

FACULTY ADVISOR MANUAL

COLLEGE OF PHARMACY

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

Prepared:
Michael W. McKenzie, Ph.D. – July 2014

Revised:
Shauna M. Buring, PharmD – August 2016

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The dedication and commitment of faculty members who serve as advisors is greatly appreciated by pharmacy students and the administration of the College of Pharmacy. Through the efforts of these faculty pharmacy students are nurtured, guided, and advised so that their time in the College of Pharmacy is made more amiable and productive.

The constructive assistance for this manual provided by the faculty advisor manuals developed at the University of Minnesota and the University of Kentucky Colleges of Pharmacy is acknowledged and immensely appreciated. The information on counseling processes in the Pathway Evaluation Trainers' manual is also very much appreciated.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	2
MISSION STATEMENT ON STUDENT ADVISEMENT	4
COLLEGE OF PHARMACY RESPONSIBILITIES	4
PHARMACY STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES	5
ADVISING OUTCOMES	5
PURPOSE	6
GENERAL DESCRIPTION	6
ROLE OF THE OFFICE FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS	7
COUNSELING PROCESSES	7
FACULTY ADVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES	13
SPECIFIC PHARMACY STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES	13
GUIDELINES & SUGGESTIONS FOR FACULTY ADVISORS	17
SPECIAL ADJUSTMENT PROBLEMS FOR STUDENTS	21
STUDENTS WITH ACADEMIC PROBLEMS	24
STUDENTS WITH NON-ACADEMIC PROBLEMS	27

MISSION STATEMENT ON STUDENT ADVISEMENT

Mission Statement

The University of Florida College of Pharmacy is committed to a strong program of quality student advisement for all its students. The mission of the student advisement program is to provide assistance to students in the attainment of their educational goals.

The student advisement program will provide accurate information about the requirements and procedures to attain a pharmacy degree in the College of Pharmacy. Faculty advisors will provide a caring relationship that addresses and meets individual educational goals.

The mission of the student advisement program will be accomplished by faculty advisors helping students to coordinate educational and career objectives which are commensurate with their abilities. The student advisement program will also function as a referral source to other campus agencies.

Student advisement is a shared responsibility among the faculty advisor, student, staff, and administration of the College of Pharmacy.

College of Pharmacy Responsibilities

The faculty, staff, and administration of the College of Pharmacy share a responsibility to provide accurate information and effective advisement to students. The College is responsible for:

- ensuring that advisement of students is fully recognized, emphasized, supported, and periodically evaluated.
- providing students, faculty, and other advising staff with accurate information in the University Catalog, Student-Faculty Handbook, and other publications.
- maintaining records of students' academic progress and advising conferences.

- providing the resources and faculty incentives necessary for the maintenance of an effective advisement network.

Pharmacy Student Responsibilities

Students are ultimately responsible for knowing and fulfilling all requirements for graduation, as stated in the University Catalog. In order to meet that goal, they are responsible for:

- attending the Orientation program for the College of Pharmacy as an entering student.
- taking full advantage of the opportunities for student advisement provided by the College of Pharmacy.
- conferring with an advisor on a regular basis.
- maintaining their own personal academic records including the University Catalog of their term of admission, transcripts, degree audits, evaluation of transfer work, and notes of previous advisement sessions.
- evaluating the student advisement program and individual advisors by filling out forms provided by the Office for Student Affairs.

Advising Outcomes

As a result of the academic and personal advising process students will be able to:

- Self-evaluate their interests and abilities to formulate a realistic direction for a career pathway in pharmacy
- Utilize resources in the College of Pharmacy, the University of Florida, and other agencies to guide them in making decisions about their academic and career plans.
- As needed, access University, College, or other services for their personal support.
- Understand and follow academic and administrative policies and procedures.
- Take responsibility for making academic decisions.

- Create an extra-curricular and co-curricular plan to enhance their pharmacy education experience.

