Dean’s Message

A Commencement Message to the Graduating Class of 2008

I wrote the following letter to myself as if I were sitting with you today, sharing lessons that I have learned over the past 32 years.

Dear Dan,

Congratulations on your decision to enter the pharmacy profession. Pharmacy is so much more than a job. It is a career that over time will reveal a constellation of possibilities. You may think that you want to pursue a career in academic pharmacy, but be open to the many exciting options that become available along the way. Make sure that any position you take will allow you to grow both personally and professionally.

When you took your first internship position you said that you would only stay at that job as long as you continued to learn something new everyday. That credo will serve you well throughout your career and you will come to realize that you only fail to learn when you fail to try.

Understand the importance of being active in professional associations and work with your associations to help you find your political voice. After all, it is the political process that determines if your patients will have access to the medications and health care they need and deserve. Politics will determine if you can maintain a sustainable income and how much you will get reimbursed for filling a prescription. The political process will also define the legal scope of practice that either enables or restricts your ability to serve patients.

You will have many wonderful mentors during your career. Learn from them and occasionally thank them for their contributions to your success. Be generous with your time when others seek your counsel. Participate in teaching by sharing your knowledge and experience with future generations of pharmacists. Mentoring and teaching will be
among the most gratifying aspects of your life.

When you meet someone new, consider that you could be starting a 30 to 40-year relationship. Your network will grow one person at a time and with a strong network, anything is possible. I am so proud to say that the first and most important member of my network is Jackie, my wife of 39 years.

There is a misconception about charitable giving. You are probably thinking that there will be a day when charitable giving will make a lot more sense than it does now. Maybe after you have a home; after you pay off some student loans; after that new car, or after the children are grown. The truth is — giving is an act of caring and caring is an unselfish pleasure that you can enjoy at any time. Do your part. Winston Churchill said, “we make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give.”

The world is full of people who complain about the status quo. Don’t be one of them. Do something to create the future you want for yourself, your family, and your profession. Take on the big challenges because they often bring the biggest rewards. You have a wonderful career ahead of you as long as you contribute to the success of those around you and you are guided by honesty, integrity, and conviction.

Best wishes for a wonderful future. I will be following your career with great interest.

Sincerely,

Daniel C. Robinson, PharmD, FASHP
Dean, College of Pharmacy
Western University of Health Sciences

Concept inspired by a senior pharmacy student project at Butler University. See Amazon.com “Prescription to my younger self: What I learned after pharmacy school”.

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DONOR RECOGNITION

We would like to thank the following individuals for their generous support of Western University of Health Sciences, College of Pharmacy.

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Student Accomplishments

APhA Students Most Improved Chapter

The WesternU chapter of the American Pharmacists Association (APhA) won a national award at the association’s Annual Meeting and Exposition March 14-17. WesternU’s chapter received the “Most Improved Chapter of the Year” award, given to the single chapter that has shown the most progress from the prior year. They were judged based on all of the activities APhA hosts both on campus and off campus, including health fairs, professional events and its mentorship program, among other activities. The award consists of a plaque and a $200 honorarium. More than 120 schools were represented at this meeting and exposition, and 36 WesternU pharmacy students represented the university.

Legislative Day and Legislative Day Awareness Night

The First Annual Legislative Day Awareness Night was hosted by the APhA/CPhA, NCPA and ASHP/CSHP Student chapters on March 21, 2008 in our Student Commons. The event helped to prepare students for issues they will be discussing with legislators and their staffs at the CPhA Legislative Day on April 16, 2008 in Sacramento. Among the speakers were several local politicians: Dr. Judy Chu, Chair of the Board of Equalization, Mayor Torres of Pomona, State Senator Gloria Negrete-McLeod of Senate District 12, Assemblymen Mike Eng of the 42 Assembly District. In addition, CPhA President-Elect Dr. Jeffrey Goad, Director of CPhA Membership Theresa Andrews, UPNI Chair Victor Law and Jerry Shapiro spoke to the group. The WesternU students would like to thank the United Pharmacists Network, Inc (UPNI) and the Orange County Pharmacists Association (OCPhA) for their sponsorship of the event. Approximately 30 students and faculty attended Legislative Day in Sacramento well prepared to discuss the 10% state budget cuts and other issues.

continued from page 1...WesternU Honored...

the Corporation for National and Community Service and the Department of Education, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, USA Freedom Corps, Campus Compact and the President’s Council on Service and Civic Participation.

