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## MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

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Before I go into my usual introduction to the articles that appear in this issue, I would like to recognize the passing of an outstanding pharmacy educator, Dr. Don Rucker. Don is best known to most of us in pharmacy education for his work as Chair of Pharmacy Administration at The Ohio State University and University of Illinois at Chicago Colleges of Pharmacy in the 1970s, 80s and 90s. Don helped train many of today's pharmacy educators, particularly in the social and administrative sciences. Don was also willing to reach out to many of us, offering ideas and words of encouragement well into his retirement. Early in my career, I particularly remember Don calling me on a regular basis to ask how things were going and providing ideas for new areas of research and scholarship. I'd like to think that our efforts with the *Journal of Pharmacy Teaching* reflect well on the guidance and support Don generously offered.

As for this issue, the first three articles deal with how we prepare our students in early portions of our curricula to perform in later portions, especially once they are involved in patient care. Many schools of pharmacy struggle with designing a sequence of courses in the first professional year that introduces concepts that are important to pharmacy practice, yet at the same time recognizes the variety of backgrounds and experiences that many students bring to pharmacy school. In the first article, Evans describes the evolution of the Introductory Pharmacy Prac-

tice course sequence at South University, a relatively new pharmacy program in Georgia. Through the use of student and faculty assessments the faculty at South University made a series of small changes over a three-year period, resulting in a course sequence meant to help students succeed in later portions of their curriculum.

Two articles in this issue deal specifically for how particular teaching techniques translate into student success in their Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experiences (APPEs), or what many of us simply referred to as clinical rotations before the advent of *Standards 2007*. Lundquist & Hogan assessed whether the Problem Based Learning (PBL) techniques used to teach much of the curriculum at the University of Mississippi School of Pharmacy resulted in increased levels of student preparedness for their APPEs. Preceptors reported that PBL prepares students very well for many aspects of their clinical rotations, but there were still some areas where student performance was well than optimal. Schultz and Smith document a clinically based peer review process for the outcomes of didactic teaching by assessing students' ability to recall previously learning material while on their APPEs. This process allows for students and faculty to receive feedback, resulting in more effective learning and teaching.

While a number of recent studies have focused on the work life and productivity of pharmacists, relatively few have focused on these issues among those of us in pharmacy education. Conklin and Desselle describe the results of a national survey of pharmacy faculty in which they empirically investigate factors such as job stress, productivity, and commitment to remaining at their institutions. This article not only serves to inform those of us who work as pharmacy educators on a daily basis, but also provides important insights to our administrators who must recruit, develop and retain faculty in a very challenging environment.

Finally, it's no secret that admission to pharmacy schools has become more competitive than ever, with some programs receiving more than ten applicants for every student that is accepted. Admissions committees at many schools are challenged to select students who come with a wide variety of backgrounds, including they type of school where they completed their pre-pharmacy curricula. Lobb and colleagues at the University of Mississippi describe their evaluation of whether students attended a two-year or four-year school prior to attending pharmacy on key performance factors in their pharmacy program. What they learned

in their study should benefit other pharmacy programs who attract students from a wide variety of pre-pharmacy institutions.

The *Journal of Pharmacy Teaching* continues to seek manuscripts related to teaching and education research in pharmacy. We are especially interested in publishing descriptions of the many of the innovations that are occurring at our colleges, particularly as we transition to *Standards 2007*. Please consider I look forward to your continued comments and submissions. Please feel free to contact me at david.zgarrick.drake.edu.

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