PURPOSE

The faculty advisor manual is a reference source for faculty advisors. In addition to this manual, faculty advisors should utilize the Faculty-Student Handbook, the Financial Aid/Awards Handbook, information on the College of Pharmacy web site at www.pharmacy.ufl.edu (e.g., PharmD Student Affairs – academics, exam schedule, academic standards, career information, etc.), and information on the University of Florida web site at www.ufl.edu per the Search Window (e.g., Disability Resource Center, Career Resource Center, Counseling and Wellness Center, Student Health Center, Teaching Center, etc.).

Faculty advisors are meant to serve as the first line of communication between the College and the student. The goal of the faculty advisor system is to give the student ready access to a designated individual at the College who can help the student maximize the benefits from their educational experience and who can help with problems directly or refer them to an appropriate individual in the College or University or community.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Faculty advisors volunteer to serve in this capacity. Students are assigned to faculty advisors at random. The total number of advisees assigned to a faculty advisor will not exceed 30.

Students should stay with the same faculty advisor until graduation unless they request a change, in writing, to the Office for Student Affairs. The requested faculty advisor must be willing to accept the student as an advisee.

By having small groups of students assigned to individual faculty members for advisement on a variety of concerns, students should be more inclined to ask questions and seek advice as well as feel more like a participant in the College's activities.

The faculty advisor should assume a role of a caring mentor. The emphasis for the faculty advisor is to maintain an interactive attitude characterized by open communication, supportive counseling, and compassionate listening. The role of academic advisor is secondary to the role as student counselor and advocate.

Faculty advisors will also function as referral agents when the problems of students require professional intervention and assistance.

ROLE OF THE OFFICE FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS

The Office for Student Affairs serves as the “advisor” for all students. However, with the limited number of staff in the Office individual advising for all students in the College of Pharmacy is not practical. Through the faculty advisor system new students meet an individual faculty member who knows their name and background. Thus, students should be more likely to ask questions and seek advice as well as feel more a part of the College.

The Office for Student Affairs will serve to support the faculty advisor system by supplying information about students, and updating the knowledge of faculty advisors with regard to academic policies, curricula changes, registration procedures, etc. The Office for Student Affairs will maintain students’ files and allow faculty advisors to access this information when necessary and within the limits of student confidentiality regulations.

The Assistant Dean for Student Affairs will coordinate the faculty advisor system and meet regularly with faculty advisors. The Assistant Dean for Student Affairs will assign new pharmacy students to faculty advisors and orient new faculty advisors.

Faculty advisors should refer students with problems that cannot be handled through the normal advisor role to the Office for Student Affairs. Faculty advisors may also refer students to appropriate agencies and personnel on campus and in the community.

COUNSELING PROCESSES

As a faculty advisor your role may be defined in two words – advisor and counselor. It is important to distinguish between these two words because they impact on how you interact with students. The College of Pharmacy has labeled you as a faculty advisor because traditionally the role of the faculty advisor was to share expertise about which courses to take, when to take them, and how to interpret various policies affecting graduation. This role of the faculty advisor still exists but in a less significant way because of the lock-step nature of our curriculum. The role of the faculty advisor is evolving into a greater emphasis on the counseling responsibility.

The following information on counseling has been extracted from the Facilitators’ Training Manual for the APhA Pathway Evaluation Program for Pharmacy Professionals.

An advisor uses expertise to encourage, inform and persuade a student to comply with a certain behavior or procedure. The student may accept or reject the advice.

A counselor focuses the discussion with a student on a defined topic. The focus is on the process, not the outcome of the discussion. The counselor assumes that the student's self-awareness is a critical variable in the resolution of a specific problem. The discussion is very much a collaborative one in which information is shared between the counselor and student. The counselor provides support and resources to the student to assist in the resolution of a problem.

It is necessary at this juncture to also define a therapist. A therapist focuses on psychic pain and quality of life. There are few boundaries to the discussion. The discussion is characterized by increased intensity, duration and a greater responsibility of the relationship.

Faculty advisors/counselors are not expected to assume the role of a therapist. The rule of thumb to judge whether or not a student needs to be referred to a professional counselor who can provide therapy is a feeling that you are very uncomfortable with your ability to influence the student in the discussion. If you are uncomfortable with the situation, the student should be referred.

There are four distinct stages in the counseling process: joining, contracting, directing, and referring.

