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50 YEARS OF ACADEMIC PHARMACY SECTION

Past, present, and future of the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) Academic Pharmacy Section: Interviews with past presidents

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Abstract

Introduction: The Academic Pharmacy Section (AcPS) of the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) celebrates 50 years of its establishment in 2022. In the last decade, the Section had significant growth in membership and strategic planning development. **Description:** The AcPS challenges in the past and present times, as well as possible future directions, are described based on the reflections of four AcPS past presidents. They responded to semi-structured interviews from January to March 2022. **Evaluation:** The collected data were analysed using a qualitative descriptive approach. The reflections and perceived challenges in the history of the AcPS, as well as future plans about the pharmaceutical workforce, capacity building, educational systems, and modern curricula, were summarised. **Conclusion:** The future direction of the FIP AcPS suggests a focus on collaboration, faculty development and strong and engaged membership.

Introduction

The year 2022 is the 50th anniversary of the Academic Pharmacy Section (AcPS) of the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP). The AcPS was founded in 1972 as an organisation within FIP for members with interest in all aspects of the workforce development of pharmacists and pharmaceutical scientists. The AcPS is a part of the Board of Pharmaceutical Practice of FIP and has a working relationship with FIP Education (FIPeD) and its constituencies, including the Academic Institutional Membership (AIM), University Twinning and Networking Programme (UNITWIN) in collaboration with UNESCO, and the Workforce Development Hub (WDH). (FIP, 2017)

In support of the vision of FIP and FIPeD, the AcPS has a mission to “serve as an international source for networking, collaboration and inspiration for educators to transform pharmaceutical education for the purpose of advancing practice and science to meet

present and future health needs in communities around the world” (International Pharmaceutical Federation, 2022). The focus is to provide education and training for pharmacy practitioners (pharmacists and support personnel), pharmaceutical scientists, and post-graduate lifelong learning.

The Section has grown significantly in the last ten years. As of September 30, 2021, there were 871 members in AcPS, including individual and student memberships. This represents an almost doubling of the Section membership since 2013, when there were 451 members. The Section Executive Committee (ExCo) serves the members and conducts Section business. The ExCo consists of 11 members as of August 2022. They are Toyin Tofade (president), Arijana Meštrović (vice president), Naoko Arakawa (secretary), Carl Schneider (treasurer), John Pieper (immediate past president), Rula Darwish (committee member), Aukje Mantel-Teeuwisse (committee member), Abdikarim Abdi (committee member), Martin Henman (committee member), Mansi Doshi

(committee member), Arinola Joda (committee member).

As health needs and health system demands have evolved across the globe, the roles and the required competencies of pharmacists and pharmaceutical scientists have had to change accordingly. This required a matched transformation in education and training. Over the years, according to the needs of its members, the Section's organisation and activities have also morphed. For example, to increase the engagement of members and address new challenges, working groups, webinars, and town halls were used in recent years.

The past presidents of the AcPS tackled such challenges at the time of their presidency and led the growth of the Section. This paper describes past and present challenges while enumerating possible future directions of the Section based on reflective oral history interviews with four of the past presidents.

Process

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with past presidents of the AcPS from January 2022 to March 2022. A list of interview questions was developed by the project team. The interview questions covered their perceptions related to key challenges in the academic pharmacy during their terms of office in comparison to current challenges, reflections on their term in general, accomplishments of their presidency, and their hopes for the future of AcPS. The interviews were conducted in a written format. The list of questions was sent via email to four past presidents of the AcPS as a word document file, where the past presidents were asked to write their reflections and include a photo upon submission. There was no word limit restriction. Collected data were analysed using a qualitative descriptive approach with the assistance of the NVivo version 12 Pro. The collected verbatim data were entered into the NVivo version 12 Pro and carefully read by author NA to summarise the data and generate codes. The data and generated codes were reviewed to generate and define themes. All codes and themes were reviewed and agreed by other authors. Ethics clearance was not obtained as the participants were public figures within the FIP and within the AcPS scope and these oral histories seek to explain the past.

Presidential comments

Four past presidents of the AcPS were asked, and all responded to the questionnaire by email. The demographics of the four past presidents are in table I.

