

Intro Hi, I'm Jacob Walsh, and I'm Orion LaMontagne. Thank you for tuning in to The Manage-A-Bull MBA podcast where we have deep dive conversations with students, faculty, staff, and alumni to give you a comprehensive picture of the life inside of a top tier MBA program. In this episode, we speak with James Pufpaff and Andrey Polukhin. James and Andrey are both dual degree students earning their Doctorate of Pharmacy and Masters in Business Administration simultaneously over a five-year period. In our conversation James and Andrey give us the details on what it is like to be a dual degree student and how pairing the MBA with their pharmacy focus is enabling them to advance their careers. Be sure to check out our show notes where we will post links to the UB MBA web page and contact information for James, Andrey, and ourselves. If you enjoyed this podcast, follow us on Twitter @UBMBAandMS to stay up to date on what's happening to the UB School of Management where extraordinary is our course. Thank you and enjoy

Jake Okay, welcome back to the manageable MBA podcast. I'm here with my co-host, Orion LaMontagne. And today we are talking with two PharmD/MBAs. They're dual degrees. So when they finish they will have both their doctor in pharmacy and their Masters of Business Administration. We're here today with James Pufpaff and Andrey Polukhin, I think I pronounced that close enough.

Andrey Yes, that will work.

Jake So, uh, the could each of you give us just kind of a brief background bio of who you are, how you got into this program, maybe what your focus within pharmacy is, and you know what the MBA is why you're doing the MBA as well.

James Okay, so Hi, guys. I'm James. I knew I wanted to go into pharmacy from high school and I knew that UB offered an early assurance Program, which is really sort of a fast track, it lets you do instead of doing four years of undergraduate study, and then four years of graduate study unless you do two years of undergraduate study and then tosses right into pharmacy school. So it would have been two years shorter than the normal eight for a total of six years. And then I knew that you'd be offered an MBA as an in terms of a dual degree for one extra year. So I figured, you know, what, one extra year puts you at seven still better than doing both for you know, even one of the full time programs. And it gives you a little bit of differentiation coming out of a, you know, somewhat saturated market these days. And I knew, you know, I'm more of a business guy, I ran small businesses through high school, and up into college, I still run my own small detailing business on the side. I'm a car guy, so I like to do that. But I was more interested in the business side of pharmacy, I didn't want to just stand behind a counter and do retail all day and I really didn't want to work in a hospital. So if I can use an MBA to go into managed care, which I already sort of have an internship jobs type thing there now. So like insurance, working with pharmacy Manufacturers and managing benefits for employers. It's kind of the business side that I want to work into and maybe eventually get

into industry. So I feel like the MBA program will get me ready for that and give me a lot of skills that I can use moving forward.

Jake You're so eloquent James.

James Hope you edit that out.

Jake Absolutely not

Andrey Hi everyone, my name is Andre, much like James I'm I did my early assurance degree through buffalo. So I knew going out of high school that I wanted to do the PharmD the which, you know, applying early gave me the opportunity to do two years of undergraduate and then four years of graduate for a six-year total. straight out of high school, you know, I looked into dual degrees UB was actually really good, at least from the pharmacy side and advertising those so you know, as soon as you got the pharmacy school upside, there's the dual degrees like right on the front, and I kind of looked into them MBA kind of drew my attention more than some of the other degrees. I've always wanted to be in the business side of pharmacy. I appreciate the clinical side of pharmacy and I think those skills are important. It's important to have pharmacist in a clinical setting. But I particularly liked the administrative and business side of pharmacy, I thought pharmacy was in a sense unique because rather the main part of the medical team like under the doctor with PhDs and the MPs kind of take care of the patients in that setting, pharmacists were well positioned to be a little bit on their own, in a sense, where you could still be an entrepreneur without having to be under a physician, or you could, you know, go ahead and work in the hospital. Much like James, my interest lies in managed care. I've been interning at a Blue Cross Blue Shield of Western New York is a local health insurance company, and kind of looking at where I would fit in in a setting like that, and how those skills may then be transferred again to other industries, specialty pharmacy, pharmaceutical industry, hospital administration, or you know, within managed care kind of vertical growth there.

Jake Yeah. So what is managed care? I'm not really familiar with that term.

Andrey Yeah, I guess I can take that one. So it's interesting because I feel like most of the former students don't know what managed care is either. It's very true. It's a word that makes you think like managed care a lot of people think it'd be like something in the sense of consulting pharmacy, which is like taking care of the elderly and working for a nursing home because of the word manage this in there. But it's actually working for, it's usually thought of as health insurance. So health insurance, PVBs kind of things that a lot of people dislike nowadays, but there's a lot of clinical moment in those in those areas, in particular, on the clinical side. So the pharmacists are the ones that are going to count you know, your dollars and collect premiums, and then and then pay the providers for the services not in the business stuff, but we want to we want to have quality clinical information available, you know, quality guidelines, quality reviews, just

to make sure that therapies are being used appropriately, and a variety of other clinical services that are being offered from these companies. So that's what pharmacists is doing managed care specifically, James anything you want to add?

