

# The Pitt Capsule

THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH  
SCHOOL OF PHARMACY



## Greetings Student Pharmacists!

Josh Niznik, APhA-ASP President

February was quite a busy month with the many events of Pharmacy Weeks! APhA-ASP recognized several students and faculty members at this year's Pharmacy Formal for their contributions to our chapter and the School of Pharmacy as a whole. This year, Faculty Member of the Year was awarded to Dr. Lauren Jonkman and our Student Member of the Year was awarded to Katie McGuire. Congratulations to both! The example set by these two individuals is something that we hope to see in all of our student members - commitment to and involvement within the profession of pharmacy.

The APhA Annual Meeting will take place at the end of this month in sunny Orlando, Florida. The APhA Annual Meeting is an opportunity for students and pharmacists from across the country to network and learn from each other. It is also an opportunity for APhA-ASP chapters to be recognized for the hard work that they do each year. Last year, our chapter was awarded the Region 2 Generation Rx Award and was named the winner of the "Make Your Mark T-Shirt Contest." The University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy has gained quite a deal of recognition on the national level at the APhA meeting over the past few years. I am confident that our continued efforts to provide students with learning opportunities and make an impact on patients will not go unnoticed this year and in years to come.

Moving forward, our newly elected and appointed officers are beginning to transition into their new roles to serve on

the APhA-ASP E-Board. I am confident that our new executive board members will lead our chapter forward and provide even more opportunities for students to develop your professional skills for future practice as pharmacists. Congratulations to the newly elected and appointed members of our executive board!

President-Elect: Erica Wilson

Policy VP: Kelsey Moss

International VP: Chelsea Henderson

Interprofessional VP: Ryan Winstead

Professional Development VP-Elect: Dylan Atkinson

Patient Care VP-Elect: Kayley Hayes

Communications VP: Daisy Zhu

Social VP: Jessie Lewis

## Patient Care Committee: Updates!

Meera Vachhani, Patient Care VP

First off, we just want to thank everyone who has helped in any APhA-ASP Patient Care project this semester! We really appreciate your hard work and we are excited to continue to work with you. Here are some updates for each operation; feel free to get involved, it is never too late!

For Generation Rx, we are continuing to work hard on our new project, PHARxM, which is aimed at educating parents on the dangers of prescription drug abuse. We will be sending out sign-ups for students to present soon, so watch your email if you are interested in presenting! The high school presentation, lecture series, and drug disposal tabling

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are also continuing, so please let us know if you have want to get involved with any of those continuing projects!

Operation Self-Care is focusing on allergies as they continue their Pills and Popcorn presentations at dorms, while Operation Heart is working on holding a mini health fair in conjunction with Operation Self-Care and Operation Diabetes later in March at Bellefield Dwellings. Operation Diabetes is also planning on holding a diabetes-focused health fair at the end of the semester, and we will need lots of help for that! If you are looking to do something, there will be plenty to do for this health fair!

As always, sign-ups for things will be sent out via email/posted on the Porxal as soon as they are available! We will be sending out applications for new operation leaders after Spring Break so there is still plenty of time to get involved if you are interested! As always, don't hesitate to let Katie or I know if you have any questions, concerns, or comments!

## P2 Class Update

Georgina Waldman, Class of 2016

The P2's are getting ready to pull out the swimsuits and migrate south – away from the below-freezing Pittsburgh temperatures. Luckily, spring break is right around the corner and some of us are venturing far and wide to find some sun. We are also starting to pick our IPPE rotations for next year, some starting the week after spring finals! We are certainly growing up fast, and P3 year will be on us before we know it. Until then, we will keep thinking warm thoughts and getting excited for spring break and Legislative Day in Harrisburg!

## The Pitt Capsule:

Editor: Nicole Romstadt  
pittcapsule@gmail.com

## Contributors:

Josh Niznik  
Meera Vachhani  
Georgina Waldman  
Karen Hoang  
Nicole Romstadt  
Alex Morgan  
Jocelyn Hatfield  
Jessica Lewis  
Andrew Nguyen  
Kevin Ordons  
Allison Doherty  
Ravi Patel  
Aaron Devanathan

## P3 Class Update

The P3s are thankful to have survived a brutal week of exams and assignments to end the month of February! Only six more exams until graduation – almost there! The P3 students are anxiously awaiting the results of the rotation lottery and are excited to plan for rotations. Over Spring Break, some students will be at their IPPE sites for one week, while others will be off enjoying a much needed two weeks of break!

