

American Pharmacists Association – Academy of Student Pharmacists
2006–2007 Chapter Achievement Reports
Chapter Activity Report

The Wisconsin Society of Pharmacy Students

Investing In Our Future

Welcome to a recent discussion between a founding member of the Wisconsin Society of Pharmacy Students (WSPS) with the current WSPS President...

Back in 1999 when a group of students and I founded this chapter of the Wisconsin Society of Pharmacy Students, we hoped that in the years to come members would accomplish great things. What does the organization look like today and what goals have you set for yourselves?

This was a truly exciting year for the Wisconsin Society of Pharmacy Students. Whereas in the first year of WSPS, there were 164 members, this year we had a total of 324 members. To account for all of our growth, the Executive Board has now grown from 12 members to 27 members. This year we were also guided by four very knowledgeable and dedicated advisors. Every year, the Executive Board chooses a theme to embrace throughout the year. This year, we chose the theme **“Investing In Our Future.”** This phrase was often acted upon in two dimensions: investing our resources into our own futures, but of greater importance was investing our resources in the community’s future.

Before the summer began, our Executive Board spent two separate days together planning for the upcoming year. While together, we set many goals for ourselves. These included:

- Educating students regarding current issues and challenges in pharmacy;
- Promoting inter-professional collaboration with other health care students;
- Providing opportunities for community involvement;
- Promoting political activism on behalf of the practice of pharmacy; and,
- Promoting career development and leadership skills by enhancing and promoting participation in state and national events.

Some of our objectives included:

- Increasing member communication through the continuation of a bimonthly e-mail newsletter, in addition to our website;
- Encouraging the recruitment and recommitment of members through successful membership drives;
- Increasing member participation in meetings and events by offering a variety of activities, especially those dealing with patient care initiatives and local, state & national meetings;
- Establishing a closer relationship with faculty and staff;
- Increasing DPh-1 and DPh-4 student pharmacist involvement in WSPS;
- Having efficient, effective, and informative meetings for general and executive members;

- Expanding the already established activities in which the chapter is involved;
and,
- Enhancing and facilitating student involvement in policy and legislative affairs.

With the 125th anniversary of the School of Pharmacy approaching, looking back, I am sure that our organization looks different than it did eight years ago. However, we are still working to advance the profession of pharmacy by educating pharmacy students, educating the public, providing unique opportunities for student pharmacists and providing services to our communities.

How were you able to accomplish all of these goals?

Accomplishing all of our goals was not an easy task, but with the support of faculty and staff, pharmacists from our communities and each member of WSPS, we succeeded this year. Focusing on one goal at a time, we were able to take a stepwise approach to this task and by the end of the year, each of these goals were thoroughly addressed.

The Executive Board took it upon itself each semester to educate our members on many issues facing pharmacy. Our SPIN coordinator, the student in charge of promoting pharmacy-specific political involvement, gave two presentations to the general membership concerning student involvement in legislative affairs. By the end of the year, we were convinced general members left with a deeper understanding of the current legislative issues that pharmacists are facing.

One of the most exciting aspects the Board witnessed was new partnerships between pharmacy students and other health care students being formed. Over the course of the year, 135 events were held with the support of, or in conjunction with, medical, nursing, physical therapy and physician assistant students. These relationships blossomed and appear to be very strong for years to come.

Another way WSPS members accomplished these goals was by becoming actively involved in patient care projects, including Operations Diabetes, Asthma and Immunization. These projects, in addition to the new patient care initiatives started this year, were consistently accomplished by student pharmacists with an attitude of respect and professionalism. By the end of the year, through the 410 projects and events members participated in, we were able to reach individuals in every region of Wisconsin.

In order to finance each of these projects, we found unique ways of fundraising. This included selling course packets to the student body, co-hosting the annual Career Fair with the Student Senate and hosting our own Pharmacy Industry Exposition in the spring. Operation Immunization even applied for multiple grants through major pharmaceutical companies.

What types of meetings did you hold throughout the year?

