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RE: RxA's Advancing the Profession Scholarship

As a future pharmacy professional, I believe that advocacy must be as diligently practiced as clinical care. In fact, it is only when we put advocacy on the forefront of our efforts, then are we able to provide the best medical care possible to our patients. However, it is vital to understand that advocacy is not a singular action nor abides to a concrete definition. It can manifest itself in many forms, ranging from something straightforward such as obtaining special drug coverage for a patient suffering from a rare form of cancer to something less tangible, such as helping shape the future of pharmacy. Nevertheless, advocacy has always been a passion of mine ever since the first day of pharmacy school, and I intend to continue practicing it as I transition into becoming a clinical pharmacist.

When I first donned my white coat, I would have never imagined the various roles I would take on as a pharmacy student in advocating for the profession. However, I recognized early on that pharmacy only goes as far as its people. Therefore, I felt a responsibility to my peers to help lead them and provide the support they needed to be successful in pharmacy school. This led to my election as Second Year Class Representative, wherein I played a vital role in ensuring proper communications were made between the faculty and my class, which was made all the more difficult as this was during the height of the COVID-19 Pandemic. This was ultimately an incredibly enriching experience that sowed the seeds of further advocacy the next year, in which I wanted to extend my leadership to the entire pharmacy student body by becoming the Vice President Fundraising for the Alberta Pharmacy Students' Association (APSA). I ran my

platform on securing the funds necessary to address the financial inequities between pharmacy students, which again was an issue that was further magnified by the pandemic. From that perspective, I am especially proud of my partnership with Mint Health and Drugs, where together we developed a bursary program that awarded \$2000 to deserving pharmacy students who needed a “helping hand”. This program has continued onto this year, and I am excited for it to be a permanent fixture that APSA is able to offer to pharmacy students for the foreseeable future. Although I am now on the tail end of my fourth year of pharmacy school and these previous advocacy roles now seem like a distant memory, they do however instill in me a sense of confidence that I will be successful in being a strong advocate for the profession as a future practicing pharmacist.

Despite boasting the largest scope of pharmacy practice in the country, Alberta still needs strong pharmacist leaders who are willing to push the boundaries of what is expected of the profession. For myself, this is how I envision the evolution of my previous role as a student advocate will proceed once I become a practicing pharmacist; by becoming involved in formal leadership. Notably, I want to not only continue being a member of the Alberta Pharmacists’ Association (RxA), but I hope one day to join the leadership cohort. Through this position, I want to continue increasing the ever-expanding ability of pharmacists to provide primary care to patients. As well, I want to pave a better and stronger bridge between hospital and community practice, such that patients will have even more seamless care upon admission into a facility and then subsequently once they are discharged back home. Integration of advancing technologies and artificial intelligence is also another interesting area of advocacy. Instead of

fearing the potential consequences that technology may bring, I strongly believe we should be welcoming it and optimizing its use for better healthcare.

As I look towards the future, I cannot help but feel optimistic. There is no better time than now to become a pharmacist in Alberta, so I feel incredibly fortunate to call myself one soon. With that said, the title of “pharmacist” also brings with it a responsibility to always advocate for the profession. As a student, I had the amazing opportunity to represent my fellow peers, and I hope to continue doing so in the future as a potential leader with the RxA. Thank you for this opportunity and taking the time to read my application.

Regards,

John Choi
Class of 2023