James That's pretty much 100%. accurate. Andrey is a president of AMCP which is a managed care organization at our school so he should know what he's talking about. But he did mention PBMs and I feel like a lot of people don't know what that is. It's a Pharmacy Benefits manager. So Andrey works for an insurance company that actually deals with, you know, the premiums and actually managing the members, the pharmacy benefit managers, though they'll often contract with the insurance companies to manage their Pharmacy Benefits. So do your own PBM work?

Andrey No, so Blue Cross Blue Shield contracts with Express Scripts, biggest PBMs in the country, but James can talk to you what life would be like a smaller PBB

James Right, So I work for pharmacy benefit dimensions, which is kind of a subsidiary of independent health. So independent health bought us and owns us, but we actually do work with smaller self-funded groups as well. It gives some flexibility to what employers want to pay for in terms of their employees' health care. So we're doing that review that Andrey was talking about, we're looking at, you know, advocacy, safety medications and really work with the pharmaceutical manufacturers that show up and they go, Hey, we have this great drug, why don't you use us and you know, pay us for our services and we go well, you know, compared to nothing, you're great, but compared to the other medications, you know, for the cost of You know, we weigh that benefit and cost to make sure that the groups are getting, you know, best bang for their buck in the best treatment for their patients. So it's just a service for insurance and we all kind of work together for absolutely interest of the patient.

Andrey I think managed care is specific is an interesting industry that's often overlooked in pharmacy. Because it is, even though it's a healthcare industry, it's often run by business, you know, graduate students, MBAs various different degrees MPH a lot of variety, health and business related degrees in there not so much pharmacy or even doctors but it's there is more and more of a presence of those clinical positions in the industry because we're starting to realize that you can't have someone who doesn't understand the clinical side running the administrative side. So I think the degrees that are like pharmacy MBA dual degrees that kind of put a person at a place where they can do both is a great advantage for an industry like that not only for us as students who want to go into that industry and are you know, career prospects but for our members and for you know, The area that we serve like Blue Cross Blue Shield WNY, we're very much a local company very much sir Western New York, we're not for profit, we care about our patients, we try to, you know, try to keep our name Blue Cross, it's kind of a, you know, it's a name has been around for hundreds of

years. So we kind of, we want to make sure that that's still staying strong. And it's important for us to be able to offer those services not just from the administrative side, but from a, you know, clean and clear clinical side as well.

Jake                   What a kind of came first, were you interested in managed care and that made you interested in the MBA? Or were you doing the MBA and that got you interested in managed care? Is there a chicken in the egg there?

James                 So I think initially, the NBA I used to have this dream of like, oh, independent pharmacy, like I can own my own place, I can be my own boss, I can, I can work the business from that side. And it's, it's come to a transition where really that's not lucrative anymore. It's more difficult to keep up with these big chains like Rite Aid and Walgreens and CVS and things that just have so much volume and buying power that really being an independent pharmacy doesn't work. Well, that you see. So after that kind of died, I was like, Well, what else is a business application? And so we can go into, I first thought about the industry because I thought about pharmaceutical sales, I thought about all these interactions, medical reasons, things like that. And I found that that kind of conflicts with the moral compass at times because pharma that they are really just salesman. So I thought about that and said, well, what's in the middle of what interact between everybody and that's really where managed care fell. And so that's how I got interested in and then I was fortunate enough to find that job opportunity. So I don't know about Andre, you can talk about his

Andrey                I had, in a sense, a similar trajectory to change actually funny enough, I was interested in the MBA without really knowing what I wanted to do. Just because I knew that the skills would take me further than just the PharmD would like I knew that that you know, from what I knew from people I talked to the MBA would be beneficial, wasn't sure exactly how to apply it myself. Managed Care, something I got exposed to as a p one my first year school through ANCP, which is the managed care club Which is kind of led me to think about that career and what that would entail. But going further in the MBA and in pharmacy, I'm it just kind of developed an interest for, you know, health economics and health policy and, and how that works. And there's a lot of, you know, political debates around this issue as well. But just what is going on with that healthcare, where's it going and kind of, do we have the right people in place that might be able to kind of take it in the right direction, you know, whatever happens with single payer health insurance is something in between. and that kind of interested me to go in that direction, because the skills you get in managed care specifically are applicable to multiple so you know, by working at a PBM or health insurance company, you get those skills, but that gives you a broader understanding of the health of the health care system in general and kind of the economics of that. So being able to apply that and then go work for the FDA or in legislature or something we're just making sound economical and, you know, political decisions with that information in mind is just easy. So that's kind of what drew me into that field.