Joining

The goal of joining is to build a relationship in which the student feels welcomed and accepted. The joining process also helps the counselor to better understand the context in which the student's predicament rests.

There are several ways to facilitate joining:

- *Social chitchat about the weather or other content that is obviously common
- *Spending time finding out a bit about the student's background, likes, dislikes, history, current interests
- *Listening for any similarities between the counselor's background and the student's linking the two – establishing some kind of bond between the two of them
- *Asking the student about what has happened so far in his or her decision-making process; being interested in emotional, cognitive, and action information

The joining process will take longer with a student the counselor does not know well. Even when the counselor knows the student, the counselor still needs to pay attention to the joining process.

Contracting

Contracting is critical to any counseling relationship. The first step in this process is to reach agreement with the student about what stage of the decision-making process he or she is in.

When a counselor and a student are entering into the contracting process, it is important for both parties to recognize that each already has some expectations. The process of contracting moves these expectations out of the “unsaid” realm and makes them a subject for negotiation so the relationship will not become unsatisfactory to either party.

By definition, a contract is an exchange of promises in which each party articulates their responsibilities to each other.

Directing

Giving directions to a student poses the identical problems to those faced by a pharmacist when obtaining a patient’s adherence to a therapeutic regimen. The techniques for fostering adherence are similar to those for giving directions.

Making Adherence More Probable

- *Keep it simple. Keep directions simple and do not give several tasks at the same time.
- *Write out the task in long hand for the student.
- *Have the student provide feedback to make sure that the student has understood the task.
- *Draw attention to the three parts of the motivational linkage:
 - The counselor’s confidence that the student can do the task
 - The counselor’s confidence that the action will lead to results
 - The counselor’s confidence that the results will lead to desired consequences

Referring

When to Refer

- *When you are scared ... when you feel beyond your role or beyond your skills.
- *When the counseling contract is broken – when the person goes beyond the contract or keeps coming after the contract is fulfilled.

How to Refer

1. Try to reach an agreement with the student about what the issues are for the student and the resources the student is willing to expend and to consider.
2. Be blunt about your perception of the need. Being gentle may minimize the difficulty or “normalize” what is an abnormal situation.
3. Write out names, addresses, phone numbers, office hours, etc. for the student.
4. Call ahead and prepare the referral.
5. Follow-up on the referral to make sure that it has taken place.
6. Provide appropriate documentation when necessary.

Counseling Skills

While there are several theories of counseling, there is general agreement that counseling is successful if the relationship between the counselor and student is experienced by the student as supportive and if work is done on the pertinent issues during and between meetings. The following specific skills facilitate a supportive relationship and are based on extensive research.

Empathy

- *Ability to understand and communicate this understanding
- *Responding with full awareness
- *Going beyond the words to the feelings

Guidelines:

- Concentrate intensely
- Use language that is attuned to the student
- Respond in a feeling tone similar to the tone used by the student

Respect

- *Establish a relationship based on trust and confidence
- *Providing genuine expressions of positive regard
- *Communicating an awareness of the student's individuality

Guidelines:

- Suspend critical judgments
- Communicate in warm tones
- Concentrate fully
- Be spontaneous

Concreteness

- *Enabling the discussion to occur so that:
 - the student communicates specific terms
 - abstractions and generalizations are avoided
 - who, what, where, and how are explored

Guidelines:

- Make language concrete
- Reflect back in concrete terms
- Keep discussion relevant
- Ask for details and examples
- Avoid storytelling

Genuineness

- *Being freely and spontaneously yourself
- *Disclosing your own experiences when appropriate

Guidelines:

- Minimize the effects of your role
- Use authentic responses
- Be open as possible

Confrontation

- *Pointing out discrepancies between
 - what the student says and does
 - reported concerns and use of time
 - self-assessment and proposed actions

Guidelines:

- Concentrate on both the verbal and non-verbal responses
- Use mild confrontations first
- Gently increase specificity

Immediacy

- *Focusing on what is happening in the present
- *Focusing the student's attention on the relationship and progress of the work

Guidelines:

- Concentrate on your own experience in the moment
- Periodically, disregard the words and pay attention to your feelings

