

New Practitioners Network ***Something I Never Dreamed Of***

by Christopher Leong, PharmD

I distinctly remember my last didactic quarter as a student at Midwestern University. I was excited about the rotations to come and nervous about post pharmacy school plans. Thus, I struggled to stay focused during lecture. I often daydreamed during class about what my career would look like – where I would be, what I would do, and how I would best serve my patients. One thing that I never dreamed of doing was teaching the very lecture that I struggled to pay attention to. Four years later, I found myself at the front of a lecture hall at Midwestern University, teaching about anti-epileptic pharmacokinetics.

As I drove down the once familiar road that leaves campus after giving the two hour lecture, I couldn't help but reflect on the experience as a whole. Bluntly, I did not give the best lecture. There were a few concepts that I could have explained better, portions of the lecture that I verbally tripped over, and I had a few students start napping within the first ten minutes of lecture (which was hard to get upset about since I was guilty of doing this during my last quarter of pharmacy school as well). Despite all of this, I left the lecture with a sense of gratitude for the journey that got me to this point and the people who helped me along the way.

Unlike some of my former classmates, I did not have a strong sense of what I wanted to pursue after graduation as I entered my fourth year rotations. As I tried to navigate the system on my own, I found myself haphazardly applying to any opportunity that I could find, and ultimately, I felt overwhelmed. It wasn't until a few of my preceptors sat down with me during my APPE rotations that I was able to find a sense of direction. I remember having long discussions with my preceptors about my interests, strengths, and career goals even after my six week rotation ended. My preceptors invested in me by giving their time, resources, and advice to help me achieve my career goals before I even knew what my career goals were. Our conversations were open and honest. I heard stories about how my preceptors' career paths, things they wished they knew when they were in my position, and the joys and struggles of their current jobs. Those conversations plus my preceptors' vote of confidence helped me set my sights on residency training, but more importantly, modeled for me the type of preceptor and mentor that I hope to be.

My time at the lecture podium at Midwestern University is something that I am deeply grateful for. I see it as the first step in a long journey of investing in the profession and the future generation of pharmacists, much like my professors and preceptors invested in me. To the preceptors who read this, keep doing what you are doing by investing in the trainees that you have. You truly make a difference in more ways than you may be able to see. To the students who are reading this, stay open minded and never say never. Someday, you too may find yourself lecturing at your alma mater.

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