The Design & Integration of Pharmacy Curricula Across Disciplines: University of Utah College of Pharmacy Experience

Patricia Orlando, PharmD1; Don Blumenthal, PhD2; Craig Henchey, PhD3; Alisyn May, PharmD1; Heather Nyman, PharmD1; Hanna Raber, PharmD1; Jaclyn Winter, PhD4; James Herron, PhD5

1Dept. of Pharmacotherapy; 2Dept. of Pharmacology & Toxicology; 3College of Pharmacy; 4Dept. of Medicinal Chemistry; 5Dept. of Pharmaceutics

ABSTRACT

Curricula are evolving within Utah pharmacy schools in response to ACPE standards 1-4 that propose students should no longer be expected to make linear connections between scientific, clinical, and patient care applications. Indeed, curricular designs favor integrated approaches to connect basic science with patient care applications. The new UUCOP integrated curricula is designed to make these connections and provide an interdisciplined professional training program for future clinical scientists, educators, and practitioners. As part of major curriculum revisions in 2015, the UUCOP developed a series of three integrated Pharmacotherapeutics courses combining pathophysiology, medicinal chemistry, pharmacology, and pharmacotherapy during the P2 and P3 years. Two pharmacy and two basic science disciplines work together to oversee and deliver this curriculum. NEUROLOGY MODULE (11 Days / 28 Contact hours)

- Seizures & Epilepsy
- Migraines
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Dementia

Recitation #1: Skills & Logic
- Neuropharmacology review
- Jeopardy
- Logic skill building

Recitation #2: SOAP Notes
- Patient counseling
- Migraine study development
- Patient seizure cases
- Medical Chemistry activity
- Written SOAP note

Recitation #3: Counseling
- Pharmacology debate
- Patient Parkinson’s Disease cases
- Medical Chemistry activity
- Patient counseling with graded rubric

BACKGROUND

- What does a pharmacist in 2025 look like?
- Pharmacy education has engaged in widespread curricular changes to better prepare graduates to assume increased responsibility for patient care
- Sustainable change in practice is driven and maintained by the practice community
- Integrated curricula emphasize evidence-based practice and quality improvement approaches

- Most students learn best by problem solving activities that utilize immersion principles and encourage students to build on existing strengths and knowledge to master new content and skills
- Integrate PharmD pathways across 4 disciplines
- Use the integrated curricula to better prepare providers for the future and train leaders in the profession of pharmacy

LESSONS LEARNED

- Importance of ongoing communication between faculty disciplines with ownership across departments
- Develop modular content as an interdisciplinary team (Pharmacology and Toxicology / Medicinal Chemistry / Pharmacotherapy)
- Be flexible with curricular content during rollout to address unforeseen problems and mitigate student angst

WORK IN PROGRESS

- Providing oversight of entire 3-semester integrated series (shuffling content / inserting / dropping content)
- Adding back flexibility & timing of lectures to accommodate changes in faculty schedules (faculty backups)
- Formalizing faculty governance within curricular administration (changes from department-owned to College-owned courses)

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