An example of the interdisciplinary approach to community service was the “Healthy Kids Day” event at the Pomona YMCA on April 19, 2008. Students and faculty advisors from the College of Pharmacy and the College of Osteopathic Medicine screened kids and their parents for hypertension, diabetes, weight and vision problems.
In shedding light on health care inequalities due to race and ethnicity, keynote speaker Brian Smedley, PhD, spoke to a group who could make a difference: clinicians, scientists, professors and future health care professionals at Western University of Health Sciences in Pomona, Calif.

Smedley, Research Director and Co-founder of the Opportunity Agenda, spoke at the Ray Symposium at WesternU on April 17, 2008. The Opportunity Agenda, founded in 2004, is a communications, research and policy organization that works across social justice issues to build public support for greater opportunity in America.

WesternU’s College of Pharmacy organizes the annual symposium in honor of Max Ray, MS, PharmD, Dean Emeritus of the College of Pharmacy. He joined WesternU as Professor of Pharmacy Practice and Director of the Center for Pharmacy Practice and Development in 1996 and served as Dean of the College of Pharmacy from 1999 to 2006.

The symposium provides a forum that brings a nationally-recognized speaker to campus to discuss issues of importance to the entire academic community, said Daniel Robinson, Dean of the College of Pharmacy.

“The first step is to become aware of (biases) so as we’re interacting with people, we take the time to learn more about the person we’re interacting with so we don’t fall back on stereotypes to fill in the missing information.”

“In 2002, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) released ‘Unequal Treatment,’ a Congressionally-mandated report, concluding that minority patients receive lower quality care than whites,” Robinson said. “This may not come as a surprise to some, however, when you consider that the disparity persists even after taking into account differences in health insurance, health and economic factors, such disparity is appalling.”

Smedley was the study director of the 2002 IOM report, and the problems addressed by that report have not improved. The 2007 National Health Care Disparities Report by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality concluded, “across all core measures and for all priority groups, the number of measures of quality and access where disparities exist grew larger between 2000 and 2005.”

The reasons for these disparities are complex. Minorities are more likely to be uninsured or underinsured, more likely to live in medically underserved communities, more likely to experience cultural and linguistic barriers to care and they may be victims of subtle bias and stereotyping, Smedley said.

Geography plays an important role. Even minority patients who are well insured often live in communities that lack the
same availability of health care services as predominately white communities, Smedley said. Sometimes hospitals and clinics in minority areas don’t have the same quality of staffing and equipment.

“People of color tend to get a lower quality of health care even when they have the same health coverage and present with the same problems,” Smedley said.

Language is another factor — one in five limited-English-proficient patients avoid seeking care because of language barriers, he said. Also, in many cases, minorities suffer higher rates of chronic diseases such as diabetes.

“Communities that have the highest health care needs often have the fewest health care resources,” Smedley said.

The “Unequal Treatment” report asks if it’s possible that bias and stereotypes cloud the judgment of health care providers, resulting in lower quality of treatment and poorer treatment outcome for minority patients.

On the face it’s an unlikely proposition. Doctors and other health care providers are highly dedicated to their work. The vast majority care deeply about their patients, Smedley said.

But a large body of research shows most people socialized in the U.S. harbor biases they may not be consciously aware of that affect thinking and behavior, such as a pro-white, pro-male viewpoint, Smedley said.

Racial bias negatively affects judgments and diagnostic treatment decisions, he said. Physicians who have a higher pro-white bias are shown to recommend less aggressive, less effective treatments for minority patients.

There are many ways to address the problem.

“The first step is to become aware of (biases) so as we’re interacting with people, we take the time to learn more about the person we’re interacting with so we don’t fall back on stereotypes to fill in the missing information,” Smedley said. “That’s easier said than done. Physicians have a very short time to interact with patients, an average of 12 minutes.”

