlight opportunities for networking, professional advocacy and education
- Focus on development of professional skills: leadership, communication, interpersonal
- Reinforce public service orientation

Orientation to Diversity

- Affirmative Action/Diversity staff show video and lead general discussion on diversity
- Student pharmacists complete "Cultural Heritage Exercise" in small groups; share personal stories; discuss and reflect on insights
- Report back and process as large group
- Reflect on implications for student pharmacist community; role as health care providers

Purpose:
- Create a climate of mutual respect
- Increase sensitivity to different experiences and outlooks
- Promote understanding and foster an open and inclusive community within the School
- Develop a better understanding of how culture impacts the giving and receiving of health care services
- Introduce concept of "cultural competence" in health care delivery

White Coat Ceremony

- Ceremony is held at midpoint of first quarter
- Welcoming words from faculty and alumni
- 4th-year student pharmacist speaker
- Student pharmacists are coated by faculty and alumni, families present
- Student pharmacists take Oath of a Pharmacist; are presented with copy of Oath from AACP

Purpose:
- Welcome student pharmacists to the profession and to School
- Mark the transition from student to student pharmacist
- Create a memorable significance to the Oath and to the white coat
- Reinforce sense of classmates as professional colleagues

Results

- Orientation initiatives introduce student pharmacists to key aspects of the School's professional and academic culture:

Dimensions of Culture	Examples
Behavior	All initiatives
Group Norms	All initiatives
Espoused Values	White Coat Ceremony, "Becoming a Pharmacist" Panel, Oath of a Pharmacist Workshop, Student Leadership Session
Formal Philosophy	Oath of a Pharmacist Workshop
Rules of the Game	"Becoming a Pharmacist" Panel, Oath of a Pharmacist Workshop, Student Leadership Session
Climate	All initiatives
Embedded Skills	"Becoming a Pharmacist" Panel, Oath of a Pharmacist Workshop, Student Leadership Session
Group's Shared Meanings	"Becoming a Pharmacist" Panel, Oath of a Pharmacist Workshop, White Coat Ceremony
Symbols	White Coat Ceremony

- Response by student pharmacists, faculty and alumni has been overwhelmingly positive.
- Student pharmacists' evaluations show these sessions to be the most highly rated in formal orientation program:

Workshop	% rating session good or excellent
"Becoming a Pharmacist" Panel	97%
Faculty Introductions	96%
Faculty/Student Pharmacist Breakfast	93%
Oath of a Pharmacist Workshop	91%
Student Leadership Session	74%
Other orientation events	71 – 89%

- Student Pharmacists' Comments

Faculty Interaction/Breakfast

- *Close interactions with faculty outstanding.*
- *Hearing the faculty speak and meeting them made it clear how approachable they are.*
- *It's great that the faculty are so involved in orientation. It makes it easier for me to approach them in the future…*
- *Interaction with faculty and the dean…took away the intimidation factor.*
- *The faculty/student breakfast allowed us access to our professors and get to know them.*

- Student Pharmacists' Comments (continued)

"Becoming a Pharmacist" Panel

- *Perspectives enlightening.*
- *Panel discussion helped settle the questions you didn't know to ask.*
- *Helpful to be able to ask questions about the field and what lies ahead of us.*
- *Hearing the pharmacist panel—very motivating. I feel so welcomed and comfortable here.*

Oath of a Pharmacist Workshop

- *Oath made me think much more of what I am entering.*
- *Oath of a Pharmacist was indispensable.*
- *Provides meaning to Oath and White Coat Ceremony; provides correct mind-set.*
- *Oath was inspiring and a good reminder for students that the oath begins from day one.*
- *It opened my eyes to the importance of our profession. Oath helpful in instilling the right mind-set for starting our careers.*
- *Oath—inspiring and enlightening to learn the thoughts and feelings of other students in the class.*
- *I wasn't too excited about spending three hours discussing professionalism. However, the discussion was helpful and intriguing!*

Orientation to Diversity

- *The experiences of other classmates taught me more about who my classmates are and about diversity issues.*
- *I really enjoyed getting to know my classmates better on these very personal issues that we wouldn't typically sit and talk about. It builds trust, respect, and camaraderie.*
- *Really helpful for our profession.*
- *Hearing about everyone's stories makes you realize what makes us different also makes the "family" unique.*
- *I learned how important it is to collaborate with other people of different backgrounds.*

- Faculty are enthusiastic about new roles; faculty participation has been excellent.
- Student pharmacists enter with varying perspectives on the concept of professionalism; benefited from discussion with peers and faculty.
- Connection with alumni reinforces significance of alumni network and extent of alumni support.
- Highlights professionalism as a foundation of the student pharmacist experience—from day 1.
- Provides venue for faculty to discuss professional values and to share expectations.
- Creates enthusiasm about school and environment; student pharmacists' participation in leadership programs is extremely high.
- Builds community among students, faculty, alumni.
- Student pharmacists are enthusiastic and receptive to hearing faculty perspectives; discussions reinforce professional mind-set; create shared expectations.
- Comments from first-year student pharmacists indicate they hold peers accountable for shared standards. Student pharmacists increasingly use the term "unprofessional" when referring to concerns about the actions or behaviors of classmates.
- Oath of a Pharmacist first implemented in Fall 2003; feedback suggests need to focus on positive examples of professional behavior. Student pharmacists appreciate time spent discussing meaning, context for Oath taken at White Coat Ceremony.
- White Coat Ceremony has been extremely popular for student pharmacists and families; connection to Alumni Association essential. The timing of the ceremony—the midpoint of first quarter—provides a "lift" in the midst of exams and coursework. Ceremony enhances class bonding, creates enthusiasm and reinforces student responsibility.

Implications/Discussion

Orientation is a critical time to introduce students to the concept of professionalism. The involvement of faculty and administrative leaders is crucial in helping students learn about the expectations and values in professional pharmacy education and the profession.

A formal or systematic post-evaluation of these programs has not been done. The effectiveness of these programs will continue to be revealed as students move through the curriculum and into APPEs. Faculty evaluation of the impact of these initiatives has been anecdotal.

These programs have heightened students' expectations. Student pharmacists have been more forthcoming about what they expect from faculty and the educational program, with the professionalism theme referenced regularly. As we become more explicit about expectations for professional behavior in student pharmacists, they in turn have been more direct about their expectations of faculty and the School.

The orientation initiatives represent only the first steps in the School's approach to reinforcing and developing professionalism.

Faculty and staff have a responsibility to help student pharmacists learn the culture and expectations of our programs; all students benefit from learning directly about the values, behaviors and standards of the programs they enter.

As the expectations are made more explicit, student pharmacists become valuable partners in sustaining an environment that supports professional behavior.

References

Edgar H. Schein (1992) *Organizational Culture and Leadership. 2d. Ed.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

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