Jake I want to take a quick step back. You mentioned P1. I've heard the P1, P2, P3. So can you walk us through a little bit how like structuring your years and your class schedule works would be a dual degree in this program?

James Sure. So pharmacy school, the professional years appears as they call them, it's graduate school in the School of Pharmacy. So they have four total years. So P1, P2, P3, P4. P1 through P3, those for three years, our academic and we do a little bit of rotation here and there is required experiential hours. And the fourth year, the P4 year is all advanced pharmacy practice, experience rotation. So you go and you work for free. Basically, it is what it is for six weeks at a time. And you do six of these six week blocks. So you can use these really to, you know, gain some insight into different fields of pharmacy you've experienced they're really not going to get when you're sitting in a classroom or maybe you have you know, are two specific jobs that you've been doing throughout your pharmacy career. You kind of use these APB ease to, you know, give yourself a different perspective and kind of eliminate what you don't want to do find what you are interested in and get that valuable experience before you become fully responsible for what you're doing on your license. So it's like kind of a key learning experience as a student transitioning into learning pharmacies.

Andrey Yeah, so right. to kind of add to that P1 is like a year where students get in, they take some classes, learn about farm school, get involved, the P2 year is where they just destroy you with the most difficult information.

James That's so true.

Andrey That's the year I'm in currently so I had to say it.

James It's terrible.

Andrey It's kind of like, oh you did P1 year which you thought was hard, now let's test your limits. And then that's P2 year and then P3 year is kind of winding down. And again, in terms of classes, but more involvement more like you know, start going to meetings, meeting people learning about what you want to do choosing a career path setting up your future. You can do the MBA; the way it is there's dual degrees. And you can, they all work sort of differently. So we'll just talk about the MBA, you can do the traditional way to do the MBAs to do first year, your introductory year in pharmacy school, then go ahead, take a break from the pharmacy school and do a year of the MBA, and then come back and finish it through the pharmacy school. So that's the path that I took. But as you can tell that adds a year to your pharmacy school, and then the downside to that is once you come out of the MBA, where your kind of readjust, you learn to work in teams, and the people make whole new connections and your friends and everything, you come back, you're a year behind. So all your old friends from P1 year ahead of you, and you're now in the hardest clinical year, having forgotten potentially some, you know, things you learned in your first year, and now you're expected to know them and build on it with a more you know,

intensive political formation when you had that year break. So that's the difficulty there and I'm sure James can speak to his way.

James

Yeah, and that that traditional way. It has its benefits and its drawbacks, like Andre just said is a concern but I did it after did the MBA year after my P2 year because I have heard that the second year was terrible and it was exactly what it was lots of exams lots of difficulty. So I figured you know what if I'm going to take the break I'm going to go do the MBA year and then come back and kind of you know, ease back into pharmacy school and you know, it's more of a time to take the winding down classes and go to work and getting that experience and duties, you know, many rotations that you're doing. So going into the into the MBA year and taking a transition from lots of studying and lots of exams to lots of teamwork and lots of assignments, I think was beneficial for me to get coming back to P3 year it's more assignments and less exam. So it was it was a better transition. But the same time, if you do it the way Andre did it, you have a little bit more time to finish your business electives, and you get out of the management pharmacy course that I already took. So I mean, there are benefits to doing both. You know, it's good. We have two perspectives to talk about here.

Andrey

And it's kind of funny. We always talk about the benefits of the MBA. But like it does come at a cost. And I think that's important to mention, I feel like just when you know somebody is weighing the pros and cons of coming to do was dual degrees, you have to understand that it does add a significant amount of time workflow to your degree. I mean, it's not pharmacies already not an easy degree, it's, you know, a doctorate in a very clinical setting, it's very difficult. Many people can't, you know, choose not to even have an internship or anything like that while in pharmacy school just to focus on the academics, whereas a lot of the dual degree students, I would say they try to be overachievers. And they have, you know, several jobs involvement and, and the dual degrees, so it is definitely, it's difficult. I mean, you're really also for going out potentially year being a pharmacist, you know, and then you're paying an MBA tuition for at least one year and then potentially, you know, summer if you choose to do an internship, so you're potentially losing off 150K, maybe more, maybe less but of money, you know, if you really think about the cost, you know, whatever time you spend in school, so that's, you know, that's definitely a drawback Doing a dual degree. So my personal opinion is always been that MBA is not a degree for everybody. I would not say, everybody if they want to, you know, go ahead and do it. I think it's definitely beneficial for those who have a use and you know, can narrow down specifically how where the NBA will take them. Because I have seen and heard of people who get the dual degree and then do the same exact thing they would have done. So you really just a bunch of money. Yeah, exactly. some money and some time to do the same exact thing. But then I've seen some people become executives and do really well. And who said without the MBA would be anywhere, anywhere and right now.

