ACCREDITATION COUNCIL FOR PHARMACY EDUCATION
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February 8, 2023

Dear Pharmacy Dean:

The ACPE Board of Directors met at the end of January, and I would like to share items from that meeting that may be of interest to you.

Extended Pathway

ACPE staff have received several inquiries about the possibility of establishing an "extended pathway" within the Doctor of Pharmacy program. An extended pathway is a mechanism whereby the timeframe students are given to complete the academic pharmacy program is extended to a maximum of 1.5 times the standard 4 academic years. Reasons for desiring an extended pathway vary between programs.

Should a program wish to adopt a formalized extended pathway, the ACPE Board of Directors will require a substantive change notification as well as the submission of a comprehensive academic plan (as described in ACPE's policies and procedures) that demonstrates how the program will remain in compliance with all of ACPE's accreditation standards. The Board will require a focused visit to vet the program's readiness to deliver the extended pathway and care for students. An extended pathway would require an added increase in the program's annual assessment fee. As a reminder, all pathways would fall under ACPE's philosophy of "one accreditation, multiple pathways" meaning that issues in any pathway will affect the program's accreditation in its entirety.

A primary goal of the "extended pathway" comprehensive academic plan would be to demonstrate equivalency to the standard that states the length of the PharmD program as being of four academic years or equivalent (key element 10.1). Please note, an extended pathway must be less than or equal to 1.5 times the standard 4 academic years. No extended pathway can exceed 6 years. The extended pathway must be compliant with university policies on program length where applicable and state licensing laws.

Programs are cautioned that entry into an extended pathway must be a deliberate and an informed decision on the part of the student and the program. Admission to any pathway must be based upon faculty-endorsed admissions criteria that are applied by an admission committee after considering the applicant's likelihood of success in advancing through the Doctor of Pharmacy curriculum.

Admission Interview

Staff continue to receive questions regarding what is required for a PharmD program admission interview. In addition to the information provided in the April 2022, Dear Dean letter (https://www.acpe-accredit.org/pdf/DearDeanApril2022AdmissionInterviewLetter.pdf), the ACPE Board of Directors asked that we remind programs that individual applicant interviews must be part of the interview process. Video recordings and group interviews have their place in the interview process should a program employ these techniques but a solo interview with a single candidate must also be included that is either in-person or technology assisted.

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Nontraditional PharmD Programs

Please note that nontraditional PharmD program (NTPD) students must complete the 4 required core rotations with a minimum duration of at least 4 weeks as outlined in Key Elements 13.4 and 13.6. The program will be required to provide documentation for a collective total of 1440 hours of APPEs that include the 4 core rotations and elective offerings. If a NTPD student has a rotation waived, a formalized faculty assessment must be used to document achievement of the outcomes of the waived rotation. All aspects of any program offering a NTPD pathway should be addressed in the program's self-study process and will be reviewed by the onsite evaluation team members during the program's comprehensive evaluation.

Public Health Emergency and Distance Education

The Biden administration announced last week that it will end the COVID-19 national and public health emergencies on May 11. This means federal agencies—including the Department of Education (USDE)—will be phasing out several flexibilities put in place nearly three years ago. As you are aware, the US Department of Education has provided guidance to accreditors that allows schools and colleges to continue to use distance education without the normal ACPE approval process for the duration of the national emergency declaration and 180 days following the date on which the COVID-19 national emergency declaration is rescinded. It is highly recommended that you contact ACPE staff now to discuss the various requirements if you plan to offer distance education that is greater than 25% of your didactic curriculum rather than wait until the end of the waiver period. ACPE policies require the following: if distance education is used to deliver more than 25% of the didactic courses, a program will need to submit a substantive change. If a program plans to deliver 50% or more of the didactic courses via distance education, then a comprehensive academic plan (as described in ACPE's policies and procedures) will also need to be submitted. ACPE requires *one-year advance notice* for the addition of a distance campus or the implementation of distance education for an existing college or school. This notification is required to allow ACPE sufficient time to conduct the evaluation needed to ensure readiness and continued compliance with the accreditation standards. Failure to comply with the one-year notice requirement constitutes grounds for review and potential adverse accreditation actions.

Job Placement Survey Results

One hundred and forty-two programs responded (100% response rate) to the survey with 14,453 graduates from 141 programs. One program did not have graduates for AY2021. Findings from the job placement survey indicated that 79.28% of graduates in AY 2021 were engaged in the profession with either employment or postgraduate training or education. However, 18.76% of graduates were lost to follow-up so the job placement number may be higher. A total of 1.96% of graduates reported being employed outside of the profession.

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NAPLEX Scores

The National Association of Boards of Pharmacy (NABP) has posted the North American Pharmacist Licensure Examination (NAPLEX) Passing Rates for 2020-2022 Graduates (https://nabp.pharmacy/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/NAPLEX-Pass-Rates-2022.pdf). As a reminder, a program accredited by ACPE is required to post on its website the most recent year's NAPLEX results for first-time takers as found on the NABP website. Please remember to update your website with the current 2022 results.

ACPE staff are available to answer any questions you have about these or any other items. You can reach us via email at: csinfo@acpe-accredit.org or feel free to reach out to Greg Boyer, Mary Kiersma, Dawn Zarembski, Jacob Gettig or myself directly.

Sincerely,

Janet P. Engle

Janet P. Engle, PharmD, PhD (Hon), FAPhA, FCCP, FNAP
Executive Director