Dear Friends and Colleagues:

When I began my appointment as dean of the WSU College of Pharmacy on August 1, 2010, I had—in words—a very simple directive from the provost’s office: “Fix research and graduate education in the College of Pharmacy.”

The logistics of how to achieve this, on the other hand, were not so simple. At the time, the college had a total of $550,000 in extramural funding, only four Ph.D. seeking students, and we were ranked about 60th nationally out of around 70 pharmacy programs with significant research and graduate education expectations (128 programs total). In 2010 the state of Washington was amidst a period of one of the largest cuts to government funding for higher education in history. WSU saw a 54% decrease in state funding from fiscal year 2009 to 2012.

The college was also facing some important initiatives that would need to be tackled very soon, including consolidating the college from two locations to one in Spokane, and preparing for its 2014 accreditation review.

Despite the challenges of this landscape, I saw great opportunity for the college and in 2010 made the commitment to WSU President Elson S. Floyd to do what was necessary to establish a top-10 pharmacy program by the year 2020. This goal has served as the beacon that guides every strategic decision I make as dean.

We implemented new student recruitment strategies including the partnership forged with the Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences. We also expanded the outreach function of our Alumni Relations and Advancement Office, and tapped into our invaluable alumni base to connect with students and serve as professional mentors.

During this same time period, the Washington state legislature made several key commitments to higher education in Spokane that allowed for the construction of the $78.6 million Pharmaceutical and Biomedical
The campus has since been renamed WSU Health Sciences Spokane to demonstrate WSU’s commitment to excellence in the health sciences and service to the state as Washington’s land-grant educational institution.

The new facilities allowed for the perfect opportunity to finalize the consolidation of the college to WSU Health Sciences Spokane in November of 2013, and we added 16 new faculty to our ranks that year. These scholars, clinicians, and educators added depth and breadth to a core group of faculty that for many years has been offering a professional program second to none.

We have seen measurable success. For fiscal year 2015, research funding grew to $7.01 million and the WSU College of Pharmacy is ranked 21 in the country according to QS World University Rankings (138 programs total). I believe it is accurate to say the College of Pharmacy has set itself up well to achieve its 2020 goals.

I completed my initial five-year contract in August of 2015. My appointment has been extended by Interim Provost Ron Mittelhammer and I will now go through the WSU administrative faculty review process (standard five-year review).

On reflection, it is clear that we have learned so much during our five year journey to improve the way we deliver our curriculum and assess our students. This has motivated us to create an “Institute for Pedagogical Transformation” through which we plan to share the road map that resulted as we developed and implemented our competency-based, active-learning model. We will be inviting our professional colleagues from other schools to participate in June 2016, programming which is designed to guide teams through an experiential learning process that will provide attendees with the evidence needed to advocate for institutionalizing pedagogical transformation, and a pedagogical plan designed to serve as a blueprint. While we will provide more details after the first of the year, please feel free to reach out to me directly should you want to reserve a spot for you and your team.

Best wishes to all during this holiday season,

Gary M. Pollack
Dean
Washington State University College of Pharmacy

Editor’s note: The next edition of the Dean’s Newsletter will be February 2016. Happy Holidays!
Increasing access to point-of-care screening for hepatitis C in community pharmacies

Washington residents in King, Snohomish and Pierce counties will have greater access to point-of-care screening for hepatitis C in community pharmacies beginning early next year, thanks to a new research study run by the Washington State University College of Pharmacy and funded by the Community Pharmacy Foundation. No appointment necessary.

The research team is looking for a minimum of 1,000 patients to get screened for hepatitis C antibodies over the 12-month study period. However, their service goal is to screen as many patients as possible using the point-of-care services offered at five Bartell Drugs locations in Seattle and surrounding areas.

“This study will give people a link to care where they may not have had one previously, and give us the opportunity to write a protocol that others can take and replicate,” said Julie Akers, who is a pharmacist, a clinical assistant professor at WSU, and the principal investigator heading up the study.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), hepatitis C is a blood-borne virus that infects the liver and becomes a long-term chronic illness for 70%-85% of people who become infected. The CDC recommends that anyone born during 1945-1965 be screened for hepatitis C, even if they do not meet any of the other risk factors. According to CDC data, people born during this time are five times more likely to be infected.

But many people within this demographic in Washington have not been tested, said Akers.

“We are not sure why people are not getting screened,” said Akers. According to the CDC over 3 million people in the US are infected with the hepatitis C virus with less than two thirds being diagnosed, she said.