FACULTY ADVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- *Maintain confidentiality with regard to student records and discussions. When referring a student to someone else, or passing on information concerning a problem that could be avoided if the College did things differently, tell the student how the situation will be handled.
- *Invite advisees to meet with you at least once a semester, preferably more frequently if possible. For first year students in the College, the first meeting should be early in the Fall so students become familiar with their faculty advisor.
- *Meet with advisees who are on academic warning or academic probation or out of curriculum sequence. The Office for Student Affairs will provide the names of students who meet these criteria to each faculty advisor. Faculty advisors must submit an electronic record this meeting (<https://login.ufl.edu/idp/Author/UserPassword>)
- *Advise students on the required and elective coursework necessary for obtaining a degree in pharmacy. Consult the Student-Faculty Handbook for specific information. Contact the Office for Student Affairs for clarification on changes in curriculum.

- *Be available to meet with advisees informally as problems or questions arise at some regular time (posted hours perhaps), or make sure students know how to get in contact with you to arrange an appointment.
- *Become familiar with College programs and University student services to the extent that you can refer a student to the Office for Student Affairs with an idea of what is available. Information on referral agencies is available on the University of Florida web site at www.ufl.edu.
- *Monitor the progress of the student and show interest in their development and level of performance in academics, professional activities, etc.
- *Discuss career opportunities in pharmacy. Consult the informational materials from the Apha Career Pathway program (<http://www.pharmacist.com/apha-career-pathway-evaluationprogram-pharmacy-professionals>) and/or the College of Pharmacy web site under Pharm.D. Student Affairs and Career Information. Faculty are encouraged to have knowledge of and feeling for current issues in the profession.
- *Discuss any academic difficulties that the student is experiencing and make referrals as necessary. Do not make harsh judgments or chastise the student for poor academic performance, however. Faculty members are to assume a helping role not a judgmental and highly critical role.
- *Try to determine if students are working up to their potential and encourage them to do so.
- *Serve as the first line resource regarding personal problems if raised by the student. Refer the student to the Office for Student Affairs for further counseling. Make sure your advisee is receptive to being referred. If the situation merits your personal escort to a counseling service, please do so.
- *Make the advisees feel like faculty and staff in the College care about them and there is one particular individual (you) who is most concerned.

SPECIFIC PHARMACY STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Meet with the faculty advisor as frequently as needed, preferably at least once per semester even with satisfactory academic standing.

- Keep the advisor informed about academic progress, interests, career goals, problems, etc., and, generally, how well you are meeting life circumstances. Advisors are interested in you. Inform your advisor about good news. Do not see them only when you have problems.
- Ask questions of your advisor, even if the question is "Where can I learn more about ...?"
- Ask questions of more senior students as well as your advisor. This is a good way to learn about the "system" from someone that has been through it. However, always reserve your own judgment on any issue. Dealing with simple problems by talking to other students also saves time that your advisor may spend with you to deal with substantial issues.
- Help more junior students when they come to you with questions. Serve as a "buddy" to younger students who are also assigned to your advisor.
- Take responsibility for your life and your actions. Faculty advisors are not here to hold your hand through the program, but rather to give you advice, encouragement, work with you to identify problems, help when appropriate and refer you to others for more assistance.
- Be completely honest with your advisor. Be sure to tell them if some parts of discussions are confidential. Be aware there are limits to confidentiality (e.g., sexual harassment incidents must be reported to the appropriate UF administrator responsible for investigating and handling these type of complaints)
- Become familiar with the College requirements for graduation, expectations for professional and personal behavior, standards for academic performance and academic honesty, and the general array of programs offered by the College and the University.

Please read the [Student-Faculty Handbook](#) and consult the University of Florida web site (www.ufl.edu) for information as needed.

- Remember faculty advisors are here to help answer questions and give you guidance as you move through the College. They are devoting their time to help you make the most of your learning experience. They are willing to help you because they care about you, but their time is just as precious as yours. Be considerate of their busy schedules including the time they must devote to other advisees. Arrange meetings ahead of time when you

can, but do not be hesitant to communicate by phone, email, Skype, or personally if you need more immediate assistance.