In addition to the eight general meetings we held this year, we also hosted 13 Executive Board meetings. These meetings were pivotal for the success of our individual projects and the organization as a whole. During these meetings, Executive

Officers collaborated in coordinating each of the events for the upcoming month. It was also beneficial to discuss the initiatives that each of the academies were undertaking at the time. In addition to these meetings, every member on the Executive Board volunteered to participate in one of seven ad hoc committees: Bylaws Committee, chaired by the President; Policy and Procedure Committee, chaired by the President-Elect; Meetings Reimbursement Committee; and four specialized MRM Planning Committees. With this structure, we were able to revise both our Bylaws and Policy & Procedures, in addition to serving as co-costs of the Region 4 Midyear Regional Meeting.

General meetings were always the highlight of each month. During meetings, every academy showcased the projects they were currently working on. Following these presentations, typical meetings culminated with a featured speaker. Over the course of the year, five speakers came in to discuss with us topics ranging from advocating for legislation at the state level to operating a specialty HIV/AIDS pharmacy. General meetings provided us the opportunity to discuss the state of our organization with members and allow members the opportunity to become involved. In addition to general meetings, our Operations held over 40 of their own meetings for their individual projects.

When we consolidated two student organizations into one to create WSPS, we created affiliations with several professional associations. How is it working for student pharmacists today?

Upon registering for WSPS, students are given memberships to the Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin (PSW), the American Pharmacists Association (APhA) and the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP).

This structure is wonderful because students are given so many opportunities to become involved in the field of pharmacy by participating in conferences and competitions with each of these organizations. For PSW, 56 students attended the Annual Conference, 10 students attended the Spring Educational Conference and nearly 100 students attended the Annual Legislative Day at our State Capitol.

As for ASHP, 31 students attended the Mid-Year Meeting and 28 students competed in the Clinical Skills Competition, with both winners competing at the National Level in December.

The other organization that we are closely tied to is APhA. This year we had 30 students attend the Annual Meeting in Georgia. Prior to the Conference, 14 students competed in our Patient Counseling Competition, with the winner going on to compete at the national level. It is exciting to be a part of this organization because each of our Operations has been initiated due to APhA programming. Operations Diabetes, Immunization and Asthma, in addition to our IPSF programming are all examples of programs that have thrived in our organization, but have originally stemmed from APhA.

First-year pharmacy students are immediately targeted to join our organization. Additionally, fourth-year students are greatly encouraged to maintain their memberships post-graduation, which is easy to do when so many benefits are offered

to students by APhA. Offering student pharmacists the opportunity to be involved in APhA has been a consistent motivation for joining our organization.

What are the greatest assets of your organization?

This year was special for many reasons. One of our primary goals as the Executive Board was to target the incoming class of first-year students. While WSPS has a lot to offer students as far as membership benefits are concerned, it also allows students to grow professionally in ways they would otherwise be unable to do. By participating in Operation Diabetes screenings, students can see first hand how important disease states are in patients' lives and how necessary the role of the pharmacist is to help each patient monitor and adjust their treatments accordingly. By participating in MEDiC, students are given the opportunity to communicate through an interpreter if the student is not fluent in Spanish. Students who participate in IPSF are given the ability to see health care in a completely new light and realize that many diseases and treatments are restricted to certain political and geographical boundaries.

Reasons such as these allowed us to share these opportunities with the first-year students and offer them something that could help them grow as individuals and professionals. Their response astounded us. Out of the seven "Member of the Month" awards given throughout the course of the year, six of them were granted to first-year students. Their enthusiasm often acted to motivate the other classes of students to follow their lead and match their motivation.

This example also illustrates how well our Executive Board worked together. We specifically built on the strengths of each member and the results were incredibly impressive. Whenever a special need arose, someone was always willing to volunteer their time. Take the American Pharmacists' Month for example. We did a good job reaching out to the community during the month of October with the message, "Know your medicines. Know your Pharmacist." However, when we realized the need to show our appreciation to the faculty and staff for their contributions to the pharmacy profession in our state, three of our Board Members baked over 300 cookies within one night.

It is dedication like this, in small and large projects alike, that is the fuel for all that is happening within our organization. With the help of pharmacists in the community, the faculty at our school, our dedicated advisors and the student members themselves, the Wisconsin Society of Pharmacy Students has grown into an incredible organization.

You seem very excited for the year to come...

I think that I can speak on behalf of the entire Executive Board, when I say that we are thrilled for the year to start. It is going to be an amazing year.