On the structural side, an important first step is to promote universal, comprehensive health care coverage, he said. Universal coverage might help balance the structural problems of health care resources being allocated most and first to communities with the most money, he said.

Diversity is also important. Some students may not be aware of their options in entering the health field.

“Equality should be among the top four or five issues that health professionals should be concerned about, particularly in this day and age,” Smedley said. “Health professionals have to keep up with this diversity to effectively service the population.”

WesternU students are aware of these issues and exemplify the trend toward more diversity.

“As future health care providers we could at least look for middle ground,” said Peter Reding, DO ’11. “If we don’t see the problems we can’t look for solutions.”

A health care professional should not look at race, said Oanh Trinh, PharmD ’10.

“You look at the patient as a human,” she said.
Janice Hoffman, PharmD '08

Dr. Janice Hoffman received her PharmD from the University of Southern California. She completed a specialty Residency in Clinical/Administrative Psychiatric Pharmacy Practice from the University of Maryland at Baltimore, with an emphasis in geriatrics. Prior to coming to WesternU, Dr. Hoffman was a Consultant Pharmacist and the Clinical Coordinator at Kindred Pharmacy Services in Santa Barbara. She has been Director of Pharmacy at two private psychiatric hospitals. Academically, she has taught in many different programs which include: mentor/preceptor for PharmD students from the University of Southern California, and the University of the Pacific, also as a Clinical Instructor at Moorpark College teaching Pharmacology for undergraduates, teaching Psychopharmacology to graduate psychology students at California Lutheran University, as well as teaching some of the clinical Pharmacy Technician program at Simi Valley Adult School. Her areas of interest include, psychiatry, neurology, geriatrics and diabetes.

Fadi Khasawneh

Dr. Fadi Khasawneh is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences at Western University of Health Sciences. He received his PhD in Pharmacology from the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), Illinois, in May 2007, and his BPharm from Jordan University of Science and Technology, in 1999. Dr. Khasawneh served as a preceptor for the medical pharmacology course at UIC, and also taught organic chemistry, analytical chemistry and pharmacognosy laboratories in the College of Pharmacy at Jordan University of Science and Technology. Dr. Khasawneh joined the College of Pharmacy at Western University in February 2008 to start a thrombosis and platelet biology research program. The major mission of the lab is to be at the forefront in platelet and thrombosis research in gaining new knowledge, and the application of this knowledge to design new therapeutic targets to manage thrombotic disorders, such as heart attack and stroke. Dr. Khasawneh's research activities thus far have led to several scholastic publications in various refereed journals, in addition to over 20 abstracts that were presented at national and international conferences. Dr. Khasawneh is a member of the American Heart Association, the American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics, and the Scientific Research Society of Sigma Xi.

Jesse Martinez

Dr. Jesse Martinez has joined the College of Pharmacy as the Vice Dean for Academic Diversity and Development. This new position in the College, which reports directly to the dean, has been created to enhance racial and ethnic diversity within our student population and to cultivate external funding sources that will support the strategic priorities of the College. Dr. Martinez has been a volunteer faculty member for many years and has been instrumental in teaching part of the Advanced Elective Track for Independent Community Pharmacy Ownership. He also presented the White Coat Ceremony address this past fall to our incoming students.

Doreen Pon

Dr. Pon obtained her Doctor of Pharmacy degree from the University of California, San Francisco. She completed a specialty residency in oncology at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland, and is certified in oncology pharmacy by the Board of Pharmaceutical Specialties. Before coming to Western University she was the hematology/oncology clinical pharmacy specialist at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, California. Her clinical practice specialty areas include leukemia, lymphoma, stem cell transplantation and supportive care, and her research interests include anti-emetics, cost-effective prescribing, and medication safety. She is also interested in providing healthcare to underserved patient populations in the United States and internationally.