Faculty Are Not Responsible For:

- Helping students plan out-of-sequence course schedules. Refer to the Office for Student Affairs.
- Interpreting graduation requirements. Refer to the Office for Student Affairs.
- Interpreting Board of Pharmacy Requirements. Refer to the Director of Experiential Programs.
- Providing definitive interpretation of University or College policies and procedures. Refer to the Office for Student Affairs.
- Counseling students about financial aid. Refer student to the , financial aid advisor. Refer to the Student Financial Aid and Awards Handbook and/or to the Office for Student Affairs.
- Arranging for students to interview for positions near graduation. Refer to the Office for Student Affairs.
- Registering students for classes. Refer to the Office for Student Affairs.

GUIDELINES AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FACULTY ADVISORS

1. Create a file for each of your advisees, or use a separate section of a binder you dedicate to advising. The file should include student biographical form and your advising notes
2. Most information about a student is considered private and confidential and may not be released to a third party without the student's written permission. Some information is usually considered public and may be released without permission unless the student has requested it be kept confidential (e.g., telephone number and address). Public information includes:

- ❑ name
- ❑ address
- ❑ phone number
- ❑ college and class

- ❓ major
- ❓ advisor
- ❓ academic awards and honors received
- ❓ degrees earned, dates for degrees, and dates of enrollment

Confidential information includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- ❓ grade point average
- ❓ letter grades in courses or on quizzes, exams or other evaluations
- ❓ letters of recommendation
- ❓ notes taken from personal discussions
- ❓ medical information
- ❓ transcripts from academic institutions
- ❓ notices (memos/letters) about academic performance
- ❓ attendance records
- ❓ class meeting schedule

It is probably better not to give out information of any kind to individuals unless it is background information as part of the referral you are making. When in doubt always check with your advisee.

3. Familiarize yourself with the information in this manual, the [University Catalog](#) on the UF web site, and the College's [Student-Faculty Handbook](#).
4. Ask open-ended questions. Minimize questions that can be answered with a yes or no. For example, "What are your study patterns?" is better than "Do you study every night?"
5. Listen carefully. Look directly at the student while they are talking and while you talk. If possible, do not sit at your desk with the student on the other side. This creates a "power" image that will tend to hinder the student from speaking their mind and may make them feel uncomfortable.
6. Let the student do most of the talking. Let the student ask you questions to learn exactly what they want if they come to you. You can often ask probing and insightful questions which should help the student solve their own problems or answer their own questions.
7. Do not make decisions for the student. You cannot. It is their life. Help them consider or even list the pros and cons of an issue. Often the answer becomes clear once they have a little more information or have done some systematic thinking.

8. If you learn of awards, Dean's list for example, that your advisee has earned or special activities like organization offices or committee chair positions, start out a conversation by mentioning it. You will have a very positive effect on the student. Be assured your advisee will be disappointed if you do not seem to know about their accomplishments, especially if they are consequential.
9. No matter how busy you are, take a few moments to jot down notes immediately after seeing your advisee. This will help you to keep things straight and remember what was discussed the next time you meet with the student. It will save you from backtracking in areas already covered and the student will be more receptive if it is obvious that you remember them. This would be a good place to jot down information about your advisee as you learn it, i.e., Dean's list, etc. Be sure to review your notes before you see the student for the next interview.
10. Remember an advising appointment is a matter of great importance to a student. For you it may be just one more thing to squeeze into a busy day, but for the student it is a significant event. You may want to establish ground rules with your advisees regarding appointments.
11. Students wishing to change advisors may do so provided they have met with their original advisor at least once. Do not be upset if a student requests such a change. Career options, special interests, prior meetings, etc. often will determine who a particular student may want as an advisor. Changes in advisors must be requested through the Office for Student Affairs.
12. Please do not intercede with another faculty member concerning your advisee's grades. That is their responsibility. Your responsibility is to help them do as well as they can on their own. Students with complaints about grading should be referred to the instructor responsible for the course. Students are informed at orientation to the College of Pharmacy and through the Student-Faculty Handbook to seek a discussion with the Department Chairperson if the discussion about grades with the instructor does not resolve their concern.
13. If more than one party is involved with a discussion or a problem do not get into a position of dealing with one individual at a time. Bring all the participants together and resolve the matter with everyone hearing the same story and hearing the same outcome.
14. Be aware that people can sometimes interpret even the simplest things incorrectly. If you have a particularly difficult point to get across, ask the advisee to repeat their

interpretation and understanding of what you were just discussing before they leave. You can get into this by saying, "Just so I have it straight in my mind where we are, why don't you go through it again for me."