So, you know, that's definitely some something to consider when considering the dual degree. Anything to add?

James

I can definitely agree with that. And I think the skill set that the MBA provides you with gives you a different perspective on things. So when you come out with it, you're really going to end up being able to I mean, it's this is a cliché example. But in pharmacy school, we take tests, we memorize answers, and yes, we do clinical patient cases. But we don't get the same kind of problem solving. We do when we do cases in Business School, yeah, we'll have to think through all these different aspects of an entire, you know, an entire consulting project, basically in Business School, and you have to get out there and you have to present it confidently. And these are like social skills, a lot of people coming from very, very clinical background that don't often have to talk to people don't have. So I think it gives you a different presence in the room when you're going to remove clinical professionals, if you have the competence and, you know, kind of experience in a business setting.

James

Absolutely. And I can add to this in the sense that because the MBA is not the main degrees, the PharmD, that's kind of, you know, the main degree and the MBAs and additional degree to that. I think it makes those soft skills, all that much more important, because everybody's going to have a PharmD, and you're, I mean, unless you're going directly and just using your MBA for your work, and you're just ignoring the fact that you have a doctorate degree in pharmacy, you're going to be a pharmacist in a capacity in some capacity. So when you're starting out, so it's not about you having those three letters after your PharmD, it's about well, what about those three letters? What about that programmer that degree makes you a better candidate for this position? So I think more than more so than some of the, you know, the actual academic skills that we got here will not get them skills but like the accounting skills or finance skills that we got in the MBA, the soft skills, the leadership skills, the public speaking skills are all that much more important for the MBA

James

I agree

Orion

Do you guys find that use the skills that you learned in the MBA or some of the things that you've been exposed to in the internships that you've done?

James

So I think both of us will have a similar answer here, we're more of a unique position Not a lot of people have jobs in managed care. It's kind of a smaller niche to get into so for us to be able to use the data analysis skills that we learned from, you know, Professor Krzystofiak's data modeling class or just statistics, if the students haven't taken the other one, we get to do that data manipulation and, you know, what is the word I'm looking forward to not like epidemiology, right utilization? Yeah, we can analyze utilization on these drugs, big Excel files and like be able to work with data You know, draw conclusions, an economic perspective from, you know, this MBA program. I think that was helpful. And then, you know, we, you probably interact with pharma too. Oh,

yeah, absolutely. Oh, being able to work through negotiations and you know, sort of mutual problem solving kind of approach that you don't get in pharmacy school, you learn those skills in MBA.

Andrey

Yeah, I kind of have a similar response with just maybe a little bit more personalized, because I did work for a different company for me. You know, I do use my data modeling skills. You know, I think the most out of the hard skills that I've gotten from the MBA, it's nice to be able to open a spreadsheet and actually do something within kind of how the people that I work with and things like that. That's huge. We get nothing like that in Pharmacy school and our undergrad. It's all math and science, traditional math, the calculus step of math, and not a lot of Applied Math and data manipulation. So that's useful, definitely the public speaking and things even you know, I learned communication class with Mary Ann Rogers, just how to you know how to effectively communicate how to send out a proper memo how to speak in front of people where to look, you know how to pace yourself, all these things matter, because I've never had any sort of formal education when it comes to when it comes to doing those things. Additionally, when it comes to being mentored, it's kind of a weird perspective. But I think because of the MBA I able to understand more about the broader picture of what we do as a department and as a company, rather than I would if I had just done the same thing with the pharmacy students. So I can go to my boss or my boss's boss and have a conversation with them about what they do. And they're going to tell me about, you know, all the strategies for cost containment and how they're interacting and negotiations and various things involved. And I'm able to understand those terms and provide my own input, which I found actually probably the most valuable out of all the things I've done.

James

Exactly. And I think the MBA offers a good opportunity for healthcare students because it does offer healthcare electives. So we were able we both put the same classes will take business of healthcare with professors Zielinski and then innovations in healthcare, which is all also his class, and it's more of the business administration side of healthcare as a whole, like with the whole country. So we could go into our jobs at Blue Cross Blue Shield and pharmacy benefit dimensions and already have like a picture of what's happening rather than, you know, the very minimal exposure that you get to say, well, insurance companies exist. And, you know, somehow you get a formulary, right, of which drugs are covered, and that's really a good pharmacy school. So I think it's valuable.

