



Fostering the Professional Identity of PharmD Students Through a Required Leadership Program

Brooke Fidler, PharmD, CHSE and Tracey Hodurski, RPh

Arnold & Marie Schwartz College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, Long Island University, Brooklyn, NY



Background

- Demonstrating and internalizing leadership and professionalism are necessary skills and attitudes for pharmacists to be successful throughout their careers
- Pharmacy educators play a key role in supporting professional identity formation which focuses on developing a strong connection to the profession of pharmacy
- Leadership and professionalism are two sub-domains of the new curricular outcomes and entrustable professional activities (COEPA) that all PharmD graduates should demonstrate

Objective

- The purpose of this study was to evaluate the impact of a required student leadership program on professional identity formation, specifically the area of leadership and effective communication

Methods

- Inclusion criteria were PharmD students enrolled at LIU Pharmacy and held an executive role during the 2023-2024 academic year
- Students who met the inclusion criteria were required to attend a 7-week, in-person, 60-minute session leadership program developed and instructed by LIU Pharmacy faculty
- A leadership workbook was developed for the students to utilize and self-reflect throughout the program
- The session topics included but were not limited to how to be an effective leader, challenges as a leader, leadership styles, managing meetings, leveraging LinkedIn profiles and conflict resolution
- Multiple teaching strategies were utilized throughout the program (i.e., workshops, think-pair-share)
- Students were asked to complete a pre and post survey to identify the impact of the program on their leadership skills
- The LIU Institutional Review Board granted the project exempt status

Results

- A total of 72 PharmD students participated in the leadership program in Fall 2023
- Response rates were 40% (29/72) and 57% (41/72) for the pre and post survey, respectively
- Majority of students who completed the pre (68%) and post (79%) survey were third professional year students
- 58.6% of students who completed the pre-survey held a leadership position during the previous academic year 2022-2023



Survey Question	Pre-Survey No. (%) of students, n=29 Agree/Strongly Agree	Post-Survey No. (%) of students, n=41 Agree/Strongly Agree
I feel prepared to be an effective student leader during the 2023-2024 academic year	28 (96.5)	41 (100)
I know how to effectively run a meeting	25 (86.2)	41 (100)
I know how to manage conflict among others on my team	27 (93.1)	41 (100)
I can adapt to the different personalities and utilize all the strengths of my team members	26 (89.7)	40 (97.6)
I feel confident in my communication skills	27 (93.1)	41 (100)
I know how to manage my time well	23 (79.3)	38 (92.7)
I know how to manage my stress well	21 (72.4)	39 (95.1)
I am comfortable delegating tasks to others	22 (75.9)	39 (95.1)
I know how to give constructive feedback to my peers	24 (82.8)	41 (100)

Acknowledgments: Dean Lisa Topolski, Assistant Dean for Student Academic and Professional Affairs

Results (cont.)

After completing the leadership program...	Post-Survey No. (%) of students, n=41 Score of 4/5*
I held effective meetings or participated in team meetings, in which my team understood the message and to do's	37 (90.2)
I engaged team members to participate in events and took initiative	39 (95.1)
I communicated with team members clearly and timely	38 (92.6)
I was able to minimize and resolve conflicts that arose during the academic year	37 (90.2)
I have collaborated with other organizations on school events	35 (85.4)

*Rating: 1 star is no experience and 5 stars is successful in performing leadership task

Conclusions/Implications

- A structured leadership program can help foster student's professional identity formation as it relates to leadership and effective communication
- More than 85% of the students felt they improved upon their leadership and communications skills after completing the program
- A positive impact was observed in both those students with previous leadership experience and those new to their leadership role
- Time management, coping with stress and delegating tasks are areas that students need to continue to improve upon
- Feedback from students confirmed that proper application of the skills and attitudes taught in the program provided better outcomes when they engaged with other members of the pharmacy community
- Potential to create a leadership certificate program for interested PharmD students in the New York City area

References

- AACP. Professional Identity Formation available at <https://www.aacp.org/article/professional-identity-formation> May 2024.
- Johnson et al. Preparing Pharmacy Educators as Expedition Guides to Support Professional Identity Formation in Pharmacy Education. Am J Pharm Educ 2023 Jan;87(1): Article 8944.
- AACP Curriculum Outcomes and Entrustable Professional Activities (COEPA) 2022. Available at www.aacp.org May 2024.