



THE PLS PULSE

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Class of 2022**
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A MESSAGE FROM THE FACULTY ADVISOR

During the graduation ceremony, after being conferred as graduates of their college or school of pharmacy, new pharmacists repeat the "Oath of a Pharmacist".

Oath of a Pharmacist

"I promise to devote myself to a lifetime of service to others through the profession of pharmacy. In fulfilling this vow:

- I will consider the welfare of humanity and relief of suffering my primary concerns.
- I will apply my knowledge, experience, and skills to the best of my ability to assure optimal outcomes for my patients.
- I will respect and protect all personal and health information entrusted to me.
- I will accept the lifelong obligation to improve my professional knowledge and competence.
- I will hold myself and my colleagues to the highest principles of our profession's moral, ethical and legal conduct.
- I will embrace and advocate changes that improve patient care.
- I will utilize my knowledge, skills, experiences, and values to prepare the next generation of pharmacists.

I take these vows voluntarily with the full realization of the responsibility with which I am entrusted by the public." [1]

Pharmacists vow to make the health and well-being of patients the main focus of their lifetime of service. As leaders in the profession, I anticipate each member of PLS will actively seek to find better ways to accomplish the goals of this oath for the patients at their practice site and in their communities, as well as ways to ensure the value of pharmacy through professional organizations and activism.

For the profession of pharmacy, each new pharmacist is a valuable resource required to accomplish this oath for society. How a valuable resource is cared for determines if it will be used to its maximum capacity. In order for the resource to benefit society, it must be cared for and protected. When a valuable resource is inadvertently used up or squandered, society suffers.

As important as taking care of our patients may be, it is important to take care of ourselves. Burnout is a concern for healthcare providers (HCP) and the increasing pressures placed on all HCPs during the pandemic has only added to the physical and mental stress faced by pharmacists in all practice environments. How are we caring for ourselves, are we squandering or protecting the valuable resource? When life becomes unbalanced and work (or school) is allowed to take over, our mental and physical health suffers. Support systems may start to unravel as less time is spent with family and friends. Long hours at work can cause a lapse healthy habits of eating and exercise. Then, all of sudden, the enthusiasm, leadership skills, great ideas, pharmacy knowledge, attention to detail turn into a lack of focus, exhaustion, and may lead to depression and/or anxiety. While it is important to be committed to leading the team to improve medication therapy and patient health, it is very possible to become overcommitted when this becomes the only focus and takes away from the other aspects of life.

It is also important for leaders to lead their team by maintaining their own healthy work-life balance. This will maintain their ability to continue to effectively lead the team in meeting goals for improving patient care AND show other team members that it is expected for them to also prioritize a healthy balance in their own lives. It is the responsibility of a leader to recognize when members of their team need additional support in caring for themselves and to provide access to resources to ensure that valuable resource, that team member has the tools to bring life back into balance.

And that brings us to this issue of the PLS Pulse. Inside you will find a focus, not only on leadership, but also on life balance and well-being. Read on and see how your peers and colleagues are valuing themselves as a resource to promote patient care and the profession of pharmacy.

-Dr. Logan



FALL SEMESTER IN REVIEW



**Let's Talk
LinkedIn:**
presented by
Dr. Chris Bland



Aliya Abdulla,
Pharm.D. Candidate '22

Member Spotlights



Remi Fagbamiye,
Pharm.D. Candidate '22



Tommy Tuggle,
Pharm.D. Candidate '22

Check out our Instagram to
learn more about our
Member Spotlights!

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TACKLING WORK-LIFE BALANCE: HOW TO BE A SUCCESSFUL STUDENT PHARMACIST AND MAINTAIN YOUR PERSONAL LIFE!

Written by: Aliya Abdulla, Pharm.D. Candidate 2022

It's a Friday night and your friend is having a movie night at their house, but you have a ton of homework and tests to study for. How do you do both? The answer is simple: balance. At least...it sounds simple. That is what people always say before, during, and after pharmacy school. "You have to keep a balance once you get into pharmacy school!" But what exactly does that mean? How do you achieve it? Let me begin by saying that it is not an easy thing to achieve, and most of the people who are telling you about it probably don't have a pharmacotherapy exam next week. The road to achieving this so-called "balance" can be a long one, but once on the path, many find themselves motivated to stay on it. I want to share with you some tips I have found that have helped me not only focus on school, but also have time for a life outside of the library!

