Assessment Committee Membership:

Candace Barnett  (Committee Chair)
Jordana Stephens Berry  (Office of Student Affairs & Admissions)
Lea Bonner  (Experiential Education)
Phillip Bowen  (Dept. Pharmaceutical Sciences)
Liza Chapman  (Alum)
Annesha Lovett  (Dept. Pharmacy Practice & Committee Vice Chair)
Jacquelyn McRae  (P2 Student)
Jared Safran  (P3 Student)
Haileen Zhang  (Dept. Pharmaceutical Sciences)
Objectives (Status ✓ = complete)

2012-13 Objectives:
1. Design and administer a survey questionnaire to send to alumni, one year post graduation. (✓)
2. Design and administer a short supplement to the AACP alumni survey sent two year’s post graduation to measure community service. (✓)
3. Design and administer a survey questionnaire for alumni who earned certificates of completion in focus areas to document their perceived value and suggestions regarding focus areas. (✓)
4. Design and administer a survey for faculty to determine their suggestions for additional assistance to help them develop competencies in research and scholarship. (✓)
5. Assist the Office of Experiential Education (EE) in reviewing alternatives to E*Value (software for management of electronic portfolios and administration of the EE function). (✓)
6. Update the map linking the College of Pharmacy (COP) Mission to the new University Mission. (✓)
7. Examine the questions posted on the ACPE website for the Assessment Committee in preparation for the visit by the ACPE site team in October 2013. (✓)

On-going objectives:
1. Update the College Evaluation Plan. (✓)
2. Examine and distribute results from AACP standardized surveys and other recurring assessments (including licensure examination results, graduating students’ practice intentions survey, P3 self-assessment of preparedness for entering the fourth year, Comprehensive Progression Examinations, Rho Chi Tutoring program summary). Request disposition reports from data users on selected items. (✓)
3. Examine data on correlates of success in the Doctor of Pharmacy Program and transfer to appropriate data users. (✓)
4. Remain available as individuals and a group to advise on assessments on an as-needed basis. (✓)

Alumni Survey One Year Post-Graduation. A seven item questionnaire was designed and sent to the 2012 graduates in May 2012 to measure current employment, state where practicing, perception of educational preparedness for practice, curricular suggestions, methods used to prepare for licensure, and involvement in community service. A 40% response rate was achieved. Results were sent to the Curriculum Committee, Faculty in Charge of Service Learning, Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on NAPLEX, and Assoc. Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions with items highlighted for their attention. These parties will be contacted regarding their use of the data as an objective in 2013-14.

Supplemental Question to Alumni Survey Sent Two Years Post-Graduation. A link to two supplemental questions was added to the 2013 administration of the AACP Alumni Survey sent to Mercer’s 2011 Doctor of Pharmacy Graduates. The questions asked them to assess their level of involvement in community service and provide a description of these activities. The data will be transferred to the faculty responsible for Service Learning oversight and will continue to be gathered yearly and monitored by the Assessment Committee as a measure of our success in fostering commitment to voluntary service.

Focus Areas. Surveys were sent to graduates of the years 2000-12 who had earned certificates in one or more of the following focus areas: academic pharmacy, contemporary compounding, community pharmacy ownership, diabetes care, geriatric pharmacy, and MBA. The results contain the graduates’ suggestions for additional focus areas (30 suggestions were made including oncology, lipids care, anticoagulation, infectious diseases, women’s health, nutritional support, among others), benefits they have realized as a result of earning specific focus area certificates or an MBA, and their suggestions for enhancing the didactic or experiential courses associated with specific focus areas. The Assessment Committee transferred the results to the Curriculum Committee and to the main faculty member associated with each focus area. These parties will be contacted regarding their use of the data as an objective in 2013-14.
Research and Scholarship. The Assessment Committee was asked by the Executive Committee to survey pharmacy faculty about their needs for support of their research and scholarship. This came as a result of the faculty’s response to an item on the 2012 AACP survey of faculty. Results from both departments identified areas for which faculty desire additional support and programming. (Successful funding was requested most.) The data were transferred to department chairs for immediate use and to the Executive Committee for discussion in 2013-14. These parties will be contacted regarding their use of the data in 2013-14.

E*Value. In Summer 2013 the Directors of Experiential Education identified RxPreceptor as a possible alternative to E*Value. A demonstration and Q/A session with the company was conducted with membership from the Assessment Committee represented to assist in the evaluation of the product. The Directors of EE transferred the results of this meeting to the membership of the Southeastern Pharmacy Experiential Education Consortium, of which Mercer is a part, for consideration by other member schools. The Assessment Committee remains available to assist in the process. RxPreceptor will be piloted with a group of volunteer students in 2013-14.

