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A Month in the Office of Engagement

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PURDUE JOURNAL OF SERVICE-LEARNING AND INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

A Month in the Office of Engagement

Aubrie Wnek, College of Pharmacy

Pharmacy students at Purdue University spend their last (usually sixth) year of college completing ten separate month-long clinical rotations. These rotations may be completed in the local community, in another state, or may be an international rotation. Students have the opportunity to experience many facets of the pharmacy profession, from inpatient hospital settings, community pharmacy, industry, or unique rotations such as the FDA in Washington, D.C., as well as global health experiences in places like Kenya and England. This past year, I had the opportunity to complete a month-long administrative rotation at the Office of Engagement under the supervision of Associate Vice President for Engagement Dr. Steve Abel. This rotation afforded me experiences that few other Purdue students have had. From sitting in on Purdue's Kellogg Foundation Engagement Award Committee to attending engagement workshops, I was able to witness the impact that Purdue has on the state of Indiana and beyond.

One of the activities I really enjoyed was reviewing service-learning grants. The Office of Engagement provides grants to Purdue students or student organizations for community service projects. An individual student qualifies for grants in the range of \$100–\$500, while teams of students can be approved for up to \$1,500. One of the keys to writing a successful grant is to provide a detailed yet succinct overview of the project. It was important for me to critically evaluate the budget portion to make sure that the funding that students requested was truly essential. Students tend to ask for things such as funds for pizza, travel, and marketing, but these things may not always be fundable from the Office of Engagement, depending on the project description. I also made sure that

students provided measurable outcomes for the project (e.g., “This project will reach out to 100 children within the greater Lafayette community” or “We will be able to provide two units of water purifiers to impact 200 villagers in a rural community”). Upon request, the Office of Engagement will work with student organizations to help them write a successful grant. Through this experience I was able to gain a better understanding of the decision-making process used to evaluate grants, as well as provide a student perspective to administrators.

My experiences at the Office of Engagement inspired me and showed me the power of service. I am in my last year of pharmacy school with graduation rapidly approaching. As I prepare to leave Purdue and become an air force pharmacist, I constantly am reminded of the responsibilities I hold to the people I will serve. Pharmacists are heavily involved with the general public. We provide many services other than just filling and counseling on prescriptions. We are regularly involved in blood pressure screenings, glucose testing, wellness checks, and public health education. These are all aspects of community involvement that are just part of our job. This profession is a continuation of my love for service. In 2014, pharmacists were ranked as the second most trusted profession according to the annual Gallup poll. This is not a new trend. Pharmacists are deeply engrained with the people they serve, and opportunities for service-learning continue to push this profession forward. I have been so inspired by the amazing projects that students create in order to give back to the Purdue community. I am excited to carry my Boilermaker character with me as I enter alumni status.

Acknowledgments

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