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Midwestern University Chicago College of Pharmacy Outside My Comfort Zone: ASHP Summer Internship Experience

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College Connection

by Maggie Lau, PS-3, ICHP Student Chapter President

As I prepared for my last summer prior to rotations, I had the strong urge to seek something unique and meaningful, yet outside of my comfort zone. It is no secret that ASHP is one of the largest national pharmacy organizations, consisting of health-system pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, and student pharmacists. After being involved on the state level and with the ICHP student chapter on campus for two years, I wanted to expand my experiences and learn from influential pharmacy leaders across the nation. From personal skills development to constant networking, the ASHP Summer Internship provided me with so much more than I had ever expected.

During my internship in the Office of Members Relations, my day-to-day responsibilities varied greatly. I was heavily involved in the student recruitment campaign and marketing, where I was able to provide my input from a student's perspective on the design and content of the promotional material. I created various student resources for SSHPs to utilize. This included a presentation on all that ASHP has to offer students such as resource documents, residency application timelines, and more. Although I enjoyed all of the projects that I worked on, I particularly loved the SSHP Advocacy Toolkit. Policy was never my forte, but this toolkit really motivated me to work outside of my comfort zone and learn from the Government Affairs staff and other SSHP leaders. I am hopeful that the toolkit will help the pilot group this year in their advocacy efforts, and that it will be open to all SSHPs next year to unify our voices as student pharmacists.

Outside of my projects, I had the opportunity to engage in a variety of exceptional opportunities. I attended staff meetings for different divisions, discussing topics such as policies for the House of Delegates, programming for the ASHP Midyear Clinical Meeting, and the A3 Collaborative. Along with Government Affairs staff, I attended a meeting at Capitol Hill to discuss the H.R. 2889 on Closing Loopholes for Orphan Drugs Act and H.R. 2871 on Preserving Patient Access to Compounded Medications Act of 2017. I also had the incredible opportunity to meet the ASHP Pharmacy Student Forum Executive Committee members and also participate in several of their conference calls. I visited numerous national pharmacy associations in the area, including APhA, NACDS, AMCP, FDA, USP, NCPA, and PTCB. It was definitely an eye-opening experience, as I learned about the different niche that each organization caters to, as well as the initiatives that they have in advancing the

profession.

As the summer intern, I had the incredible opportunity to attend and serve as a session moderator at the 2017 ASHP Summer Meetings & Exhibitions in beautiful Minneapolis, MN. Experiencing the complex operations “behind the scenes” of a conference allowed me to further appreciate the staff for their time and commitment to creating a unique experience every year. The Strategies for Personal and Professional Success Workshop was offered for the first time this year, and it turned out to be my personal favorite. Distinguished pharmacy leaders spoke about emotional intelligence, mentor-coach-sponsor relationships, work-life integration, and self-assessment. It encouraged me to take a step back from my student role and dedicate time for self-reflection to pinpoint my own areas for improvement.

My favorite part of the internship was working with the ASHP staff. It was truly inspiring to see how the wide variety of divisions come together and work towards the advancement of the pharmacy profession. The passion that each staff has for their work is apparent and it creates an amazing work environment that is both empowering and uplifting. I felt so privileged to be able to meet them one-on-one, learn more about their journey to their position at ASHP, and their memorable patient stories that have shaped them into the leaders that they are today.

My ASHP Summer Internship was completely outside of my comfort zone. The location, assigned projects, and the individuals that I met made it nothing short of amazing. As a bonus, I was also the first intern to step foot in the new modern ASHP headquarters in the Joseph A. Oddis building that I personally think is absolutely beautiful.

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