

YOUR LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITY

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Your Leadership Responsibility

Congratulations to all Rho Chi Members for your significant achievement in attaining your Rho Chi Society stature in your respective College or School. This is an Honor that is granted to you for your entire career.

Being chosen for this recognition from among your peers indicating you have special scholarly talents and qualities is perhaps the ultimate award. Hopefully you do have a special vision, maintain an individual and professional curiosity, are goal oriented, and strive for excellence. You have a rewarding career ahead.

Attainment of this award, however, does bring an obligation or responsibility to you, your career and the profession. This is in keeping with the Mission of Rho Chi that encourages and recognizes intellectual achievement, stimulates critical inquiry to advance pharmacy, contributes to the development of intellectual leaders, promotes highest ethical standards, and fosters collaboration. The Rho Chi Society byline of “Lifelong Intellectual Leaders in Pharmacy” is so very important and pertinent for the profession. I wish to discuss your responsibility for your future—Your Leadership Responsibility.

You are just beginning your path through Pharmacy education with your formal degree program and perhaps a future of residency training or post graduate degrees. Along this way you will have many opportunities. You will have many choices.

I am reminded of a favorite story in the book **Alice in Wonderland** by Lewis Carroll which reflects upon finding the right path to your leadership journey.

“One day Alice came to a fork in the road. Puzzled. She looked up, and saw a Cheshire cat in a tree. “Which road do I take?” she asked. The wise cat’s response was a question: “Where do you want to go?” I don’t know” Alice answered...

“Then,” said the wise Cheshire cat, “it doesn’t matter”

You have a life of opportunities or paths to consider. However, with your intellectual abilities, your ambitions, your creativity, and your leadership quest, you will have a rewarding career.

Leadership

Let us reflect upon “Leadership.” What is Leadership? The classic definition of Leadership by Webster’s New Dictionary is: “The power or ability to lead other people” or “The capacity to lead.” However, I like "A leader is a person who takes you where you will not go alone." – Susan Ascher, CEO, founder and president, SusanAscher.com. Another favorite definition is “Leadership is having a vision, sharing that vision and inspiring others to support your vision while creating their own.” -- Minday Gibbins-Klein, founder, Real Though Leaders. I have also heard that “Leadership is like gravity. You know it’s there, you know it exists, but how do you define it?”-- Jamie Williams, former San Francisco 49ers star.

Personally, I like to relate to Leadership as a process of Influence in which one can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common goal. One has the ability to act as a catalyst to make positive change. Again, Leadership is simply influence. Leaders have a Vision—they can see what is Invisible to others.

Aside from your recognition in Rho Chi Society and its challenge to you of a Lifelong Intellectual Leadership in Pharmacy, where do we find Leaders? Leaders are in all settings. We generally focus upon the term in the workplace setting. For the Pharmacy profession we would generally note those individuals who are in active professional practice in our nations community pharmacies, health-system pharmacies, faculty in our nation's Schools and Colleges, those thought-leaders doing research and drug development, or those pharmacists who are involved in leadership activities in our professional organizations. However, leadership is not limited to these settings. Many pharmacists exhibit their leadership abilities in several settings. One can demonstrate leadership abilities in the community in service organizations, our Church, or just our family. Thus, leadership can be exhibited in all settings.

We often think of leaders that have a title. Examples include a Dean, Professor, Director, or a Principal Investigator. Sara J. White, in her 2006 HAK Whitney (ASHP) address coined the terms "big L" Leaders and "little L" Leaders. She challenged the pharmacy profession to not just consider leadership as limited to those individuals with a title but to consider all pharmacists in the profession to have the potential to be a leaders by following the definition of leadership (influencing others) that we have discussed. The "big L" leaders are in positions with a title but probably the most important group of "little L" leaders are those colleagues in practice that continue to contribute and influence others through their daily practice. We have defined Leadership as having the ability or taking responsibility to influence others to a common vision in all settings with or without a title.

How can we all improve our skills and ability to become a successful leader in our sphere of influence? Is Leadership something that is innate or can it be

developed. Vince Lombardi, the classic football coach says, “Leaders are made, they are not born and they are made just like anything else has ever been made in this country—by hard work.”

Many of our colleagues in our profession have reflected upon Leadership attributes and its development. The following are some of the pearls of thought or advice for the development of leadership skills have been captured:

- Listen first and often.
- Communicate often.
- Reward from the Heart by recognizing others and the team.
- Celebrate accomplishments regularly.
- Put purpose above personal interest.
- Be perseverant yet be adaptable.
- Recognize opportunities when they present themselves.
- Invest in the future and others.
- Enjoy your journey.