Table I: Demographics of participants

Term of the office	Name	Country	Affiliation
2003-2007	Claire Anderson	United Kingdom	University of Nottingham
2007-2011	Jennifer Marriott	Australia	Monash University
2011-2017	Ralph Altieri	United States	University of Colorado
2017-2021	John A. Pieper	United States	University of Health Sciences & Pharmacy in St. Louis

History of AcPS through the lens of the past presidents

The general reflections and perceived accomplishments during different presidency terms have revealed an overview and history of the growth of the Section. Table II summarises the emerging themes of each presidency and describes the challenges and accomplishments of their respective terms.

Relevance to members (since 2003)

Two decades ago, the AcPS was very different when Claire Anderson (Figure 1) was elected president. While global challenges in academic pharmacy were similar to the current situation, the engagement with and attendance of the AcPS members at meetings was significantly less compared with today.

"The Section was dying in Nice (FIP Congress) 2002 and Sydney 2003; only 2-3 people attended congress sessions, although more people attended the dinners!" (Claire Anderson)

The relevance to members was missing, so Anderson and her committee changed the focus of the Congress sessions from academic research presentations to pedagogy. This shift resulted in the delivery of the first session on e-learning at the FIP Congress. The early recognition of the importance of training for pharmacy educators started in Anderson's term. Anderson co-lead a roundtable on pharmacy education with Professor Henri Manasse, which inspired the association and resulted in the establishment of the Pharmacy Education Taskforce.

Table II: History of the AcPS growth

Presidency	Year	Theme	Accomplishments	Challenges
Claire Anderson	2003-2007	Relevance to members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shift of Congress programming from academic research to pedagogy The first session on E-Learning in FIP Congress A roundtable on pharmacy education led to the establishment of Pharmacy Education Taskforce (PET) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of attendance at Congress sessions Lack of academic capacity, workforce shortage, especially in sub-Saharan African countries
Jennifer Marriott	2007-2011	Diverse representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch of PET in 2007 The number of Section ExCo members increased to represent the WHO regions Increased number of the attendance of Congress sessions (>50 common) UNITWIN and AIM was established in 2010 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low membership of the Section and low involvement from developing countries
Ralph Altieri	2011- 2017	Governance and Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The establishment of FIP Education initiatives (current FIPeD) led to the AcPS statutes amendments. Election of AcPS ExCo members standardised Development of Policies and Procedures handbook Establishment of various working groups Outreach: YPG, FIPeD constituencies / IPSF and external organisations and conferences / Social media (Facebook) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic capacity and faculty development for delivering needs-based education Equity, diversity and inclusion in academia Advocacy by academic pharmacy
John Pieper	2017-2021	Strategic progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Implementation Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working groups enhanced and active Increased member engagement Grant scheme launched 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COVID-19 pandemic Quick transition to online remote education Limited collaboration with BPS



Figure 1: Claire Anderson (left) together with Kamal Midha (past FIP president) at the 2005 AcPS FIP Congress dinner in Cairo

Anderson's challenge of getting people together in person for meetings during her presidency would be unimaginable during this present time. Virtual meetings were not common, which made frequent communication and deliberation difficult for committees. The further development and sustenance of projects were only done through email communications. Claire Anderson served a total of four years as president.

Diverse representation (since 2007)

Low AcPS membership was still a pressing challenge when Jennifer Marriott (Figure 2) took office. Efforts to change the Section activities and Congress sessions to better match the interests of members continued. These changes resulted in an increased number of attendees at the FIP Congress academic sessions, which commonly have more than 50 attendees per session. To build on that success, however, Marriott felt the need for the involvement of a wider and more diverse representation from resource-limited countries.

"I felt the greatest challenge was to increase Section membership, make the sessions at congress relevant to members in order to attract more attendees. I also wanted to increase relevance to, and involvement of, developing countries in Academic Section activities and leadership." (Jennifer Marriott)



Figure 2: Jennifer Marriott

Marriott and her committee tackled this by increasing the AcPS ExCo members to include representation from all World Health Organization (WHO) regions. The efforts of increasing representation from diverse settings were seen in the establishment of the

UNITWIN Centre of Excellence in Africa, as well as the AIM in 2010. (FIP,2022) Jennifer Marriott served a total of four years as president.

