

CougarRx News

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November 2021

MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

As we head into the holiday season, I'm reminded of the many things I am grateful for this season. We were still without a vaccine at this time last year. Just weeks away from the FDA approving the first COVID-19 vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna, the country waited in great anticipation for the beginning of the end of the pandemic. In just one year, thanks to quick action by our faculty, staff, students, and community of pharmacists, over 60% of Washingtonians have been vaccinated. This accomplishment was only made possible by you and the community we have cultivated together. Faculty worked tirelessly to train students in vaccine certification, while many of us, faculty and students alike, volunteered hundreds of hours to set up mass vaccination sites and administer vaccines.



While we certainly are not out of the woods with this pandemic, we can celebrate some wins. The annual meeting (in person!) of the Washington State Pharmacy Association was a reminder of what we can achieve when we work together. Many of our faculty, alums, and Deans Advisory Council members received awards for their continued commitment to the profession and protecting the health of the communities we serve. Congratulations to long-time Dean's Advisory Council members **Merrie Kay Alzola** and **Leon Alzola** for individually receiving the coveted Bowl of Hygeia award. I was very proud to see several of our colleagues give live talks. **Chris Greer**, class of 1991, just stepped down as President of WSPA but has another year to serve as past-president. Chris is one of those folks who just makes everyone around him better. After a long year of virtual meetings, it was a joy to finally see people in person again.

I'm also reminded of the excellence and prestige that our faculty bring to the college and university with their research and knowledge. Congratulations **Bhagwat Prasad**, **John White**, **Zhenjia Wang**, and **Mary Paine** for making the list of highly cited authors in 2020. Elsevier compiled a database of over 100,000 top scientists and ranked them in several areas beyond a simple number of citations. What a great honor it is to call them my colleagues.

Finally, while November is generally associated with the Thanksgiving holiday, it is also the same month we celebrate first-generation students. November 8 was the annual National First-Generation College Celebration Day to honor the anniversary of the signing of the Higher Education Act of 1965. The Higher Education Act emerged out of President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty. The initiative was intended to level a playing field that was weighed against Americans from minority and low-income backgrounds. As a land-grant university, our mission is to serve the sons and daughters of toil. I thank all the donors who continue to help us serve our mission to educate first-generation students and those from underserved communities.

Thank you all for your pursuit of excellence, generosity, and camaraderie. With deep appreciation for all that you do for the college, university, and profession.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Leid". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mark Leid, Professor and Dean
WSU College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences

Top Stories

Pharmacy students to be trained in Mental Health First Aid

In any given year, approximately one in five American adults is living with a mental illness. A [recent survey published by the CDC](#) found 40% of adults surveyed in the U.S. experienced adverse mental or behavioral health conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic, suggesting a critical need for people trained to intervene in a mental health crisis.

With [approximately 90%](#) of Americans living within five miles of a pharmacy, pharmacists are one of the most accessible health care providers and uniquely positioned to aid patients living with mental health conditions. The Washington State University College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences is making sure its students are prepared to do so.

The college was one of seven programs across the nation recently chosen by the [National Association of Chain Drug Stores \(NACDS\) Foundation](#) for their annual scholarship program which funds innovative and diverse educational programs which aim to advance patient care and public health. The \$20,000 award will be used to incorporate [Mental Health First Aid \(MHFA\) training](#) into existing required courses at the college to prepare student pharmacists to identify and support individuals who are experiencing mental health challenges.

“Our students will be health care providers who may be the first point of contact for patients who are struggling. Having knowledge and tools to intervene will help them care for individuals experiencing a mental health crisis,” said Director for the Center for Pharmacy Practice Research and Pharmacotherapy Associate Professor Kimberly McKeirnan.

McKeirnan is part of the project team responsible for this training alongside fellow faculty members Associate Dean for Professional Education and Pharmacotherapy Professor Jennifer Robinson, Pharmacotherapy Assistant Professor Katie MacCamy and Pharmacotherapy Professor Megan Willson.