The point-of-care hepatitis C service uses a simple finger-prick test, similar to the tests used to measure blood sugar, and detects hepatitis C antibodies, which will tell if a person has ever had hepatitis C. There is a certain percentage of people who contract hepatitis C and their immune system is able to overcome it, so even though they do not have the active virus in their system they will have the antibodies for it.

The patients who test positive for the hepatitis C antibodies will be referred to either their primary care provider or be connected with a list of providers who have expertise in hepatitis C, in order to confirm the virus with the full RNA test.

“The goal is by the time the patient leaves the pharmacy, they will have a follow-up appointment scheduled. We want a model that will keep costs down, but more importantly have an actual impact on the person’s individual outcome,” said Akers. “Each patient will participate in the study for approximately 30 days, including the initial in-person screening and a 30-day post-screening follow up call.”
The CDC fact sheet on hepatitis C lists it as a leading cause of liver cancer and the leading cause of liver transplants in the U.S.

“The medications available now have extremely high cure rates,” said Akers. “With early detection, we could prevent liver damage and substantial long-term health costs.”

Akers is partnering with the Washington Department of Health for marketing efforts as well as to identify providers for referral. “Partnering with the health department gave us access to the health systems that allows us to not just give people a basic screening, but to provide a quality service with linkage to care that can lead to an improvement in the health of individuals,” she said.

Robert Gish, a physician and internationally published hepatology expert, is another collaborator on the study. Gish previously published research on the point-of-care hepatitis C screening tool and several studies related to hepatitis C treatment. He will be providing content expertise as well as poster, presentation and manuscript writing assistance. As part of the study, Gish will also assist with the development of a continuing education course for pharmacists on hepatitis C, disease progression and available therapies.

“Community pharmacists can be a valuable resource when it comes to increasing access to viral hepatitis care, testing, education and linkage, that is needed in many communities,” said Gish.

The research team chose Bartell Drugs as their community pharmacy partner based on the company’s history in successfully implementing other pharmacy point-of-care programs and collaborative drug therapy agreements, which allow pharmacists to provide care for minor ailments with prescriptive authority.

Akers has had a passion for contributing to patient outcomes through community-pharmacy based services since she graduated with her pharmacy degree from Washington State University. “When we were trained to do patient assessments and immunizations, I knew that was the kind of pharmacist I wanted to be,” she said.

Before joining the Department of Pharmacotherapy at WSU in 2013, Akers was the retail pharmacies manager for the Everett Clinic in Everett, Washington. Prior to that she spent 11 years with Bartell Drugs, starting as a pharmacist and ultimately serving as a pharmacy district manager. Akers is a past president of the Washington State Pharmacy Association, and twice served as a delegate to the American Pharmacy Association (APhA) representing the state of Washington.
Two pharmacists join WSU teaching team in Yakima

College’s Doctor of Pharmacy program extension records successful launch

The Washington State University Doctor of Pharmacy program has hired two new clinical assistant professors as part of the WSU Doctor of Pharmacy program extension on the Pacific Northwest University (PNWU) of Health Sciences campus in Yakima, Washington. There are four additional WSU teaching faculty positions in Yakima planned over the next two years.

The program extension successfully launched this fall with an inaugural cohort of 30 student pharmacists.

Damianne Brand-Eubanks, Pharm.D.

Damianne Brand-Eubanks, Pharm.D. earned her Doctor of Pharmacy degree from Washington State University, completed a post-graduate residency at Yakima Memorial Hospital, and has been a practicing pharmacist in the Yakima Valley ever since.

“Damianne knows the needs of this community and can apply that to the preparation of our student pharmacists who are interested in practicing in rural areas or targeting underserved populations,” said Angela Stewart, who is the director of the WSU Doctor of Pharmacy program extension in Yakima.

Brand-Eubanks is a Washington certified pharmacy preceptor and holds additional certifications in CPR/AED, pharmaceutical compounding, emergency contraception, and immunization/vaccination distribution. Prior to working for WSU she spent six years working as a clinical pharmacist for Yakima Neighborhood Health Services, a small, rural community health clinic.

Brand-Eubanks joined the Experimental and Systems Pharmacology Section at the WSU College of Pharmacy in Yakima on the first of June. She teaches first-year student pharmacists in Integrated Pharmacology, Pharmaceutics, and Pharmacy Calculations, as well as Integrated Pharmacology II and Pharmaceutics II, including the lab, next spring.

