LETTERS

Proposed Guidelines for Uniformity of Postgraduate Industry-Affiliated Fellowships

Finding detailed information regarding industry-affiliated fellowship opportunities can be a significant challenge for doctor of pharmacy (PharmD) graduates who decide to pursue postgraduate training. We recommend *Post-PharmD Industry Fellowship Opportunities and Proposed Guidelines for Uniformity* by Larochelle and colleagues as it highlights the need for uniformity and gives a repository listing to help inform and advise applicants regarding fellowship programs.¹ We also support the recommendations to develop accreditation standards and categorize these programs in order to help pharmacy students evaluate the diverse fellowship opportunities available to them upon graduation. We would like to introduce a collaborative fellowship program that was not included in the original 131 programs identified by Larochelle and colleagues, and to provide additional suggestions to the proposed guidelines for uniformity.

The Regulatory Pharmaceutical Fellowship jointly sponsored by Purdue University, the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Ortho-McNeil Janssen Scientific Affairs, and Eli Lilly and Company, has been in existence for more than 10 years and offers 2 post-PharmD industry fellowships specializing in drug information and drug advertising and promotion. The purpose of the Regulatory Pharmaceutical Fellowship is to train selected candidates in 1 of these 2 tracks focused on the medical and regulatory aspects of drug information dissemination or prescription drug marketing. The program enhances the scientific link among the FDA, academia, and the pharmaceutical industry, providing the fellow with an opportunity to develop an understanding of the process and practices of the FDA and the pharmaceutical industry in the delivery of drug information, and the regulatory oversight of prescription drug marketing practices. The fellowship is a two-year program consisting of 3 major learning experiences; a 9-month rotation with the FDA Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (CDER) (Silver Spring, MD); a 9-month rotation at Eli Lilly and Company (Indianapolis, IN) or Ortho-McNeil Janssen Scientific Affairs, LLC (Raritan, NJ), and a 6-month rotation in the Department of Pharmacy Practice with Purdue University School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences (Indianapolis, IN). Fellows become an integral member of the departmental team at each practice site. Alumni of this program have been successfully

recruited for positions within industry, government, and academia.

To account for the growing diversity seen with programs like ours, we recommend that the proposed categories for post-PharmD fellowships be expanded to include programs that have affiliations with a governmental agency (eg, FDA) or other organization (eg, pharmacy associations, nonprofit organizations, etc). In addition, as most post-PharmD industry-affiliated fellowship programs include extensive experiences in the academic setting, we would like to propose that the purpose of the fellowship program include the development of competency to also practice in academia or government. With this addition, the preceptor qualifications should also be broadened to include preceptors working outside of the pharmaceutical industry.

We are encouraged by the proposed recommendations made by Larochelle and colleagues and look forward to the development of a formal categorization and accreditation process for post-PharmD industry fellowship programs.

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REFERENCES

1. Larochelle PA, Giang DK, Silva MA, Kcomt M, Malloy MJ, Kay S, Ku MT. Post-PharmD Industry Fellowship Opportunities and Proposed Guidelines for Uniformity. *Am J Pharm Educ*. 2009;73(1):Article 20.

Industry or Academia - The Proverbial Question

Most researchers see industry careers as their future, and rightly so as there is more money and growth in industry compared to academia. At the beginning of our careers, most of us believe that research will not be much different, whether it is in an academic setting or industrial environment. But this is far from truth. In fact there is a world of difference between the 2 settings as illustrated by the following comparisons:

Options and choices. In academic research the doors are wide open. Faculty members have the option to select their own research topics. They can work independently and invest time in research that they totally believe in. In

industry, research is more or less governed by the market demand. Projects are decided in advance, and research is undertaken according to a specific plan. Specific time-lines must be met, and the progress of projects is monitored by regular discussions and updates.

Publication of work. In the academic world, researchers are known by their research and list of publications. Hence, in academic settings, more emphasis is placed on publication. Researchers also are encouraged to present their work at symposiums and conferences. In industry, researchers are recognized based on project management skills and the end product of their research rather than the innovativeness or experimentation put into the research. Thus, it is rare to see people in industry publishing the results of a research project.

Resources and funding. There has always been a dearth of good funding for academic research. Also, resources like laboratory equipment and facilities are limited for academic researchers. Academic researchers often have to rely on external organizations to complete those aspects of their research that require the latest technical equipment and expertise to interpret complicated data. In industry, the availability of the latest equipment,

coupled with easy access to resources, helps researchers complete projects in a timely manner. Almost all research is completed in-house with a multidisciplinary group working on each project.

Career Options. If they stay in academic research long enough, faculty members may fulfill the dream of setting up their own research laboratory. They also may become a part of professional educational bodies and serve as evaluators of research proposals and research findings. If they want to concentrate a significant amount of time in the laboratory, industry may not be the best option because in industry, after a few years of research, pharmaceutical scientists get drawn into the corporate environment, where management takes precedence over bench research, and they eventually become decision makers.

Whether to work in industry or academia will always remain an important question for every researcher to answer. Given all the pros and cons, in the end it is all about personal choice.

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