The new material will expand upon an existing MHFA elective at the college created by Robinson with the help of then-pharmacy-student Miguel Toscano ('18). Since its start, the elective course has been popular among students and has consistently had a long waiting list to enroll. With this grant funding, the college will be able to provide the MHFA training to all pharmacy students. The training will teach students how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illnesses in future patients while providing students with the tools needed to support themselves and their peers.

“This is a great program because it will teach our students about how to help others going through a mental health crisis but also helps participants reflect on their own mental health and provides tools for addressing problems,” explained McKeirnan.

A [2018 large-scale survey of college age students](#) found one in four respondents had been diagnosed with a mental health disorder and over a 12-month period 24.3% of respondents experienced suicidal ideation. A survey within the college a few years ago found 40% of student pharmacists planned to reach out and help someone they knew due to concerns about suicide after learning about suicide prevention in class.

“When we realized what a huge issue this is, not just nationally but here at WSU, we started applying for grants to bring this training to our students,” said McKeirnan.

The training covers a wide range of mental health concerns from recognizing risk factors and warning signs to an action plan which prepares students to intervene in situations such as when someone around them is experiencing panic attacks or suicidal thoughts.

“I am excited to get to work and invest this money in building a stronger and more resilient community,” said Robinson.



Pharmacochemistry Assistant Professor Christina Buchman trains Yakima pharmacy students in suicide awareness in the fall of 2019.



Dr. Sara Dumit at WSU Pullman Campus Commencement Ceremony (2018)

CPPS alum research helps Homeland Security in event of nuclear attack

WSU College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences alumna, Dr. Sara Dumit, was invited to attend the 70th Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting this past summer, which convenes in Lindau, Germany. This annual meeting gives the next generation of leading scientists in the world to discuss global issues ranging from climate change to genome editing with Nobel Laureates. She is among the leading theorists working on the modeling of plutonium decorporation and the development of chelation models. These models help to better understand the movement of plutonium inside the human body during chelation therapy, otherwise known as the process of binding to heavy metals which is then removed from the body.

Dumit is currently a health physicist at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) and a Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting Alumna (2021). She earned her PhD in Pharmaceutical Sciences from Washington State University in 2018. She conducted research at the [United States Transuranium and Uranium Registries \(USTUR\)](#) at WSU College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences (CPPS). Her postdoctoral research work was completed at LANL's Internal Dosimetry Group – Radiation Protection Division.

Her research in internal dosimetry (health physics field), focuses on the strategically important field of actinide biokinetics, particularly where these biokinetics are affected by chelation therapy. Her areas of expertise include modeling of plutonium decorporation, development of chelation models, and medical countermeasures after actinide intakes (such as chelation therapy with a drug known as 'DTPA').

How does plutonium get inside the human body and what is chelation therapy?

Plutonium intake may occur mainly via inhalation and/or wound, which could happen either accidentally (e.g. an incident at a nuclear defense facility) or maliciously (e.g. a terrorist event).

Chelation therapy (with either drug agents Ca-DTPA or Zn-DTPA) is known to increase the rate of excretion of plutonium from the body (decorporation) by forming a stable complex (or a 'chelate') with plutonium in vivo. The goal of chelation therapy is, therefore, to eliminate plutonium and decrease the internal radiation dose inside the body. Both drug agents, Ca-DTPA and Zn-DTPA, have been approved by the US Food and Drug Administration to treat individuals with suspected or known significant internal exposure to plutonium.

Why is your research important?

My research work is important mostly for Homeland Security reasons, as plutonium is an undesirable element for people to have incorporated in their bodies, whether accidentally or maliciously. A chelation model can help us to better understand and predict the movement of plutonium, DTPA drug, and plutonium complexed (or 'chelated') with DTPA inside the body—including the enhanced excretion rate of plutonium during chelation therapy. Therefore, such a model can help researchers (internal dosimetrists) to better evaluate and assess the magnitude of the internal radiation dose delivered to organs and tissues in a timely manner.



Dr. Sara Dumit at the official online photo booth for the 70th Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting (2021)

How do you hope your research will one day contribute to the public?