## AMCP Elections

Alex Morgan, AMCP Secretary

Next month AMCP will be having elections for officers next year! Officers will be President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, P&T chair, and P2 class representative. Any questions at all or if you are interested, please let us know!

AMCP Annual is also coming up April 1-4 in Tampa, FL. There will be talks on drug trends, improving medication use, managed care research, infectious disease challenges, and cancer care. There will also be a specialty pharmacy conference that will include managing specialty drugs, how specialty pharmacy integrates into the ACO model, how coupon cards and patient assistance programs affect specialty pharmacy, and much more. If you are interested in attending or have any questions, let us know!

## Kappa Psi keeps busy!

Karen Hoang, Corresponding Secretary

February was a very busy and productive month for Kappa Psi! We kicked off the month with a blanket-making event with the Pitt Grad chapter where we made fleece blankets for Project Linus, which provides blankets to children in need. We had a great time socializing with graduate brothers while learning how to make blankets. Later in the month, brothers traveled to Salisbury, Maryland to attend the Mountain East Province Spring Assembly. Brothers from our chapter conducted workshops at the meeting on Robert's Rules of Order and on how to build a strong collegiate chapter. We had a blast getting to know brothers from other chapters and are eagerly looking forward to the next assembly that will be hosted by the Duquesne chapter in Pittsburgh this fall!

Another fun event we held was our annual Black and White Party. Brothers and their dates came out in their classiest black and white formal wear and some brothers from the Duquesne chapter came out to mingle as well. Fun superlative awards were voted on and given out such as "Cutest Should Be Couple" and "Most Likely to Win Survivor." Upcoming events include elections for our pledgemaster and rush chair positions as well as a committee retreat to build committee bonds and brainstorm ideas for the committees for this year!



*Pittsburgh Grad and Beta Kappa brothers make cozy blankets for Project Linus!*

## PLS Auction was a HUGE success!

Nicole Romstadt, PLS Secretary

The Annual PLS Auction, benefiting the Grace Lamsam charity was a huge success! Students and faculty bidders raised over \$12,000 for charity, which was \$4,000 more than

last year! The highest grossing auction item – raising \$1,000 – was the Faculty Happy hour with the P3 Class. Thank you to everyone that planned, attended, donated and purchased items at this event. A special 'thank you' to Dr. Drab, Dr. Pschirer, Jessie Lewis and Dylan Atkinson for acting as auctioneers for the night.

PLS members are looking forward to planning a Pirates tailgate event in the spring for the PGY2s and Dr. Pater, who purchased this event!

Phi Lambda Sigma was excited to hand out the acceptance letters earlier this month and we are excited to welcome so many wonderful new members! Congratulations to Joni Carroll, Lana Avshalumov, Katelyn Grossman, Tyler Halfhill, Kelsey Moss, Dan Nelson, Neil Turco, Dylan Atkinson, Maddie Chavara, Alex Marshall and Brian Terreri on your acceptance! New members will be inducted at the PLS/Rho Chi induction ceremony at the Pittsburgh Athletic Association on **Tuesday, March 25th**.



*Top: Auctioneers Dylan Atkinson, Dr. Drab, Dr. Pschirer and Jessie Lewis pose for a picture after the auction. Bottom: Trey Draude, Georgina Waldman and Mallory Wiersch work together to sell raffle tickets at the auction.*



## Educating the Girl Scouts

Jocelyn Hatfield, LKS Corresponding Secretary

This semester LKS has put their Generation Rx project into action – meeting with local Girl Scout troops to talk to them about medication abuse. Rebecca Tokarski (P3) is the Dean's Theme Chair for LKS, and has led a committee of sisters to create an interactive presentation for these events. The average age for the girls we reached out to was 10 years old (4<sup>th</sup> grade), so the committee had to be creative in ways to present the information and make it understandable by the girls. Topics included were: what is a prescription drug, what do they look like, and general answers to questions such as “what would you do if someone offers you prescription medications”. At the end of the meeting the girls receive a pin that can be worn on their sash to show their involvement in a medication-related session. Working with the Girl Scouts has been a unique (and entertaining!) way to interact with students and teach them about medication abuse. Great Job, Rebecca!



