



MARYLAND MENTOR

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A Newsletter for the
University of Maryland
School of Pharmacy's
Academy of Preceptors

From the Assistant Dean for Experiential Learning

Dear Preceptors,

I am excited to share the Fall 2025 edition of *Maryland Mentor*, a newsletter that reflects the momentum we have built together and the continued evolution of experiential learning at the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy (UMSOP).

In this issue, you will find highlights from our 10th Annual APPE Rotation Site Fair, reflections from site visits across diverse practice settings, student perspectives from longitudinal rotations, and a tribute to a beloved preceptor whose legacy continues to inspire. We also spotlight the expanding role of preceptors in shaping industry experiences and share important updates, including the newly revised preceptor promotion policy.

Over the past 18 months, we have together made meaningful progress across several strategic priorities:

- Launched a revised **ELP Attendance Policy** to better support students and preceptors.
- Implemented a **NAPLEX integration framework** to align rotation experiences with licensure preparation.
- Expanded **Longitudinal Track Program participation** to record levels.
- Strengthened **global rotation opportunities** and interprofessional learning through increased PharmD student involvement in the **AHEC Scholars Program**.
- Introduced new **preceptor development modules**, including content focused on inclusive excellence.
- Restructured our **Policies and Procedures Manual** to improve clarity and accessibility.

Whether you are guiding students through clinical decision-making, supporting their professional growth, or modeling compassionate care, your contributions move the needle forward - advancing pharmacy education and patient care alike.

Thank you for being a vital part of our community. We look forward to another year of collaboration, growth, and meaningful impact.

Warm regards,



Mojdeh Heavner

Mojdeh Heavner, PharmD, BCCCP, FCCM, FCCP

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Professor, Department of Practice, Sciences, and Health Outcomes Research

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Welcome

We welcome the following newly appointed preceptors:

- Mohammed Aldhaeefi
- Lucas Bryk
- Hanna Desai
- Chinedum Dike
- Grace Erdman
- Esther Esadah
- Charisse Fong
- Connor Flynn
- Zeleke Goshu
- Falguni Kanthan
- Gertrude Kinyua
- Margaret Kunz
- Rose Jose
- Serena Mang
- Alayna Miller
- Deepa Neupane
- Karin Stewart
- Brian Suen
- Meseret Teklu
- Naga Vejalla
- Shelby Zavala

What the ELP Office Needs from Preceptors

Please help us be 100 percent compliant with preceptor requirements by doing the following:

- Submitting all required midpoint and final evaluations by their due dates.
- Entering your site requirements in CORE ELMS by clicking “My Requirements.”
- Reading all emails that come from the School via CORE ELMS.
- Completing one hour of preceptor development each reappointment cycle.
- Providing a brief description in your preceptor profile in CORE ELMS by clicking “Profile Information,” then “Description.”

Library Access

One of the many benefits of being a School of Pharmacy preceptor is having offsite access to eFacts and Comparisons Online and Micromedex only through the University’s Health Sciences and Human Services Library (HS/HSL). **Access is limited to School of Pharmacy preceptors who are scheduled to take a student for at least one block in the current academic year.** Please note you will only get access during the blocks/rotations that you have students scheduled. If you would like to take advantage of this benefit, please contact LaTia Few at Lfew@rx.umaryland.edu for more details.

School News

Experiential Learning Program Hosts 10th Annual APPE Rotation Site Fair

By Nathaniel Thomas, MBA, Office Manager of Experiential Learning



On Oct. 8, the Experiential Learning Program (ELP) proudly hosted the School of Pharmacy's 10th Annual Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experience (APPE) Rotation Site Fair for third-year student pharmacists.

First introduced in 2016 by a fourth-year student inspired by similar events at other pharmacy schools, the APPE Fair has become a signature event. It helps students explore the wide range of rotation opportunities available in the final year of the Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) program, a year focused on applying didactic knowledge in real-world clinical and professional settings. This fair plays a critical role in preparing students for that transition.

Held in Pharmacy Hall, this year's fair saw an impressive 96 percent attendance rate from the third-year class. A total of 81 preceptors and site coordinators from 42 organizations and



institutions participated, representing a broad spectrum of rotation settings, including health systems, community pharmacies, regulatory agencies, industry, and more.