Jake

So how, what's the average class size and the pharmacy class?

Andrey

Anywhere between like 100 and 130? It's running usually 115 - 130.

Jake

Okay. And because there was nine, pharmacists in our grade?

Andrey

More,



James I think there was sixteen total

Andrey We were just talking about that

Jake Wait, 10% of the pharmacy class are MBAs too?

Andrey Out of my class there was 9 people, so I mean yeah, percentage wise probably 6 or 7 percent did it, and then in your class a couple people?

James So it was I think that was the highest year like the highest rate individuals to join the MBA program was our year.

Andrey And you know, I don't know why. Because I think this year there's less MBA students again. So it's something about last year, push people into the MBA.

Jake Yeah, we just had a class in general.

Andrey Yes that too.

Jake Our class size went down almost 40 students to this year. Yeah. So there's a whole bunch of issues behind that. There is decreasing enrollment in MBAs across the board, decreasing enrollment of international students. But that's, that's a whole bunch of things when the economy's hot most people don't go back to school.

Andrey Now, that's true.

Jake But so like when you are applying, like how does that work? How early into the program because you already skipped two years of undergrad, and then you do one year of pharmacies so at what point in there are you deciding and applying into the to the MBA program?

Andrey Yeah, so I'm the one who did the one-year pharmacy so I mean, I knew going into I was going to do the degree so for me it was a little easier may call okay. But when it comes to literally Applying it's actually a pretty short window for you to consider yourself it's get into pharmacy school, you're just adjusting you're like, well now in grad school, it's like you'll figure out the professors and you know, all the classes.

James And then it's due.

Andrey And then it's February, the application. So Professor Fielbelkorn, the associate senior dean of Pharmacy Practice pharmacy school, actually, and he he's a big advocate, he has an MBA and he kind of talks about the dual degree a little bit there is like an orientation where they talk about all the dual degrees for like an hour maybe. But it's really up to students to go and ask questions to talk with the professor Fielbelkorn or somebody from the business school other students and kind of learned that way it is quick though. You can't sit and wait on it right new application today it's like in February I think or in March

James And then you have to take standardized, well, it used to be able to take a standardized test as well. So you would have to take the GRE, the GMAT and sometimes they would allow you to take the PCAT scores and yeah, but neither of us took the PCAT.

Andrey PCAT is the same as like the MCAT but for pharmacy school is like an application to measure, you know the science and math skills of students who want to be pharmacist and to get them into pharmacy schools and just the same as students who apply to medical school. But that's as this wave for those of us who do combine like two and four degrees. So if you know straight out of high school, you wanted to pharmacy and you go into your undergrad and UB. They will, I think it's because it's internal. So they see it was like, okay, you did really well, your first two years, you have to have maintain a certain GPA. There's all these requirements, take certain classes. And if you do, well, they'll just take you to the pharmacy school, because they know the rigor of these courses. If you can do well in them you can do on pharmacy school, from if you're applying from a different school, you almost always have to take this PCAT exam. So it was a dilemma for us for me personally. Because it's like, okay, I want to do the MBA, but I need a standardized test to get to the MBA. I never took the GRE or the GMAT or anything like that, because I wasn't it's not my name. Yeah, but yeah, I wasn't going into that field. But I didn't take the PCAT because I didn't too. So they used to actually make you go back and take the GRE or the GMAT, which I feel like the target a lot of students, but as of last year they passed the resolution allowed pharmacy students to go straight into the school of business without having to do that. Yeah. Which I think makes sense.

James It was if you met a certain GPA. Yeah, could do it. So I remember waiting on grades.

Andrey And I think you have a recommendation from like the Dean of pharmacy school or from the Associate Dean of pharmacy school, somebody could vouch for you saying you did well, in this graduate program. That's a doctor level program. We trust that you will do well in the end. And yeah,

Jake that's, that's crazy. It still blows my mind that you skipped two years' undergrad. I didn't realize that.

Orion Yeah that's a good gig

Andrey Not everybody does. By no means I'd say classes about half and half. So half of the students do go ahead and do that two-year four-year program, and have students get a bachelor's degree or two, three years and get all their pre racks and then apply into pharmacy school.

Jake Yeah, like kind of makes sense because I don't know anyone who like towards the end of their college career. Just side of pharmacy, anyone I know, I knew when they were like 16 years old. That that's the route they were going,

Andrey Well, how else do you do you have to take so many pre racks that and there's not a lot of room for error. So it's not like I take a little pre racks, a little elective, things will count. It's like, No, you take these science classes, these math classes. So if you don't know what you're doing, and you say your computer science for two years, and you're like, Oh, I don't want to do this, let me go to pharmacy, you have to do another four years of undergrad and that for you the pharmacy school. So unless you choose it, you know, pretty much right away. That's it.

