AACP REPORTS

A4: Access, Affordability, Accountability – and Acceleration Address of the 2014-2015 President to the Opening General Session at the AACP Annual Meeting

Patricia A. Chase, PhD

A year ago as I assumed this office, I took you all on an excursion and compared the changes in higher education and healthcare to whitewater rafting – a favorite West Virginia pastime. This is indeed an exciting and challenging time – a period of monumental change. The changes are so great and happening so quickly, that it can be difficult to process them and respond appropriately and swiftly.

I emphasized that the changes to our environment had three common themes: access, affordability and accountability, and I charged the AACP Standing Committees to study important aspects of our work with these themes as their central focus.

As they have done in the past, each committee embarked on a serious analysis of their charges. The work contained in their reports is extraordinary, far reaching and, in some cases, even controversial! I like to say that in some cases “they poked a few skunks!”

The Academic Affairs Committee, chaired by Kari Franson, took the broadest view of pharmacy education with respect to the three themes and, I have to say, they found some skunks to poke!

Much as Kevin Carey describes in his book, *The End of College*, our committee declared that higher education and more specifically pharmacy education may have become too expensive and too cumbersome—financially unsustainable and failing to adequately meet the needs of our students. Could that be part of the reason we have seen our applicant pool shrink in the past few years?

The remedies proposed by the committee include seriously re-examining our approaches to delivering content, measuring learning achievement, and identifying new collaborative approaches to creating and maintaining an all-encompassing, continuous quality assurance process for accreditation. Their recommendations certainly validate the bold action of the AACP Board of Directors in 2014 to embark on the development of educational games to advance interprofessional education.

Mimycx engages teams of learners in ways that enhance their collaboration in the context of health scenarios and offers faculty members rich data on student learning and team performance.

The Advocacy Committee, chaired by Bob Mangione, considered how AACP and member institutions are positioned to influence public policies, to assist all of higher education in addressing the issues of access, affordability and accountability. Their report guides AACP members to develop effective strategies.

The Professional Affairs Committee, chaired by Charles Taylor, examined the question of PharmD graduate “practice readiness” and specifically the 30% of the pharmacy curriculum dedicated to experiential education. They focused on the value proposition for students, the health delivery system, and our schools from this perspective. They identified a limited body of evidence aimed at demonstrating value, including one study that evaluated almost 60 000 APPE student interventions for one school over an entire year with an estimated value of \$8.5 million.

The Committee declares that we need a new global vision to define and emphasize the value of pharmacy education. The goal would be to advance innovative educational programs that better align with the emerging value-based healthcare environment. This has the potential to reinforce the value of our students and our schools. They urge us to be the leaders in advancing innovative models of pharmacy practice across the United States. And they challenge us to “flip” experiential education – ask yourselves, are your student pharmacists practicing in models that prepare them for the future?

The Research and Graduate Affairs Committee, chaired by Natalie Eddington, has a two-year assignment. This will give them time to complete their charges, as they develop academy-wide recommended competencies for graduate programs. This will include a suggested roadmap for the evaluation of graduate programs. And they will lay out competencies, outcomes and assessment approaches for postdoctoral fellowship programs using the framework articulated in the 2014 NIH Biomedical Workforce Report.

The Argus Commission, comprised of our last five AACP Presidents, took on an analysis of how big data would affect future practice, learning, and research. Of these three mission components, they found that our

researchers are already the most affected by access to and work with “big data” – and certainly we have exemplars who are thriving in this new era of computational power and information sciences. They found examples across all sectors of our research enterprise.

Argus challenges us to consider if we are adequately preparing our graduates for practicing and engaging in quality assurance efforts, immersed in a sea of data that will come from electronic health records, genomic analyses, and personalized-self information sources. But the largest game changer, consistent with recommendations from the Academic Affairs Committee, will be the use of predictive analytics in our admissions practices and in our teaching, learning and student assessment efforts.

In 2013, AACP President Peggy Piascik established a Special Committee on Admissions, chaired by Andrea Wall, which has been working intensely over the past two years to assess the admissions landscape and present recommendations for policy and action to support this critical component of our members’ success. At our annual meeting the AACP Board of Directors requested a detailed plan to intensify AACP’s work in recruitment and applicant pipeline development. At our November Board meeting, we will determine how to accelerate implementation of the recommendations from this important committee.

In the course of their work, our committees discovered that there was, in fact, an “A” missing from the

“access, affordability and accountability” equation. And what do you think that is?

It’s acceleration! The issues these members addressed are so significant that we can’t afford to just talk about them. We must take action now! In some cases the committees found decades-old recommendations for action but insufficient follow-through. In other cases they affirmed that the environments around us – in healthcare and higher education – are changing so dramatically that if we stay the same we are vulnerable.

I am confident that AACP has the vision and the will to take bold and decisive action to communicate the value of pharmacy services provided by our faculty members, students and graduates and, in doing so, enrich the pipeline of future learners. AACP will continue to enable members to introduce innovative learning and assessment strategies to prepare our graduates to improve the cost effectiveness and quality of care for everyone. And through programs like the Academic Leadership Fellows and the Academic Research Fellows, AACP will equip the next generation of academic and research leaders to accelerate change in the academy and in our communities.

While it may feel at times like we are hurtling down the white water rapids, just remember that AACP programs and services are indeed your life preservers! It has been an honor and privilege to serve as your president; truly a capstone for my career.

Thank you for your support!