A new addition to this year's event was dedicated networking hours, held after the main fair. This extension allowed students to continue conversations with preceptors and site representatives, share their interests and career goals, and gain deeper insights into available opportunities and the mentors with which they may be working.

The event was a resounding success. Students appreciated the chance to connect directly with potential preceptors, while participating sites welcomed the opportunity to engage with the next generation of pharmacists and highlight the unique experiences they offer.

We are proud to have delivered a meaningful and memorable experience that supports the professional growth of our PharmD candidates, and we look forward to building on this success in the years to come.



Reflecting on Site Visits and Partnerships in Experiential Learning

By Tuan Huynh, PharmD, Assistant Director of Experiential Learning

As I look back on my first year as assistant director of experiential learning, I'm reminded of the progress we've made as a team and appreciate the integral role our preceptors, site coordinators, and practice sites play in elevating the student experience. A key component of my role is conducting site visits, which provide a valuable opportunity to observe the high-quality learning experiences our students gain during their rotations. On these visits, I am excited to personally connect with, engage, and learn from our dedicated preceptors and site coordinators who advance UMSOP's mission. Through these connections, we continue to strengthen our partnerships and deliver exceptional experiential opportunities for our students across the pharmacy landscape.



During the 2024-2025 rotation cycle, a total of 67 sites were visited across a wide variety of practice settings, including health systems, community practice, acute care, ambulatory care, administrative pharmacy, and specialized patient care experiences. These opportunities allowed me to interact directly with 100 organizational partners and encompassed more than 180

preceptors who played an important role in mentoring and supporting our students in their rotation experiences. Each visit reaffirmed the dedication and enthusiasm of our preceptors and site coordinators, whose commitment to experiential education enhances our students' learning and drives the success of our program.

As we look ahead to another academic year, I am both humbled and grateful for the strong relationships we share with our practice sites and for the collaboration among preceptors, site coordinators, and students that makes experiential learning at the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy both impactful and transformative.

Preceptor News

Honoring a Legacy - Bennett R. Kantorow

By Crystal D. Sykes, BSP, Controlled Substance Program Manager, Operations at Baltimore VA Medical Center

The Baltimore VA Medical Center and the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy honor the legacy of Bennett R. Kantorow, BSP, a pharmacist and long-time pharmacy preceptor who passed away on Aug. 9, 2025. His dedication, mentorship, and compassion left an enduring mark on generations of student pharmacists.

A preceptor serves as a bridge between classroom learning and real-world practice — and Bennett embodied that role with remarkable grace. Known for his exceptional communication skills, he had a natural ability to connect with everyone he met — patients, students, and colleagues alike. His conversations often turned into lessons, filled with wisdom and humor drawn from decades of experience.

Fondly referred to as the “B.C. pharmacist — before computers,” Bennett carried with him a wealth of knowledge from his years as an entrepreneur and owner of Burris & Kemp Drug Store. He freely shared these experiences with students, offering practical insights and guidance that shaped their professional growth.

For Bennett, precepting was more than teaching — it was a way to give back to the profession he loved. His dedication to pharmacy and his commitment to patient safety were unwavering. In one memory shared by his family, Bennett identified a critical drug-drug interaction and respectfully insisted on addressing it, ultimately preventing potential harm. His humility in such moments reflected his deep sense of duty and care.



Bennett's mentorship, professionalism, and kindness made a lasting impact on everyone who had the privilege of learning from or working alongside him. We are grateful to have known him as a colleague and a friend. His legacy will continue to inspire future generations of pharmacists.

Student News

Three Perspectives, One Track: Insights into Maryland's APPE Longitudinal Program

By Daniel Butz, Lana Le, Zachary Geesaman, and Reginald Briscoe III, Fourth-Year PharmD Students

The University of Maryland School of Pharmacy's Longitudinal Track Program offers fourth-year student pharmacists an opportunity to immerse themselves in a single health system or community practice for an extended portion of their final year. Students complete three to five rotation blocks at a single chosen site, offering a level of structure and continuity that closely mirrors a residency experience - unlike traditional models where each block may take place at a different site or organization.

