

COLLEGE OF PHARMACY NEWS

“Taking Exams on iPads”

The College of Pharmacy has adopted computer-based assessment. In September 2013, first-year (P1) students in both the Traditional and International Advanced Standing Programs began taking exams and quizzes on their iPad, instead of the traditional "paper-pencil" tests. For many, it's almost impossible to imagine taking an exam without bubbling in an answer sheet and paging through a test: But it turns out that taking an exam on your iPad feels natural and has plenty of advantages.

Under the leadership of Dean Deziel, the College's Educational Assessment Committee devised an innovative, new way for faculty to create exams and for students to complete them. It works like this: A professor can now create assessments online, which are made up of carefully crafted questions related to their course. The assessment is downloaded to each student's iPad, where it "sits" until exam time. When exam day arrives, students arrive to the auditorium but only need bring their iPad with them (no need for calculators, there is a calculator built in to the testing app!). Students start the exam and are able to see one question at a time, which can include attachments such as vivid color photos, images, and even video! Students can also set timers to set their pace throughout the assessment, zoom in and out of diagrams and figures, flag questions to come back to and review, and "mark up" their exams. When a student ends the exam, it just takes a few clicks of a button to have the assessment sent back to the professor, where it can be scored instantly.

Not only is the interface much more engaging than staring at a flat sheet of paper, the computer-based testing system offers new resources and options for faculty and students. It is good for the environment, as it is a completely "paperless" system. It also allows for unprecedented quickness in giving students their grades. But best of all, the system tracks student learning throughout their entire training at COP, from the first course to the last course. Every exam and quiz, in every course, will now be linked together.

Dr. Sean Leonard, Chair of the Educational Assessment Committee, says: "This is a great system for both our faculty and students. We probably can't ever make taking exams fun---but we can make assessments better, so that they give students and professors more useful, meaningful information about progress towards becoming an outstanding pharmacist."