

# Establishing a New Student Organization - Inclusive of both Graduate and Professional Students

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# Background

This poster describes lessons learned from establishing a new student organization at a School of Pharmacy, outside of the usual PharmD organizational structure, to include primarily graduate students, while also including professional students with research interests. The poster describes the vision, implementation, difficulties, and leadership development for the students.

### Vision

A primarily graduate student organization was envisioned as part of the Biophysical Society. The vision for the organization's mission was centered on the development of a series of events focusing on 1/ scientific and professional development, 2/ service and outreach, and 3/ networking and socializing.

# Implementation

The Biophysical Society (<a href="https://www.biophysics.org/">https://www.biophysics.org/</a>) is a national organization, increasing in prominence in research in pharmacy schools in terms of drug discovery, with many graduate and professional students being members. Comparable to the traditional American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists (AAPS), student chapters are included, but logistics for establishing such chapters are not clear at the campus level.

# A major problem encountered was: Where does the organization "fit" within the University structure?

This was important for official signatures for documentation and financial aspects. The traditional SGA (PharmD) said it wasn't part of their structure, the UGSA (graduate) said it wasn't part of their structure, and the University said it wasn't part of theirs....it was pass-the-parcel.

### **Administrative Solutions**

A strong faculty advisor was necessary, along with dedicated leadership within the students. Involving Associate Deans helped to some extent, but every institution is going to be different, and require their own approaches. This results is strong leadership development for the students

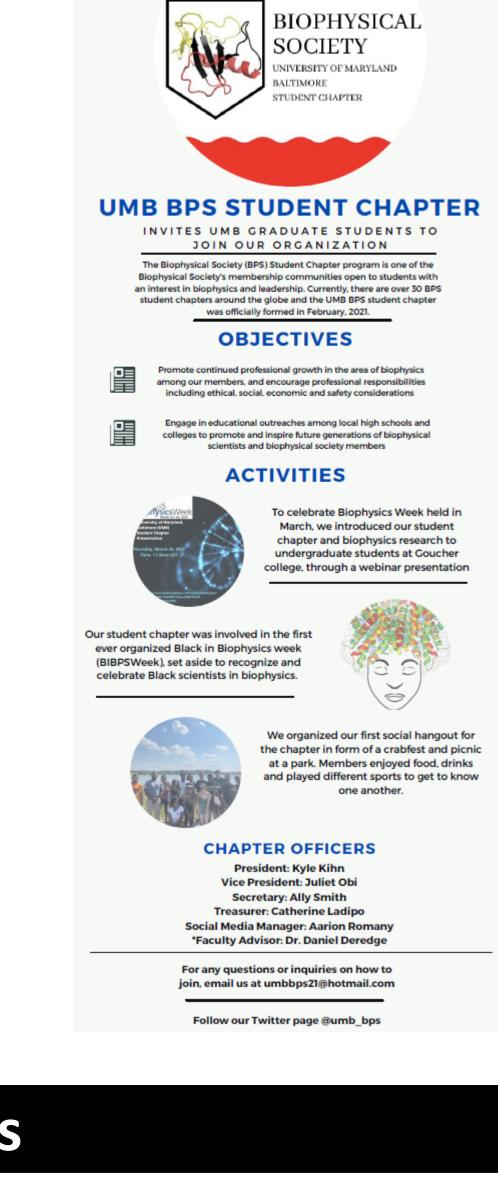
#### **Events**

In spite of the administrative issues, the main three goals described in the vision were embraced by the student members. These included:

Presenting research at professional meetings
Community outreach events to Baltimore
Networking events for career prospects
Recruitment activities for future students









# Conclusions

The need for a faculty champion was essential, as was the critical mass of faculty and graduate students with an interest in the area for long-term health of membership. Important considerations for the strength of the organization are core principles consistent with aims of the graduate student body — research, professional development, networking, outreach, and recruiting. The recruitment was particularly important, as current students are far better prepared to reach potential students than faculty.