

EDUCATION SPOTLIGHT...



Sheena Neilson, B.Sc. (Pharm)

CSHP Foundation's Pharmacy Leadership Academy Scholarship Recipient (2014)

The CSHP Foundation is committed to offering educational opportunities to develop Canada's hospital pharmacy leaders using innovative, evidence-based methods. The ASHP Pharmacy Leadership Academy, a 12-month distance-learning program, provides training for those aspiring to leadership positions. The Foundation's scholarship covers the program's tuition.

Q: Why did you decide to enrol in the ASHP PLA program?

A: I was looking for applicable educational opportunities for targeted professional development. The ASHP Pharmacy Leadership Academy (PLA) scholarship caught my eye and the program curriculum aligned with my learning needs self-assessment. My long term career goal is to be a health system or facility director, and already, only few years into my leadership career, I realize that heightened leadership training and ability are musts for me to achieve this.

Q: What did you gain from the ASHP PLA program?

A: Healthcare today changes at a "turbo" rate and brings with it complex challenges and disruptive healthcare forces. All members of our teams and departments must use their creativity and commitment to overcome these challenges and move forward. As leaders, it is our job to foster the environment and culture required to achieve this. Through the program I gained skills in project and change management, effective communication, talent management, organizational culture strengthening and financial accountability. There was a great focus on how technology and informatics advancement is already revolutionizing the way health care is provided and how it is anticipated to evolve in the years to come. The PLA framed the importance of appropriate organizational structure and how we as pharmacy leaders can work to place ourselves at the forefront of organizational strategic discussions around the delivery of optimized health care. My time in the PLA has significantly increased my confidence in my professional ability. The PLA developed skills I can use and teach others to help in the optimization of hospital pharmacy service delivery.

Q: How will you leverage what you gained from the ASHP PLA program in your professional career?

A: I have used my learnings to lead the creation of the strategic planning framework in our health system pharmacy program, which led to the development of an impactful strategic plan that aligned with the vision of our broader organization, not only the pharmacy department. I gained the tools and perspective necessary to positively influence leaders in key discussions about resource utilization and to leverage strategic planning to work towards these goals. As pharmacy leaders we are educated and trained to be clinicians first, but being an effective leader of health system pharmacies requires another set of skills that we do not often learn and develop in our traditional pharmacy education. The PLA bridged this gap for me.

Q: Why should others consider the ASHP PLA program and the CSHP Foundation PLA Scholarship?

A: The PLA provides a structured learning environment to facilitate becoming an effective pharmacy leader through sharpening multiple skill sets. The program format, combining self-study with collaborative sessions and group work, creates a very engaging overall experience. The faculty roster is impressive and extremely supportive, offering an open invitation to connect at any time and formal office hours. You get to know your international classmates and gain perspective on what pharmacy 'looks like' from all corners of the globe. The flexible program format allowed me to manage the workload with my other work and life commitments, and the varied content and style of learning materials and facilitators kept me engaged and dedicated over the course of the year.

The role of the hospital pharmacist is changing; research and education will support the change.

Apply for the PLA Scholarship before April 12, 2017. Information at www.cshpfoundation.ca