

Project: Student Opportunities Website

Utilizing technology to maximize professional development accessibility for student pharmacists
Lipscomb University College of Pharmacy

Objective:

The student opportunities website was created as a tool to provide information to students throughout the pharmacy program about professional development opportunities. The site provides information in a central location about current jobs and internships, professional organizations and activities, and resources for residency or job placement in an interesting, dynamic format that includes a weekly blog. Site analytics are set up to track which pages are most utilized and a designated email account was created to receive feedback from students to ensure the site can be modified to continue to meet students' current needs.

Plan:

I. Assessment: The need for a student opportunities website was evaluated using a college-wide survey distributed via email. The survey asked questions about how students preferred to receive information (i.e. email) and if they felt they were connected to professional development opportunities. Over two-thirds of students responded that they had missed a professional development opportunity by being informed via email alone. This survey illustrated the need for information to be accessible in a central, online location and was used to propose the project plan to college faculty/administrators for approval.

II. Technology: Possible online tools were evaluated to determine the best way to host and maintain the website for students. University policies and the need for privacy required that the website be only accessible by College of Pharmacy students, faculty, and alumni. Google is the email provider for the university and had multiple tools that suited the needs for this project. A student website was created using Google Pages and provided security features that allowed access only by email address based on a list controlled by the owner of the page account. Google Pages is user-friendly and allowed students to create a website with no prior experience. Once selected, the chapter sought approval from the administration to continue project development.

III. Organization: A team of students was recruited to construct the student website. Students from each class were recruited to ensure that opportunities reflected priorities and availability of professional development projects applicable to all college of pharmacy members and to aid in transition of the website committee from year to year. The chapter created an executive position, Technology Coordinator, to oversee and ensure website maintenance. The Technology Coordinator is responsible for maintaining content of the website with the option to recruit a committee of student members each year.

IV. Content: The website committee and ASHP-SSHP members created categories that they deemed applicable to student professional development. The final website subpages included a section designated as a home, Jobs and Internships, Student Organizations, CV and Career, Residency, and Pharmacy Advocacy page. One or more students were responsible for developing each page and accessed multiple sources including faculty and Student Affairs, professional organization websites, student organizations within the college, and other online resources.

Outcome:

The student opportunities website received final approval and will be launched college-wide in 2016. Google site analytics were set up to determine which pages on the website are most utilized in order to meet the current needs of student users. An email address was designated for students to provide feedback or questions about content on the site. The students on the technology committee improved their technological skills and the website will be a resource for information to students in the future.

What you can do:

- Assess the need for a professional development website (i.e. use a survey).
- Determine what existing technology is available to host/create a dedicated student website.
- Designate a student or team of students to build and maintain the website.

Questions? Contact Lipscomb University ASHP-SSHP at lucop@mail.lipscomb.edu