This experiential learning model fosters professional growth by allowing students to build relationships with preceptors, pharmacists, and health care teams, while also engaging in long-term projects and scholarly activities that may have otherwise been limited by a traditional five-week rotation. Many longitudinal sites use a layered-learning model, where residents serve as mentors, offering guidance from multiple perspectives across the continuum of pharmacy practice.

Below, four students share their experiences across three unique longitudinal sites, offering insight into how continuity, mentorship, and engagement shape their professional development.

Community Hospital Perspective

~Lana Le - Carroll Hospital, LifeBridge Health

At Carroll Hospital, I completed five consecutive APPE rotations as part of the health-system longitudinal track. This format allowed me to pursue personal areas of interest and expand my professional network while preparing for residency.

Throughout my experience, I built strong relationships with preceptors, shadowed procedures in the cardiac cath lab, and presented to professional audiences. One of my proudest accomplishments was publishing an article in *Medication Matters* - LifeBridge Health's medication safety newsletter - providing an overview of IV push medications used in the hospital. These experiences strengthened my confidence in clinical decision-making



and deepened my understanding of hospital pharmacy practice.

Preceptor Insight

According to Patricia Kokoski, PharmD, and Mary Goodell, PharmD, longitudinal students bring unique value to the pharmacy department by contributing to long-term projects beyond a typical rotation block. Familiarity with site operations, workflows, and the site's electronic medical record system allows students to progress quickly to independent patient care and participate in scholarly or quality improvement initiatives. Overlapping students and residents also foster peer mentorship and collaboration, enhancing the learning environment for all.

Tips for Success: Stay curious and ask questions. Turn daily encounters into opportunities for research or quality improvement projects, and don't forget to maintain a healthy work-life balance.

Integrated Health System Perspective

Daniel Butz and Zachary Geesaman – Kaiser Permanente

At Kaiser Permanente, students experience an integrated, patient-centered system that allows pharmacists to practice collaboratively across ambulatory care, management, and clinical settings.

Daniel's Experience: My longitudinal track has given me invaluable opportunities to grow within a highly collaborative environment. I have honed my communication skills through continuous interaction with providers and patients and refined my presentation skills through student symposiums and topic discussions. The continuity of working with the same team has strengthened my confidence and deepened my clinical insight.



Zachary's Experience: My time at Kaiser has involved research projects that span multiple rotations and the chance to develop NAPLEX review materials for other students. Building trust and continuity with my preceptors has opened the door to experiences that would not have been possible in a shorter rotation. The extended timeframe allows for meaningful contributions to research, education, and system-based care.

Preceptor Insight

Sydney Hajimirsadeghi, PharmD, a clinical pharmacist at Kaiser specializing in diabetes care, emphasizes that the longitudinal model allows students to build on previously learned skills and see tangible growth over time. By engaging in the full spectrum of outpatient, clinical, and management activities, students connect systems-based knowledge with direct patient care - preparing them to "hit the ground running." Overall, the model benefits both preceptors' and students' experiences for experiential learning.

Tips for Success: Be proactive in seeking learning opportunities. Volunteer for presentations or

projects that align with your interests - these experiences showcase your initiative and can lead to valuable mentorship and growth.

Urban Teaching Hospital Perspective

Reginald Briscoe III – Johns Hopkins Hospital



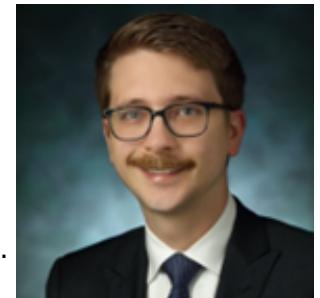
At Johns Hopkins Hospital (JHH), I've experienced diverse learning environments across inpatient and outpatient settings, including anticoagulation and HIV clinics, internal medicine, and specialty community pharmacy.

One highlight of the JHH longitudinal track is the 10-week blended ambulatory care and community pharmacy experience, which allows students to follow patients over time and observe their progress. Independently conducting patient visits in the internal medicine clinic strengthened my confidence and patient communication skills.

Another rewarding experience was publishing a review article on recent drug approval in *The Medicine Cabinet*, JHH's ambulatory care magazine. This project helped hone my academic writing and research skills in preparation for postgraduate training. The continuity of learning at JHH deepened my understanding of both the operational and clinical sides of pharmacy practice, knowledge that will help me improve workflow and patient care.