*The Sisters of LKS present at a local Girl Scout troop.*

## Rho Chi has a busy February

Nicole Romstadt, Rho Chi Historian

Rho Chi would like to congratulate and welcome all of the new P2 members! We are excited to welcome the new additions to our society at the Rho Chi/Phi Lambda Sigma induction ceremony on March 25<sup>th</sup> at the Pittsburgh Athletic Association.

The Posters and Professors event was a great success. Students had the opportunity to view posters presented by the faculty members on the television screens in 402. This annual event connects faculty and students, fostering interest in research and a greater understanding of faculty areas of expertise and projects outside of the classroom.

Rho Chi members continue to present monthly ‘Health Talks’ at the Salvation Army Adult Rehabilitation Center. February’s topic was Smoking Cessation and Relaxation Techniques. The men are always very interested and ask lots of great questions!

Rho Chi’s Auxiliary Label Project for the Dean’s Theme, GenerationRX, is moving forward. The committee chairs are currently having the auxiliary labels for proper drug disposal printed. The next step is to gain approval from pharmacies interested in using these labels!

Lab cards have been distributed to those students who purchased a set. Thank you to everyone who bought cards!

Finally, Rho Chi members auctioned off a First Friday Dinner at the Enrico Biscotti Co. in the Strip District. This dinner event which was purchased by faculty members at the PLS auction. Rho Chi members will have the opportunity to dine with faculty members over a tasty, family style dinner!

## Pharmacy Weeks Recap, and Spring Events

Jessica Lewis, ASP Social VP

Another huge thank-you from the Social Committee for everyone’s work during pharmacy weeks! I hope it was a great time for everyone both involved in the planning process and the attendees. For those who may not have made it to some of the events, here is a quick recap.

LKS Dr. Salk Hall winner was the ever-dashing John Lyons, and Janetta Geronian stole the show as crowd favorite for her hip-hop dancing at the Talent Show. Also, P1 student Taylor Watterson won “biggest loser” at the Talent Show (because her vocals were way too impressive for words). The students kicked the professors’ butts during Family Feud, and PLS raised an all-time record high of over \$12,000 at the auction for the Grace Lamsam Pharmacy Program. Finally, students danced the night away and looked fantastic in formal wear at the Westin for the Phormal. Congratulations to our chapter award winners for the year: Dr. Lauren Jonkman for Faculty Member of the Year, Katie McGuire for Student Member of the Year, Rising Stars Alison Merkel, Jenny Zhao, and Megan Dunlop, and Unsung Hero Andy Nguyen. Thanks for all of your involvement and dedication this year!

Everyone has a little break to recover from all of the fun from pharmacy weeks, but look forward to a new event for

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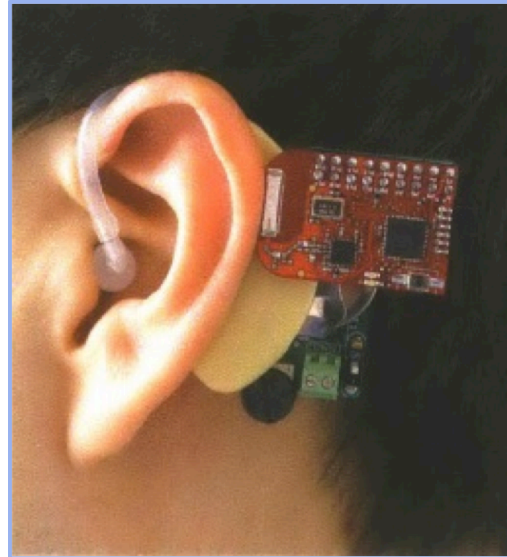
the spring: Pharmacy Price is Right! This will be held in Scaife 6 at 7:00pm on Monday, April 7<sup>th</sup>. Contestants will be called down from the audience to participate in Price Is Right games, involving, you guessed it....drug prices! All for the chance to win some incredible prizes. So channel your inner Bob Barker and make sure to come out to guess your prices!



