BACKGROUND
With career options for pharmacists expanding, the number of pharmacists seeking careers in the pharmaceutical industry has steadily grown over the past few decades. For most pharmacists and student pharmacists, the first step to a career in the pharmaceutical industry begins with successfully obtaining a pharmaceutical industry fellowship. Fellowship programs are designed to bridge the experience gap between recent PharmD graduates and entry level job requirements of the industry.

The Rutgers Pharmaceutical Industry Fellowship program is the oldest and largest industry fellowship program with a rich history of over 650 alumni and 25 years of experience. As interest has risen, competition for this program has also grown. From 2008 to 2012, the number of applications to the program has doubled while the number of positions has remained static.1,2 This analysis seeks to determine the traits and experiences associated with successful applicants against those not admitted, and to compare trends over the past few years.

OBJECTIVES
Primary objectives:
• To determine how industry or specialty-based experiences correlate to success in obtaining an industry fellowship position.

Secondary objectives:
• To analyze the impact of extracurricular leadership, scholarly activity, and organizational leadership involvement on successfully obtaining an industry fellowship position.
• To compare current acceptance rates to acceptance rates over the past 5 years of the program.

METHODS
An analysis was completed on all CVs (n=302) submitted to the online fellowship application database for 2012 admission to the program to evaluate:
• Pharmaceutical industry internships and rotations
• Specialty experiences (managed care, association management, etc.)
• Pharmacy organization management and leadership
• Poster presentations and publications
• Additional degrees and educational background

Inclusion criteria: Fellowship applicants starting July 2012 that were submitted to the online fellowship application database
Exclusion criteria: Applicants with incomplete applications or who declined RPIF fellowship position

RESULTS

In the past five years, acceptance rates for the program has decreased from 37% in 2008 to 22% in 2012 (Table 1). During this time, the number of positions has remained fairly constant while the number of applications continues to increase. Data suggest that prior work or industry experience may play a role in successfully obtaining a fellowship. Additional factors that may contribute to applicants successfully receiving an offer include involvement in poster presentations, publications, and professional societies.

There was little difference in leadership positions between accepted and non-accepted applicants. However, the quality of the leadership experiences were not assessed overall besides a few positions. Of accepted applicants, 40 of the 56 (71%) applicants attended the Fellowship Information and Networking Day at the Rutgers Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy prior to interviewing at the ASHP Midyear Clinical Meeting.

On average, applicants that were accepted into the Rutgers Pharmaceutical Industry Fellowship program had a greater number of pharmaceutical industry experiences, more student leadership experience, and were engaged in more scholarly activities.

DISCUSSION

• Data collection process was not blinded.
• Applicants who received offers and chose not to matriculate into the program were not included in the analysis.
• Some CVs had incomplete or missing information for evaluatable criteria.
• Additional factors that influenced successful candidacy for the RPIF Program were not evaluated, such as level of performance in the interviewing process, the strength of letters of recommendation, and presentation/writing abilities.
• The online applicant portal did not capture all candidates that interviewed for the fellowship program. Poster session presents at: 2009 APhA Annual Meeting and Exposition; 2009 Apr 3
• Rutgers Pharmaceutical Industry Fellowship (RPIF) Program.

REFERENCES

All authors are affiliated with the Rutgers Institute for Pharmaceutical Industry Fellowships. Rutgers Pharmaceutical Industry Fellowship Program and are paid employees of Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey.

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