

College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences

A publication to keep YOU informed

Summer 2007 Volume 1, Issue 2

Dean's Message



During this upcoming 2007-2008 academic year, our doctor of pharmacy (Pharm.D.) program will be evaluated by the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) for the purpose of continued accreditation. As part of the ACPE review of our Pharm.D. program, an in-depth Self-Study is required to identify programmatic strengths, weaknesses, and areas in which improvement is needed or desired. Surveys endorsed by ACPE were administered to

graduating students, alumni, preceptors and faculty to gather the needed data for the Self-Study. In this correspondence, I would like to share with you some of our findings.

The majority of the respondents answered positively to all survey items. The student, faculty and alumni surveys listed 23 identical practice functions such as communicate with patients, minimize medication errors and develop a patient care plan. Responses confirmed that the program was preparing students to perform these functions. Other areas of strength identified in the surveys were the teaching and learning process, use of assessment measures for improvement, the governance of the College, the admissions process, various student services and the culture of mutual respect.

Introductory pharmacy practice experiences (IPPE) required improvement per the graduating student survey. This issue has now been addressed

with the restructuring of IPPE to include community, chronic care and institutional experiences assigned and managed by the College.

Increased preceptor input into the curriculum was also an area requiring improvement. Reactivation of advisory groups for advanced and introductory practice experiences has been initiated. They meet periodically with electronic contact in the interim.

The cost of tuition was identified as an issue of concern by students. As a result we will increase our communication of the value-added services provided by the College. Alumni indicated a desire to be more connected with the College. This will be addressed in several ways including an increase in electronic updates to the alumni, development of a student/alumni mentoring program and an alumni panel discussion sponsored by the Council of Students about career choices and opportunities.

For any areas requiring attention that are not addressed prior to March 10-12, 2008, the date of the accreditation on-site visit, the Self-Study will include a plan and target date for addressing the concern. Please be confident that our Self-Study is a continuation of our commitment to excellence. Thank you for helping us achieve our goals.

Regards,

H. W. "Ted" Matthews
Dean and Vice President for the Health Sciences
(matthews_h@mercer.edu)

Important Dates

August 16
White Coat Ceremony

August 17
New student orientation

August 20
First day of classes
Welcome to Atlanta party

October 24
Honors & Awards Luncheon

Alum Sworn in as New GPhA President

Sharon Sherrer, Pharm.D., CDM, a 1984 graduate, was inducted as the 133rd president of the Georgia Pharmacy Association during the annual meeting in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

Sharon is an avid supporter of the College and was honored in 2003, along with her husband John Sherrer, BSPHM '77, for her commitment to pharmacy education and dedication to the enhancement of the profession. She is a steadfast advocate working with local, state and federal organizations to improve the practice of pharmacy.

Sharon is very active in professional organizations, both on a local and national level. She is a preceptor for Mercer students and has served on numerous College committees. Congratulations Sharon on this very distinctive honor.



Visit us on the Web at www.mercer.edu/pharmacy

Graduates Set to Begin Exciting Careers

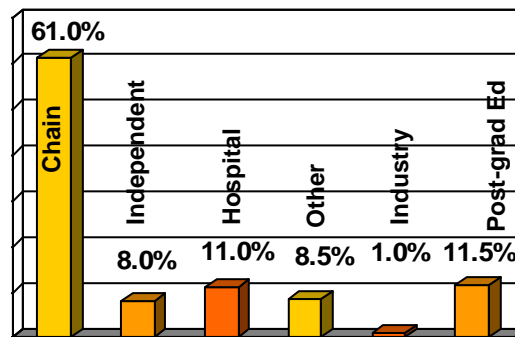
The College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences conferred 142 doctor of pharmacy degrees during its commencement on May 5. Roger L. Williams, M.D., executive vice president and chief executive officer of United States Pharmacopeia (USP), delivered the commencement address. "By virtue of your knowledge, skills, and abilities, plus your place in the community, you will be admired and you will become role models," said Dr. Williams.

Rachel L. Davenport received the prestigious Reuben C. Hood Award during the ceremony. Given in honor of a founder and longtime dean of the 103-year-old College, the award is presented annually to the student who has the highest scholastic average in the graduating class of the Doctor of Pharmacy Program. Dr. Davenport completed her four years of pharmacy studies at Mercer with a perfect 4.0 grade-point average. The new graduate will be joining Tanner Medical Center in Carrollton, Georgia as a clinical pharmacist.

