

Creating connections

By Catlin T. Goodfriend

You may have noticed that APhA–ASP has a new chapter leadership position—the State Association Liaison. This position is designed to enhance your chapter’s relationship with the pharmacy association in your state, which will strengthen both organizations. At the University of Washington School of Pharmacy, our chapter is part of an umbrella organization that has benefited from a long-standing formal connection with Washington State Pharmacy Association (WSPA). Our members elect one student pharmacist each year to a 2-year term as junior and then senior WSPA liaison. The junior liaison year serves as a shadowing period, allowing the new liaison to learn about the association. The senior liaison is our chapter’s voice as a full voting member of the WSPA Board. The senior liaisons from the two schools in Washington State co-chair the WSPA Student Academy and develop student programming for WSPA meetings.

Numerous advantages

One WSPA staff member serves as both a chapter advisor and advisor for Operation Heart. Grant support gives her a flexible schedule and allows her to precept many of our outreach events. She also recruits other pharmacist preceptors she knows through WSPA. The association supports our annual fundraising auction, which provides travel funds for chapter members to attend pharmacy conferences. WSPA publicizes our auction by making announcements at meetings and in its magazine, distributing invitations, and promoting our Facebook page. WSPA staffers donate items and provide event-planning expertise.

Our chapter’s structure supports this relationship. “A key component to

streamlining the communications with our student chapters is the umbrella design, which offers a predictable portal to share and receive valuable information,” said Jeff Rochon, PharmD, CEO of WSPA.

Course series supports collaborations

One of our chapter’s recent successes is a new two-course series on policy and advocacy. These courses would never have existed without WSPA. Our WSPA liaisons developed the courses, and WSPA and its advocacy arm, the Legislative and Regulatory Affairs Council (LRAC), provided speakers to both courses.

These courses supported another of our collaborations with WSPA; the annual Legislative Day. Our SPAN Liaison and State Association Liaisons work with LRAC to organize this event. Students in the advocacy courses are leaders throughout the planning and execution. In the first course, student pharmacists learn about the legislative process and basic tools of advocacy. Then, in the second course, they learn about current pharmacy issues in our state legislature and teach other student pharmacists about these issues.

This teaching component recruits more student pharmacists to participate in Legislative Day. Student pharmacists from the advocacy course help teach one session of the first-year Pharmacy Practice course series. The student instructors guide Pharmacy Practice students to role-play and discuss policy issues as if with state legislators. Most of the student instructors are first-year student pharmacists themselves, so this exercise makes advocacy seem particularly accessible. This class session makes first-year stu-

Tips for working with your state association



- Make the connection! Provide your state association with the contact information of your chapter’s state association liaison every year. Reaching out is the first step to collaboration.
- Invite your state association to send a representative to your chapter’s board meetings. Regular, ongoing contact allows your state association to understand what resources you have to offer and how the association might be able to help you.
- Update your state association on your chapter’s activities. WSPA publishes school news in their magazine. This allows pharmacists in your state to find out what you do.
- Involve your state association in orientation events, white coat ceremonies, general chapter meetings, and leadership development events. At our annual Welcome to the Profession Ceremony, first-year student pharmacists receive the school pin from a WSPA representative, introducing them to their state association before classes even begin.
- Find out how other chapters in your state and your APhA–ASP region work with their state associations.
- Your passion is powerful! Offer your enthusiasm for the future of the profession to your state association. Remember that pharmacy practice is determined at the state level.

dent pharmacists more likely to attend Legislative Day.

The chapter’s relationship with WSPA has benefited our chapter and our state in many more ways. “Our student liaisons provide fresh perspective and energy to our Board meetings while sharing current pharmacy practice issues with their classmates. It’s mutually beneficial,” explained Rochon.

I hope that your chapter will develop a connection with your state association soon!



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