15. Try not to give answers to questions you cannot address or for which someone else has the final answer. For example it is better to say, "I will check on that and get back to you" or "I will try to find out" rather than "I am sure you can do that."
16. Get your advisees together as a group so they will get to know each other. This will especially help the younger students readily identify someone to ask questions that students may be best to handle.

SPECIAL ADJUSTMENT PROBLEMS FOR INCOMING STUDENTS

In a typical entering class there are many variations in background, education, work and life experiences and personality. Every new pharmacy student will have to undergo considerable adjustment and each will have a unique set of obstacles and coping skills.

Native UF Students

The most obvious differentiation within the incoming classes is between students that have done their pre-pharmacy work at UF versus another institution. A student from UF is likely to have fewer initial adjustment problems. These students are well oriented to the campus and are old hands at bureaucratic procedures such as registration and the complexities of financial aid. They are more likely to have a network of friends for support and are settled in living and job arrangements.

Transfer Students

Transfer students come from a variety of institutions, other state colleges and universities, smaller private colleges, and community colleges. Some may be living away from home for the first time. Everything can be new and unfamiliar to them.

Since students come from many different institutions, their academic preparation is by no means uniform. In addition, the amount of college level work they have completed may vary from 65 credits to over 128 credits. Some may have baccalaureate or even graduate degrees. Some have baccalaureate degrees in nursing and medical technology or have been respiratory therapists. This variance in background can have a big impact on performance, level of maturity, and their interaction with you, especially during their first couple of semesters in the College.

Older Students

Several other variables make adjustments more difficult for some students. Older students may have been out of school for a long time. They may have to relearn study skills but also they are often years away from having taken essential pre-pharmacy coursework such as organic chemistry and calculus. Often these problems are offset by maturity, experience, and a sense of purpose. Students who are married, especially those with children, are not only experiencing adjustment to school but also rearranging the lives of their spouses and children. This means they may be under different stresses than the traditional pharmacy student. Daycare, babysitters, visits to emergency care for childhood accidents or illnesses complicate the daily routine of many of the older students.

Minority Students

The student body is a demographically diverse group. It includes older students, African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and resident and nonresident aliens from many different countries. Minority students may feel left-out of the daily events of the College through cultural orientation. It may be advantageous to contact an upper class person who is a minority and active in the College to provide encouragement to a minority advisee. The International Student Center can provide social and academic support for those students who are nonresident aliens.

You can facilitate a minority students' feeling of acceptance into the College family by being an empathetic listener and frequent encourager for them to participate in student activities.

All Students

Students are frequently unaccustomed to the challenges that confront faculty at a research intensive institution. You have to make them aware that teaching, research, and service are all important components of the mission of the University of Florida. Many students come from institutions where teaching is the only mission. Pharmacy faculty may be less readily available for individual instruction. Students must take much more initiative to make appointments with instructors and get questions answered for material covered in classes than they probably did previously. Encourage them to deal with questions and obtain clarifications from instructors before and after class or during office hours.

The Pharmacy Curriculum. It is likely that the academic load for new pharmacy students is more than they have encountered in the past. Also the academic competition is far stiffer than perhaps previously experienced. Many of these students will have been in the top of their class. In the

College of Pharmacy some of these students will be in the middle of the class, or even the lower portion of the class in terms of academic performance. It can be very discouraging for these students to earn C or D grades in selected courses. Be realistic with them at the same time you support their efforts. However, most of the first year students have a good idea of what they think they are interested in doing for a pharmacy career (even though this is prone to change as they progress through the curriculum and IPPE and APPE courses). While not wanting to encourage mediocrity, it is well to remind students that they might not be able to sustain the same level of achievement that they had before entering pharmacy. Alternatively, they may have to study much harder to reach their own expectations. Some of these students may also have parents who pushed them to accept only As and Bs. To some a C may seem like a failure.