John D. Bauer was the second graduate to be awarded the doctor of pharmacy/doctor of philosophy dual degree in the history of the College. Two doctor of philosophy degrees were also awarded to Akm Nasir and Parvin Aktner.



Where will Pharm.D.s practice?



Rising Fourth-Year Students Get Pinned


More than 500 people in attendance witnessed the Class of 2008 as they marked the transition from didactic to experiential education during the 2007 Pinning Ceremony on May 4. This occasion has become an important part of our culture and promotes professionalism in our students.


A 1985 graduate, Becky Hamilton, Pharm.D., was the ceremony speaker. Dr. Hamilton served as Clinical Pharmacy Manager for the Kaiser Permanente Georgia Region for over fifteen years and recently joined Lacey's Drug Company, based in Acworth, Georgia, to pursue new opportunities integrating, developing and implementing clinical pharmacy services with the pharmacy team there. Becky completed an ASHP-accredited Drug Information residency program through Mercer and Grady Memorial Hospital in 1991.


Students were presented with specially designed pins to commemorate the occasion and recited the Pledge of Professionalism. Student rotations began in June and most students will complete them by February of 2008. The 2008 Pinning Ceremony will be held on Thursday, May 4, 2008.





Student Recognitions and Awards

 Sonya Chhatwal, a fourth-year student, won the Best Student Poster Award at the 2007 American College of Clinical Pharmacy Spring Forum for her poster entitled "Evaluate the prevalence of heterogeneous resistance in community-acquired methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* isolates in an era of increased virulence and treatment failure." Dr. Vanthida Huang, assistant professor of pharmacy practice, was co-author on the poster.

 Graduate student Tatyana Sidorova was among only four Ph.D. candidates chosen to present in the field of pharmaceutical biotechnology at the 2007 National Biotechnology Conference (NBC) Graduate Student Symposium. Students were chosen from a large field of qualified applicants and, received a cash award of \$250, free travel and registration to NBC.

 Third-year student Allison Bell and Dr. Julie Kissack were selected as one of the 51 scholarship recipient pairs for the 2007 Wal-Mart Annual Conference Scholarship Program to attend the annual AACP meeting.

 Katherine Van Drew, a second-year student, and fourth-year student, Mandi Herndon, were honored with second and third place, respectively, for their submission in the Pharmaceutical Care Essay Competition sponsored by the Georgia Pharmacy Association.


 Second-year student Patrick Holt reported his research on "Intra-Operative Aprotinin in Liver Transplant and Renal Dysfunction" to the American Congress of Transplantation. His research will be published in a supplement of the American Journal of Transplantation.





Dean Ted Matthews, Dr. Jim Bartling, and Mercer students enjoy outing during GPhA Meeting.




Dean Matthews chats with students during his annual Ice Cream Social. The students enjoy this time to have a little fun with the Dean.

 During the Georgia Pharmacy Association Annual Meeting, P4 student Sonya Chhatwal won first place for her poster entitled "Evaluate the prevalence of heterogeneous resistance in community-acquired methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* isolates in an era of increased virulence and treatment failure." Jason Waszak, a fourth-year student, received second place for his poster, "Vancomycin dosing in pediatric patients."

 Fourth-year student Alexander Garrard was selected to participate in the 6th Annual Paul Ambrose Scholars Program in conjunction with Association for Prevention Teaching and Research and the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion for his project on heart failure.

 Fourth-year student Alexandria Fagan presented a poster entitled "Evaluation of Weight Gain and Extrapyramidal Symptoms in Forensic, Chronically Ill Psychiatric Patients" during the American Pharmacy Association Annual Meeting.

 Graduate student, Sanjay Gakewad, was one of 10 chosen from 850 student posters selected for a cash award at the 34th Annual Meeting of the Controlled Release Society, July 7-10, in Long Beach, California. The selection criteria was based on the novelty of the research work, innovation, creative thinking and significance to the field of pharmaceutical research. The poster was entitled "Formulation and ex-vivo evaluation of anti-sense to Nf-kB encapsulated albumin microspheres in a kidney transplant model."

Ryan Named Distinguished Educator

Dr. Gina J. Ryan, Pharm.D. was the recipient of the 2007 Distinguished Educator Award. Announced at the 2007 commencement in May, the award recognizes an outstanding faculty member who has made significant contributions in the area of teaching.