*Top: Mallory Wiersch, Josh Niznik and Jessie Lewis present P3, Andy Nguyen, with the 'Unsung Hero' award at the ASP Formal. Middle: P3 students Juliann Keffer, Stephanie Cotugno, Amanda Jaber and Tara Bastawrous enjoying ASP Formal. Bottom: Kappa Psi FPC '13 perform at the No Talent Talent show.*

## Tech Update: Quanttus ear-worn heart monitor

Andrew Nguyen, Class of 2015



Last month, we looked at smart contact lenses, which tracked blood sugars using tears. To continue with the theme of wearable gadgets, a startup company from MIT has introduced an ear worn heart monitor. This monitor would be able to collect more than half a million vital sign data points (a lot) per day. The usefulness of this data is that you would be able to essentially see the trends of your heart vitals throughout the day, every day. The company and CEO, Shahid Azim, are trying to market this device as one that “blends with life instead of interrupting it”. Obviously the finished product that is marketed will be smaller than the picture above, but it will be interesting to see where this concept goes in the future. With the flood of “medical” devices into the market, it will be interesting to see how different companies try and set themselves apart from the rest. To what part of the body will the next device be attached to and what will it do?

## Phi Delta Chi - Mu Chapter Updates

Kevin Ordons

*Elections:* It's hard to believe it's that time of the year again, but PDC elections were held the last week of February. The results are listed below. Best of luck to the new officers as they begin transitioning into their roles! We are pleased by the excitement and enthusiasm shown by this group of guys. We look forward to seeing our organization move forward next year!

- Worthy Chief Counselor: Will Wilson
- Worthy Vice Counselor: Dylan Nelson
- Worthy Keeper of Records and Seals: Brent Milovac
- Worthy Correspondent: Cam Ninos
- Worthy Keeper of Finance: Alex Cockerham
- Worthy Alumni Liaison: Luke Walker
- Worthy Prelate: Mike Diduch
- Worthy Master of Arms: Matt Bruno
- Worthy Inner Guard: Tyler Hoffman
- Academic Chair: Nick Ruzzi

*Service:* Each month, the brothers have been hosting events and talking to patients at the Jewish Community Center in Squirrel Hill. This semester brothers have selected a topic for each month. In February, the brothers spoke to and counseled many patients on dietary supplements. Brothers presented information on the topic, constructed posters to display, and made handouts to give to patients. The event was a huge success, so everyone is looking forward to March and April where diabetes and hypertension will be highlighted.



*Regional conference:* At the end of February, the Mu chapter sent six brothers to the Great Lakes Regional conference in Lima, Ohio. The brothers spent time interacting with members of all the chapters in our region. Events included a banquet, workshops, and social events. It served as a great opportunity to connect and bring together our region as a whole for a weekend. Brothers brought lots of fresh and successful ideas from other chapters back to Pittsburgh to continue to grow and improve the Mu chapter.



## SSHP election results are in!

Allison Doherty, SSHP Business Manager

The Student Society of Health-System Pharmacist is excited to announce the newly elected members of our executive board for the 2014-2015 academic year! Our President-Elect, P2 student Dan Nelson, will fulfill his role as President next year. The following students will be serving with him to continue to make SSHP a success:

- President-Elect: Kerry Moore
- Vice President: Sophie Yang
- Business Manager: Brendan Homanick

The current executive board wishes the newly elected officers the best for the upcoming year, and will be working to make the transition as smooth as possible. We will be looking to appoint chairs for the next academic year as well. P2 student Valerie Nolt, as our Professional Project Chair-Elect, will become the Professional Project chair next year. The available chair positions include Professional Project Chair Elect (must be a P1), and Career Development Co-Chairs (can be a P1 or P2).

While we look forward to the next academic year, this semester is not over, and SSHP still has plenty of great events for members to be involved in. Our Poison Prevention initiative will give members several opportunities to raise awareness. We will be having presentations at an elementary school and a YMCA, as well as presentations at local health fairs in collaboration with the Poison Prevention Center. The contraception education for undergraduate sororities project is still happening this semester, with several more sessions with chapters on campus coming up.