Jake No, it's wild. Yeah. So I mean, I'm sure you have a certain personality that you find in pharmacy school for the most part, how was the adjustment to still a graduate level program but with maybe a different set of, you know, personalities and characteristics.

James Honestly, it's half and half because when you're when you are, you know, more outgoing and you're more involved in doing things and used to interaction you associated with those kinds of people. So, ultimately, I think a lot of the pharmacy students, you know that they work with patients all the time, they're able to have conversations. It's just when you get the international students that don't have the same, you know, language capability, their English is not their first language. It's a more difficult process because not only do they have to learn all this information regarding clinical knowledge, I had to learn you know, how to tell people in English about this clinical knowledge. So I feel like you know, a lot a lot of people in pharmacy were quieter than MBA students. But I think it's, you know, just their background and then the fact that they have to focus more on studying and studying. It is you know, working in a team here is more of an individual Game Over in the pharmacy school and people are just a little bit

Andrey right I found a lot of pharmacy students are type A personalities vary by the book and I think it's important kind of have to be it's the job of a pharmacist traditionally, to be the detail oriented person to make sure everything is right to double check everything the triple check everything's you know, be the one cause the doctor corrects something be the one who tells the nurse, you know, know we're going to do different this is the right way. But that, let's do Certain environment pharmacy schools. It's very competitive in a sense, you know, I feel like there's less there's still a lot of it but it's more individual what James said it's very much like you go to class or you don't go to class things are recorded, you just need to know the material, you got to take the bar exam, your pharmacist, that's usually how it works. And it's very individual it's a different studying pattern. It's a different everything. I mean, you can be on your own in your house never talked to anybody and graduate as a pharmacist, no problem. There a little teamwork there. That's just the way it is. And they're starting to incorporate more and more but that's just the way of the world I think pharmacy medical school PA, all these programs. They're very, you know, clinical and academically challenging or like that. I personally had to you know, it was challenging for me to come to the MBA, I'm going to be honest. I got used

to kind of doing things on my own. I of course, I stopped my friends and my group in pharmacy school, but it was like, studying on our own there's no group projects, we just kind of help each other out and hung out. Whereas here you come in. It's like everything about what you do depends on other people like really your own efforts almost don't matter. It's almost like your efforts to make sure other people Through their work as well, you know, that's half the effort and, and you kind of have to be friends with your group. Because otherwise you're not going to survive, there's so much work. And work is usually not so much a challenge academically that it is, there's a lot of it and you have to meet and you have to, you know, delegate and do all of this stuff. So you kind of start having to trust other people and let others be responsible for your grade. And I found that to be challenging. So that was definitely transition.

James I can agree that's it's part of the learning experience with the MBA is that they're not even just your friends, your group members, they become your family for like, you know, the nine months that you're in the MBA program. So I think that that's a useful skill to have. If you can get over the transition and become habit or develop great relationships with these people. It teaches you to work effectively and you know, delegate and all these things that you don't do in pharmacy school.

James Considering both of you were on my team

Andrey Yeah, and I was almost adopted into your team.

Orion We basically adopted you, and Lydia as well, and Kate

Jake I feel like we adopted quite a few people

Andrey Yeah your group was pretty awesome

Orion Yeah, we're like gravity.

Andrey it almost seems like a family in a sense because like, I feel very closely with my team, but I feel very close to with your team. It's almost like a second team like, it's really weird.

Orion Yeah, I'll text Andrey stuff, right and we will be like, oh, read an article about something. Yeah,

Andrey right. Exactly. So you have those things from spending so much time together in the MBA, which I don't have things like that with anybody in pharmacy school I feel like it's unique to the MBA.

Orion Same thing with me. I'm James calls me like almost every day. Every day.

James It depends.

Orion Sometimes it's more sometimes less. Right. But I wanted to actually piggyback off of the question that Jake asked, was there anything coming in from a

completely separate school? Was there anything that surprised you about the MBA program? was it? Was it what you thought it was going to be you were there things that we're doing Were the students that you interacted with different than you expected.

James

So I want to say that some was exactly as I thought it was going to be. And some was not. Because when you come from for come from the pharmacy program, a lot of people over there that they're obviously very confident their abilities, and yes, they're smart. But some people I think, had this conception, the MBA where it was a year off from, you know, this academic, academically rigorous program. And, yeah, and it's, in some ways it is, and in some ways, it's not, and I think it's on you as a student, or as a dual degree student. To make the most out of the education that you're going to apply for this new school. If you come over here and you take, you know, the bare minimum electives, you don't take any of the, you know, quote, difficult classes that you can take, I think you really miss out on the value that the MBA, you know, the program can provide you things like data modeling, and you know, he's more involved healthcare courses for us, at least. If you don't do that, yeah, you'll escape by and you can get good grades doing this program for somebody that's used to cramming material in their head, the exams here we're not hard. It's just so much work and so much teamwork that I at least I didn't expect it to be that busy. I expect there to be a lot of work. And I expected us to always be working in teams. I didn't expect it to be so much work that sometimes you did not see the work that your group is turning it on your back. Yeah. So it's different.