Dr. Ryan serves as a clinical associate professor in the Department of Pharmacy Practice. In her academic position, Dr. Ryan teaches courses in endocrinology and oversees a clinical pharmacy practice at the Grady Health System Diabetes Clinic. She strongly believes in the use of case-based learning as a way to engage students in the learning process. In the patient-care setting, she allows students to actively participate in all aspects of care for the patient.

Dr. Ryan stated that the most important thing that she can do as a teacher is to set an example as a lifelong learner. This philosophy is evident in her teaching. She facilitates the work of students to help them employ critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and her warm rapport with students helps them to feel comfortable asking for direction in the decision-making process.

Huang Receives Award for Excellence in Research

Dr. Vanthida Huang, Pharm.D., was recognized for her research efforts with the Award for Excellence in Research during the 2007 commencement in May. The award is presented to a faculty member who has made a significant contribution to the area of research within the college.



Dr. Huang serves as an assistant professor in the Department of Pharmacy Practice. Last year, Dr. Huang received a grant from Elan Pharmaceuticals, Inc. as primary investigator and is a recipient of a Solvay Summer Fellowship, where she was a collaborator on grants funded by Lipocine, Inc. and the Emory Foundation. She also published four manuscripts in peer-reviewed journals for her research field of infectious disease and presented five posters at national and international meetings, including some collaborative work with the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences at Mercer. Dr. Huang is a member of the Institutional Review Board of the University.

Faculty Honors and Awards



- 🏆 **Dean Ted Matthews**, dean and professor of pharmaceutical sciences, was named chair of the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy Council of Deans Nominating Committee.
- 🏆 **Dr. Ajay K. Banga**, professor and chair of pharmaceutical sciences, has been elected to Fellowship status by the American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists (AAPS). AAPS confers the honor of Fellow to recognize individuals for outstanding contributions that elevate the stature of the pharmaceutical sciences and for professional excellence in the field relevant to the mission of AAPS. Dr. Banga will be formally recognized at the 2007 AAPS Annual Meeting in November.
- 🏆 **Dr. J. Grady Strom**, associate professor of pharmaceutical sciences, was selected for the Governor's Teaching Fellows Program for the 2006-2007 academic year.
- 🏆 **Dr. Richard A. Jackson**, professor of pharmacy practice, was named the recipient of the Kroger Foundation Professor in Community Pharmacy.
- 🏆 **Dr. Leisa L. Marshall** was appointed to the Board of Directors, Campbell-Stone, June 2007 - 2010.
- 🏆 **Dr. Chad M. VanDenBerg** was named editor of the American College of Clinical Pharmacology Newsletter.
- 🏆 **Dr. Julie C. Kissack** was named 2007-2008 Chair of the NAMI Relationship Management Group of the College of Psychiatric and Neurologic Pharmacists. Dr. Kissack was also reappointed to the Board of Pharmaceutical Specialties (BPS) Specialty Council on Psychiatric Pharmacy for 2007 - 2009.

Alumni Notables

D. Steven Wilson, Pharm.D. '77, owner and pharmacist of Carter's Pharmacy in Smyrna, was named to the eight-member Georgia State Board of Pharmacy, which is responsible for the regulations of pharmacists and pharmacies in the state.

Dr. Wilson has remained actively involved with his alma mater. For more than 25 years, he has been an adjunct faculty member and a preceptor for the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. A former president of the Alumni Association, he continues to serve on its Board of Directors. The Alumni Association has recognized his commitment to the pharmacy profession and the college, awarding him the Young Alumni Award in 1987 and the Alumni Meritorious Service Award in 1991.

Judy Gardner, Pharm.D., '87 was named Pharmacist of the Year by the Georgia Society of Health-System Pharmacists (GSHP), the highest honor the organization can bestow on any member. The award honors outstanding service and accomplishments in health-system pharmacy practice, as well as contributions to GSHP.

Dr. Gardner is the director of pharmacy at Northside Hospital-Atlanta, where she has worked for the past 19 years. Committed to advancing pharmacy, Dr. Gardner also serves as vice president on the State Board of Pharmacy, where she was recently elected president for 2007, and on the board of directors for the Atlanta Academy of Institutional Pharmacy and Georgia Pharmacy Association. A resident of Alpharetta, Gardner is also a member of the Board of Visitors for the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences.