Thus, a loss of self-esteem and self-confidence can occur in many first year students. You can help alleviate their anxiety and self-doubt by being a good listener and encourager. In most cases, students who begin their pharmacy studies at a lower academic level than they are accustomed will adapt with better time management and study skills and will improve as they progress through the curriculum. Those students who continue to have academic difficulty will need support through the Rho Chi tutor system and assistance from peers and faculty.

The Pharmacy Profession. It is not unusual for students embarking on a new endeavor to wonder why in the world they decided to do what they are doing. Many students will wonder why they are not taught more about drugs. Some have worked in pharmacies most of their lives and feel they know what is important. Most will wonder what some of the coursework has to do with their goal of becoming a pharmacist. Some will need to be shown how the curriculum fits together and that there is an essential logic, need and order to the required course sequences.

Loneliness. Do not underestimate the extent to which loneliness can affect a student, especially incoming first professional year students. Some students will be separated from their families or special friends for the first time. If this is the case they are probably also adjusting to new living conditions such as new roommates, a first apartment, etc. After a few weeks most students establish a routine and make new friends, but the early weeks can be agony. Encourage your advisees to become involved with professional organizations as a way of making friends and helping the adjustment.

Outside Employment. A large percentage of pharmacy students nationally work while in school. Our students are no different and frequently have jobs. It is not uncommon for new students to have an unrealistic idea of what work schedule they can handle along with school. Having budgeted for and committed themselves to a certain number of hours per week, it is often difficult for students to cut back, even when it is clear work is interfering with their studies. As a general rule we would recommend students not work more than 10 hours per week.

Just a reminder, now that you are aware of some of the problems and pitfalls of students, you do not have to solve all their problems. You can be very helpful in identifying problem areas and referring students to the Office for Student Affairs or other campus or community resources. Amazingly often just acknowledging a concern as legitimate is very helpful to a student.

STUDENTS WITH ACADEMIC DIFFICULTY

Although we are all concerned with students in serious academic difficulty, we should also be concerned with students who are not working up to their potential. If a student comes to you with a problem, always start by asking if they know why they are having problems. Often students know the answer. They may not have progressed to the next steps of identifying and implementing solutions. Once you identify a problem ask some of the following:

- Do you have any thoughts on what you could do to solve this problem?
- Have you talked to the instructor in the course?
- What steps are you willing to take this week (today) to begin dealing with this problem?

Try to get students to make a plan and then arrange for a follow-up meeting or refer the student to the Office for Student Affairs if you feel you cannot assist them.

The following are issues to explore as you try to help students:

Time Management Issues

- Does the student schedule their time?
- How does the student spend time between classes or between classes and work?
- How many hours per week does the student work? Does the work schedule vary from week to week? How late on week nights does the student work?
- What other outside responsibilities or activities does the student have?
- How much time is spent on socializing or in leisure pursuits?
- Is the student keeping up or just a chronic procrastinator?

If the student is using their time ineffectively, or is over committed with outside responsibilities, try to help the student establish realistic goals. Planning a weekly schedule, noting all time commitments including time for study is a good start. As a guide, the student should plan to spend a minimum of two hours studying for every hour in class. Marginal students will have to make a bigger commitment. Any schedule should allow time for adequate sleep, leisure, and

exercise. The exercise and sleep are especially important to resisting stress. The University has a Testing and Evaluation Center that helps with special problems.

Academic Skills and Habits

- Does the student read the textbook?
- Does the student ask questions?
- Does the student take reasonable notes?
- Does the student study on the same schedule and in the same place on a daily basis?
- Does the student keep up or cram for exams?
- Is a particular kind of test format a problem? (Multiple choice? Essay?)
- Does the student have test anxiety?
- Can the student communicate effectively in writing?

If specific and serious deficiencies (other than laziness) are identified in the academic/study skills area, the student should definitely be referred to the Teaching Center. Videotapes of helpful information on studying and taking examinations are available online.