I hope my research will contribute to the development of a consensus chelation model—for the advancement and refinement of internal radiation dose assessment, particularly in case of nuclear emergencies.

A standard/consensus chelation model may assist health physicists and medical staff in responding to a nuclear incident involving actinides, such as plutonium. The model may allow radiation safety professionals (especially internal dosimetrists) and physicians to make an early radiation dose estimate, refine the final radiation dose assessment, make an informative decision on the chelation therapy planning, and determine when the efficacy of chelation therapy declines.

How did you become interested in this field of study?

I became interested in this field of study (known as Health Physics or Radiation Protection) after visiting Washington State University's USTUR research facility in Richland, Washington. The USTUR Director, Dr. Sergei Tolmachev, and his staff provided me with a fascinating academic tour of their laboratory and also with lectures about their research portfolio, at their main office. I was very impressed with the uniqueness of the research and data available.

I learned that the USTUR is the only tissue repository that collects and preserves post-mortem tissue samples from workers in the US nuclear weapons complex. I was eager to learn more about the unique data they have available for research purposes, such as data from former nuclear workers who had plutonium intakes and were treated with chelation therapy. After some highly interesting discussions, Dr. Tolmachev invited me to join the USTUR for my PhD research work—which I wholeheartedly accepted in the fall semester of 2015.

Why did you choose WSU CPPS to do your PhD?

I chose WSU CPPS because of the opportunity to learn from world-renowned experts, the variety of areas of research available, the top-notch laboratory facilities and technology available, and also because of the multi-disciplinary and translational approaches that faculty use in the PhD program.

How has your education from WSU CPPS contributed to your success in the profession?

My journey at WSU CPPS positively contributed to my success in interdisciplinary research, and consequently in my current profession. During my first year as a PhD student, I participated in laboratory rotations, where I could explore different research areas. These experiences opened up my mind to a variety of disciplines and how they could be interconnected to solve a scientific research problem. Such opportunities shaped me into a quick, adaptive, open-minded, and inquisitive learner.



USTUR staff group photo (from left to right): George Tabatadze, Margo Bedell, Stacey McComish, Sergei Tolmachev, Florencio Martinez, Maia Avtandilashvili, Sara Dumit, and Elizabeth Thomas at WSU Tri-Cities Campus (2016).



WSU CPPS Graduate Committee group photo (from left to right): Sayed Daoud, Kay Meier, Sergei Tolmachev, Sara Dumit, Jeannie Padowski, and Daniel Strom at WSU Spokane Campus (2018).

Preceptors recognized for impact on next generation of Cougar pharmacists

Through teaching and mentorship, preceptors guide pharmacy students as they work with patients in a variety of health care settings. These experiences are pivotal in determining a pharmacy student's future career. The WSU College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences network of pharmacy educators extends across the state of Washington and beyond, with 250 sites and more than 400 annual volunteer preceptors and faculty members. Together, they form the backbone of WSU student pharmacists' introductory pharmacy practice experiences (IPPE) and advanced pharmacy practice experiences (APPE).

To recognize the importance of preceptors, every year the college asks pharmacy students to nominate preceptors who go above and beyond in their education of the next generation of Cougar pharmacists for the college's annual Preceptor of the Year award. This year, the college extended the award criteria to allow students to nominate not only Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experience (APPE) preceptors but Introductory Pharmacy Practice Experience (IPPE) preceptors as well. The response was overwhelming with students submitting more than 387 nominations for over 183 individual IPPE and APPE preceptors. Of those many outstanding nominations, five preceptors were selected for the award.

Here's what some of their nominations had to say:



Tyler Fischback, APPE

Confluence Health- Central Washington Hospital
Wenatchee, Washington

"I learned more in these six weeks than I would in a classroom. I see Dr. Fischback as a strong mentor for me even when I complete this rotation. I cannot thank him enough for pushing me to strive to be a better pharmacist and person in life."