Jake

Yeah, like even as someone who just came from didn't come from a separate grad program like that. That was one of the things that also caught me a little off guard was the trust that you had to have in your group, because there was so much work to do sometimes be like, Orion and I are doing the stats case, have fun on marketing.

Andrey

And I had a similar experience. I mean, first of all, for things you didn't get to choose your teams, you're stuck in the team. Some people may be geniuses, some people may be average people going back with MBAs, it's really a combination right here. You have dual degree students, single degree students, international students, totally different backgrounds you didn't get to choose you kind of learn to appreciate and kind of benefit off of the strengths of your team and then mitigate their weaknesses because everybody has weaknesses. We as pharmacy students had a ton of weaknesses we had. not truly though like it's true, we maybe we had the work ethic we were good at like memorization and things like that, because we did it. We weren't used to the economics and in the finance and accounting, we had no background. So we counted on others for that. And personally, what surprised me the most of the MBA to get back to the original question is, in pharmacy school, everybody does the same thing. When you graduate, you have the same skills as somebody else, unless you go and do something extracurricular, you know, involvement. But bottom line, you

still the same pharmacy skills, you take the same classes, that a few electives, to kind of round you out as a professional, but it's all the same. Whereas here, you and I might have the same MBA degree, but we have totally different skills. And you might have never seen what I can do with my MBA skills. And I could never even think about what you could do. Somebody who, you know, goes and does finances, their concentration. I couldn't even imagine what they do in finance, but in healthcare, I'm serious. You know what I'm saying? I'm good with data because I like data modeling. I took that class. I kind of got into that, but again, finance, accounting operations, even anything like I, I couldn't imagine what that would be like and there's a variety of skills you can get an MBA that I think was kind of surprised me how different was from pharmacy school.

Jake                    So, you're done you did the first like full on intensive year of the MBA, you're back to P2, you're doing P3. What does that look like? Because there's still some MBA classes, you have a few electives to finish like how does that work? finishing up the MBA requirements over your timeline?

James                    You should go first.

Andrey                    So first of all, were exempt from all pharmacy school electives, which is good for that, in that sense. Never had to take the pharmaceutical electives unless we chose to and MBA electives are cut back a little bit just accounting for all the extra classes we take the pharmacy students

James                    You're at 21 right.

Andrey                    Yeah, so what do you guys have to do?

Jake                        I already hit my requirement

Andrey                    30 or something like 36 maybe it's not quite as high as I Well, James and I both we were proactive during our main MBA year, and instead of like taking it easy, we actually dove in and we took more electives when we should have we like petitioned to get overrides into classes and classes we shouldn't have been and we pushed it through to get into and we got it in and things like that. So it actually is looking pretty good for me, like, this semester, I'm only taking LeaderCORE as an elective, because I wanted to kind of have a lighter year go back into the two year to readjust and everything. But um, next year, I'll probably, you know, finish my electives by the fall and ride out the spring. So it's actually not bad and kind of take them between your pharmaceutical classes. So next year, I'll probably be combination of I spend two days in pharmacy school three days and then two days here in a year and kind of balance it out that way. This is doable.

Jake                        Yeah

James                    Yeah. And that's exactly what it is for me being in this year. Now I have a downside of having a crunch a little bit more, you know, more work in terms of

elective hours in one year, because I only have this P3 year and you really don't want to take business selected when you're on rotation. Working 40 plus hours a week. So I, you know, I have that one last year to get the electives done. But I know we have class Monday through Wednesday on South Campus and the pharmacy school. And then I'm taking my LeaderCORE and project management. So my Thursdays we would normally have off for pharmacy school, I do come to North Campus and do business classes. One's a night class, I really, you just kind of lose a day when you don't do the, you know, the typical program. But that was a kind of a risk and a tradeoff. I was willing to accept because I definitely did not want to come back to P2 year. So I mean, I like it so far. I still have more time to work. Both the jobs I'm in and we're managing it. We're alive right.

