

Text of Comments Provided by Joseph DiPiro, Executive Dean, South Carolina College of Pharmacy at the SCCP Faculty Meeting, January 30, 2007

A Commitment to TOP-10 Quality

Today I would like to talk about our goals and direction as a College of Pharmacy. Over the past year we have heard a lot about TOP-10 Colleges of Pharmacy. The term was used at the retreat and I have used it to identify the best colleges of pharmacy. What I would like to do is talk for a few minutes about how we can use this concept to have the College reach the next level of excellence.

As we all know, we do not control college rankings. Others decide our ranking (such as the US New & World Report), and they may or may not know much about us. Sometimes colleges get higher or lower rankings than they deserve. Generally, a college that is moving up in quality and productivity will be under-ranked for some time, just as programs that are over-the-hill retain their high reputation and ranking for a while. We are moving up – but not yet into the ranks of the top colleges.

While a TOP-10 ranking would be great, it is probably not realistic to achieve in the next few years. What would be more important for us is to work toward a level of quality that is equal to the top colleges, irrespective of our external ranking. While we cannot control our ranking we can make a commitment to TOP-10 Quality. A Commitment to TOP-10 quality requires that we do our best to identify excellence that is recognized and acknowledged in TOP-10 pharmacy colleges and move our programs in that direction. TOP-10 quality should relate to our faculty, staff, students (PharmD and graduate), our curriculum, research programs and our service programs.

How will we know if we are TOP-10 Quality? This is a question that cannot be fully answered in a few minutes. Each component of our program needs a methodical assessment to identify where we stand now and how far we need to go. We should develop and follow key performance measures with target values. Our administrators have begun this process and a draft of key performance indicators has been sent to the Assessment Committee

We already have many examples of excellence that could be found in Top colleges

- Faculty on both campuses have been awarded NIH grants
- Faculty members have gained national recognition. Recent examples include Jean Nappi who received the ACCP Education Award and LeAnn Norris who is the latest in a long line of Faculty who achieved Board Certification.
- Palmetto Poison Center was granted national accreditation
- In the past year we have recruited Faculty who would be welcomed as faculty at any University in the US
- Our PharmD students were top in the US in the clinical skills competition
- The MUSC Residency Program year after year attracts some of the best candidates in the US

There are other examples.

We have individuals who demonstrate TOP-10 excellence but our overall program is not there.

Part of the process in achieving TOP-10 quality is recognizing excellence.

- Who in the US has the best curriculum?

- What does a TOP-10 research program look like in size and quality?
- What is it about a TOP-10 program that makes it TOP-10?
- How do we find models of excellence?

We can see local models of excellence like the USC School of Public Health. The SOPH is a great college that is highly regarded. What has happened to make the SOPH an excellent institution? They were created after the College of Pharmacy, and started smaller, but advanced at a much higher rate by most measures. Decisions and commitments were made that set them on a higher trajectory.

How will we know if we achieve TOP-10? TOP-10 programs are recognized for innovative curriculum that prepares students for the future of pharmacy rather than the past. We would know we were there if our students can meet rigorous competencies. And, students, faculty, and those who employ our students agree that our curriculum is one of the best in the US. It is not only that close to 100% of students pass NAPLEX and MJPE. That is important but not a good measure of excellence since almost all colleges have close to 100% pass rates.

Our curriculum should be at the cutting edge. As a TOP-10 College, our faculty would regularly present curricular innovations at meetings and have their work published. They would be invited as curriculum consultants at other colleges. We would know that we have a TOP-10 curriculum when we have identified the best in the US and match it or better it.

Some of the directions, or challenges, that we should consider for our curriculum are:

- Determine the best lecture course designs that require active-learning methods and develop critical thinking as opposed to fact memorization. This does not assume all or none for distance education, but a incorporates a selective use that makes the most of the technology to provide time for more interactivity in or out of class.
- Construct the experiential program with a clear definition of quality that is competency based, and better addresses interprofessional instruction, information technology, wellness, medication therapy management, patient safety, continuity of care, and cultural competence

TOP-10 Colleges have very active research programs in pharmaceutical, biomedical and clinical sciences with a high level of NIH funding and strong graduate programs. NIH funding is a nationally-recognized measure of quality research. At this point in time, the only about 10% of NIH applications are funded. Last year – TOP-10 colleges averaged over \$6 mil in NIH funding. The SCCP increased from \$2.1 mil to \$4.2million, so, we are headed in the right direction.

I am not negating the importance of prestigious non-federal grants and contracts, but we should build a faculty development program that assures that young faculty will become NIH funded. We need to assure that we have a faculty recruitment program that attracts the best faculty who are or will soon be competitive for NIH funding. We should make the most of our opportunities for funding, and position ourselves to be a part of the CTSA effort on both campuses, to participate in Health Sciences South Carolina to develop important initiatives like the Center for Medication Safety. We now have an opportunity to submit proposals for Duke Endowment funding. Overall, we need to look for other collaborative opportunities that strengthen our research.

For our graduate program, we need to improve quality of the program and quantity of good students in the program. We should continue to determine which model of graduate training works best for the College. More College support to graduate education will be needed to make progress.

TOP-10 colleges have clinical programs that are viewed as state-of-the-art and that attract students and residents. I know that we have good examples now and need to build on these. We need to make others aware of our excellence in clinical programs.

TOP-10 programs have faculty members who are recognized as national leaders. They are national officers, on study sections, serve as chairs of important Committees. They are invited to other colleges for their expertise. While we do have examples of this, it will require consistent efforts in faculty development with departmental and college-level support to move ahead and develop new national leadership.

TOP-10 programs have a high percent of graduates who go on to residencies / fellowships / grad school. They become leaders in pharmacy and can build and spread our reputation. These people send good students back to SC.

Finally, TOP-10 colleges have a high level of alumni support and private giving. Alumni, donors, and benefactors want to be part of a winning effort

A reasonable question is why should we do this, why commit to achieving Top-10 Quality? What is in it for us? Becoming a Top College is our best opportunity to build a stronger college and departments. We will recruit better students – PharmD and graduate and attract and retain the best Faculty. As you know, who you work with goes a long way to determine how successful you are. We will deserve and receive more resources from our Universities. A productive unit will have higher salaries and top notch individuals have more career options. Alumni will have a College that they can feel proud of.

What is in it for students? They would have the best possible curriculum taught by the best faculty. Our graduates would be highly sought after all around the country. What we do here could lead other Colleges throughout the country

Again, I am not talking simply about being ranked in the TOP-10, but working to achieve TOP-10 quality. Achievement of TOP-10 quality requires commitment not only of faculty, but also of College and University administration, even our Board of Trustees. They must all be committed to Top-10 Quality. To do this we need to get beyond the circumstances of the merger and focus on progress. As Tim Fallon described during our retreat – becoming agents of change rather than targets. We now spend too much time in a tug of war over which campus will win out in curriculum or faculty policy issues. Sometimes we are asking the wrong questions. We should be asking, what is the best in the US and how can we be as good or better. This is not something that administration can do without Faculty commitment. I am committed to TOP-10 quality, and if you are committed to TOP-10 quality for the SCCP then our next step is to learn what TOP-10 looks like and work in that direction, and we should set that as our challenge and goal.