Governance and outreach (since 2011)

Having seen the growth of the opportunities in academic pharmacy and workforce development in FIP, when Ralph Altieri became president (Figure 3) he recognised the need to harness the governance of the AcPS for better coordination and collaboration of activities with other constituencies in FIP. Considering the establishment of the FIP Education initiatives (currently FIPEd), Altieri and his ExCo members amended the AcPS statutes to ensure better succession planning and transitioning of officers and ExCo members of section three. The two-year election cycles were implemented so that all senior positions of the ExCo were not elected in the same year to ensure the continuity of AcPS business. For example, the President-Elect and Secretary were elected in a different year than the treasurer and Vice President. Ralph also saw the need to strategically place the AcPS in a better position for the rapid growth of FIP projects and activities related to education and workforce development.

"First order of business for me was to meet with the IRG (International Reference Group) at FIP 2011 Hyderabad Congress and work on integration of AcPS, AIM and PET into FIPEd work and incorporate AcPS into FIPEd while maintaining AcPS as a section in BPP which has proved to be a successful joint venture." (Ralph Altieri)



Figure 3: Ralph Altieri

Overall, the governance of the AcPS was improved by the standardisation of the ExCo elections, the development of the policies and procedures handbook, and the establishment of various working groups.

Consistent with other past presidents prior to his term, academic capacity was seen as a challenge by Ralph. Additionally, with the growth of clinical

programs around the world, Ralph found the balance of science and clinical practice in pharmacy curricula to be a challenge. A new challenge identified in his term was gender inequity in academia, which started to be addressed through the FIP Women in Science and Education (FIP WiSE) programme.

“Women in academia that is now being addressed by FIP WiSE program. While there is much work that remains, there has been good progress in regions of the world where we see an increasing number of women in academia – science and practice – and in leadership positions.” (Ralph Altieri)

Furthermore, advocacy by academic pharmacy was found to be another challenge by Altieri. Advocacy for the profession has been traditionally handled by pharmacy associations, whereas support for education to advance the scope of practice of pharmacists needs to be advocated by academic pharmacy practitioners. To tackle these challenges, outreach activities were strengthened with enhanced collaborations with the Young Pharmacists Group (YPG), International Pharmaceutical Students Federation (IPSF), and other FIPed constituencies (AIM, WDH, and UNITWIN). The section also sought out a deliberate relationship with IPSF and Altieri became the contact person from FIP to the IPSF. He also presented and advocated for AcPS activities at regional conferences of various external pharmacy associations. During his tenure, member engagement grew tremendously with increased communications through the office of the secretary, multiple webinars featured, publication of a monthly newsletter, and additional section representation on congress programming. Furthermore, a Facebook® account was created to reach out and attract non-members to the AcPS membership.

Additional efforts included increased research and creating publications in collaboration with other FIPed areas, greater collaboration with the Board of Pharmaceutical Science (BPS), and the initiation of a variety of working groups. The effectiveness of working groups was later improved upon during the tenure of his successor. Ralph Altieri served a total of 6 years as president.

Strategic progress (since 2017)

The growth of the AcPS became more strategic when John Pieper (Figure 4) took on the presidency. Pieper and his ExCo developed the Section’s Strategic Plan at a retreat held at FIP Headquarters in The Hague. The plan was approved by the AcPS membership on September 23, 2019, at the Annual Business Meeting (FIP, 2019). This was the first time a section created a strategic plan, a novel approach for one of the FIP constituencies. The Strategic Plan led to the

generation of more coordinated projects and activities aligned with the AcPS membership interests. Working Groups were organised and met virtually using modern online meeting tools (GoToMeeting, Zoom, Skype, etc.) to ensure more engagement with members and increased interest in participation. The reorganisation of the working groups based on the new strategic plan resulted in more deliverables, tools, and outputs to support the AcPS members globally. Increasing strategic activities and engagement resulted in the historic growth of the AcPS worldwide membership to 800 members in 2021.



Figure 4: John Pieper

The most significant challenge in Pieper’s term was the COVID-19 pandemic. This caused a rapid transition from traditional in-person education to online/remote education and training worldwide for a period of 2 years.