“I am extremely excited about the integration of our newly implemented teaching and learning styles. I am also excited to work closely with pharmacy students through their foundational education years, since I primarily worked with fourth-year rotation students formerly,” said Brand-Eubanks.

Brand-Eubanks also plans to conduct research, which will focus on interprofessional experience perception, and expansion of experiential and collaborative opportunities for pharmacists and student pharmacists, she said.

“I am most interested in advancing the pharmacist’s role on the healthcare team, particularly with medication therapy management strategies and advancing the reach of collaborative practice agreements,” said Brand-Eubanks.
Christina Buchman, Pharm.D.

Buchman earned her Doctor of Pharmacy degree from the University of Montana Skaggs School of Pharmacy, and has completed two yearlong post-graduate residencies. Her first pharmacy residency specialized in pharmacy practice at Oregon State University’s Student Health Service Pharmacy in Corvallis, Oregon. Her second residency at the University of Montana in Missoula specialized in drug information, where she also served as a pharmacy preceptor.

“This combination of experience has left me with a great passion for teaching and promoting the importance and abilities of pharmacists in community and ambulatory settings,” Buchman said. “I really enjoy interacting with students at all levels, both in the classroom and in the pharmacy.”

Buchman is a licensed pharmacist in Washington, Oregon and Montana. She also holds certifications in basic life support, adult immunization, aseptic technique, and teaching.

Buchman joined the Department of Pharmacotherapy at the WSU College of Pharmacy in Yakima on July 16. This fall, she teaches first-year student pharmacists in the Communications Lab, Pharmacokinetics, and Health Care Systems, as well as teaching the Advanced Pharmaceutical Care Lab, Pharmacogenomics, and Pharmacotherapy next spring.

“Christina has experience lecturing in both traditional and active classrooms as well as teaching physical assessment in a lab class. These skills allowed her to really hit the ground running when classes started,” said Stewart.

“I like the hands-on approach that is so vital to lab classes, and am looking forward to bringing some of those techniques into other classes to enhance student learning,” said Buchman.

Extending access to pharmacy education

WSU has committed to Yakima’s transformative potential and recognized the need to improve access for rural pharmacy education and care. The WSU College of Pharmacy has a long history of being committed to preparing pharmacists not only to enter the practice of pharmacy today, but to lead the changes in the practice of pharmacy that are certain to come tomorrow. The initiative to extend the Pharm.D. program to Yakima supports the WSU land-grant mission to increase access to education, increase access to care across the state, and also supports the college’s pursuit of sustaining health though healthier people and communities.

PNWU provides the pharmacy program with cutting edge classrooms, and this spring marked the formal opening of a new pharmacy laboratory on the Yakima campus. The renovated space includes a licensed model pharmacy, three counseling suites for patient care simulations, a clean room for practicing on two laminar flow hoods, and a large central laboratory for compounding and parenterals labs.
Kimberly Paulson, a student pharmacist at Washington State University, was appointed to a two-year term on the Student Leadership Council (SLC) for the National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA). The WSU College of Pharmacy has sent eight students to serve in this national leadership role in the last seven years.

Paulson joins an elite group of WSU pharmacy student leaders, including two WSU students who served as president of the council.

“The goal of the NCPA Student Leadership Council is to support the development of future leaders in community pharmacy and to recognize student pharmacists who have a strong interest in entrepreneurship and pursuing a career in community pharmacy,” said Paulson. Over the next two years she will be representing NCPA student chapters in Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington.

“I get to travel to schools in my region, give lectures about the benefits of NCPA, and meet with student executive members to help give them ideas on how to improve their chapter,” she said.

“The SLC experience that I am most looking forward to is the NCPA steering committee meeting. I sit on the compounding steering committee and have found it an honor to be the only student pharmacist to sit on this board of influential pharmacists who are experts on this topic,” said Paulson. The committee addresses issues relating to the practice of pharmacy compounding, including the right of pharmacists to compound drugs, legal and legislative concerns, and guidance and education to enhance the practice of furnishing medications to patients with special needs.

Paulson is from the town of Rosalia, Washington. She completed her bachelor’s degree in biology at WSU and is currently in her third year of pharmacy school at WSU in Spokane.

Once she has obtained her Doctor of Pharmacy degree, Paulson plans to pursue a post-graduate residency specializing in community pharmacy in order to gain experience to further her goal of owning her own independent pharmacy.

