



WCCS

World Congress of Chiropractic Students

www.wccsworldwide.org

info@wccsworldwide.org



@wccschiro

A tale of two paths

Joshua W Boudar

Narrative: The first path for a chiropractic student is to become qualified and build the foundation for all that will be done in practice. There is a secondary path, one where the students find their passion. If this first path is everything you need to be qualified, the second path would be considered anything that you do while you're in school that helps you to become competent.

This secondary path is the path that will help the student to one day stand in front of people with unconscious competence because they preemptively spent the time and energy to develop themselves into the doctor they dreamt of becoming.

Taking time to care for one's well-being while walking these paths is not optional, it is mandatory.

Indexing terms: Chiropractic; World Congress of Chiropractic Students, WCCS; self-care, well-being.

Introduction

In this information era Chiropractic students are bombarded with more data in school than at any other time in their lives. A common phrase, heard in schools right now is 'that attending chiropractic school is like drinking from a firehose', difficult but achievable.

Deciphering all the information and making a properly informed decision can become difficult for many students. Decision fatigue and burnout are two real problems that chiropractic students deal with daily. As of the writing of this article, I am in my final year at Cleveland University in Kansas City and I have definitely felt the pressure of school over the last few years. I can only speak from personal experience in hopes that my insight will help other students through chiropractic school.

... The WCCS helps you develop your own unconscious competence as a doctor and leader in your community and our profession ...'



The pathways in your Chiropractic school

First, the purpose of a chiropractic school is to be an institution designed to offer individuals, who wish to become chiropractors, a program in which to enrol to acquire the necessary qualifications needed in their desired practice location. Basically, chiropractic schools exist to help students become qualified to call themselves 'doctors'. This is the first path, the apparent path, the path that most students in school right now believe is the only path for them. However, this is far from the truth.

There is another path while you're in school that helps make the process worth it, tolerable, and even enjoyable. This first path, to become qualified, is your foundation for all that you will do in practice, the secondary path is where you find your passion. If this first path is everything you need to be qualified, the second path would be considered anything that you do while you're in school that helps you to become competent. The second path, sometimes known as the '*parallel curriculum*' or self-guided exploration, is the one you find yourself on while exploring seminars and workshops, shadowing doctor offices, and attending clubs and conferences.

Most of these activities are done during your free time, at your own expense, between classes, studying for exams, and all the other life events that happen while you achieve your degree. These activities help you build new skills physically and mentally. Sometimes these activities will test the boundaries of your comfort and force you to examine previously held habits and beliefs. This secondary path is the path that will help you to one day stand in front of people with unconscious competence because you preemptively spent the time and energy to develop yourself into the doctor you dream of one day becoming.

A benefit of the WCCS

What do either of the two paths have to do with the *World Congress of Chiropractic Students*? The WCCS is an international, apolitical, nonprofit organisation run by chiropractic students from around the world and is dedicated to promoting and progressing the chiropractic profession. I am currently privileged to call myself the President of this fantastic nonprofit organisation. I believe that the individuals who commit their time to this cause are working on their '*parallel curriculum*'.

Individual members of the WCCS have opportunities to collaborate with their counterparts around the world, creating networks and developing their leadership abilities. Participating in international conferences and meetings will impact our profession for years. Becoming a member of the WCCS will not help you to qualify in any state or country around the world, that is the responsibility of your school. The WCCS will help you develop your own unconscious competence as a doctor and leader in your community and our profession.

Why would anybody want to add extra work to their already stressful and overwhelming schedule? That's a great question, as I wrote about earlier, you need to find something while you're in school that helps keep you from burning out. For me, attending seminars and conferences, shadowing doctors' offices, and spending time outside of class in clubs and clinics, learning techniques I want to master, helps me keep that passion burning bright. Many of my classmates have started to get that deadeye, shell-shocked stare as if they are returning from war and I can understand that many of them haven't had much outside of class to give them a greater perspective of our profession.

Truly, school is a temporary obstacle that is extremely challenging, but having an outlet, such as an organisation like the WCCS, will help students keep their passion alive, and enhance their ability to perform under pressure.

The WCCS is only one of many organisations that you could devote your time and energy to. Other organisations I know of that would be useful for a chiropractic student might include *Business Network International (BNI)*, *Chambers of Commerce*, *Toastmasters*, a sorority or a fraternity, and even your state, national, or international association. All these are designed to give you purpose, develop different skills, and are available for you when you're ready to take advantage of them.

There are so many different activities and organisations that one individual can get into while in school, but maybe your school or city doesn't already have what you're looking for. Why not be the person to create what you're looking for?

Why not be the change you want to see in the world?

I have been involved in the creation of several different clubs and organisations on *Cleveland University's* campus throughout my time in school and it is a complicated but rewarding process. Once you get together a group of individuals committed to a common cause you immediately feel a sense of support, connection, and camaraderie. Maybe you're interested in physical fitness and want to start a climbing, running, or hiking club at your school. This is not only a great way to help maintain physical fitness for yourself while you're in school, but will also give you the ability to learn how to manage time and groups of people when working out together. You could get a group together and dive into learning about sports chiropractic and rehabilitation after traumatic sports injuries. Maybe you are interested in books, philosophy, and literature, you could get together with a group of people and start a book club. I highly recommend reading *The Chiropractic Textbook* by RW Stephenson and *33* by David Serio for anyone interested in learning about chiropractic philosophy. These groups and activities are other examples that would be applicable for students to participate in while they are in school because the skills required to conduct these activities are directly transferable to your practice.

Prioritise your well-being

If you're reading this and you're feeling burnt out as a chiropractic student, know that you're not the only student feeling overwhelmed. What you're experiencing is a common scenario for many students, however, just because it is common does not mean it is normal. It's not normal to only get a few hours of sleep while studying for exams, stressing over finances, and feeling a lack of time management and support.

Remember that taking time for your well-being while going to school is not optional, it is mandatory. Graduate school is a marathon, not a sprint, and finding a group of individuals to support you along the way will help improve your life while in school. I recommend you find a group that is not only going to support you, but also push you to become the best version of yourself.

I feel extremely grateful for all the connections I have made while in school because many individuals have impacted my life in many ways. With less than a year until my graduation date, I am now closer to the point where I will be qualified to call myself a doctor and experience the unconscious competence I spoke of earlier. This is all due to the two paths I have consistently traveled throughout school.

Conclusion

Chiropractic students, here is your call to action to find a group or organisation, get involved or create the group or organisation you are passionate about as soon as possible, commit to sticking with it, embrace challenges as they arise, ask for support when you need it.

'We never know how far reaching something we may think, say or do today will affect the lives of millions tomorrow.'

BJ Palmer

Joshua W Boudar

BAppSc, AssocDeg Sci, FASA

Cleveland University

Kansas City, MO

President, WCCS

president@wccsworldwide.org

Cite: Boudar JW. A tale of two paths. [WCCS]. Asia-Pac Chiropr J. 2024;5.2. apcj.net/papers-issue-5-2/#BoudarTwoPaths

Note: All contributions from the WCCS are gathered at apcj.net/WCCS

Email to president@wccsworldwide.org