“The most important challenge facing academic pharmacy globally during my term was the crippling effects of and opportunities provided by the COVID-19 pandemic on traditional in-person pharmaceutical education and the need to quickly transition pharmaceutical education to an on-line format. The pandemic exposed inequities in the ability to deliver pharmaceutical education effectively, given real differences in internet availability and strength across the World. The impact of these inequities will likely be felt for generations.” (John Pieper)

The challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic most significantly hit resource-limited institutions, countries, and settings in academic pharmacy. The impact was particularly felt by childcare givers (mainly females) who had to double up as workers and teachers in their households. This led to many resignations from the workforce to maintain the home front. In response to member feedback, the AcPS developed a COVID-19 grant scheme to fund projects developing education and training to tackle COVID-19 challenges and support advancing education and

training in low- and middle-income countries (FIP AcPS, 2020). All Section activities were also moved entirely online. Previously planned congress sessions were converted to webinars or digital events and the AcPS Annual Business meeting was held virtually in 2020 and 2021. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the online meetings intensified while face-to-face meetings were impossible due to travel restrictions across the globe. The desire for more face-to-face interactions was somewhat in contrast to 20 years ago when Claire Anderson wished for more virtual meetings.

Current challenges in Academic pharmacy

All of the four past presidents provided a reflection on the variety of challenges that academic pharmacy currently faces, covering the vision of pharmaceutical workforce, capacity building, the educational system, and modern curricula.

Vision of pharmaceutical workforce

Setting a vision for the pharmaceutical workforce was identified as a challenge to tackle. Past presidents raised the importance of expanding the role of the pharmaceutical workforce, through better advocacy, and increasing women's involvement in leadership. Ralph Altieri indicated that recognising and expanding the roles of the pharmaceutical workforce is not only important in the traditional healthcare setting, but also in the wider health environment.

"A continuing challenge is positioning and expanding the role of pharmacists and pharmaceutical scientists in the health care environment, given the powerful role that novel therapeutics and vaccines have played in the past four years. Interest and participation in global health, inter-professional care, pharmaceutical research and health care-for-all initiatives are at an historic high, to which academic pharmacy must rise to meet." (Ralph Altieri)

Advocacy was identified as another challenge, necessary to ensure that the scope of pharmacy practice is sufficient to make the best use of pharmacists' competencies for national and global health improvement. To address the pharmaceutical workforce challenges with better representation of women and minority groups in leadership, Claire Anderson proposed that flexible working schedules should be implemented to support women in leadership in academia.

"We need to develop more women and minority groups to become leaders, there are still more men in the higher positions in pharmacy academia. This will mean embracing more flexible working. Women have been more affected than men by the pandemic and have published less and received less research funding." (Claire Anderson)

Capacity building

Issues related to capacity building are a long-standing challenge that all past presidents faced. Among them, academic capacity remains a significant challenge in resource-limited countries.

"The first is academic capacity, particularly in developing countries. Unless pharmacy schools are adequately staffed by competent academics then a small number must share the high burden of teaching leading to "burnout" and lower academic standards." (Jennifer Marriott)

Broadening academic capacity to serve the existing workforce was also addressed.

"As many academic courses shift to be more clinical, we also need to shift practice to be ready for them and upskill the existing workforce." (Claire Anderson)

Training students and providing the academic workforce with faculty development for research is another issue that majority of past presidents identified.

"Advancing science and practice requires continual research progress. In the clinical realm, we can enhance clinical pharmacy research to support practice advancement and improve the lives of individuals and populations of people and at the same time enhance the status of clinical pharmacy everywhere it is practiced." (Ralph Altieri)

Education system

The majority of the past presidents expressed challenges related to the quality of the educational development of the pharmaceutical workforce, specifically in the areas of curriculum and assessment. The importance of including topics that are relevant to practice advancement, the evaluation of curricula teaching content, and subsequent assessments were addressed.

"I think we over teach and certainly over assess and need to re-examine our courses." (Claire Anderson)

“Assure outcomes and curricula support practice advancement” (Ralph Altieri)

A need to consider suitable education content for different degree levels and training was also raised.

“Assure our education programs train practice specialists at the appropriate level” (Ralph Altieri)

“I believe the profession as a whole must determine what should be the entry level qualification. Currently, we have Bachelor, Masters and Doctoral level degrees all as entry level qualifications, with all graduates having approximately the same level of competence. All are recognised and registered as pharmacists.” (Jennifer Marriott)

To assure the ongoing quality of the pharmaceutical workforce, the enrolment process of students is important.