“I know that NCPA has given me the experiences and tools to be able to do just this,” she said.

Past presidents of the NCPA Student Leadership Council include Jason Doss, class of 2009, and Andrew Helm, class of 2011. Others who served on the council include Manpreet Chahal, class of 2010; Patrick Tabon, class of 2012; Erik Nelson, class of 2013; Lisa Garza, class of 2014; and Patrick Stolz, class of 2016, who is a senior member on the council this year.
Publications

- Pharmaceutical Sciences Associate Professor Grant D. Trobridge and two co-authors published, “A novel gammaretroviral shuttle vector insertional mutagenesis screen identifies SHARPIN as a breast cancer metastasis gene and prognostic biomarker,” in the multidisciplinary, free-access journal Oncotarget on October 25, 2015. [doi: 10.18632/oncotarget.6232] [read abstract]
- Pharmaceutical Sciences Research Associate Arun K. Nalla (Trobridge lab), Grant Trobridge and three co-authors published, “Lentiviral vector-mediated insertional mutagenesis screen identifies genes that influence androgen independent prostate cancer progression and predict clinical outcome,” in the journal Molecular Carcinogenesis on October 29, 2015. [doi: 10.1002/mc.22425] [read abstract]
- Pharmacotherapy Research Associate and Specialty Resident in Drug Information Ross J. Bindler and Pharmacotherapy Professor and Associate Dean for Professional and Continuing Education Danial E. Baker published, “Ivabradine,” in the journal Hospital Pharmacy 2015;50(9):806-817.
- Danial Baker and one co-author published, “Drug evaluation – sacubitril/valsartan (Entresto): updated evaluation,” in Wolters Kluwer Health’s The Formulary Monograph Service (FMS) in October 2015. Wolters Kluwer Health is a drug and health information publisher, the FMS is a resource used in the formulary decision making process for hospitals and managed care systems on recently released and investigational drugs.
- Pharmaceutical Sciences Assistant Professor Zhenjia Wang and three co-authors published, “Neutrophil-mediated delivery of therapeutic nanoparticles across blood vessel barrier for treatment of inflammation and infection,” in the October 30, 2015, issue of ACS Nano online. [read article]
- Pharmaceutical Sciences Postdoctoral Research Associate De Cheng (Zhu lab), Pharmaceutical Sciences Clinical Associate Professor Shuwen Wang, Pharmaceutical Sciences Professor Jiyue Zhu, and three co-authors published, “Human telomerase reverse transcriptase (hTERT) transcription requires Sp1/Sp3 binding to the promoter and a permissive chromatin environment,” in the Journal of Biological Chemistry. [read article]

Presentations

- Pharmacotherapy Clinical Associate Professor Brenda S. Bray, Pharmacotherapy Clinical Associate Professor Lisa J. Woodard and one co-author presented, “Preparing teams for collaborative practice using a series of primary care standardized patient simulations,” at Collaborating Across Boarders V in Roanoke, Virginia, on September 30, 2015. The conference brings groups together from the United States and Canada around the key themes of interprofessional education and practice.
- Lisa Woodard and Brenda Bray presented, “Death over dinner workshop,” at the Collaborating Across Boarders V conference on October 1, 2015.
- Brenda Bray, Lisa Woodard and four co-authors presented, “Health care team challenge workshop,” at Collaborating Across Boarders V on October 1, 2015.
- Pharmacotherapy Associate Professor Joshua J. Neumiller served as co-chair and presenting faculty for the workshop, “Team-based approaches to help older adults with Type 2 diabetes achieve individualized glycemic goals,” held at the 2015 American Society of Consultant Pharmacists (ASCP) Annual Meeting and Exhibition on October 30, 2015, in Las Vegas, Nevada.
- Joshua Neumiller, Pharmacotherapy Clinical Professor and Associate Dean for Professional Education Brian J. Gates, and eight others co-authored the poster, “Effect of a medical management intervention on acute care utilization after hospitalization in CKD,” presented on November 5, 2015, at the American Society of Nephrology (ASN) Kidney Week in San Diego, California.
- Pharmaceutical Sciences Research Associate Anil K. Singh (Ahmed lab) presented, “Epigallocatechin-3-Gallate (EGCG) facilitates TAK1 nuclear translocation and its interaction with p300 to inhibit histone acetylation in human RA synovial fibroblasts,” at the annual meeting of the American College of Rheumatology 2015 in San Francisco, California, on November 7-11, 2015. Research co-authors included Pharmaceutical Sciences Associate Professor Salah-uddin Ahmed.
- Pharmaceutical Sciences Research Associate Nahid Akhtar (Ahmed lab) presented, “Regulation of ASK1 expression by microRNA-17 and their correlation with rheumatoid arthritis pathogenesis,” at the annual meeting of the American College of Rheumatology 2015. Research co-authors included Pharmaceutical Sciences Associate Professor Salah-uddin Ahmed.
- Nahid Akhtar presented, “Characterization of different phosphorylation sites of Mcl-1 in human rheumatoid arthritis synovial fibroblasts and their correlation with RA pathogenesis,” at the annual meeting of the American College of Rheumatology 2015. Research co-authors included Salah-uddin Ahmed.
- Pharmaceutical Sciences Postdoctoral Research Associate Sadiq Umar (Ahmed lab) presented, “Pentagalloyl glucose (PGG) exhibits anti-rheumatic activity in human RA synovial fibroblasts and rat adjuvant-induced arthritis,” at the annual meeting of the American College of Rheumatology 2015. Research co-authors included Salah-uddin Ahmed.