Penny Melder, APPE

Jonathan M. Wainwright VA Medical Center
Lewiston, Idaho

"Penny is one of the most knowledgeable pharmacists I have ever had the opportunity to work with and learn from. She truly cares about the patients and wants to see her students succeed in becoming pharmacists... She pushes you to be your absolute best and to try your best. There are days that can be tough, but in the end, you walk away feeling like you gained so much in such a short period of time."



Vikash Patel, APPE

Genoa Healthcare: Sound Mental Health Capitol Hill
Seattle, Washington

"I have never had a rotation where I learned so much. This preceptor showed me teamwork, communication, patient care, and the true meaning of working in a pharmacy. You can tell he fights for the patients' voices to be heard and wants the best for his patients."



Taylor Bertsch, IPPE

Washington State University
Spokane, Washington

"Dr. Bertch is a true professional, he cares a lot about his students. Dr. Bertsch has always been helpful, even during stressful times he would respond soon as possible. Dr. Bertsch is gifted with the art of teaching, he's able to simplify the most complex kinetics concepts and explain them in a way that makes sense for everyone."



Garett Manion, IPPE

Walgreens
Spokane, Washington

“Garett possess all of the traits that a strong preceptor has: patience, understanding, knowledge, and kindness. One of the most important things he has showed that positively impacted my experience was his confidence in me.”

A NOTE FROM JULIE AKERS

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

After so many virtual meetings and conferences, it was so rewarding to attend the 2021 Washington State Pharmacy Association (WSPA) Annual Meeting in person at the end of October! I would like to thank WSPA leadership and staff for putting practices in place which allowed for safe interactions, including requiring those in attendance be vaccinated, masks worn inside when not eating, and allowing each registrant to determine their level of comfort with color-coded ribbons (although I think credit for the ribbon idea goes to our own Merrie Kay Alzola). As I reflect on my experience at the conference, it reminds me of just how important networking and collaboration are.



The past 19 months has been trying for everyone. As a profession we have survived because of our strong networks, leaning on one another when we are afraid of falling, picking one another back up when we do fall, and providing encouragement to never give up. Those in attendance at the conference who listened to incoming WSPA President Ryan Oftebro’s speech likely didn’t have a dry eye by the end of it. While some of you may tease me for quoting someone from the “other” school in my message, I find his words to be exactly what we all needed to hear. And his dad is a legend in the Cougar family, so I am sure there is a little crimson in there somewhere! As Ryan talked about the pandemic, he recognized the pain but emphasized the wins.

“It’s been brutal. However, this experience has not been without its gifts as well. The pandemic has been a great teacher. It has forced all of us to learn to quickly adapt to a rapidly changing environment. We have had to figure out how to interact with our patients, and each other, in a whole new way.” He goes on to say, “We have done all these things, and it has been amazing. But there has been a cost. We are **TIRED**. We are **BURNED OUT**. We were already a profession constantly asked to do more with less. The pandemic has added exponential pressure. Every day we show up and give all that we have. Most of us did not have the ability to work remote. Instead, we had to face the challenges of serving the public while doing everything we could to keep ourselves, our teammates, and our families safe and healthy. **For many, the burden on mental health and morale has been extreme. We are spent.** Yet we keep showing up.”

Ryan continues with examples of colleagues stepping up to help one another, using the networks they have developed over the years. He mentions sharing knowledge through continuing education and educational offerings, advocating for our patients and profession through legislative and regulatory affairs, and supporting one another through mentorship, leadership, and camaraderie. He ended his speech with the following statement: “we need to keep showing up for each other.”

When people ask me why I am active in state, national, and international associations, why networking is so important to me, and why truly authentic relationships with those surrounding us is vital, I can now reference Ryan Oftebro’s speech. It sums it up eloquently. And the fact that this Cougar is quoting a Husky goes to show that we are truly One Pharmacy. Leave the competition to sports. Our profession is so much stronger when we collaborate and work together toward a common goal, caring for our patients.

It is also a time of celebration. Look through the long list of 2021 WSPA award winners and inaugural fellows. It is great to see so many names who are members of the CougaRx Nation. All of you, my network, make me proud every day to be a pharmacist, a Coug pharmacist, and your colleague. Each of you makes me a better person and I am so thankful for you!