“How we recruit students and whom we recruit is critical.” (Claire Anderson)

“Enrolment issues globally – must advocate for pharmacy role in healthcare and assure this message reaches prospective students for fulfilling careers in pharmacy be that practice, research or especially academia” (Ralph Altieri)

Modern curricula

Modernisation of pharmacy curricula was raised by all four past presidents, and this included curriculum content and teaching methods.

Current curricular content may need to be updated on topics related to climate change, the continuum from medicines development to the provision of pharmaceutical care, digital health, and personalised medicines. These need to be linked with the development of abilities in the future pharmaceutical workforce, such as lifelong learning skills, better communication skills using empathetic approaches, and provision of care that is equitable, inclusive, and meets the needs of a diverse patient population.

Modernisation of teaching methods should be based on student needs and focus on a combination of remote, online, and in-person teaching.

“Another challenge is the need for teaching methodology to change to be more student focused. While this is happening broadly throughout pharmacy schools in high income countries. For the same reasons as stated previously (lack of academic capacity, limited academic budgets and the intransigence/ short sightedness of entrenched heads of faculty) this

is much slower to be instituted in low- and middle-income countries.” (Jennifer Marriott)

“A major challenge in academic pharmacy today is incorporating the lessons learned from the pandemic into future educational initiatives such as optimising and balancing the use of remote learning and communications with in-person instruction.” (John Pieper)

Future of AcPS

The past presidents described their hopes for the future of the AcPS with three themes: collaboration, faculty development, and membership.

Collaboration

Stronger and broader collaborations within FIP were raised by all four past presidents. The One FIP strategy (International Pharmaceutical Federation, 2019), was most referenced as a guide to direct the future of AcPS. Emphasis was made to not only collaborate with the other FIPed constituencies (AIM, UNITWIN, WDH), but also to collaborate with BPS and Board of Pharmacy Practice (BPP) as crucial partners to bridge between practitioners and scientists (FIP, 2019).

“My big wish is that it can truly be part of One FIP instead of sometimes working in competition or duplicating work of DGs (Development Goals), UNITWIN and AIM. I would prefer all of education/workforce development to be more together than it currently is and have said that for a long time.” (Claire Anderson)

“AcPS must partner with other units in FIPed - AIM, UNITWIN, PTAC - and FIP - FIP Hub, BPP and its sections and BPS SIGs - in a strategic and coordinated way for advancing education and training programs.” (Ralph Altieri)

Faculty development

One of the presidents' desires is for the AcPS to be a stronger platform to support faculty development. Bringing advances in education and training to pharmacy academics worldwide can eventually facilitate the development of a better-equipped future workforce for improved global health.

“I hope that the Academic section will remain strong and focus on providing a platform for discussion of academic-specific issues and for providing education sessions aimed at providing members with information and tools to remain up-to-date with current trend in teaching and

learning to strengthen academic outputs. This will facilitate the graduation of pharmacists with an appropriate range of skills and abilities to serve their community and to lead the profession forward.” (Jennifer Marriott)

To better support faculty development, the AcPS has been working on developing more tools and resources through the working groups.

“I hope the AcPS can continue to develop innovative projects that enhance the ability of pharmaceutical academicians to provide the highest quality of pharmaceutical education possible for their students and trainees.” (John Pieper)

Membership

The influence of the AcPS within FIP should remain strong by growing membership numbers, expertise, and engagement. The current strong position and leadership of the AcPS in FIP were thanks to efforts by past-presidents and colleagues in the Exco committees, working groups, and, most importantly, section members and volunteers.

“I would like to thank the hundreds of volunteers, colleagues and members who participated and led the many activities of the Academic Pharmacy Section over the last four years. Your efforts have deeply enriched my life and career and I will be forever grateful.” (John Pieper)

Closing comments

This is the first paper analysing the past and present challenges facing academic pharmacy and helping set the future direction of the FIP AcPS section through the lens of past presidents. Technological and environmental changes worldwide presented a variety of challenges to pharmacy academics across the world. Four individual past presidents reflected on the challenges faced during their terms. Membership growth in the AcPS is a result of the good work and leadership initiated by the AcPS and the past presidents and validates the importance of a global platform to pharmacy academics worldwide.

Some of the challenges identified in this analysis persist in the current academic pharmacy world.

Aligning with the vision and mission of FIP, the AcPS will continue to tackle them.

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