Preceptor Orientation and Development: Highlights from a National Survey

OBJECTIVE
This study was designed to identify preceptor orientation and development program successes and challenges at US Colleges and Schools of Pharmacy.

METHODS
An anonymous 28-item survey was administered in January 2017 to experiential education administrators (EAs) of accredited US Schools and Colleges of Pharmacy. Data from the survey were tabulated and qualitative answers to open-ended questions were examined using thematic analysis.

RESULTS
RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS
85 EAs participated in the survey (67% overall response rate)

Number of students in the entering class of 2015
40 (47%) < 100
22 (26%) 100-199
15 (18%) 150-199
8 (9%) > 200

PRECEPTOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS
How frequently live programs are offered
- Monthly < 10%
- Bimonthly 10%
- Annually, campus, e-learning 40%
- Annually, campus, in-person 30%
- In-person with(client) or without a didactic component 15%
- 1x-2x annually and webinar 15%
- On-demand with campus events 10%

What types of online preceptor development programs are offered
- Commercially available programs through a monthly or bimonthly subscription 30%
- Self-created, live group sessions for online learners 40%
- Recorded webinars 15%
- Written word, as part of a print document 15%
- Interactive module with recorded sessions, survey responses, quizzes, articles, or similar 5%

Most popular topics for live programs
- Meeting with difficult student situations 40%
- Giving feedback to students 30%
- Addressing individual student needs 25%
- Generalism, humanism 15%
- Preceptor-patient change in relationship, ethical, legal, other student topics 15%

Additional preceptor development programs
- Individualized preceptor development was through site visits (20%) and when specific issues arise (41%)
- 29% of respondents require preceptor development in order for a preceptor to remain active in their experiential program
- 59% of respondents collaborate with other schools in creation of preceptor training programs

Percentages of schools with non-personnel spending on preceptor development
- Programs with an investment > $10,000 annually generally featured multiple venues (live and online) for preceptor development

Personnel investment in preceptor development
- Preceptors with high personnel investment most frequently described dedicated site visitors who provided group or individualized preceptor development.

Innovations in orientation
- Use of blended preceptor orientation that includes online modules with a yearly webinar to update or ‘orient’ all preceptors
- Staff person dedicated to orientation
- Orientation includes exercises for application of content

IMPLICATIONS
Preceptor orientation programs are similar but development programs vary between Schools. Programs devoted the most resources to preceptor development either invested in live and online programs or in site visitors who provide orientation and/or individualized feedback to preceptors or sites.