

A Motivation Letter

Mary HH Ensom

Once upon a time, there was a pre-pharmacy student who wrote a “motivation letter”. As was the case for all applicants to the University of Kentucky College of Pharmacy, she had to convince the selection committee (in 500 words) that her motivation for becoming a pharmacist qualified her for acceptance to pharmacy school. That student was me, and I vividly recall how I struggled to write that letter. I ended up listing such lofty goals as “helping mankind by making a significant difference in the well-being of patients” and “having a fulfilling professional career”.

Now, almost 32 years later, I find myself writing another motivation letter. As I embark on my 5-year term as Editor of *CJHP*, I ask myself what exactly has motivated me to take on this major endeavour. This time, the answer is easy and requires just 16 words: “I would like to give something back to the profession that has given me so much.”

Little did I appreciate that those big words in my pharmacy motivation letter would ring so true and be so directly applicable today in my role as Editor. Back then, I used the words more as a way to gain acceptance to pharmacy school than to describe my true feelings. Now, I can't think of words any more appropriate to describe exactly how I feel.

Helping Mankind by Making a Significant Difference in the Well-Being of Patients

The *CJHP* has the most rigorous peer review process of any pharmacy journal based in Canada and publishes the latest “original research, clinical reviews, case reports, and topical discussions on pharmacy practice that are of use and interest to pharmacists engaged in institutional practice” (quoted from objective 1 for the *CJHP*; see page 57). It is a forum for pharmacists and other health care professionals to share information and research findings with the pharmacy profession and with the health care community at large.

Like teaching and managing, publishing is a way to compound our individual ability to enhance patient care by influencing our colleagues. I can't imagine a better way for me as an individual to make a difference than to serve as editor of a journal that provides a venue



for the sharing of insight and wisdom among my colleagues. I have never claimed to be an expert clinician or basic scientist, but I do have a track record as an integrator who bridges the gap between the basic and clinical sciences. As Editor, I can have the best of both worlds and, with the help of the Associate Editors, staff, contributors, and peer reviewers, ensure that articles published in *CJHP* are at the forefront of clinical practice and based on solid research evidence.

Aside from our Editorial Board's goal to have the Journal indexed by the National Library of Medicine for MEDLINE, I have some other rather specific activities in mind to enhance the effectiveness of *CJHP* in “helping mankind by making a significant difference in the well-being of patients.” In several cases, I have borrowed ideas from other journals on whose editorial boards I serve. Here is a list of just some of these activities (in no particular order):

- Regularly publish a short column entitled “Journal Jewels” in CSHP's *News and Employment Opportunities Bulletin* (the *EOB*), which would highlight *CJHP* activities, statistics, and areas of special emphasis.
- Update profiles of the Journal's reviewers.
- Send letters of recognition to our best reviewers.
- Actively solicit submissions to the Journal and have the Associate Editors and myself be active ambassadors for *CJHP*.

- Implement a “buddy system” for new authors to be linked up with seasoned author mentors.
- Conduct sessions at the CSHP Annual General Meetings and Professional Practice Conferences on how to be a great reviewer and how to submit articles to the Journal.
- Use *CJHP* as a unique peer-reviewed forum for topics that have relevance here in Canada but that are currently being discussed in print only from a US perspective (e.g., in the *American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy*). Some examples include USP797 (see <http://www.usp797.org>) and its relevance in Canada and US Food and Drug Administration bar coding.
- Ask CSHP branches to submit “something meaningful to them” for the front cover of Journal issues.

By the time this editorial is published, members of the *CJHP* Editorial Board, CSHP Executive, Council, and staff members, CSHP members (including students), and representatives from the CSHP Research and Education Foundation and the *American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy* will have participated in a day-long *CJHP* strategic business planning session. In conjunction with an environmental scan with input from other stakeholders, this planning session will provide the Journal with a draft of a 6-year strategic business plan. The plan will serve as a compass and road map to guide the Journal and will ensure that we engage in activities “helping mankind by making a significant difference in the well-being of patients.”

Having a Fulfilling Professional Career

Many of you have heard me remark, “What a bonus it is to be paid for doing a job that you love to do!” My job is a journey of lifelong learning and allows me to

continually grow through professional self-development and continuing education. My job also provides me with the opportunity to teach and mentor people entering our profession. To me, few activities are more rewarding than to contribute to a pharmacy student’s professional development and years later to see the visible fruits of our labour.¹ Furthermore, my job provides me with opportunities to do research, the results of which are immediately and directly incorporated into patient care. Now, with the role of *CJHP* Editor as an added dimension to my job, I look forward to giving back to the profession that has given me so much!

Reference

1. Ensom MHH. Thanksgiving reflections on being an institutional pharmacy practitioner. *Can J Hosp Pharm* 1999;52:272,275.

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