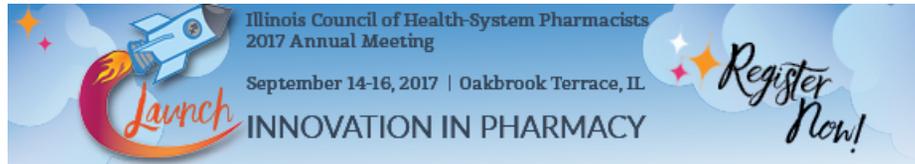




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Presidents Message

Chicago State University College of Pharmacy Hooding Ceremony Address - GRIT

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by Charlene Hope, PhamD, MS, BCPS, ICHP President

I had the honor of serving as the guest speaker at the Chicago State University College of Pharmacy Hooding Ceremony a few weeks ago. After several weeks of thinking about and hoping for a spark of a topic that would inspire a graduating class of student pharmacists, the word GRIT kept popping up in my head.

GRIT is defined as "perseverance and passion for long-term goals". Individuals with a high amount of this characteristic can maintain their determination and motivation over long periods despite experiences with failure and adversity. Their passion and commitment towards the long-term objective is the overriding factor that provides the stamina required to "stay the course" amid challenges and setbacks.

This personal characteristic of grit is often used to describe entrepreneurs and innovators or anyone really that is embarking on something new, different and perhaps against the norm. GRIT is the armor one needs if they are choosing to take the road less traveled.

Angela Lee Duckworth has popularized this term and recommends how we can build and develop GRIT over time.

The first stage is to foster a passion.

Part of grit is actually doing enough exploration early on and quitting enough things early on, so that you can find something with which you are willing to stick. You have to actively put some work in and try things – try them for a little while and get into them.

To me, fostering passion is to actively fight complacency like the plague. Whether one is a newly minted pharmacist or on the launching pad to retirement, it is so important to stay connected to the feelings that we had when we decided to pursue the profession of pharmacy. To stay connected to the feelings we had when we found out that we were accepted into pharmacy school. To stay connected to those feelings that we had on the first day of classes. Most importantly, to stay connected to how we felt the day we graduated, like many of the graduates that I spoke to that afternoon.

It is too easy to let the pressures of life take over and settle for a paycheck. To show up every day and punch a clock. Many of us, as members of ICHP engage our passion by being active members of ICHP.

The second stage is practice.

While we graduate equipped with the knowledge, skills and tools to do great things in our careers as pharmacists, we know that we are committing ourselves to a profession based on lifelong learning. It is so important, especially in our current era of rapid fire change – fueled by technology and innovation – to continue to hone our skills. However, I wanted to challenge the graduates and you, dear reader, to focus on doing all that you can to “practice” building relationships as well – that is, connecting your work to people who are not you. As pharmacists, we can become very insular and choose to remain in silos waiting for others to ask for our help, to invite us to be a part of a project impacting patient care or to direct us in how we choose to participate as a member of the healthcare team. Those often disrespected “soft skills” are the skills of the future. They are the interpersonal skills of leadership, charisma, diligence and contribution. These are skills that will really take you to the next level.

I am not sure why they are called soft skills, because it takes hard work to develop and hone these skills over time. But at the end of the day, they are at the heart of what we need today. Because even if you have a pharmacy degree, residency training and numerous letters behind your name, you are no help to us (patients, healthcare teams, society) without these human skills, the things that we cannot write down or program a computer to do.

And the final component is hope.

There has to be hope, that your vision for the future will come true.

“To be gritty is to keep putting one foot in front of the other. To be gritty is to hold fast to an interesting and purposeful goal. To be gritty is to invest, day after week after year, in challenging practice. To be gritty is to fall down seven times, and rise eight.” – Angela Lee Duckworth

I extend my wish to the CSU-COP Class of 2017, and to you my fellow ICHP members. I wish that you will rise more times than you fall as you continue your journey on the way to your dreams!

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