Preceptor Insight

Ryan Whisler, PharmD, MPH, BCACP, clinical coordinator III for solid organ transplant, notes that longitudinal tracks not only benefit students but also challenge preceptors to stay current with evolving clinical practices. The layered-learning structure - where residents and fellows mentor students - creates a dynamic environment for teaching and assessment. This model supports both student growth and resident development as future educators.



Tips for Success: Embrace every learning opportunity to develop valuable skills, be transparent about your career goals, and communicate openly with your preceptors - they are invested in helping you succeed!

Reflections on the Longitudinal Experience

Across each setting - community hospital, integrated health system, and urban teaching hospital - the longitudinal track experience has proven to be transformative. Students emphasized how the program bridges classroom learning with real-world application, fostering growth in both clinical expertise and professional confidence. The extended time at a single site allowed for stronger relationships with preceptors, deeper integration into the health care team, and meaningful contributions to long-term projects.

Beyond developing clinical and communication skills, students found that continuity cultivated a sense of belonging and professional identity, preparing them to transition smoothly into residency and future practice. Collectively, their experiences highlight the longitudinal track as an invaluable opportunity to grow as a learner, collaborator, and future pharmacist, offering a truly immersive and rewarding path toward professional excellence.

Bridging Perspectives: Reflections from a Student and Preceptor on the Industry APPE Experience

By Oanh Hoang, Fourth-year PharmD and MS in Regulatory Science student, and Emily Duong, PharmD, clinical scientist at REGENERON and APPE preceptor

Disclosure: The thoughts and opinions expressed by the individuals in this article are their own and do not reflect the views of REGENERON and/or AstraZeneca.

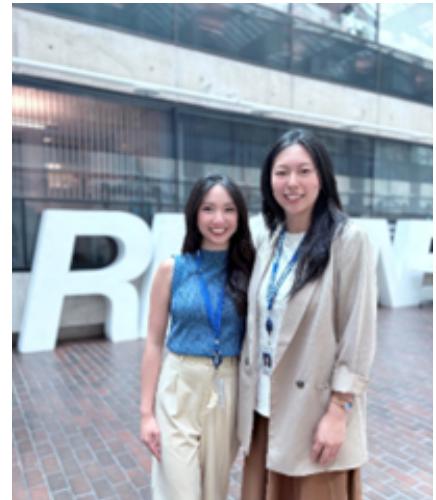
The APPE experience marks a pivotal transition from classroom learning to real-world application, offering valuable lessons not only for students, but also for preceptors who guide them. Through our shared experience in an industry-based rotation, we both gained a deeper appreciation for the experience. As a student stepping into an unfamiliar environment and as a preceptor once in those same shoes, we found that growth happens when both sides approach learning with openness, curiosity, and a shared sense of purpose.

Planning for Industry Rotations – Oanh Hoang

When I began pharmacy school, I envisioned a future in psychiatric pharmacy through residency. But as I explored different opportunities with an open mind, my path evolved. My first experience in a non-traditional pharmacy setting sparked a strong interest in industry, and I never looked back. Once I realized I wanted to become a clinical scientist, I intentionally shaped my journey and aligned my education and rotations to support that goal.

With two APEX blocks available for industry experiences, I strategically used my open vacation block to add a third rotation. I planned to make every week of my final year count by focusing on the following key areas:

- **Starting with a clear objective.** I treated rotations like a clinical question: define the goal, then design to meet it. My goal was an industry fellowship in clinical development, so I asked: What are the day-to-day responsibilities? What are unique challenges experienced in early versus late development? Those questions guided the teams I joined. I spent 10 weeks at Regeneron in late-stage development and five weeks at AstraZeneca in early-stage development, which gave me an end-to-end view of the drug development continuum.



- **Building complementary skills.** Before Day 1, I refreshed my therapeutic knowledge, reviewed the drug-development lifecycle, and reviewed the clinical scientist's role so I could contribute immediately. At Regeneron, I built a strong foundation in how cross-functional work comes together, seeing the day-to-day tasks and real pain points of a clinical scientist. At AstraZeneca, I built on that groundwork by navigating incomplete data and practicing evidence-based decisions.
- **Knowing your preceptors.** Engaged preceptors are valuable to the success of rotation experiences! They are your first stop for day-to-day operations, professional development, and problem-solving. Before applying, I met potential preceptors to understand their plans, scope, and how they'd bridge exposure gaps when company policies limit access to the clinical database. I'm so grateful I did - my preceptors prioritized meaningful, hands-on work and advocated for appropriate visibility.