Service

- Salah-uddin Ahmed served as an expert reviewer for the Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (AMS) study section meeting at the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin (NIAMS) institute of the NIH held on October 29-30 in Rockville, Maryland.
- Salah-uddin Ahmed served as an expert reviewer for the Musculoskeletal, Oral and Skin Sciences (MOSS) integrated review group at the NIAMS institute of the NIH on November 6, 2015.
**STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

**Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) students**
- **Sabrina Fechtner** (Ahmed lab, pharmaceutical sciences) co-authored with **Sadiq Umar, Salah-uddin Ahmed** and one other the abstract, “Pentagalloyl glucose (PGG) exhibits anti-rheumatic activity in human RA synovial fibroblasts and rat adjuvant-induced arthritis,” presented at the annual meeting of the American College of Rheumatology 2015.
- **Solomon Agere** (Ahmed lab, pharmaceutical sciences) presented, “Rantes/CCL5 selectively induces MMP-1 and MMP-13 production in rheumatoid arthritis synovial fibroblasts via PKC-δ and JNK pathways,” at the annual meeting of the American College of Rheumatology 2015. Research co-authors included **Nahid Akhtar** and **Salah-uddin Ahmed**.
- **Solomon Agere** received a certificate of recognition at the Rheumatology Research Foundation Awards and Grants Luncheon held on November 9, 2015, in San Francisco, California. Solomon is the recipient of ACR/REF Health Professional Research Preceptorship.
- **Victor Bii** and **Dustin Rae** (Trobridge lab, pharmaceutical sciences) with faculty co-author **Grant Trobridge** published, “A novel gammaretroviral shuttle vector insertional mutagenesis screen identifies SHARPIN as a breast cancer metastasis gene and prognostic biomarker,” in the multidisciplinary, free-access journal Oncotarget on October 25, 2015. [doi: 10.18632/oncotarget.6232] [read abstract](http://oncotarget.com)

**Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D.) students**
- **Stephanie Lind** received the Spokane Pharmacy Association’s Student Pharmacist of the Year award.
- **Juliet Nguyen** was elected to serve a one-year term as regional member at large for APhA-ASP region seven.
- The WSU student NCPA chapter received the Most Improved Chapter Award at the national NCPA 2015 Annual Convention in Washington, D.C., October 10-14, 2015.

**Coming Events**

- **December 4, 2015**  
  **Shannon Kozlovich** (Lazarus lab, pharmaceutical sciences) will present, “Stereospecific phase II metabolism of the potent tobacco carcinogen, NNAL,” as part of the WSU College of Pharmacy Graduate Research Seminar, at 12:10 p.m. in Walgreens Auditorium (PBS 101).
- **December 6-10, 2015**  
  Over 20 WSU College of Pharmacy affiliated post-graduate pharmacy residents will present research project posters at the 50th ASHP Midyear Clinical Meeting and Exhibition, in New Orleans, Louisiana.
- **December 11, 2015**  
  **Yili Zhong** (Pollack lab, experimental and systems pharmacology) will present as part of the WSU College of Pharmacy Graduate Research Seminar, at 12:10 p.m. in Walgreens Auditorium (PBS 101).
JOBS

• Assistant Professor
Pharmacotherapy, Spokane, Washington

• Clinical Assistant Professor
Pharmaceutical Sciences, Yakima, Washington