

March 18, 2021

Fall/Winter 2020/21 - Semesterly Counselor Report **From Vice President Academic (Navjot Singh)**

(1) Curriculum Committee (CC)

CC continues to work to improve the PharmD program as each course goes through review. Student representatives on the committee include the first, second, and third year class representatives and the APSA VP Academic (standing member). I continued attending meetings over the summer, as I transitioned into my current role from second year class representatives. As CC meetings typically require 2-hours and overlap with courses, this semester Dr. Hall would meet with student representatives prior to CC meetings, to best optimize the 1-hour students could commit to.

I continued to review first and second year courses, and participate in discussions as new third year courses came through the committee. Over the summer, I provided the second and third year representatives with guidance in their approach to reviews. This semester, Dr. Hall provided all student representatives with an introduction to the course review process as this semester, the first year class representative actively participated in the formal process.

At each meeting, I provide an APSA update, thus I have shared resources APSA has created, upcoming events, and information regarding how the student body is coping with the challenges of this pandemic. Next set of course reviews will likely take place early 2021.

Winter Update:

I completed another set of course reviews, with focus on experiential education. In conversations with FoPPS, a template modifiable calendar originally designed for preceptors to use will be linked for student use moving forward in case students too prefer a calendar format (see [here](#)). Our last official meeting within our roles took place March 17th, and transitioned councillors will join in during our next meeting (tentatively scheduled for late April).

Over this semester, I continued to provide APSA updates, and share invites to APSA initiatives with members of Faculty.

The Curriculum Committee has been focused on creating more internal electives for students, and we have continued the conversation from last year. While internal course development is still in the works, CC has discussed the approval of external electives as appropriate for 1st/2nd and 3rd years, and updates are to be shared by faculty with each appropriate cohort.

(2) Student Advisory Committee (SAC)

SAC is composed of a faculty representative as chair, VP Academic, first, second, and third year class representatives. Over my experience with the committee last year, we noted that SAC turned into a support system for class representatives by providing a safe environment and a place where we can come up with solutions.

This year, all four class representatives gathered student feedback/concerns via their mid-semester/mid-rotation feedback forms. Years one to three compiled their feedback to share at SAC, and we recognized some opportunities for changes as we head into a new semester in 2021. We will be reaching out to professors at the start of the next academic year to help create a two-way communication to help facilitate the sharing of feedback and support both students and professors as we continue to learn to navigate a new normal.

Although the fourth year class representative does not sit on SAC, I did reach out to their representative periodically to gauge how the Class of 2021 is doing. My goal has been to have an accurate understanding of each cohort's experiences, thus I am able to accurately voice concerns at other committees (i.e. CC, CoFA, etc.). I hope to formally include the fourth year class representative as a part of SAC.

My role thus far has been to organize meeting dates, sharing my templates for feedback, and ensuring all representatives have a chance to discuss their concerns. A meeting can be called by any of the committee members.

Winter Update:

I continued to communicate with class representatives from years 1, 2, 3, and 4, to gauge how each cohort is doing. Additionally, we recognized the number of feedback surveys last semester were overwhelming, thus we opted to not release a student let "Mid-Semester Feedback Survey," as each cohort felt that a majority of things needing addressing from last semester had been adequately addressed this semester (i.e. overwhelming pre-readings, going over allotted Zoom lecture times, etc.). We discussed the same during CC Meetings, and opted to leave feedback to the faculty surveys. Class representatives felt they had adequate alternative means to allow students to

voice concerns if needed (i.e. anonymous feedback google forms linked in class emails). There is an opportunity to revisit this in the future as needed.

I also communicated some of the concerns from 1st and 2nd year students regarding electives and Pharm 498/499 opportunities, and discussed a question gathering tool that had been released for both cohorts. As per discussions, these topics will likely be addressed by faculty. At this point, a FAQ sheet may not be needed due to faculty sharing updates as appropriate, however before I end my term, I will try my best to try and leave something behind in the event it is of help moving forward.