SSHP wishes all student pharmacists a happy and successful semester. Remember to "Like" us on Facebook if you haven't already for the most up to date information, and feel free to email us with any questions about projects or events at [pitt.sshp@gmail.com](mailto:pitt.sshp@gmail.com)



## Learning what to learn when you're learning on rotations

Ravi Patel, Class of 2014

One of the motivations behind this column is posterity. It is a tangible product of effort I can take with me when I graduate. In contrast, the biggest take aways from P4 year are the intangible experiences accrued over nine five-week blocks. I've spent at least three years trying to figure out the principle of practice in various settings and given only a handful of blocks before having to make a decision on my path following graduation. As I look back on the experiences I did have, there comes a balance between the quantity, quality, and applicability of these experiences. To balance these, and to provide some advice to live on through posterity, I can offer my experiences on how to make the most of rotations.

After a long physical separation from Salk Hall, it was nice to see familiar faces whenever I came back. When I do get a chance to talk with P3's, the topic of rotations inevitably comes up. As I try to form any kind of applicable advice from my relevant experiences, I end up giving the kind of generic advice I always tried to avoid giving (or getting). My answer about rotation recommendations comes down to suggesting that fellow students find a site where they can carve out a unique experience based on their interests and where they can get out what they put in. The overall applicability is limited with information and subjectivity of sites, but the overall message is "make the best of it."

When you make the "best" of any situation, however, it's tough to figure out what you didn't like. Rotations are no different than any other portion of the educational process. Each has its unique benefits and drawbacks. To make the experience of spending the standard eight-hour work day in a setting, it is either a realistic attempt to find benefit in everything or a simple self delusion that prevents forming a genuine "hate" for a rotation site, experience, or assignment. While a superficial benefit, not genuinely hating a rotation site/practice makes it difficult to narrow options.

If there is a benefit to hate and, and by extension, enjoyment of a site, how do you derive the most meaning from these subjective sentiments about objective practice settings? The third-person perspective of a first-person

experience can hold the greatest benefit in such an evaluation; however, this third-person perspective is not easy to form. Past experiences of third-person perspective in our education most commonly were the video-recorded standardized patient experiences. Given the amount of students who hesitated to view these videos due to dislike of their recorded voice, cringing at the creation of flubbed words, or depression at seeing their mistakes directly correlated with a loss of grade points. Plus, the technical logistics and simple reason overwhelmingly argue against videorecording an entire rotation experience.

Luckily, there are mechanisms to help students. The site evaluation required twice at each site, almost surprisingly, helped form an opinion by forcing you to take time to reflect (a well-practiced skill by this point in school) on the experience. Of course, these site evaluations come as a retrospective exercises. Reflecting on what was good, what could have been improved, and what was learned. The retrospective approach is only half of the potential when making a rotation a "good". Students looking for or beginning rotations should be prospective. You shouldn't only look back and think "Well, that was terrible. What did I learn?" The prospective perspective should ask, "Well this has potential for or lack or growth. What can I do about it?"

My rotations experiences began when I started creating my list of experiences I wanted in my P1 year. By the end of P3 year, I was assigned rotations I never planned for. Even with this twist of fate, a prospective perspective, a desire to get the most out of each rotation, and an understanding (or self delusion) that all experiences are good led to me to get the most out of my rotations. In fact, through such an approach, I finally figured out my ideal practice site, location, and practice. I eagerly await my future career in "Off-Block."



# The Algorithm of Life

By Aaron Devanathan, Class of 2016

February is over. Are you ready for March? I sure am. As I had mentioned last month, February shapes up to consistently be a tough month each and every year. To become an agent of change takes practice and obstacles inevitably emerge, despite your hardest efforts.

Take a look at the figure below. It roughly details the thought process for encountering an obstacle. The division occurs when you learn whether you overcame the obstacle or not. Sometimes you do, but most of the times, you do not. So what do you do when you don't?