Prioritize!

With entry to a professional program, there also comes opportunities such as organizations to join, events to attend, etc. Although it is extremely important to take advantage of all the professional development you can get, something you have to keep in mind is—it is okay to say no. If you do not plan on attending every org hour or only join 1-2 organizations, then this can be viewed in a negative light; however, this is not the reality. What is important is to prioritize what you are passionate about! Pick a few organizations or opportunities you feel that align with your future pharmacy goals and grow within those. Quality over quantity! By doing this, not only will you be building substantial networks, but you will be saving time that could be invested elsewhere.

Scheduling!

Once you have narrowed your scope of interest on what you plan to be involved with professionally, don't forget about your personal life too! You may have a job, a family at home, non-pharmacy organizations, or just some laundry to do. No one expects you to have all of those commitments completed immediately; this is where scheduling comes into play.

"The road to achieving this so-called 'balance' can be a long one, but once on the path, many find themselves motivated to stay on it."

There are a myriad of ways to schedule your life—Apple/Google Calendar, a physical planner, sticky notes on your laptop screen, or maybe a reminders app on your phone. Regardless of the method you choose, scheduling is one of the most helpful ways I have kept all my commitments in order. It helps to ensure that you're not overbooking yourself and that you don't forget anything coming up. Especially with our new virtual world, scheduling makes a world of a difference with organizing all those Zoom links!

Self-Care!

Now while you are building that schedule out, make sure you block off some time for yourself. Arguably, this is the most important tip to ensure a balanced lifestyle. With all the stress of the world on your shoulders, you, and everyone for that matter, needs time to unwind. Pharmacy students tend to be very type A, so if you need to physically schedule relaxation time in your calendar then all the more power to you!! However you get there, make sure that you do. Self-care is extremely important in ensuring that you not only can prioritize obligations but also that you see yourself as a priority! So go on that run, paint that picture, watch that YouTube video! Make time for the things that keep that smile on your face and leave you inspired to be your best self.

And THAT folks, is just my take on how to achieve that thing they call, "Balance."



A CONVERSATION WITH NINA MURPHY, PHARM.D. C/O 2021

Interviewed by: Busola Fowowe, Pharm.D. Candidate 2022

Can you tell us about yourself?

"I graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, VA with a B.S. in Biology and am currently a 4th year on my APPE rotations. I live in Lawrenceville, GA (yes, I commuted to campus from Lawrenceville for 3 years!) with my husband and two cats, Jaws and Jiggy. I have been working as an IV Room Pharmacy Technician at Emory Johns Creek Hospital (since 2018) and Emory Saint Joseph's Hospital (since 2015). My current interests lie in pediatrics and neonatology; however, I'm keeping an open mind while I'm on my rotations! Prior to my induction into PLS at the end of my P2 year (2019), I served as the 2018-2019 RxPups-SSPA President and 2018-2019 SNPhA Pre-Pharmacy Liaison and have continued to serve in leadership roles since."

What does leadership in pharmacy mean to you?

"Leadership in pharmacy means having the courage to think outside the box and do things that have never been done before. It means to never stop dreaming and to leave things better than you found them. I have always been an innovator, so when I first started pharmacy school, I made it a goal to try new things, get outside of my comfort zone, and implement new ideas at the CoP. Because the pharmacy profession is such a dynamic field, it is important to adapt and to innovate so that we can better serve our patients and communities."

You have served in many leadership roles at the College of Pharmacy, 2018-2019 RxPups-SSPA president, 2019-2020 PLS president and SNPhA Vice President to name a few, what would you say your biggest accomplishment in any of these roles has been?

"I would say that my biggest accomplishment would be innovating new events. For example, when I became President of RxPups-SSPA for 2018-2019, I established a new logo for the organization and created lapel pins for our members (which I still proudly wear on my white coat to this day).



With the help of my executive board, we implemented the first CoP fundraiser benefiting UGA Miracle and raised over \$2,000 for Children's Healthcare of Atlanta and continue to make this an annual tradition within the CoP. As SNPhA's Pre-Pharmacy Liaison for 2018-2019, we were able to implement the first SNPhA Pre-Pharmacy Day in March 2019. This event was held at the CoP and included representatives from all four colleges of pharmacy in Georgia. The day was filled with fun activities, Q&A panels, and guest speakers who spoke about the pharmacy profession, the application process, and so forth. The inspiration for this event was my personal experience researching pharmacy programs in Georgia as a pre-pharmacy student and my wish to facilitate the process. The event ended up being a huge success with tons of positive feedback from pre-pharmacy students and their family members, and we also received national recognition from SNPhA!"