With that, my next message will be in December after the Thanksgiving holiday and Apple Cup. Wishing you all a joyous time with family and friends and (sorry Ryan if you are reading this) a Coug victory where it matters...on the football field!

With my best and, as always, Go Cougs!



Julie Akers, Associate Dean of External Relations
WSU College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences

Spotlight on Success

A new path for future pharmacy students in Pullman

Washington State University (WSU) Honors College students who are interested in working in the growing health care industry and protecting the health of the communities they serve can now do so through the WSU Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) program.

Thanks to a new agreement between the two colleges, Honors College students admitted to the College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences (CPPS) during their sophomore or junior year will be able to use PharmD courses to complete their bachelor's degree electives while in the first year of their pharmacy education. This means completing the two programs will take seven years instead of the traditional eight. Students will also be able to work with a CPPS mentor to complete their honors thesis. Honors College students admitted into PharmD program during their junior or senior year can still complete their bachelor's degree in Pullman.

Honors College students interested in pursuing their PharmD have two options for applying to the pharmacy program. Those who know in advance that pharmacy is the right career path for them can apply through the college's [Save-a-Seat](#) program by the end of their sophomore year. Save-a-Seat is an early assurance program for students to fast-track their career in pharmacy. Admission to the Save-a-Seat program secures a spot in the WSU Doctor of Pharmacy program so students can focus on preparing for their future instead of competing for admissions. Honors College students admitted to the pharmacy program through Save-a-Seat will work with the Honors College to identify coursework meeting prerequisites for PharmD admission while receiving additional guidance from CPPS academic advisors. Honors College students who need more time to decide whether or not pharmacy is the right career path for them can apply through the [normal admissions process](#) during their junior or senior year.

“This agreement creates an exciting pathway for students in the Honors College to enter the pharmacy profession and ultimately serve the citizens of the state of Washington. Student pharmacists in CPPS will be exposed to all areas of innovative pharmacy practice, including our increasing emphasis on serving underserved populations in rural Washington state” said CPPS Dean Mark Leid who met with Honors College Dean M. Grant Norton to formalize the new pathway in October.



College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences Dean Mark Leid, front left, and Honors College Dean M. Grant Norton, front right, were joined by Honors College students for a signing ceremony October 11.

WSU faculty, alumni recognized at WSPA Annual Meeting

It is always a time to celebrate when any member of our Cougar community is recognized for their commitment to the profession. This year the [Washington State Pharmacy Association \(WSPA\)](#) honored several Coug pharmacists on October 30 for their contributions to the profession. Congratulations to the following College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences alumni and faculty.



WSU faculty and alumni at the 2021 WSPA Annual Meeting

Washington State Pharmacist of the Year

Nick Bruck ('04) is a huge supporter of public health and has been unwavering in his response to public health emergencies in Spokane. Over the last year, he led vaccination efforts in eastern Washington and personally drove to remote locations to administer vaccines in rural communities.

This year WSPA has chosen Bruck as the Washington State Pharmacist of the Year, an award which recognizes a pharmacist who possesses qualities of excellence in routine practice and association activities, is an exemplary role model, and who has contributed service and skill to the WSPA during the past year.

Rodney D. Shafer Award

Linda Garrelts MacLean ('78) has been a leader in the pharmacy profession for over forty years, passionately advocating for the profession and constantly working to improve the ways pharmacists care for patients. Recently retired, MacLean continues to serve the college as a professor emeritus and remains a mentor and inspiration to all those around her.

In recognition of all she has accomplished over the course of her career, this year MacLean was chosen by WSPA for the Rodney D. Shafer Achievement Award. The award honors pioneering and sustaining contributions to the profession of pharmacy.