When I was in high school, my parents would preach to me that it makes no sense to try to be perfect; it will add unnecessary stress to an already hectic life. Since I was in high school, I obviously didn't listen to my parents. But now that I am older, I realize they were right. The goal is to be the best you can be. Sometimes that is good enough and sometimes it is not.

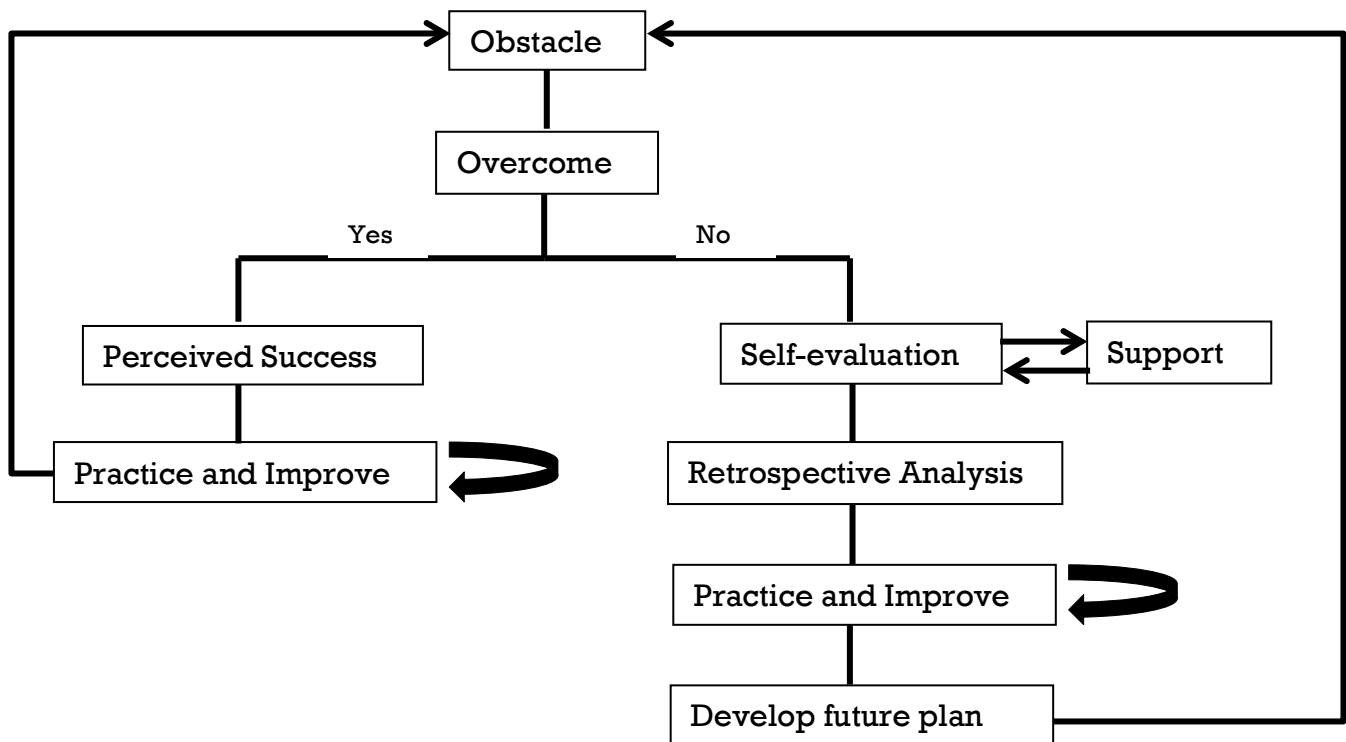
Looking back at the figure, if you fail to overcome an obstacle, the first step would be to do some self-evaluation with a hearty dose of support, whether from family, friends, or faculty. Why didn't things go well and what had gone wrong?

Then you need to look back objectively and find the exposure. Maybe you didn't have enough time. Or maybe the outcome wasn't in your hands (February is full of those). When you locate it, you can start moving on to the next step.

Practice, practice, practice. By practicing, we can improve so that when we encounter an obstacle again, we will be better equipped. Even after all that practicing, you have to develop a plan for when you do indeed encounter an obstacle. It makes no sense to work on a skill and forget it when the moment presents itself. Come up with a game plan for the future and be prepared.