Linkage of COP and University Mission. The COP mission statement and the new University mission statement were mapped revealing that they are closely aligned around the following themes: professional and graduate education; excellence; teaching, research, scholarship, and service; critical thinking; leadership; life-long learning; diversity; values arising from a faith tradition; personal and professional growth; and community engagement.

ACPE Site-Visit Questions. The Assessment Committee reviewed 22 questions posted on the ACPE website representing the areas the site team will typically cover when they meet with the Committee. This exercise served to confirm for the Committee that its objectives and methods are consistent with ACPE’s vision for assessment.

College Evaluation Plan (CEP). The Assessment Committee updated the CEP in fall 2012. New sections were added delineating how we assess interprofessional education, health care professional interaction, community service, cultural diversity, and professionalism. The updates to the CEP were summarized and distributed to the faculty at their January 23, 2013 meeting.

RECURRING ASSESSMENTS:
Examination of Results from AACP Standardized Surveys. In 2012-13 the Assessment Committee examined the results of the following AACP surveys: Survey of Graduating Students (GSS) [class of 2012], the Alumni Survey [administered in 2012 to the 2010 graduates], the Faculty Survey, and the Preceptor Survey. Data were transferred to the entire faculty and specific parties responsible for using the data, who provided written dispositions of how they would use the data for program improvement.

 noteworthy findings and dispositions. Of note, we have given attention to preparing students to interpret epidemiological data, interpret economic data, evaluate the health sciences literature, and the GSS shows we exceed national data. We now exceed national data regarding the GSS item about elective courses, and we have added 10 new electives since 2010. GSS responses about IPPEs preparing the student for APPEs were below national results, but the Curriculum Committee and Office of Experiential Education anticipate that the new 80 hour IPPE structure and simulation lab will lead to marked improvement of this item, which will continue to be monitored. GSS items related to academic advising and career planning and guidance reveal improvements over the previous year. The Office of Students Affairs and Admissions anticipates these numbers improving significantly in the coming years as all students in the graduating class of 2015 and later have assigned academic advisors and are part of the professional development network. The addition of an 8th required APPE was not viewed positively by many in the graduating class of 2012 and may have contributed to a decline in positive results for several GSS items related to responsiveness of administration to concerns and
fairness of APPE assignments. The GSS responses have improved significantly for applying patient care skills in the community setting. The OEE continues to address this item and conducted a site standardization survey in 2012-13 to monitor activities and address any shortcomings with sites and preceptors. Preceptor responses to items related to awareness of policies and procedures show room for improvement. The OEE has uploaded various policies to E*Value and addressed them in the preceptor newsletter. A decline in GSS satisfaction with study areas was addressed by expansion of night time and 24 hour study areas effective December 2012. The need for study areas and common spaces, brought out in the GSS, will be addressed by the construction of a new pharmacy building with completion in academic year 2015-16. GSS responses indicate that students continue to view the Atlanta campus as a safe learning environment.

Comprehensive Progression “End of Year” (EOY) Examination Oversight. In October 2012 the item analyses from the 2012 administration of the End of Year (EOY) examinations were distributed to course coordinators for use in teaching during the 2012-13 academic year and in making revisions to selected items for the 2013 exam. For the P1 exam, 22 of 144 questions were brought to the faculty’s attention, for the P2 exam, 13 of 128 questions, and for the P3 exam, 23 of 128 questions. The faculty completed a form which documented which questions they would change and which questions would result in adjustments in teaching practices. The results for the 2013 EOY exams were as follows: The first time pass rates were 100.0% for P1 students, 98.7% - P2, and 100%- P3. Of the two P2 students who failed, both passed on the second multiple choice exam attempt.

Graduating Students’ Practice Intentions. A survey of our 2012 graduates revealed that 47.7% planned to practice in chain or independent community pharmacies; 10.3% - hospital pharmacy practice; 21.5% - residencies or a fellowship; 2.8% - graduate school or medical school, and 16.8% undecided. The number of students answering undecided most likely reflects the current job market.

NAPLEX and MPJE Results from 2012 Graduates. The pass rate for Mercer’s 125 first time NAPLEX test takers in May-Aug 2012 was 98.40% compared to the national pass rate of 97.20% and state of 98.48%. The first time MPJE pass rates for Mercer’s 92 graduates testing for GA and 76 graduates testing for any state in May-Aug 2012 were 91.30% and 90.79% respectively (natl=93.94%, state=90.75%). The Assessment Committee noted the decline in MPJE pass rate from the previous year and communicated with the Curriculum Committee recommending reinforcement of law and presentation of law updates be a component of the Practice of Pharmacy courses as well as the PHA 650 capstone course in the form of a law and ethics case.

