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International cooperation engages pharmacy students in development of dietary supplements

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We will describe the successful development of a dietary supplement product line by a Brazilian company for sale to a North American market. The processes involve student selection, preparation of students for internships, workshops tailored to the stage of project development, and the process used for placing and developing student and company expertise. Given the global nature of the project, international students were intentionally placed on separate teams within, and offered culturally relevant experiences outside, the company to ensure development of cultural understanding. Finally, the assessment of the student internships and workshops from professionals and faculty at Brazilian and US locations provides feedback to assess the next stage of project. Students deliver a short presentation summarizing their work to both the company and the University at the end of their internship. They also deliver a detailed written report addressing their specific project that is tied to the dietary supplement line development. The student report includes specific operating procedures that integrate FDA/ANVISA regulations. Some specific examples will be presented. International partnerships between universities and industry can help small to medium sized companies develop processes for manufacturing and sales that meet global regulatory standards, while at the same time, training students in critical thinking skills and international focus by working towards solutions to a practical problem. Additionally, there is a benefit from a cross-cultural infusion and a broadened understanding of patient and pharmaceutical industry needs in multiple countries and communities.

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