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Being Successful as a Tenure Track Faculty Member

Kelly traces her career development and shares the lessons she has learned along the way, including her initial reluctance to take a tenure track faculty position because she did not feel prepared.

Kelly M. Smith is currently Associate Dean, Academic and Student Affairs, and Professor, Pharmacy Practice and Science, University of Kentucky, College of Pharmacy. She completed a previous term as Interim Dean. Kelly has chaired the ASHP Section of Clinical Specialists and Scientists and served on the ASHP Board of Directors. She received her PharmD/BS in Pharmacy from the University of Georgia and completed a specialized residency in drug information practice at the University Medical Center (now UF Health Jacksonville).

Kelly's advice is: ***Rather than taking on challenges and opportunities as they come, make things happen for yourself. Remember that every professional interaction is an opportunity to make an impression on someone.***

 ***Dear Young Pharmacist,***

I have always enjoyed learning, yet I never dreamed that I would help others learn how to be pharmacists. Nor did I realize the lessons I would continue to learn throughout my career. After graduating from the University of Georgia, I entered a drug information residency at what is now UF Health Jacksonville in Jacksonville, Florida. Because I am a perfectionist, it was a challenge to learn how to manage multiple priorities to yield the best collective outcome. The responsibilities required contributing heavily to precepting students, and my resident colleagues forced me to quickly hone my ability to guide, collaborate, and advise others. I then

became a Drug Information Specialist at the University of Kentucky (UK). I learned that the introvert in me enjoyed facilitating the success of others, from shaping a physician's approach to caring for a complex patient, to developing a student's ability to critically analyze the literature, to connecting a resident seeking employment with a colleague.

As I began guest teaching at the UK College of Pharmacy, I realized that I enjoyed helping others learn. Dr. Bob Rapp, a world-renowned clinical pharmacist and my department Chair, challenged me to pursue a tenure track faculty position. Out of naïveté, lack of self-reflection, and lack of confidence, I did not feel prepared to take on the research expectations of a tenure track faculty position so I became an Adjunct Assistant Professor. As I explored my identity as a Clinician/Instructor, I became more engaged with the pharmacy residency program. Soon, the Director of Pharmacy asked me to lead the pharmacy practice residency upon his departure from the university. This was something I had not anticipated. This storied residency program created by Paul Parker, a pioneer of pharmacy (and former ASHP President), had always been led by a Director of Pharmacy. Only 4 years out of my own residency, I was the Director of the UK program, working with preceptors who were world-renowned clinical experts that trained emerging leaders of the profession.

Just months into my tenure, our program underwent a fortuitous event—an ASHP residency accreditation survey. I collaborated with our preceptors and residents to push the program to greater heights based on the results of the accreditation process. Great things emerged, including the creation of the nation's first residency teaching certificate program and a more intentional approach to our well-established resident on-call program. I learned that our experiences could benefit residency programs across the country; postgraduate training innovations became a topic of research for me.

My confidence in teaching, contributing to the professional literature, and leading groups of colleagues was growing. I was promoted from the entry-level position of Assistant Professor to Associate Professor. I contributed to committees within the Kentucky Society of Health-System Pharmacists and other pharmacy organizations, including the American College of Clinical Pharmacy (ACCP) and the University Health-System Consortium Pharmacy Council. It quickly dawned on me that the more opportunities I had to bring my ideas for a program, department, college, or organization to fruition, the more I enjoyed leadership—a role I previously thought required the personality of an extrovert.

I began seeking opportunities to lead in the drug information practice setting. Although some positions were outside of UK, I valued its blend of practice, teaching, scholarship, leadership, and professional development. Soon, my Drug