

RxA's Advancing the Profession Award Application

During my degree before getting into pharmacy, I was not deeply engaged in advocacy or extracurricular activities. I was unaware of the initiatives my student association was pursuing, and I missed many opportunities to contribute. However, as I progressed through pharmacy school, I have experienced significant growth in understanding the importance of advocacy and the impact it can have on the profession.

As a pharmacy student, my advocacy journey has been largely shaped by my various roles in the Alberta Pharmacy Students' Association especially as the Vice President of Student Services. In this capacity, I have worked diligently to support and consider the health and well-being of my peers by chairing the Space and Wellness Committee, which I have been part of since my second year. Throughout my time as VP Student Services, I am a voice for the student population in meetings and decisions made in our council.

One of the most fulfilling moments of my advocacy work was participating in both Student at the Ledge Day events. The first event focused on advocating for the inclusion of pharmacists in the student loan forgiveness program. I took the initiative to personally contact my MLA and engaged with other policymakers at the event. Shortly after, the Canadian Pharmacists Association (CPhA) announced that the government had extended the program to include pharmacists, a victory that benefited students across the country. The second Ledge Day was focused on advocating for all pharmacists in Alberta in light of recent funding cuts and the importance of the work we do especially in rural communities. I was in a unique position to share how these budget cuts would affect me as a new graduate, especially concerning job stability. Being able to voice these concerns directly to the Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) was a rewarding moment for me.

In addition, I have worked on advocating for the profession within the Faculty of Pharmacy by attending the Dean's Five-Year Strategic Plan and workshops aimed at positioning the University of Alberta as a leader in pharmacy education. I also participated in Alberta Health Services' "Hack-a-Thon," which aimed to enhance preceptor engagement with AHS. I was able to provide input from a student's perspective and help brainstorm ideas with AHS leaders. Volunteering at the University of Alberta's Open House, I encouraged prospective students to pursue pharmacy while dispelling common misconceptions about the profession.

Looking ahead to my career as a practicing pharmacist, I see even greater opportunities to advocate for the profession on a broader scale. I have created three primary advocacy goals that I aim to pursue after graduation. The first one is to obtain my Additional Prescribing Authority (APA) and practice to the full scope of my abilities, as I want to demonstrate the diverse and extensive competencies that pharmacists are capable of. By practicing to our full scope, we can break free from the limiting perception that pharmacists are only responsible for dispensing medications, and instead, showcase the full breadth of our professional capabilities.

Second, I aspire to become an exemplary preceptor. By mentoring and shaping future pharmacists, I will have the opportunity to influence the next generation and ensure they are well-equipped to succeed in a rapidly evolving healthcare landscape. Providing an exceptional placement experience and interacting with pharmacy students, I hope to inspire them to become involved with pharmacy-related extracurricular activities including advocacy.

Finally, I plan to become an active member of RxA, with the goal of joining their Leadership Cohort or contributing to a committee. Since my time as a pharmacy student, RxA has become a significant part of my professional journey, and I am eager to continue fostering that relationship. I want to be part of initiatives that extend beyond the confines of the pharmacy where I practice and be able to be the voice in pharmacy.

In conclusion, advocacy for the pharmacy profession goes beyond simply raising awareness; it involves cultivating meaningful connections with fellow pharmacists and pharmacy students, collaborating with like-minded individuals, and contributing to a larger movement that will continue to evolve and benefit others long after my career ends. In the future I hope to reflect on the progress we have made, and feel a sense of pride in the positive impact we have had on the profession and the communities we serve.