I also informed FoPPS the overwhelming month of March ahead of 3rd year students. In doing so, I had faculty members reach out and we worked to try and alleviate some of the stress by discussing some possible changes (i.e. updating deadlines, or, changing lecture topics around as possible).

(3) APSA's Awards Committee (AC)

AC is chaired by the VP Academic, and is composed of: faculty representative, VP Social, VP Fundraising, VP Finance, and a representative from each four cohorts.

Over the summer/early this semester, I worked with our VP Finance to connect with last semester's award recipients and find an alternative way to deliver award prizes as the pandemic led to the cancellation of last semester's Blue and Gold event.

The committee worked with CAPSI to help with awarding the Guy Genest Award in November. This month, the committee members will be reevaluating the current APSA Awards and updating the applications for the 2021 year. AC is planning to meet next early January to discuss award updates, funding, and we hope to have the applications released early 2021.

Winter Update:

AC re-distributed the sportsmanship awards this year, as given the online environment and unequal opportunity for out of Edmonton students to participate in intramural sports. The number of total awards remained the same. Additionally, AC went through all award criteria, application, and deadlines.

We have completed deliberations for APSA Awards, and will announce the recipients at Blue and Gold. This year, I worked collaboratively with committee's acting co-chair, Neha Dhalani, to ensure the process was equitable, fair, free of conflicts of bias, maintaining confidentiality, and ensuring we exhausted the security/accessibility regarding award materials to limit the chances of breaches. I will leave behind further suggestions and tips for the incoming VP Academic. I addressed concerns regarding breaches with AC members and moved to implement further protocols to limit any further possibilities.

Overall, it was truly an honour to see the hard work, dedication, and passion that fellow colleagues demonstrate throughout their academic careers. Deliberations were certainly difficult and long -the talent and number of deserving individuals among our student body is no small number! I would like to sincerely encourage each and every APSA member to consider applying in the years to come.

(4) Professionalism Committee (PC)

PC is chaired by the VP Academic, and is composed of faculty representative, APSA President, Past-President, VP Student Services, and one active APSA member who is not on council.

As VP Academic, I have presented a professionalism presentation to all of APSA Council/Officers and to the first years during orientation. Additionally, throughout the semester professionalism concerns and issues have been brought to my attention, and I have dealt with a number of concerns, planning courses of action moving forward.

An extension from last year's professionalism committee initiative, **Career Series** was officially launched and four sessions took place this semester. Both Jadin Chahade (VP Academic 2019-2020), Ellen Dotty (Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences (FoPPS) Development and Alumni Engagement Officer), and I have worked to organize and deliver over 10 sessions with various staff, alumni, and professionals. All upcoming event dates have been added to the APSA Google Calendar -check it out to see when we have our next session!

Winter Update:

I continued to deal with a number of professionalism concerns this semester, this year I had approximately 10 different situations come across my attention. I provided guidance to fellow councillors and APSA members when dealing with concerns, working closely with faculty as appropriate. With each situation, I worked to maintain confidentiality and limit concerns to be kept among those involved.

Career Series will be ending this semester with a total of 14 sessions throughout the 2020-2021 year. This semester, Andrea Tack, professionalism committee member, assisted with organizing events throughout the

semester. We have been so pleased with the discussions each of the sessions brought up and the student engagement - I hope students enjoyed and learned as much as I did from all the speakers throughout the year!

(5) Academic Appeals Committee (AAC)

As the VP Academic is a voting member of the faculty's AAC, I am not in a position to be able to provide students with advice heading into their appeals meetings. Thus, to continue Jadin's efforts, Jadin, FoPPS, and I worked over the summer and earlier this semester to release a [resource document](#) designed to assist students in preparing for their experiential education, provide tips to resolve concerns, and present steps to assist in the case a student receives a failing grade.

The resource document is available on myapsa.ca under "Academic Resources" and on eclass under "Student Services."

Winter Update:

No further updates. I learned some concerns continue to exist with some experiential education experiences in fourth year, and I will continue to remain engaged and offer support to those taking lead.

