

UTCOP Policy Week and Texas Pharmacy Day at the Capitol University of Texas at Austin College of Pharmacy

Project Description & Implementation Overview:

Every two years, the Texas Pharmacy Association (TPA) and other Texas pharmacy associations organize a Texas Pharmacy Day at the Capitol. Since policy and advocacy were foreign concepts to many student pharmacists, student organization leaders of the University of Texas at Austin College of Pharmacy (UTCOP) collaborated to put together an **inaugural** week-long Policy Week to educate and interest student pharmacists to participate during the Day at the Capitol. The goal was to empower and to equip student pharmacists with the tools to educate legislators on policies related to the field of pharmacy. The week-long Policy Week included training workshops, on campus educational tabling and mock practice session. Policy Week led up to the Texas Pharmacy Day at the Capitol. The Day at the Capitol included activities such as meeting with legislators and/or staffers, health screenings and pharmacy care research poster presentations. In total, **seventy** student pharmacists from UTCOP participated in Policy Week and Day at the Capitol. Student pharmacists spoke to **16** Texas legislative offices, provided 10 health screenings, and presented four research posters.

Purpose of the Project

To educate Texas legislators on pertinent legislation relating to pharmacy and pharmacists and to demonstrate the opportunities and influences of policy and advocacy to student pharmacists

Project Budget: Expenses and Revenues

1. Printing paper and printing (~\$50)
2. Pizza (~\$50)
 3. Health Screening material
 4. Poster

Who and How Many Chapter Members are Involved?

Several UTCOP student organizations partook in Policy Week. This list included the student chapters of APhA Academy of Student Pharmacists, National Community Pharmacists Association, Student National Pharmaceutical Association and Texas Coalition of Student Pharmacists (local organization). The student board of the Texas Pharmacy Association served as the liaison for the Day at the Capitol.

Who Should be Targeted? Audience or Involvement? How Do You Find Them? How Do You Contact?

Target audiences should be both student members and legislators. The aim is to give every student pharmacist exposure to policy, so don't just limit the target to student AMCP member. Organizer should identify student organizations leaders, discuss collaboration with them and get buy in before planning the scope the event. Furthermore, organizers will need to seek support from administrators, since some policies may be sensitive issues for administrators. Lastly, state associations have the experience and the resources to assist students in developing a proper and targeted plan, so don't hesitate to utilize them.

What Materials are Needed? Outside Resources, Ordering, etc?

1. Attractive Flyers (paper and online) for Policy Week advertising
2. Legislative Priorities Information, provided by Texas Pharmacy Association
3. State Legislature Website
4. Agenda for Day at the Capitol, including map of Capitol
5. Business Cards
6. Thank You Emails

The College of Pharmacy presents the first ever **Policy Week**

Prepare for **TPA Day at the Capitol** by attending the following Policy Week events!

Tues 2/21	Wed 2/22	Thurs 2/23	Mon 2/27
Voter Registration 12:30 p.m. Hallway Tabling by TCSP	Pharmacy Policy: Why Do We Care? 12:00 p.m. PHR 2.108 by APhA	Info with SNPhA 12:30 p.m. Welch Hall Tabling by SNPhA	Mock Talk with Your Legislator 4:30 - 6:00 p.m. PHR 3.110 by NCPA
Pizza and Policy Open Forum 6:00 p.m. BUR 130 by TCSP			

*All leading up to... TPA Day at the Capitol on **Tues 2/28** from 8-11 a.m.*

JOIN your fellow pharmacy professionals to EDUCATE elected officials about the pharmacy issues that YOU are passionate about!

Timeline for Implementation and Execution *event is defined as Day at the Capitol

6 months prior: Identify student leaders. Delegate roles. Seek administrative support.

4-5 months prior: Collaboration and seek Policy Week ideas. Get funding for materials needed. Get approval for health screening material/posters, etc.

2-3 months prior: Finalize logistics of Policy Week (rooms, projectors, food, etc). Discuss plans with state association liaisons.

1 months prior: Start advertising for Policy Week. Compile lists of students interested in speaking to legislators. Make appointments with respective offices.

3 weeks prior: Confirm appointment meetings. Check in with student leaders to prevent burn out. 1-2 weeks prior: Host Policy Week. Provide students with training session to practice a mock legislative visit. Explain legislative priorities and encourage students to consider the issues independently.

1-2 days prior: Send out informational email about logistics (transportation, maps, etc). Find photographer for the event. Answer any last questions.

1-2 days after: Follow up with everyone. Seek feedback from attendees and leaders. Send Thank You correspondences to all involved student parties and legislative offices. Report outcome to administration.

Follow-up with Faculty Members/Volunteers/Participants

At the conclusion of the meeting, the legislative aide was given our business cards and student pharmacists offered to be a resource if the office had any follow-up questions regarding the issues discussed or any other pharmacy related issue. Group photos of the meeting attendees were taken inside the office and outside at the atrium of the Texas Capitol building. A short summary of the Day at the Capitol, along with the pictures, were shared with the Dean of our College of Pharmacy. One of the photograph was further showcased in an alumni publication to display students' outstanding efforts. To follow up, the meeting attendees either emailed or mailed a thank you letter to the legislators and staffers for meeting with the students. A separate email was sent out thanking student leaders and students for participating, while listing opportunities for future advocacy involvement within the college.

What Went Well? What Didn't? How Would You Improve for the Next Year?

What went well:

1. Garnered large student interests and participation. Many students felt empowered by the experience.
2. Created a new initiative. Policy Week has continued annual since.
3. Met and spoke with several Texas legislators and staffer

What didn't go as well:

1. Communication internally. People commented that they didn't know what other parties were doing.
2. Communication externally. Difficult to balance sharing information with attendees and not email too frequently.
3. Learning curve was immense.

The following are lessons that the organizers took away from the experience:

1. Communication is key. Communication on-line and off-line is super important.
2. Delegate roles and delineate the roles clearly to everyone. Keep everyone updated.
3. Get administration and faculty approval early on.