Distinguished Leadership Service Award

Angela Stewart encourages her students and peers to become leaders in the pharmacy profession. Stewart works with those she mentors to find their strengths, recognize areas of opportunity, and strive to reach their goals. In addition to her roles as pharmacotherapy professor and associate dean for the Washington State University (WSU) Doctor of Pharmacy Yakima extension she takes part in numerous professional and community organizations and currently serves as the Director for the Yakima Valley Interprofessional Practice and Education Collaborative. Currently, Stewart is also working with WSPA, University of Washington, and her WSU peers to create an interprofessional rural health track focusing on behavioral health to increase access to health care for rural communities.

Stewart was selected for the WSPA Distinguished Leadership Service Award in recognition of her instrumental contributions to the development and growth of the profession, and demonstration of a high level of influence and direction in the workplace, community and the profession.

Bowl of Hygeia

Since its inception in 1958, the [Bowl of Hygeia](#) has become one of the highest honors a pharmacist can receive. The national award recognizes pharmacists who possess outstanding records of civic leadership and take active roles in their communities.

This year, two Washington pharmacists were chosen for the Bowl of Hygeia. Leon ('91) and Merrie Kay ('93) Alzola. Leon and Merrie Kay met while pharmacy students at WSU and have shared a passion for pharmacy and each other ever since. Both as a team and individually they are devoted supporters of pharmacy education and the advancement of the profession in Washington state.

In addition to her role as a Senior Employer Account Executive with Novo Nordisk, Merrie Kay Alzola serves as chair of the WSU CPPS Deans Advisory Council and is the Pharmacist Director for Clark College Pharmacy Technician Program. She has also served on the boards of numerous professional and community organizations and provides invaluable mentorship and support to pharmacy students and new graduates.

Leon Alzola, National Director of Kroger Health West, gives generously of his time volunteering for a variety of community and professional organizations. In addition, he works with both Washington state pharmacy schools to help shape pharmacy education in the state. Leon serves as a board member for the WSU CPPS Dean's Advisory Council and the Chair of the Executive Advisory Board for the University of Washington School of Pharmacy.

Excellence in Innovation Award

When a patient walks into Othello Station Pharmacy in the southside of Seattle they find not only pharmacy, but a community center. The pharmacy owned by Ahmed Ali ('08), serves the predominantly East African and Somali community in Rainier Valley and has become a place for patients to ask questions, seek translations of medical communications, and be directed to the help they need.

To further serve the community, Ali established the Somali Health Board to address health disparities disproportionately affecting the Somali population in King County. In addition to supporting wellness programs, advocacy, and community-based research, the nonprofit has been integral in COVID-19 vaccination efforts and education. Ali has posted videos of himself receiving the vaccine and hosted webinars on how the pandemic has impacted the Somali and immigrant community.

For these reasons and more, Ali was selected by WSPA for the Excellence in Innovation Award, a national award which recognizes pharmacists who use innovative pharmacy practice to improve patient care and outcomes.

WSPA Fellow Award

For the 2021 awards ceremony, the organization also introduced the inaugural WSPA Fellow Award in recognition of pharmacy professionals who have shown outstanding service to WSPA and the pharmacy profession through advocacy, community engagement, and advancement of the profession.

WSU alumni and faculty members who received the award:

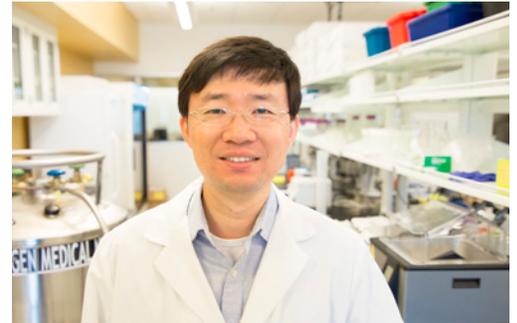
- Andy Stergatchis ('75)
- Angela Stewart, pharmacotherapy professor and associate dean for the WSU Doctor of Pharmacy Yakima extension
- Bill Fasset, professor emeritus and former dean
- Chris Greer ('91)
- Chuck Paulsen ('84)
- Colleen Terriff ('96)
- Cristina DuVall ('07)
- Holly Whitcomb Henry ('78)
- John Oftebro ('65)
- Julie Akers ('00), pharmacotherapy associate professor and associate dean for external relations
- Kirk Heinz ('86)
- Leon Alzola ('91)
- Linda Garrelts MacLean ('78), professor emeritus
- Merrie Kay Alzola ('93)
- Nanci Murphy ('77)
- Roger Woolf ('83)