Academic Preparation Issues

- Is the student having difficulty in one particular course area? Can you identify the preparatory coursework that most closely correlates with the problem area?
- Does the student attend help sessions when offered?
- Could the student benefit from tutoring in the subject? (See below)
- Will the student be seriously disadvantaged in future coursework if remedial action is not taken?

If the student seems to be studying hard but still cannot grasp the concepts it is likely they lack a sound foundation for the subject. This is a difficult problem to remedy because it involves an additional expenditure of time on the part of the student to backtrack. A Rho Chi tutor can be very helpful. Tutoring sessions provide more opportunity to ask specific questions freely, and get specific answers. Peer teaching can be a very powerful method since communication between two students may be better than between the student and faculty member.

Students with academic difficulty, however, usually demonstrate a strong hesitancy to seek assistance through Rho Chi tutors because they feel they are admitting defeat in their own innate ability to master course material. In addition, admitting to a peer that they are not making good grades lowers their self-esteem. You can provide the necessary encouragement and

insightfulness to overcome these obstacles. Students need to understand how you often seek advice or assistance in your research and preparations for lectures, presentations, and publications. They need to understand that there is no shame in seeking assistance to enhance one's ability to learn. That is why they are attending the College of Pharmacy in the first place . . . to obtain help in learning how to become a competent professional pharmacy practitioner.

If the student seeks out a friend outside the Rho Chi tutor system for study assistance, please make sure that friend is making good grades and is a willing tutor for the student.

STUDENTS WITH NON-ACADEMIC ISSUES

Physical and Mental Health. If a student has missed a significant number of classes or tests because of illness, they should meet with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs or a coordinator of student affairs at their respective campus to work out a plan to either complete work later with permission of the instructors, or withdraw from the College and retake courses at a later date after gaining readmission to the College. The University has options for students dropping for legitimate medical reasons.

A recent loss in the family such as death of a parent, sibling or friend can severely interfere with the ability of a student to concentrate. Additionally, family problems or difficult relationships with friends, girl-friend/boy-friend or others interfere with interest in classes and performance on exams. If a student seems to display symptoms of depression, apathy, lack of affect or hopelessness they probably need more help than anyone in the College can offer. Please refer them to the Office for Student Affairs and/or the Counseling and Wellness Center. Be supportive but get the student to take advantage of the professional help on campus.

Substance Abuse and/or Chemical Dependency Problems. Chemical dependency is a sickness and should be treated as such. Chemically dependent students need support and should be counseled to seek professional help. The Committee for Chemically Impaired Students can handle anonymous and confidential reporting of students suspected of abusing chemical substances. This Committee can perform an informal and confidential review of all evidence concerning a student's alleged problem. There are detailed and specific guidelines as to how the College manages students with suspected and confirmed chemical dependency problems. These guidelines are printed in the Student-Faculty Handbook.

Indicators of a potential chemical dependency problem include:

- frequently missed appointments or deadlines
- declining performance, usually suddenly, for no apparent reason
- sudden or drastic changes in behavior

- unusual stories to cover absences or poor performances
- incoherence at times in the classroom, lab or teaching site

Motivational Problems. Some students may not have a strong commitment to pharmacy. They are here because parents, relatives, or friends pushed them into the profession. Such students may end up being dismissed from the program for poor academic performance. It is unlikely you or anyone will be successful in counseling the student out of the program. You may be able to assist in increasing the student's motivation by suggesting they learn more about the profession, or learn about other career opportunities available to an individual with a pharmacy degree, something other than professional practice. Many students will have little or no idea of the options available to them other than working in a community or hospital pharmacy, and they may not understand very well what is involved in that. Certainly, few probably considered options as varied as pharmaceutical company representatives to research via graduate school. Counsel the student to ask about other career options. Many professional student organizations schedule programs on various career options bringing in outside speakers to describe their activities. Refer them to the Office for Student Affairs.

Questions you might ask include:

- How did the student get interested in pharmacy as a career?
- Has the student ever work in pharmacy?
- Does the student know any pharmacists?
- What does the student envision themselves doing in the profession?
- Are the student's family and friends supportive of their career choice?
- If the student could not be a pharmacist, what other work would they enjoy?
- Is the curriculum meeting the student's expectations?