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Fun Facts!

Nina was born in Olongapo City, Philippines, and she is 100% Filipino!

She has 4 younger sisters, all of whom are pursuing careers in different fields: environmental sciences, teaching, graphic design, and architecture.

In her spare time, she enjoys art (water coloring) and music (piano/violin).



A CONVERSATION WITH NINA MURPHY, PHARM.D. C/O 2021 (CONT'D)

Do you currently hold any leadership roles, and how do you manage the responsibilities of APPEs alongside these roles?

"I currently serve as a member of the Phi Lambda Sigma National Awards Committee where we carefully review completed materials and select the best candidates for the numerous PLS awards offered throughout the year. As a current 4th year student, I would say to know your limits. Despite wanting to take on more leadership roles and projects, I knew that it would be difficult to prioritize my rotations with a full plate and that it would be detrimental to my mental health. Once you begin your rotations, it's important to remember to treat every rotation like it's a "5-week interview". If you are not performing at your best while you're on your rotations, then you're only hurting yourself and jeopardizing possible future employment opportunities at those institutions. If you believe that you can handle numerous leadership positions and projects while you're on rotations, then more power to you (!!), but proceed with caution and be honest with yourself in your capabilities to wear multiple hats."

What has been the most impactful rotation you have been on?

"My most impactful rotation so far has been my institutional rotation at Emory Saint Joseph's Hospital. During this rotation, I mainly saw orthopedic surgery patients (eg, knee/hip/shoulder surgeries) and counseled them on their oral anticoagulant(s). This rotation allowed me to make many meaningful interventions. For example, whenever a patient's clinical presentation began to indicate signs of bleeding, I would alert my preceptor and we would inform the physician who would either stop/hold off on administering the anticoagulant or carefully monitor the patient. In addition, we would also alert the physician whenever we needed to suspend or restart a patient's anticoagulation therapy prior to or after surgery, respectively. However, the most rewarding aspect of this rotation for me was seeing how grateful the patients were for pharmacy taking the time to counsel them on new anticoagulants or for teaching them something new about an anticoagulant they have been taking. Every patient encounter was meaningful to me because my patients really appreciated all of my efforts. Overall, this experience reinforced how critical our roles as pharmacists are in ensuring that our patients are safe and adherent to their medications."

What advice do you have for students looking to develop themselves as leaders in pharmacy?

"Make the most of every second you have in pharmacy school. I know that 4 years sounds like a long time, but it's amazing how fast time flies. Join organizations, form strong connections with your professors/mentors/fellow peers and student leaders, and don't be afraid to ask questions! This is the time where all the resources are at your disposal, so take advantage of them while you still can!

Seek leadership positions and practice self-reflection.

Whether it's taking charge of a group project or becoming a leader for a student organization, you have nothing to lose by taking that chance and stepping up to the plate. The only way to become a good leader is to put yourself in those positions. By putting yourself in challenging situations, you will discover what your strengths and weaknesses are. Continue to work on your weaknesses and always practice humility in times of success.

Remember – A team is only as strong as its weakest link.

As a leader in pharmacy, you will have others looking up to you and relying on you for guidance. Get to know your team members (their interests, strengths, and weaknesses) and utilize them in ways that will uplift them and allow them to shine. More importantly, listen to your team members. Everyone brings something to the table, so be open to suggestions for improvement and new ideas!

Prioritize your mental health! Rotations are like a slow marathon, so you will inevitably start to hit a stage of burnout. Establish a good support system (whether it's through a mentor, friends, family, etc.) to give you a pep talk whenever you're starting to feel down or worn out. Also, surround yourself with things that make you happy (for example, I purchased a cute little plush toy that I kept in my purse/car that reminded me that "everything is fine" during times when I felt stressed or mentally exhausted). Lastly, try to set aside some time out of every week to decompress and not think about any work. Whether it's bingeing a new show on Netflix, having a spa day, going shopping, or hanging out with loved ones, we all deserve to show ourselves some love! When you're happy, then everything else will fall into place."