(6) Race Against Racism Committee (RaR)

APSA and the Alberta CAPSI chapter launched its newest committee and recruited members this past summer in light of recent events that highlighted the continual systemic racism that prevalent in our communities. Our focus has been to highlight the systemic racism that exists within the healthcare system, to provide students the opportunity to acknowledge our biases, and to continue to learn about the disparities that continue to exist.

RaR is co-chaired by CAPSI Senior and the VP Academic. Early this semester, I had the pleasure to share information regarding our launch with the J & J Pharmacy Podcast. This year, we held a virtual run over September 25-27th and we raised \$4 712.20 for our charity of choice, [Action Dignity](#). Committee members worked to highlight health disparities that exist in our healthcare system by creating infographics for sharing via instagram.

As VP Academic, I'll be working with our committee to help bring speakers to discuss their work with vulnerable populations next semester. The committee will be working to confirm dates and roll out other initiatives -keep an eye out for more information as we head into 2021!

Winter Update:

We had three speakers discuss their work in providing care to vulnerable communities earlier this semester: Klaudia Zabrzanski, Lauren Mark, Dimitri Kachenjuk, and Choi Chung. We shared the Zoom recordings with the 4th-years on rotation for a week to allow accessibility given their rotation schedules. Our fourth speaker, Dr. Sanghera, will be ending the sessions during PAM with a discussion on "Skin Assessment in Skin of Colour."

(7) Council of Faculty Associations (CoFA) - Advocacy Board

As a member of the CoFA Advocacy Board, I brought forward three pieces of work to APSA's attention from the University of Alberta Students' Union.

1. *Hiring of the Sexual Violence Prevention Coordinator* - The SU VP Student Life and SU President brought forward statistics relating to campus sexual violence, and presented the plan to hire a Sexual Violence Prevention Coordinator (SVPC). This new position will work to identify gaps and provide support to those who have encountered sexual violence at the University of Alberta. This position will increase each semester's tuition by \$2-\$3 and I brought this forward to APSA Council for discussion, thus I sent a letter supporting the hiring of SVPC to the University of Alberta Students' Council.

2. *Course Workload Statement* - CoFA put forward a "Joint Call to Standardize Course Workload" and I shared the statement with APSA Council. As per council discussion and majority vote, APSA agreed to sign onto the statement.

3. *Online Proctoring Statement* - CoFA put forward a "Joint Call to End Online Proctoring" and I shared the statement with APSA Council. As per council discussion and majority vote, APSA agreed to not sign onto the statement.

Winter Update:

No further updates. I did touch base with the SU VP Academic regarding the two Joint Calls, and learned that the relevant sections moved onto the GFC Council for further discussion.

(8) Alberta College of Pharmacy (ACP) Council

The VP Academic sits as a student member of the ACP Council. I attended all meetings over the summer and attempted to attend partial meets as possible throughout the semester.

Over the summer, I worked with the Class of 2020 and ACP to have their questions regarding licencing answered, as the pandemic brought uncertainty for the new graduates.

Most notable this year, as per Bill 30, as of April 1, 2021 council make up will require 50% public participation, thus the student position may no longer be a part of council. I discussed future possibilities for APSA and ACP to maintain communication with ACP Council President, Dana Lyons, and shared these with APSA's Executive Council as well. I will continue to remain updated on ACP Council initiatives and developments, by attending possible meetings or reading all documents/meeting minutes. My plan is to continue to keep APSA updated as appropriate.

Winter Update:

I continued to attend meetings, as possible with our class schedule, or, I tried to stay informed via reading meeting minutes where appropriate. As of currently, APSA VP Academic will no longer be an ex-officio member of ACP Council come April 1, 2021. However, there is space for a conversation to see how both APSA and ACP can maintain a dialogue. I had a conversation regarding this with President, Dana Lyons, and I will share any developments moving forward with the new incoming VP Academic.

As a part of my role, I provide ACP with an Annual APSA Report, sharing the highlights of APSA's accomplishments, and inviting ACP Council members to attend any of our events as they are interested.

Additionally, I hope to draft an ACP Report for APSA members before I end my term.