Student Evaluations of Didactic and Experiential Teaching. The cumulative and individual scores for student evaluations of faculty teaching and courses in the didactic and experiential curriculum were compiled and distributed to applicable data users. For the didactic curriculum, on a 5-point scale, the mean rating for course overall was 3.99 for Fall 12 and 4.09 for Spring 13. The mean rating for overall teaching ability was 4.26 for Fall 12 and 4.19 for Spring 13. For the experiential curriculum, the mean rating in academic year 2012-13 for overall teaching ability of primary APPE preceptors was 4.42 and for IPPE preceptors was 4.80 on a 5-point scale. The mean overall rating of the site/experience was 3.66 (4-point scale) for APPEs and 4.65 (5-point scale) for IPPEs.

P3 Preparedness to Enter P4 Year. In spring 2013 P3 students (Class of 2014) rated on a 4-point scale (poor, fair, good, excellent) how well prepared they felt to perform 27 practice activities. Students entered their individual results in their portfolios and were encouraged to pursue self-directed learning prior to starting the P4 year. The cumulative results were examined, noting there were two items where at least 1/3 rated their feelings of preparedness as fair or less. These were “analyze scientific literature” – 3.7% rated their preparedness as poor and 33.6% as fair; and “evaluate serum drug levels” – 4.5% =poor and 35.1%=fair. The information was transferred to the Curriculum Committee for action. The Assessment Committee noted that these results were a significant improvement over the previous year, and the experiential education member
of the Committee indicated that the OEE is now helping students understand the role of IPPEs in preparing students for these skills and role of APPEs in refining these skills and the responsibility of students to engage in self-directed learning. The Graduating Class of 2013 was also administered the same survey. Preparedness for all 27 practice functions was rated as good or excellent for 75-96% of the respondents, which was a marked improvement over their responses in 2012, prior to entering their P4 year when 18 practice functions had received a preparation rating of poor or fair. This provided evidence that continued learning related to these practice functions had occurred in the P4 year. The data were also transferred to the Curriculum Committee. 

Rho Chi Tutoring Program Summary: The Assessment Committee examined statistics on the pass rate for students within courses for which the receive tutoring (71% - fall 2012 , 76% - spring 2013) noting its continued success. The Assessment Committee made suggestions for formal criteria for tutors including an earned A in the course, minimum GPA, desire to teach, recommendation from course coordinator, etc. These criteria would be helpful in the event the pool of tutors expands beyond the Rho Chi membership. The Committee also suggested that Rho Chi examine reasons why some students do not use the Rho Chi tutoring program. The Committee will offer its assistance for this assessment in 2013-14.

Correlates of Success: An analyst examined data from the graduating classes 2007-15. Individual NAPLEX scores from the Class of 2011 and 2012 were included in the analyses. The following bullets summarize the results:

• When examining PCAT sectional scores and GPA in each professional year, the Biology and Chemistry scores are the best predictors of GPA in the first and second professional years. The Chemistry and Reading Comprehension scores are the best predictors in the third and fourth professional years. The prediction value decreases from the first professional year to the fourth professional year.
• PCAT sectional scores do not predict who will or will not fail a course; however, Chemistry scores are related to the number of course failures (the lower a student’s PCAT Chemistry score, the more courses failed).
• Reading Comprehension and Verbal scores are positively correlated with the number of failing course grades (the higher a student’s PCAT Reading Comprehension or Verbal scores, the more courses failed); but as mentioned above, Reading Comprehension scores are a positive predictor of program GPA in the third and fourth professional years. A possible explanation of the impact of Reading Comprehension scores on the third and fourth professional years is the transition from a primarily didactic and basic science emphasis to a primarily pharmacotherapy and experiential emphasis in the curriculum.
• PCAT sectional scores for Biology, Chemistry, Reading Comprehension, and Verbal Ability are statistically significantly correlated with Comprehensive Progression Exam (EOY) scores. Correlations for Reading Comprehension and Verbal Ability scores are highest for the third year exam.
• PCAT Biology and Reading Comprehension scores are marginally statistically significant predictors of NAPLEX Total scores. There is not a statistically significant relationship between PCAT sectional scores and MPJE.
• A four year degree is a strong predictor of being on track for completion of the program. Additional hours without a degree, is not a predictor of success.

Results were reviewed by the Assessment Committee and transferred to the Office of Student Affairs and Admissions along with the following comments: The Assessment Committee members were encouraged by the reliability data for the Comprehensive Progression Examinations. The Assessment Committee encouraged the Admissions Committee to closely monitor Reading Comprehension in future analyses, consider putting additional emphasis on this sectional score in the admission decision, and begin to explore if and when a four year degree will be mandatory for admission.