Introductory Pharmacy Practice Experiences (IPPEs): The Role of Professional Service and Leadership

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Background
Introductory pharmacy practice experiences (IPPEs) have become a larger portion of today’s doctor of pharmacy curriculum. Engaging students in professional service and professional development may enhance student pharmacists’ ability to gain not only the knowledge and skills of the profession, but also the values and attitudes of a professional.

Objectives
1. Explain the organization of the IPPEs at the University of Iowa.
2. Describe an innovative strategy of incorporating professional service and leadership into IPPEs.
3. Evaluate the types of professional service and leadership experiences in which student pharmacists have participated.

Methods
Participation in professional service and leadership events (IPPE 4) comprises approximately 10% of IPPE requirements. Students record their participation in professional leadership and service activities in a computer database with verification by a faculty or pharmacist on site. Students write a reflective learning assignment at the end of each year and receive feedback from their faculty mentor. Data on IPPE 4 type, activity, and documented student effort from August 2007 through May 2009 are summarized.

Students received credit in one-half hour increments for participation in approved activities. Multiple students could receive activity credit as appropriate for any given IPPE 4 opportunity. Students received hour for hour credit for participation in both service and leadership activities. Distribution of IPPE 4 student participation hours in service and leadership by class and professional year were used to compare using Chi-Squared analysis.

Discussion
Documentation of hours was dependent on the student pharmacist. We are aware that some hours went unclaimed due to student oversight. Students were able to and did submit more than the minimum number of hours necessary to meet the IPPE 4 requirements. The system used to record and validate participation assures us that collected values are not overestimates. System capacity to allow students to accumulate hours does not seem to have been met with two concurrent classes.
P1 students may have done more leadership activities due to limited ability to contribute in service activities. As students progressed through the P2 year, the number of service related activities may have increased as ability, familiarity and comfort level increased.

Conclusion
In the first cohort of students completing IPPE 4, second year students completed a higher proportion of service activities than in their first year. First year students in the second cohort completed a higher proportion of service activities than did the first year students in the first cohort completing IPPE 4. Students more than doubled the total number of hours in IPPE 4 participation with the addition of a second cohort.
The overall impact of these new IPPEs on student professional behaviors and engagement is yet to be determined.