

Pharmacy School Q&A: University of the Pacific Thomas J. Long School of Pharmacy and Health Sciences

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Location: Stockton, California

Founded: 1955

Enrollment: Over 600 students

Students of the Thomas J. Long School of Pharmacy and Health Sciences at the University of the Pacific receive clinical training, take part in experience-based learning, and participate in community outreach programs—all in just 3 years.

“Our accelerated program is rigorous and fully prepares a student to enter the pharmacy profession, but accomplishes this over 3 years instead of the traditional 4 years,” said dean Phil Oppenheimer, PharmD. “This means students are able to enter the profession sooner and translates into decreased school-related expenses and increased income potential, a combination that makes Pacific a unique value to our students.”

The 3-year program consists of traditional classroom learning as well as experiential learning. All students are required to complete the Introductory Pharmacy Practice Experience, the experiential component of the curriculum. In this program, students gain hands-on experience in introductory and intermediate community practice, geriatrics and long-term care, hospital practice, and health care outreach and public health.



About half of the students admitted to the accelerated program each year are students who completed the University of the Pacific pre-pharmacy program, Oppenheimer said.

“This mix of Pacific pre-pharmacy students and those transferring from other institutions creates an excellent mix of students from a variety of academic backgrounds and is the backbone of our powerful alumni network,” he said.

In addition to the accelerated PharmD program, the school also offers PharmD/PhD and PharmD/MBA dual-degree programs.

Q: What is unique about your school/program?

A: The accelerated nature of our program, the dual pathways for entry into the program, placement of full-time faculty in regions across the state to deliver the advanced pharmacy practice experiences, and the extensive involvement by our students in professional organizations and community outreach are the most unique features of the Doctor of Pharmacy program at the University of the Pacific. Everything about this program is designed to develop practice-ready pharmacy professionals who will one day lead the profession.

Pacific has utilized a decentralized advanced practice model for over 25 years, which places 13 full-time and 4 part-time faculty in critical locations throughout California and Hawaii to more effectively support students and preceptors in our advanced practice programs. This model facilitates standardized student assessment, preceptor development, and supports the advancement of pharmacy practice in these regions.

Q: What are some community outreach activities or programs the school participates in?



A: Each Pacific pharmacy student is required to complete 35 hours in community outreach activities. However, many of our students far exceed this requirement. Our students are particularly involved with community outreach activities involving health screenings and education to underserved adult populations, as well as providing educational events for local elementary school children.

In the first semester of pharmacy school, students take a required practicum course which provides training and certificates of completion in several skills. This ensures competency with core skills and abilities prior to interactions with the public early in our students' curriculum.

Additional coursework in Medicare Part D and Medication Therapy Management prepare our students to offer advanced services to the public. The community outreach events targeting Medicare beneficiaries have evolved into an effective geriatric population-based care model. Students participate in planning the events and providing health services. In 1 Medicare Open Enrollment season, our students provided 2,633 health screenings for 1,013 outreach attendees, and earned 2,650 introductory pharmacy practice experience hours.

Q: What advice do you have for students who will graduate this year?

A: This is an essential time for graduates. The job market may be a little tough, but positions are still available. Graduates should continue to develop as a professional and take advantage of those opportunities that are presented to follow their passion.

For the future, California State Bill 493 is likely to have an impact on expanding the role of the pharmacist in patient care and our graduates are well positioned to be a part of that movement

- See more at:

http://www.pharmacytimes.com/publications/career/2014/PharmacyCareers_May2014/Pharmacy-School-Q-and-A-University-of-the-Pacific-Thomas-J-Long-School-of-Pharmacy-and-Health-Sciences#sthash.sPUVHTEF.dpuf