

As a resident, how do I get more involved in ACCP?

Sonalie Patel, Pharm.D., CPP
PGY2 Ambulatory Care Resident
University of North Carolina Medical Center
Chapel Hill, NC

As a resident, you have made the commitment to pursue post-graduate training in clinical pharmacy and presumably a career as a clinical pharmacist. The entire focus of the ACCP strategic plan is to develop, advance and position clinical pharmacists – that is unique among pharmacy professional organizations and emphasizes why ACCP is and should be the professional home for any pharmacist who identifies themselves as a clinical pharmacist. ACCP has never attempted to be the professional organization for all pharmacists, but rather is focused on the educational, practice and research needs of pharmacists with advanced training and advanced clinical practices. Throughout your career you will find that active membership in ACCP will provide you with many rewards including high-quality educational products, networking opportunities with peers through the PRNs and annual meetings, opportunities to contribute through the practice-based research network, and an active forum for discussion and debate among like-minded clinical pharmacists.

In my experience, there are many ways to progressively become more involved in ACCP over several years. Here are some ideas to consider in the early stages of your career:

- Join a PRN(s) that are relevant to your clinical interests and productively engage in the PRN listserv discussions as appropriate. You can quickly start to generate some name recognition among your peers.
- Attend the ACCP Annual Meeting as often as your travel budget will permit. It is an outstanding opportunity to network with your colleagues and re-energize your enthusiasm for clinical pharmacy.
- Attend the PRN business meeting at the annual meeting and volunteer for PRN committees and task forces. Almost all of the PRNs allow and encourage residents to serve on PRN subcommittees. These are great opportunities to get involved in ACCP at an entry level and to begin to forge relationships with other active ACCP members.
- Attend the town hall and business meeting at the annual meeting; it will help you gain greater insight into ACCP and our priorities.
- Complete the annual June survey calling for volunteers for ACCP committees and task forces. It is important to realize that ACCP receives many more volunteer requests than there are committee assignments, so it is often necessary to volunteer each year. Also, choose a few committee charges that are intriguing to you and for which you believe you are uniquely qualified to contribute; then take the time to compose a clear and concise description of why you believe you can strongly contribute to that committee when completing the survey. The President-elect will pay more attention to a well-written and focused request to serve, than someone who volunteers for every committee with shallow descriptions of interest. These committees are composed of a mix of senior and junior ACCP members, and a well-

written request by a junior member goes a long ways towards being considered for an assignment.

- If you have a local ACCP chapter in your region, become actively involved in your chapter. The chapters are normally looking for young, eager members who will serve on committees and help plan regional meetings. “Climbing the ranks” within a chapter can lead to successful engagement in ACCP at the national level, and it is a wonderful way to offer service to your local colleagues.
- Select an ACCP mentor. As a resident member of ACCP you can access a mentor outside of your institution to provide you with additional guidance and perspective. Mentors are ACCP member volunteers with at least 5 years of professional work experience after their training.
- Study the resident/fellow section of the ACCP website (<http://www.accp.com/resfel/>), and become aware of the resources available to you as postgraduate trainee members of ACCP. Contact your colleagues on the Resident Advisory Committee with questions and ideas.
- For every volunteer assignment, make sure to work hard, be timely, and distinguish yourself as a highly productive member of the team.

Like most national professional organizations, it can take several years of progressive contribution to be recognized and called upon to take on a senior leadership role. However, if you begin early in your career with a local or “grassroots” level strategy, and make meaningful contributions to each assignment you accept, it will be not only professionally rewarding but will also lead to an increasing level of responsibility within ACCP. My involvement in ACCP over more than two decades has been one of the most enjoyable and rewarding experiences in my professional life, and I hope that you realize the same level of “return on investment”!

Curtis E. Haas, Pharm.D., FCCP
Director of Pharmacy
University of Rochester Medical Center
Rochester, NY