Even if you did overcome that original obstacle, the success is fleeting. You still have to practice and improve for the future obstacles that will inevitably appear. And the cycle repeats.

We aren't perfect, no matter how much we want to be. All anyone can ask of us is to be the best we can be. If that is good enough, then you did well. If it isn't, we have to understand why it wasn't. These are skills that take time and they won't develop easily. The hope is that when you do develop the skills, you can assist others along the way and help them become better people.



## Who are you?

By Aaron Devanathan, Class of 2016

Perhaps when you were younger, you had an idea of the life you would have when you became an adult. The life may have consisted of a husband/wife, some children, a nice home resting in quiet suburbia, and a well-paying job. It would be hard for me to imagine that we didn't come to pharmacy school to achieve that dream. Believe it or not, the decisions we make today, however insignificant they may seem, are important. And they define who we are.

Since I arrived at pharmacy school, I have contemplated what defines a person. Grades may define a student (probably not), but actions define a person. And that sort of realization translates into our futures. What we do for our patients defines us as pharmacists. The same is true for any health professional. We don't spend three years getting bombarded with information and then a year applying that information for the fun of it. Everything we do is for the patients, and that hopefully gives meaning to some people.

Having that goal in mind makes what we do in school that much more meaningful. We strive to become better people, forming and developing relationships along the way. We study hours on end to ensure that we gain the knowledge to ultimately treat others. All of our efforts are (hopefully) towards that goal. Personally, I find meaning in that.

It would be upsetting to me if our end-goal was to achieve the best grades, get involved in every organization, and lead every single event known to man. That would be preposterous and most likely impossible. I would be mistaken if I believed a patient truly cared that you graduated with a 5.0 (not a typo) or that every single event in school from day 1 was planned and executed by you. Although these accolades are nice, there's more to life than them.

Let me tell you what my professional goals are at this moment. I plan on pursuing a residency, but I hadn't truly decided where I want to specialize. I want to be employed at a setting that will allow me to hold a faculty position at a nearby School of [insert health profession] because I want to have a teaching component to my practice. I have a passion for teaching, I am quite good at it, and I will personally make sure that the decisions I make will help foster and develop my passions. But those are my professional goals. They really mean little without family.

We are at the age where we have to start wondering who we are and what we want to become. There are days

when I will think about who I am and who I want to become and the picture starts to become clearer as I gain some new perspectives.

For the record, I am not suggesting that you spend days and days on end from now until April, for instance, thinking about who you are; you'll have plenty of time to do that. But it may be a good idea to casually think about who you are and where you see yourself in 5, 10, 15 years. That may be so far into the future, but the time goes by so quickly.

And actions define a person. If you are a leader, lead. If you are an innovator, create. If you are a student wishing to share knowledge with others, follow that path. The idea is to have a goal in mind for our future and do things now to show how dedicated and passionate we are about our goals. For instance, leaders will make valiant efforts to ensure that members are involved and that each voice is heard. They won't purposefully exclude members for personal gain because those actions paint a clear picture to others.

Lately, I have been thinking about who I am and what I want to become. This school offers us endless possibilities to explore and carve our own paths to our end-goal. Our growth does not stop at the end of the semester, year, or pharmacy school. We grow and learn every day.

But it isn't easy along the way. The obstacles are always there. The decisions you make may not be the most favorable and there will always be someone to let you know that. However, the toughest obstacles are not ones where other people stand in your way. The toughest ones are those where *you* are standing in your own way. You have to trust yourself that the decisions you make are the best ones to define you. It doesn't matter how many people are in your way, because if you impede your own progress and clip your own wings, you can never grow.

So in this crucial time in our lives, think about who you are. I envision two types of people: there's the one type who can step on top of everyone to get to the top and the other type who will have the support from others to reach the top. It's up to us to make those decisions.

We always have a choice. Our actions define who we are and who we want to become. Sooner or later, we need to honestly have this conversation with ourselves. Define yourself in terms of your actions based on who you are. Make your actions meaningful and pure and you'll never regret them. So again I ask: who are you?