- Senator Linda Evans Parlette ('68)
- Steve Riddle ('84)
- Sue Merk ('76)
- Teri Ferreira ('91)
- Terri Levien ('90), pharmacotherapy professor and director of quality assurance improvement and accreditation preparation

Research Week celebrates outstanding faculty and staff systemwide

Pharmaceutical Sciences Assistant Professor Boyang (Jason) Wu received the Pacesetter Award: Life and Health Sciences for his research on prostate cancer during the Washington State University Research Week Awards Ceremony on October 15, 2021.

Read more from the WSU Insider at bit.ly/3oDhBzj



PHILANTHROPY FOCUS

A new effort has been launched to raise funds to promote rural health initiatives at the college. The Pharmacy Rural Health Challenge, led by former dean and professor emeritus Bill Fassett, professor emeritus Linda Garrelts MacLean ('78), and alumnus John Oftebro ('65), encourages alumni and friends to get on board with immunizations and help support our student pharmacists to take immunization fairs on the road, particularly to rural parts of the state where the need is greatest. Funds will be used to provide training for students, purchase immunization supplies, and pay for transportation expenses incurred by our students.

After seeing the level of negative response to the COVID-19 vaccine, Fassett decided to take action to show solidarity with the college, the students, and pharmacists who have been on the frontlines of the pandemic since early 2020. Bill, Linda and John are getting commitments from several donors at \$1,000 each. If you would like to join this effort, you can donate to the [Dean's Excellence Fund](https://pharmacy.wsu.edu/give) at pharmacy.wsu.edu/give and add a notation that your gift is for the Public Health Challenge. Please reach out to Bill Fassett (b.fassett@comcast.net), Linda Garrelts MacLean (lmaclean@wsu.edu) or John Oftebro (john.oftebro@comcast.net) for more information.



WSU pharmacy students receiving vaccination training and certification in the fall of 2021.

Alumni News

Jacqueline Eide, class of 2009, recently completed the purchase of an independent pharmacy in Goldendale, Washington, and said she is, “absolutely loving” the experience of owning an independent pharmacy and living in rural Washington. She was formerly with Bartell Drugs and lived in Marysville-Lake Stevens area.

Sad News: **Nancy Ogana**, class of 2016, passed away in her sleep last month at her home in Tucson, Arizona. A funeral was held on October 30 in Tucson. Her classmate **Victor Bii** has been in touch with the family and can be reached at victor.bii@mvsu.edu for more information.

Timothy Maynard, class of 2007, has left his position at The Albertsons Companies to join the tech sector. He recently joined Indeed.com as their Director of Global Product Commercialization. Congratulations, Tim!

Congratulations to **Jennifer (Czapinski) Miller**, class of 2015, and her husband Jon, on the birth of their son, Kaiden Robert Miller on September 15, 2021, at 10:54 p.m. Baby Kaiden was 7 lbs. 15 oz. and 20.5 inches. Jennifer Miller is also an assistant professor at the Washington State College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences in the pharmacotherapy department.

Want to be listed in our alumni updates? Send us your career information or let us know what you’ve been up to at pharmacy.gocougs@wsu.edu!



Other News

Celebrating first-gen Cougs: WSU Spokane

In honor of National First-Generation Day November 8, WSU celebrated first-gen students and staff including pharmacy student Selomie Habtemichael and Pharmaceutical Sciences Graduate Program Coordinator Christina Brelia.

[Read more from the WSU Insider](#)

Women in pharmacy: remembering our past, committing to our present and investing in our future

Hear words of wisdom from women pharmacy leaders (including class of 2023 WSU student pharmacist Kennedy Erickson) as they discuss topics related to the history of pharmacy, professional development, and the future of pharmacy.