Acknowledging the Rho Chi Society member tagline, Lifelong Intellectual Leaders in Pharmacy, your obligation as a Rho Chi Society is to continue to distinguish yourself and enable others to distinguish themselves. Leaders have to enable others to be leaders in their own right. This successful strategy results in the Profession continuing to advance in Science, Education, Practice and Society.

I am reminded of an ancient Chinese philosophers' text, Tao Te Ching, 17th Verse (4th century BC) which I recently noticed: "The Great Leader speaks little. He never speaks carelessly. He works without self-interest and leaves no trace. When all is finished, the people say, "We did it ourselves."

How do you enhance or accelerate your Leadership skills? First you have to understand or acknowledge your responsibility for and your gift of leadership. As Vince Lombardi proclaims, "it is made...by hard work."

Enhancing Your Leadership Skills

I recommend three general areas of action which may improve your existing leadership skills—seeking your Mentor, Networking for personal and professional development, and leadership readings for self-improvement or growth. Seeking your Mentor and having conversations about your leadership growth is important. Your mentor(s) probably want you to be as successful and have a rewarding career just as you do. They can provide sage advice on issues or problems you may be addressing. Most mentees have a close, non-judgmental relationship with their mentor(s). Mentors can provide interesting or alternative perspectives on a variety of issues as you seek to improve your leadership development. I have referred to "Mentoring" as the "invisible ingredient" to the success of a person in leadership.

One of the greatest aspects of being in a profession is the ability to develop a collegial relationship with peers within the profession and with those that have mutual interests. Whether this is with colleagues outside your School or College or in your state or national pharmacy profession organizations, a networking relationship can last a lifetime. Develop those relationships. Be curious about the profession and its many activities. Discover new opportunities. Likewise provide

your own thoughts and ideas to the networking relationship. Networking becomes a win – win situation.

The third recommendation is to read about leadership concepts and leadership styles. There are a plethora of books available on “Leadership.” None of these books have all the answers nor do they have the perfect answers. However, all of them are thought provoking, stimulate you to “think beyond your existing boundaries,” and provide you with ideas or concepts for future opportunities. Some of the classic leadership books are: The **8 Habits of Highly Effective People** by Stephen Covey; **Good to Great** by Jim Collins; **Emotional Intelligence** by Daniel Goleman; and **Strengths Finder 2.0** by Tom Rath. I particularly recommend the Strengths Finder concept. This book provides for a web-based analysis of your personality traits relative to your strengths. This analysis identifies your five greatest characteristics of leadership (strengths) to guide you in your leadership journey. Strengths Finder urges you to focus upon your strengths, not your weaknesses, for your leadership growth and performance. This classic concept has been used in the business industry, professional association management, and for the position interviewing process.

Lastly there are a couple of Leadership books recently published by ASHP Press for students, residents, or young leaders entitled **Letters for Young Pharmacists** by Susan A. Cantrell, Sara J. White, and Bruce E. Scott and **Wisdom from the Pharmacy Leadership Trenches** by Toby Clark and Sara J. White.

As a member of Rho Chi Society, you are responsible for sustaining the Goals of the Society by being a Lifelong Intellectual Leader in Pharmacy. You have a tremendous beginning and have already demonstrated an ability to lead others. Continue to develop this skill for your own self development and satisfaction, for the pharmacy profession and for society in general. Leadership is for Life.

Summary

Continue to be aware of the following Leadership Development principles:

- Develop your Communication Skills
- Find a Mentor(s) and Sustain that Relationship
- Get Involved in Activities you care about
- Be Curious and Seek new Experiences
- Expand your Professional Horizon—Always Look at the Big Picture
- Strive for and Insist Upon Excellence
- Network with your Peers or Colleagues
- Control your own Destiny
- Seek Opportunities both Expected and Unexpected
- Recognize and Seize the Opportunities
- Say “Yes,” Say “Why,” Say “I Think,” Say “I Will”
- Yogi Berra says “When You Come to a Fork in the Road, Take It”

Congratulations on your achievements. Now is the time to “pay forward” and to improve and continue your leadership strengths for a rewarding and successful career. Achieving success in your career is not the destination but it is the journey to that success that is the most important.

