Analysis and Implementation of Co-Curriculum Experience in a School of Pharmacy

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INTRODUCTION

The 2016 ACPE Standards emphasize the need for a deliberate and purposeful co-curriculum to foster and document student pharmacists’ competency in the affective domain-related expectations of Standards 3 and 4. The co-curriculum relates to activities that complement the academic learning experience, particularly activities that engage students with opportunities to learn and refine technical and cognitive skills as they relate to personal and professional development, leadership, self-awareness, innovation and entrepreneurship. These attributes foster responsibility, critical thinking, advocacy, and ethical behaviors that contribute to student pharmacist curricular requirements. The Committee also collaborated with the Office of Academic Affairs to develop a guidance document for the School of Pharmacy. Throughout its development, the School and professional practice. Here, we describe the design, development, and implementation of co-curricular requirements for a developing School of Pharmacy.

Co-CURRICULAR EVALUATION FORMS AND RUBRICS

A standing Co-Curriculum Committee was charged by the Dean of the School of Pharmacy to develop the co-curricular learning outcomes, requirements, assessment criteria, and co-curricular policies, procedures and programming. Committee membership included faculty appointed by the Dean, representative from the Office of Student Affairs, the Office of Experiential Education, and student representatives from each class. Once formed, the Committee met weekly, for over a year, to develop co-curricular requirements.

The Committee first worked to develop Co-Curricular Learning Outcomes (Co-CLOs) that capture the affective domain-related expectations of Standards 3 and 4. The Committee carefully considered the assessment component of the co-curriculum throughout its work. Accordingly, each Co-CLO was mapped to the School’s programmatic learning outcomes and this mapping was included on each co-curricular assessment piece to facilitate assessment efforts. Throughout its work, the Committee also considered the personalization of each students’ co-curricular interests. To this end, the Committee developed a guidance document for the Pharmacy Student Handbook that included class-specific co-curricular requirements (including reflections) with due dates and examples of co-curricular engagements that satisfy the four areas of personal and professional development, leadership, self-awareness, innovation and entrepreneurship. RxPortfolio provided a unique sandbox for students to upload and document their co-curricular engagement, so that they could be shared with and assessed by faculty advisors. The Committee also collaborated with the Office of Academic Affairs to develop a pass/fail zero-credit course, to ensure that co-curricular requirements were tied to student progression.

Co-curricular requirements were fully implemented for the 2017-2018 academic year and student engagement in leadership, professionalism, self-awareness, and entrepreneurship were assessed. A total of 114 students were required to complete their respective professional year’s co-curricular requirements by April 1st of the academic year. Of the 114 students, seven (6%) failed to complete the co-curricular requirements. For those students failing to complete the requirements, a co-curricular remediation plan was developed by the Co-Curriculum Committee. The remediation plan included a personalized action plan (PAP) approved by the Committee and sent to the students. All students were given a deadline to complete the IAP and informed that failure to complete the requirements could impede their progression into the following professional year. Importantly, all student passed the co-curricular non-credit course. Of the 7 students failing to meet the co-curricular requirements, 57% the students failed to satisfy leadership expectations. Based on assessment data, the Committee is revising expectations for the upcoming School year to ensure that (1) the co-curricular expectations are reasonable, (2) adequate programming resources and opportunities are in place to help students execute their co-curricular requirements (3) and that measures of the affective domain development are evident.

DISCUSSION

Affective traits are as important to the success of future pharmacists. Efforts to develop areas of the affective domain in student pharmacists are often overshadowed by the necessity of committing volumes of therapeutic information to memory and mastering complex practice skills. The co-curricular components described herein, may be leveraged and modified by Schools/Colleges of Pharmacy across the academy as they seek to execute their respective co-curricula and develop successful graduates.

REFERENCES