(9) APSA's Mentorship Program (AMP) - Resource

This year, with an all online fall semester, APSA decided to make AMP mandatory for all incoming first years, in hopes of trying to connect them to upper year students to help foster a sense of belonging among the student body. Additionally, in discussions with the faculty, we also expanded AMP to allow mentors to provide mentees with an opportunity to practice their patient interaction skills. Thus, I developed a resource, in collaboration with Dr. Sanghera and Teri Charrois, that discusses the role/expectations of mentors and provided them with further assistance in creating mock patient-interaction cases. The resource was shared with all AMP Mentors via email.

Furthermore, in discussions with class representatives and FoPPS, APSA will look at the possibility of opening up matching again in 2021 for current upper year students who also wish to have more mentors. More information will come as we revisit the idea in the new academic year.

Winter Update:

No further updates.

(10) Sexual Violence

This year, I worked alonging FoPPS, Sexual Assault Centre, APSA President, and APSA member Lisa Zhang to help organize and find times for pharmacy students to participate in "Working for Change" presentation by the Sexual Assault Centre.

We have also been working on a resource since this past summer, designed to act as a quick guide for students to refer to for information and additional resources. Currently, we are working on finalizing the document and we hope to have it finalized and shared with students -more information to come!

Winter Update:

We continued our work this semester, and have officially launched [APSA's resource](#) with information regarding supports/contacts available for students who have experienced sexual violence, or, for their supporters. Our hope is the resource lends itself as an accessible piece PDF. APSA has been working to foster a concern culture, and we hope to have this conversation continue in the coming years.

(11) Pharmacy Undergraduate Journal Club (PUJC)

This year, I worked with APSA Member, Alan Min, to launch PUJC. New this year, we created a resource for students to refer to to help with planning presentations. Alan created a new 'journal bank' for students to refer to when searching for possible articles to present on. Additionally, we also launched a new initiative to help highlight the importance of Evidence Based Medicine (EBM) via our class email 'PUJC Presents' infographics. We have a 'Clinical or Therapeutic Queries/Questions' google form, where students can share a clinical question or an interesting clinical practice and PUJC members can answer the question/delve into background information and have it presented in class emails. We have also used the infographic to highlight student presentations.

This past semester, we had one PUJC presentation, and we have four potential presenters for 2021. If you are interested in presenting or tackling a clinical question/topic for a class email feature -please feel free to reach out to either myself or Alan Min!

Winter Update:

This semester thus far, we have had three presenters share topics of interest and create discussions. We have a fourth presentation that may be taking place asynchronously -so keep an eye out for that! PUJC this year has been so inspiring this year -watching fellow peers share their knowledge and create conversations in a safe space has been such a great learning experience! We have had topics move from being a PUJC conversation, to, students collaborating with our Community Education Director to create new presentations! I hope all PUJC members have enjoyed the year as much as I have, and to anyone interested in being involved, please reach out to join via our [club's Facebook group page](#).

(12) Other

- *Working with Janice Kung*: Janice, our librarian, and I have been working to provide an opportunity for students with a refresher when it comes to using our clinical resources. Janice will be working on providing an asynchronous opportunity for brushing up on skills in 2021, so we will share as we have more information to come!

Winter Update:

- *API Info Session 'Lunch and Learn'*: I worked with Ellen Dotty and the CEO of API (Applied Pharmaceutical Innovation), Andrew MacIsaac, to bring a virtual noon information session to students in January.

- *Experiential Education - Leadership*: I met with Dr. Charlotte Yang, to discuss ways we can share student rotation experiences in leadership sites with students (notably with 3rd years). I was joined by our SAF-Pharm Director, Monica Choy, and Publications Director, Yan Chen, to explore some possible avenues. This year, experiences were shared via a PQ+2 publication -see Yan Chen for more details.

- *RxA Advocacy Leaders Night*: I attended, along with fellow APSA Councillors, for an evening of networking and good laughs.

- *Remote Learning Task Force Advisory Group*: This semester, I represent pharmacy students on the advisory group, accompanied by Dr. Dion Brocks, Associate Dean, Academic. The group is organized to provide feedback regarding the recommendations put forward to assist with improving remote learning.

Sincerely,



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