What makes industry rotations unique?

What sets an industry rotation apart is the day-to-day immersion in the complexity and uncertainty of drug development where decisions rarely wait for complete information. Didactic coursework provides the foundational framework to be built upon, and the classrooms' fixed structure gives way to environments where the workflow is designed in real time. Students learn to evaluate data, weigh risks and benefits, and make informed choices as conditions evolve. That rhythm builds durable skills beyond the bedside: strategic thinking, clear cross-functional communication, and decision-grade evidence generation. The result is a mindset that balances rigor with speed, equipping students to contribute meaningfully wherever patient impact depends on timely, well-reasoned decisions.

Support from UMSOP Office of Experiential Learning

The rotations I ended up choosing were the ones with strong ties to the School. This was a reliable signal that those preceptors understood our curriculum and could tailor projects to our skills. As the Class of 2026 implemented new ACPE accreditation requirements to include an additional direct patient care elective, the School and the ELP Office were incredibly supportive throughout the process, working individually with students to ensure that our rotation schedules not only met accreditation standards but also aligned with our professional career goals.

For students interested in gaining experience in non-direct patient care and non-traditional settings, such as industry, the ELP Office provided thoughtful guidance and flexibility to help us explore those opportunities. They worked one-on-one with students to design schedules that supported individual interests while maintaining the balance of required and elective experiences. The most important thing to remember is that they're there to help, so don't hesitate to reach out!

A Preceptor's Perspective – Emily Duong, PharmD

When I think back to starting my first APPE rotation, I can still remember the mix of excitement and anxiety - reviewing endless class notes, memorizing lab values, and trying to anticipate every

question my preceptor might ask. Now, as a preceptor, I can confidently say that I don't expect students to have all the answers. What matters most is showing genuine curiosity and a strong intention to learn. It's one thing to give the right answer or admit, "I don't know," but it's far more meaningful to follow up with, "Here's what I think might be happening. What do you think?" or "How could I learn more about this?" ***That mindset - of asking intentional, thoughtful question - is what sets students apart.***

This same approach becomes even more valuable in the industry setting. In clinical development, decisions often need to be made with incomplete information - it's part of the nature of science and innovation. Learning to navigate that uncertainty with curiosity, critical thinking, and a willingness to learn will serve you far beyond your rotations. The best scientists aren't those who know everything, but those who keep asking the right questions.

Advice to Future Students - Oanh Hoang

After 15 weeks in industry rotations, my biggest takeaway is this: be curious with purpose. Know why you're doing each task, what decision it will inform, and what outcome you are aiming for. Anchor your work to a clear objective, measure progress against it, and let every question serve that end goal.

Career, Leadership, and Professional Corner

Affiliate Faculty Promotion Opportunity for Preceptors

By Mojdeh Heavner, PharmD, Assistant Dean for Experiential Learning

We are pleased to share that the updated Preceptor Promotion Policy now provides eligible preceptors with a formal pathway to advance in their affiliate faculty ranks at UMSOP. This policy recognizes the critical role preceptors play in experiential education and offers a structured process for promotion based on sustained engagement and excellence in precepting.

Eligibility Criteria for Promotion Include:

- A minimum of five years of continuous service as a UMSOP preceptor.
- Demonstrated excellence in student mentorship, teaching, and professional practice.
- Completion of required preceptor development activities and compliance with ELP policies.
- Submission of a promotion application, including a current CV and supporting documentation of contributions to experiential education.

Preceptors who meet these criteria are encouraged to review Section VII of the [**Procedures Manual**](#) for full details and reach out to mheavner@rx.umaryland.edu to express interest. This update reflects our commitment to recognizing the valuable contributions of our preceptors. We invite all interested individuals to explore this opportunity and reach out to the ELP Office with any questions.

Disclosure: Microsoft 365 Copilot was utilized solely for editing purposes in the preparation of this newsletter. All content and ideas were created independently by the authors.