A PHARMACIST'S ROLE IN COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

Written by: Rachel Shelley, Pharm.D. Candidate 2022

As pharmacists, we have a strength in versatility. When given a patient's profile, whether it be in the community or hospital setting, we naturally screen for drug interactions, therapy duplication, appropriateness of treatment regimens, and other ways to improve patient outcomes. All of these interventions play a major role in the overall well-being of our patients which, in return, creates a community of wellness.

Nearly half of U.S. adults have some type of cardiovascular disease, which is reflected in the recently updated hypertension guidelines[2]. Approximately 1 in 10 Americans have diabetes and 1 in 3 have prediabetes[3]. Where can pharmacists play a role in the diabetes and heart disease epidemic of the 21st century? Education. Every pharmacist knows the importance of adherence, but having our patients recite 'I take the big white pill twice daily with meals' is not enough to help patients take control of their disease states.

Disease state awareness and education undoubtedly helps reduce health complications which in turn also helps decrease related health care costs. There are numerous wellness grants offered by many organizations that recognize the importance of education programs. Whether the opportunity for education happens at the bedside or inside a classroom at a community pharmacy, patients can benefit from understanding diabetes pathology, how medications and insulin work, blood glucose monitoring and how to interpret those numbers, along with exercise and nutrition. This creates a learning environment that encourages interprofessional collaboration and open conversations between patients and healthcare workers.

Depression and mood disorders are another disease state that has gripped the nation, especially since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Symptoms of anxiety disorder and depressive disorder increased considerably in the U.S. during April-June 2020, compared with the same period in 2019[4].

With the increase of people experiencing mood disorders, there will inevitably be an increase in antidepressants and anti-anxiety drugs being prescribed. ExpressScripts reports more than three quarters (78%) of all antidepressants, antianxiety, and anti-insomnia prescriptions filled during the week ending March 15th, 2020 the peak week, were for new prescriptions[5].

An estimated 25,000 people per year in the U.S. will seek medical treatment in emergency departments due to an adverse event associated with antidepressants. Clinical Practice Guidelines for the Treatment of Depression recommend Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors, SSRIs, as first line therapy[6]. For those diagnosed with major depressive disorder, ~50% will fail initial SSRI therapy[1]. A new, mainstream way to help improve outcomes for patients taking SSRIs is genotype testing. Polymorphisms in CYP2D6 and CYP2C19 can influence the metabolism of SSRIs, therefore affecting efficacy and metabolism of the drug. Pharmacists can utilize pharmacogenetic results to guide SSRI therapy, which could improve treatment response and decrease adverse events.

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A PHARMACIST'S ROLE IN COMMUNITY WELL-BEING (CONT'D)

Over recent years, there has been an increase in patients purchasing Direct to Consumer (DTC) Genetic Testing, like 23 & Me and Vitagene, which bypasses a healthcare provider who would normally order the test. DTC Genetic Tests typically go on sale for ~%50 off during Black Friday and Cyber Monday which can potentially increase the number of patients pursuing additional information about their genetics. As healthcare providers, having baseline knowledge or the ability to utilize online resources, pharmacists can help patients interpret their results.

Pharmacogenomics Knowledge Base (PharmGKB) is a resource that posts freely available, peer-reviewed, evidence-based, updatable, and detailed gene/drug clinical practice guidelines[7]. Clinical information on PharmGKB includes dosing guidelines and drug labels, potentially clinically actionable gene-drug associations, and genotype-phenotype relationships. It is a great resource for any pharmacist who has a patient that presents with questions about their genetic results.

Pharmacists play a role in community well-being through many different avenues. They are the key to helping patients manage some of the highest occurring disease states in the United States. Pharmacists, the medication experts, can give important insight about medications during diabetes and cardiovascular education classes. They are also able to help improve the efficacy and safety of mood stabilizing drugs, which improves patient's overall well-being.

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UPCOMING SPRING SEMESTER EVENTS



UPCOMING EVENTS:



- **PLS Delta Chapter Induction Ceremony** - March 2021
- **PLS Delta Chapter Meeting** - March 2021
- **Speaker Event: Dean Smith & Leadership** - March 2021
- **PLS Delta Chapter Elections** - March 2021
- **Fourth Years Tell All Panel** - April 2021
- **Compounding Review Workshop** - April 2021

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