Promotion

Jennifer Le, PharmD, has been promoted to Associate Professor of Pharmacy Practice and Administration. She has specialized in pediatric infectious disease and practices at Long Beach Memorial Medical Center. She is also a Board Certified Pharmacotherapy Specialist (BCPS).
Faculty Accomplishments

Faculty Awards Presented at Honors Day, April, 2008

Arezoo Campbell, PhD, Assistant Professor of Pharmaceutical Sciences was awarded the Teacher of the Year Award.

Gollapudi Shankar, PharmD, Assistant Professor of Pharmacy Practice and Administration was honored as Preceptor of the Year.

Eunice Chung, PharmD, Associate Professor of Pharmacy Practice and Administration, Sunil Prabhu, PhD, Associate Professor of Pharmaceutical Sciences and Siu-Fun Wong, PharmD, Associate Professor of Pharmacy Practice and Administration were awarded the Faculty Service Award.

Featured Publications

Dr. Cynthia Jackevicius has made national and international news with her article on differences in prescribing and utilization of ezetimibe in the U.S. and Canada. This was one of two featured articles published in New England Journal of Medicine, April 30, 2008. An interesting consequence of this and a companion article was that the market capitalization of Schering-Plough and Merck dropped by $22.5 billion on the day following release of these studies. Western University of Health Sciences has had a prominent position in the national news as a result of her efforts. She has also published articles in two other prestigious medical journals: Circulation and the Canadian Medical Association Journal. We are certainly proud of the quality of work and the impact that our faculty are having in health care.


Publications


Jacob S, Chen JJ Restless Legs Syndrome in the Elderly. Long-Term Care Interface. 2008 Mar/Apr; 30-35. Review. Publication: In press


Le J Acute otitis media, Rx Consultant, February 2008

Marquez P, Nguyen AT, Hamid A, Lutfy K The endogenous Opi/N/ORN-1 receptor system regulates the rewarding effects of acute cocaine. Neuropharmacology. 2007 Nov 17; [Epub ahead of print]; PMID: 18082848 [PubMed - as supplied by publisher]

Marquez P, Baliram R, Gajawada R, Lutfy K “The role of beta-endorphin in the acute motor stimulatory and rewarding actions of cocaine in mice” Psychopharmacology (Berl), in press


Grants

Lutfy K “Mixed NOP/mu compounds and the involvement of their receptors in analgesia” R01 funded to Larry Toll (PI) of SRI, NIH/NIADA, subcontract ($65,000/year for two years). The grant is funded for four years (10/01/07 to 09/30/11) with total fund being >$1,000,000

Sunil Prabhu (PI) received $118,450 in funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), National Cancer Institute (NCI) sponsored R03 program for his research on colon cancer chemoprevention entitled “Combined Chemoprevention Using A Nanotechnology-based Therapeutic System”. Ying Huang and Jeff Wang serve as co-investigators on this two year grant.

Scott JD, O’Barr S “A comparison of the effect of selected Protease Inhibitors and Non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors On T-cell function”. Funding source: Abbott Labs, $50,850.25
Alumni Giving

Darryl Moore, PharmD '01 made a generous gift of $2,000 to the Debbie Robinson Scholarship fund. This enabled us to present a $1,000 scholarship to Daniel Liou '08 and to Rozita Taghdis '08 at Honors Day.

Dr. Moore is the owner of Real Time and RX Staffing & Solutions, Inc., a health care staffing registry. He goes out on assignments as a contract pharmacist through his company and is also currently the chief pharmacist of Chuckawalla Valley State prison in Blythe, CA.

While in pharmacy school, he had to overcome numerous obstacles. He recently wrote us:

I was a single parent with two daughters ages 5 and 6 years old and I was 36 years old when I started the program at WesternU and was definitely a late bloomer by any standard. I worked after school at least 20 hours a week at the U.S Postal Service in order to fulfill my obligations as a father while still chasing a dream. I slept in my car on several occasions, because I couldn’t afford gas to make it back home. I appreciate the opportunity that I was given to attend Western University of Health Sciences College of Pharmacy. I also thank God, the faculty and the students there that made the dream for me a reality. “Nothing is impossible, if you believe.”