John Sherrer, BSPHM '77, was elected as second vice president for the National Community Pharmacists Association. He and his wife, Sharon Sherrer, Pharm.D. '84, were recognized for their commitment to pharmacy education and dedication to the enhancement of the pharmacy profession during the 2003 Honors and Awards Luncheon.

Jeffrey L. Osman, Pharm.D., '85 received the 2007 Lester E. Hosto Inspector Distinguished Service Award for his efforts on behalf of National Association of Boards of Pharmacy and the Kentucky Board of Pharmacy. Dr. Osman has received several awards recognizing his numerous contributions. He has been employed by the Kentucky Board of Pharmacy since 1989.

STAY IN TOUCH WITH COPHS

As valued alumni of the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, we want to stay in contact with you. Please take a moment to update your contact information with the form below and fax to 678-547-6315.

This electronic newsletter is designed to keep alumni and friends of the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (COPHS) informed of recent news, activities and accolades. The e-newsletter will be distributed during the months that the annual report and Mercer Health are not published.

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Name:

Home Address:

City, State, Zip:

Preferred e-mail address:

Pharmacy or company name:

Title:

Address:

City, State, Zip:

____ *Please send me information on Alumni Association*

____ *Please contact me about gift opportunities.*

COPHS Launches New Physician Assistant Program

Mercer University College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences is proud to announce the development of a new Physician Assistant (PA) Program, which is poised to matriculate its first class in Spring 2008. The addition of the PA Program helped to cultivate the name change of the 104-year-old pharmacy school will offer opportunity to add more programs in the health professions and provide interprofessional education for the students in these programs.

The new masters degree (MMSc), a 28-month physician assistant program will be based on the Cecil B. Day Graduate and Professional Campus in Atlanta and will eventually enroll up to 50 graduate students per year. The initial class will be 26 students followed by progressive growth over the next several years. Bradford Schwarz, MS, PA-C, serves as the inaugural director of the program. Mr. Schwarz is a 25-year veteran of the physician assistant profession with over 10 years of academic teaching and supervision experience. Most recently, he served as the Associate Director of the Emory University Physician Assistant program. His area of clinical specialty is in cardiology and electrophysiology.



Bradford Schwarz, MS, PA-C, new Physician Assistant Program Director.

The program is designed with a 13-month didactic phase, followed by 15 months of clinical rotations and a capstone project. The clinical rotations will consist of nine core and two elective five-week clinical experiences, interspersed with a series of professional didactic sessions. At the conclusion of the clinical rotations, students will return to campus for a final three-week capstone experience prior to graduation. The nine required clinical "core" rotations include: family practice, pediatrics, women's health, emergency medicine, surgery, internal medicine-outpatient, internal medicine-inpatient, behavioral medicine and orthopedics. Students will also be allowed to take two elective clinical rotations.

In March 2007, Philip Brachman, MD, was hired as Medical Director. Dr. Brachman serves as a part-time member for the physician assistant program and functions as a liaison to the medical community, assisting in the development of clinical rotations, as well as providing input concerning curriculum development and instruction in the area of infectious disease.

Patricia Kelly, MMSc, PA-C, serves as the Academic Coordinator for the PA Program. Ms. Kelly has an extensive background as an athletic trainer and was an adjunct sports medicine faculty member at Ball State University and Southeastern Missouri State University. She holds a master of education degree from Northern Illinois University, a master of physiology degree from Ball State University and a master of medical science degree from Emory University. Ms. Kelly's area of practice interest is in Internal Medicine.

An additional faculty member, Nadja Button, MHS, PA-C, was hired in July 2007 as a clinical coordinator, who will be charged with development and oversight of clinical rotations. Ms. Button comes to the program with a wealth of experience in rural family medicine and emergency care. She is a former paramedic and medical assistant. Laura Baumgarten, LPN, is the program specialist. Ms. Baumgarten most recently worked for the North Georgia United Methodist Foundation and was also an LPN with PruCare/Meridian Medical Group.

In addition to the graduate program, Mercer will have a bachelors degree pre-physician assistant program on its Macon campus, home to its traditional undergraduate schools and colleges. Undergraduate students successfully completing a minimum of 90 hours of pre-requisite coursework in the program, including all College of Liberal Arts general education requirements and the designated number of hours of direct patient care experience, will be considered for admission into the highly-competitive PA program in Atlanta.