Orion

So I just wanted to ask about sort of your perspectives on the full time MBA versus some of the other options are out there. And the reason that I'm asking is because I was in the info session with Aaron Shaw recruiter for the MBA, and there was an individual JD background. And he just wants to have the MBA for, basically for his resume. And, you know, he's really he was kind of leaning towards the, the one year. And, and so we've talked about like how this was an experience and like, you know that the groups are so close knit. And I'm just curious, what's both of your honest perspectives? Do you wish that you had just done like one of the other schools one year programs that, you know, maybe was a little bit less intensive, a little less interactive and just had the same three letters on your resume?

James

I would say no. I think because we you know, we're in school right now what I mean, obviously, people come from different backgrounds. If this guy's a practicing JD, he's out in the working force. So I can't tell you a perspective for him. But we're both students and we will be going from one school to another school back to school again. So for us to get it over with and Get it in, you know, you might as well have this full experience that really teaches you different things by being so tight knit with these groups and really forcing you to do so much work together. I feel like the MBA program, doing it live is more beneficial than that, you know, what does this other option different school or an online program? So yeah, there's online programs.

Orion

Yeah there's online programs, part time.

James

I mean, if you're solely looking for letters on your, you know, on your resume, sure, you can do that. When I asked you to talk about what the letters mean to you, and what kind of skills those letters bring to the table. If you just sat in your living room and did an online course or if you're not, you know, had a cake year that we were talking about the pharmacy students think it is, I don't think you will get the same benefit from saying you have an MBA, I think you have to make the most education and actually get something out it.

Andrey

Right. Like I said before, I think in pharmacy more so than maybe in other places. The MBA, three letters don't mean very much. I mean that maybe in some degree they do, but majority of is what, okay, you have the MBA, we trust you but now show me what you can do with it. And that's how it's been in my internship. When I got hired on they were like oh you're doing the MBA, cool, those skills might be useful. But as I'm working there, and as I'm showing them, like, Look, these skills are actually helping me here. I think people are having more of an appreciation for the dual degree, and kind of the skills that come with it. I've been told by so many students, like my old friends who they were like, why are you doing the MBA, like just do the one-year online program after class after work, and you'll still make your pharmacist salary and just give this me and you know, and if that seem tempting, I'm not going to lie. It's if you look at the same tempting to a lot of people just do like, it's still the same degrees, same three letters, I can always make something up for what I did. But going through it now the skills I developed, the relationships I've built, and just all that I've done, you know, trump that extra year by a lot, in my personal opinion, and up is a highly ranked heavy school. I mean, most MBAs understand that rankings need things in the MBA world. And they're not there for nothing. They really reflect the value of the school and I think you'd be has a really, really good value, especially for dual degree student Where you can go for one year, you know, not have to double up intuition to do the second year and kind of fit it in and graduate with this dual degree from a school especially for us pharmacy students. The pharmacy school is rated as number one New York State. And then the MBA is ranked very highly as well in various ranking whatever sites or, or different ways that I thought that this is a great value. I couldn't pass up rather than to go some secondhand business school to get an MBA. That doesn't mean anything.

James

I agree.

Jake

So this has been great. You know, we're going to wrap up here in a second before we go. Any words of wisdom to someone who's currently in pharmacy school thinking about going after the MBA joint degree? What would what would you say to someone in that position?

James

If you're feeling like you want to pursue a career that can utilize the skills in the MBA, if you want to be you know, on the facing, you know, facing front of industry, managed care, consulting, things like that. I think the MBA provides you with skills that you won't get anywhere else and you can develop these skills and practice but then it becomes, you know, do you have the right network to get where you want to be? Whereas, you know, compared to coming out of school with this, this degree itself and these experiences like it gets you looked at to begin with, so provide you with opportunities and skills that you won't have coming out of the strictly pharmacy program.



Andrey Absolutely. I agree with that. 100%. And just in general, I wouldn't suggest the MBA for everybody. In fact, I would say it's wrong for most people. Most people in pharmacy school I think MBA is definitely not right for if you go to the MBA, or if you do think of a dual degree in general, but especially the MBA because I had, that's where I have my experiences, don't look for an easy year, don't look for, you know, especially in easy year than you think it's just going to get you know, highly paid job out of school and you're all set because that's not it. MBA just gives you more tools to succeed. It doesn't necessarily by any means get you where you need to be on its own. So be ready to work really hard. You're ready to, you know, work really hard not to only get the MBA skills but to learn how to apply them to pharmacy, how to get connection in the pharmacy world so it's definitely not like The MBA gives you something it's the NBA gives you the tools to get you set yourself somewhere. So make sure that what you want to do is in line with the values and skills MBA provides and be ready to work hard because it's not going to be easy.

Orion Awesome guys.

Jake Well said. Well James Andre, thank you very much. This has been a lot of fun.

Andrey My Pleasure

James Thank you

Jake This will probably be out next week.