BACKGROUND
- Retail community pharmacies have seen an increase in the number of pet prescriptions dispensed
- ACPE’s Standards 2016 do not address the place of veterinary pharmacotherapy within the core curriculum requirements

OBJECTIVES
- Describe the Veterinary Pharmacotherapy course
- Report on student perceptions of sense of community within the course and its impact on learning and perceived need for such a course

COURSE DESIGN
- Two credit elective offered spring 2013
- Offered to third and fourth year pharmacy students
- Delivered exclusively online through a Learning Management System (Moodle)
- Divided into 3, 4-week modules; new topic each week
  - Video & audio-linked PowerPoint presentations, primary literature readings, handouts
- Assignments
  - Pre- and post-course reflection papers
  - Calorie counting worksheet
  - Preparing client education for a veterinary drug product

ASSESSMENT
- Additional questions were added to the standard course evaluation form to assess views on community engagement, perceived need for the course and reasons for taking the class
- A pre-defined 6-point Likert scale was used
- The evaluation and all questions were optional

OVERALL COURSE EVALUATION (n=14)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
<th>Median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I appreciated that this class was offered solely online</td>
<td>5.6 ± 0.50</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I took this course because I feel that animals are an important population for pharmacists to know about</td>
<td>5.4 ± 0.76</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I took this course because I have a strong interest in animals</td>
<td>5.4 ± 0.85</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material learned in this class will be applicable to my future career</td>
<td>5.2 ± 0.58</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The reason I was able to take this class was because it was offered solely online</td>
<td>5.2 ± 1.1</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I took this course because I am planning to go into a career where I will be responsible for dispensing &amp; counseling on pet meds*</td>
<td>4.6 ± 0.87</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would have preferred that this class be offered in a classroom*</td>
<td>2.2 ± 0.73</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VIEWs ON SENSE OF COMMUNITY (n=14)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
<th>Median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The weekly email updates assisted me in being updated about the course*</td>
<td>5.7 ± 0.48</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The weekly email updates aided in the feeling of community of this course</td>
<td>5.2 ± 0.43</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The weekly topic discussions aided in the feeling of community of this course</td>
<td>4.9 ± 0.73</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I watched the video attached to the weekly email update*</td>
<td>1.6 ± 0.67</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I found the video attached to the weekly email aided in the feeling of community of this course*</td>
<td>4.1 ± 1.2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on a Likert Scale of 1 – 6; 6—Strongly agree, 5—Agree, 4—Somewhat agree, 3—Somewhat disagree, 2—Disagree, 1—Strongly disagree except * based on a Likert scale of 3—Always, 2—Sometimes, 1—Never
*Answered by 13 students  *Answered by 12 students  *Answered by 7 students

FOSTERING COMMUNITY
- Four of Rovai’s 7 areas of focus for improving sense of community were used to foster community
  - Transactional Distance
    - Limited structure Dialogue - weekly topic discussions
  - Social Presence
    - Weekly email with video
  - Social Equity
    - Monitoring of discussion boards
  - Community Size
    - 34 students in the course

DISCUSSION
- Veterinary pharmacotherapy was well received
- The online format was viewed positively and was preferred by students over a face to face option
- Elements beneficial to the feeling of community were the weekly emails and topic discussions
  - Students did not find the video useful
  - Students took this course because they felt that animals were an important patient population for pharmacists to learn about
  - Colleges and schools of pharmacy should offer more opportunities for students to learn about this population
- Limitations
  - Survey had a response rate of 14/34 (41%)
  - Likert scale used did not offer a neutral response

REFERENCES
The author has nothing to disclose