VIEWPOINTS

Sharing Our Wealth

Lucinda L. Maine, PhD

Executive Vice President and CEO, American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy. Alexandria, Virginia

This issue of the *Journal* includes articles describing evaluations of 2 national train-the-trainer programs developed and implemented by University of California, San Francisco, (UCSF) faculty members and their colleagues from other institutions. While the contents of the programs are distinct (cultural competence and tobacco cessation) the findings provide important lessons and implications for American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP) and our members.

There are several key similarities in the 2 content areas developed and shared in these programs. First, while most schools likely would acknowledge both areas to be germane and important to pharmacy students and pharmacy practice, not many schools would likely have a great depth of faculty expertise to use in developing materials for integration in required or elective courses. Pharmacy school accreditation standards, which were under revision as these train-the-trainer programs were designed, delivered, and evaluated, place greater emphasis on both content areas. Equipping students to work with an increasingly diverse workforce and patient population is spoken to directly in Standards 2007.¹ Tobacco cessation would be included broadly in the 2004 CAPE Outcomes as part of the public health curricular content receiving more emphasis in current standards.²

Evaluation data from both projects suggest that Drs. Assemi and Corelli and their teams approached their efforts in a way that met faculty needs and expectations. High quality, evidence-based materials provided adequate background on the topics covered. Resources in the form of slide sets, cases, and other active-learning exercises were provided to those trained. Web-based resources and important reference materials were compiled and made accessible. All of this increased the likelihood that these projects would meet their ultimate objectives of expanding the coverage of this content in curricula across the country. Most participants declared their ability and intent to incorporate the material into courses upon their return to their campuses.

The work of these faculty leaders is to be commended and AACP is pleased to have played a role, albeit a small one, in helping these faculty members with their projects.

For the tobacco cessation program, UCSF faculty requested a letter of support from AACP which facilitated their efforts to secure funding from the National Institutes of Health. In this letter, AACP pledged support to facilitate communication regarding the programs through various channels. That assistance was easy to provide and would be offered to other initiatives promoting shared curricula. In fact, AACP is also working with Dr. Bruce Berger from Auburn University on yet another train-the-trainer program, in this case, in the area of motivational interviewing.

The expanding role of pharmacists necessitates coverage of a dizzying and diverse array of content and new skills. Identifying the mechanism to decrease the burden and redundancy of preparing these materials is increasingly important in this era of rapid expansion of colleges and schools and persistent faculty shortages. Excellent teaching can be supported through the exchange of peer-reviewed teaching resources within pharmacy education and across the other health education disciplines. Networking opportunities beyond the live course offer great potential for continuous curricular innovation and collaboration in scholarly activities.

AACP has slowly worked to develop a system for sharing curricular resources using the Association's web site to organize materials that have been developed in a variety of different projects. Other organizations, including the Association of American Medical Colleges, have embarked on projects to make quality teaching resources available to faculty members. The Health Education Assets Library offers a model and potentially a platform for sharing relevant course resources.

The Council of Faculties considered a resolution in 2006 urging AACP to expand activity to make curricular resources accessible, but the suggestion generated concern among some faculty members and was defeated. Concerns about quality were voiced; additionally concern was expressed that faculty positions could be jeopardized if content in a particular discipline was readily accessible. In light of the current shortage of qualified faculty members and increasing numbers of new pharmacy schools, this issue should be revisited.

The evaluations from participants in the UCSF train-the-trainer programs suggest that there are areas where sharing teaching resources makes sense and is valued by participating faculty. Standard 26 holds all schools responsible for attending to the continuous professional development of faculty and preceptors.¹ These programs offer one avenue for very productive faculty development that yields benefits to the faculty member, students, the institution and ultimately society.

REFERENCES

1. Accreditation Standards and Guidelines. Chicago, Ill: Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education; 2007. Available at: <http://www.acpe-accredit.org/standards/default.asp>. Accessed November 8, 2007.
2. American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy, Center for the Advancement of Pharmaceutical Education (CAPE), Advisory Panel on Educational Outcomes. Educational Outcomes, revised version 2004. Available at: http://www.aacp.org/Docs/MainNavigation/Resources/6075_CAPE2004.pdf. Accessed November 8, 2007.