[Watch the virtual panel](#)

New initiatives increase pronoun visibility at WSU

New initiatives at WSU will allow students to include their pronouns on class rosters and CougarCards.

[Read more from the WSU Insider](#)

Grant funds new clinic by and for Indigenous people

WSU Spokane’s Native American Health Sciences program is creating the nation’s first Indigenous-developed and instructed clinical simulation space to eliminate health disparities and unintended negative communication among Indigenous communities.

[Read more from the Daily Evergreen](#)

Faculty Scholarship

PUBLICATIONS

Pharmaceutical Sciences Assistant Professor **Travis T. Denton** and three co-authors published "[The metabolic importance of the overlooked asparaginase II pathway](#)," in *Analytical Biochemistry*, a peer-reviewed journal by Elsevier.

Travis Denton and 4-co-authors published, "[The metabolic importance of the glutaminase II pathway in normal and cancerous cells](#)," in *Analytical Biochemistry*, a peer-reviewed journal by Elsevier.

Pharmacotherapy Associate Professor and Director for the Center for Pharmacy Practice Research **Kimberly McKeirnan** and ten co-authors published, "[Advancing a global pharmacy support workforce through a global strategic platform](#)," in the *Journal of Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy* in October 2021.

Kim McKeirnan and three co-authors published, "[Standard-setting for continuing education assessment of select new competencies](#)," in the *Journal of Continuing Education in the Health Professions* in October 2021.

Kim McKeirnan, Pharmacotherapy Assistant Professor **Cheyenne Frazier**, Pharmacotherapy Professor **Brian Gates**, and one co-author published, "[Teaching transgender patient care to student pharmacists](#)," in *Currents in Pharmacy Teaching and Learning Journal* in October 2021.

Pharmacotherapy Professor **Megan Willson**, **Kim McKeirnan**, Pharmacotherapy Assistant Professor (Yakima) **Christina Buchman**, and co-authors published, "[Comparing trained student peers versus paid actors as standardized patients for simulated patient prescription counseling](#)," in *Exploratory Research in Clinical and Social Pharmacy* in December 2021.

Connor Smith (PharmD, class of 2021) and Allen I. White Distinguished Associate Professor of Pharmacotherapy **Joshua Neumiller** published, "[Nonalcoholic fatty liver disease primer for pharmacists](#)," in *U.S. Pharmacist* in October 2021.

PRESENTATIONS

Pharmaceutical Sciences Associate Professor and Director of Industry Engagement **Bhagwat Prasad** presented his research as an invited seminar entitled "Interplay of phase II metabolism, transport and microbiome in drug and steroid disposition," at the University at Buffalo Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences in Buffalo, New York on October 14, 2021.

Josh Neumiller presented, "[Managing type 2 diabetes with glp-1 receptor agonists: updates and insights for pharmacists \(monograph\)](#)," on PowerPak.

Josh Neumiller presented, "Meeting People with diabetes where they are: lessons learned from the home environment," for the Maine Association of Diabetes Care and Education Specialists on October 20, 2021.

Josh Neumiller presented, "Clinical pearls about the use of SGLT2 inhibitors for patients with CKD," on November 4, 2021 at the American Society of Nephrology (ASN) Kidney Week 2021 annual conference.

Josh Neumiller presented, "Optimal delivery of diabetes and CKD therapies by multidisciplinary care models," on November 4, 2021 at the American Society of Nephrology (ASN) Kidney Week 2021 annual conference.

SERVICE

Travis Denton and collaborator Kenneth Hensley were issued US Patent No. 11,084,836, titled, "Therapy of autophagy-related pathologies," on August 10, 2021.

Bhagwat Prasad was the section editor for *Drug Discovery Today: Technologies* journal for its [recent issue on proteomics in drug discovery and development](#).

Josh Neumiller is serving on the Diabetes Technology Society (DTS) Certified Diabetes Technology Clinician (CDTC) Advisory Board.

GRANTS AND AWARDS

Pharmaceutical Sciences Assistant Professor **Boyang (Jason) Wu** received the Pacesetter Award: Life and Health Sciences for his research on prostate cancer during the Washington State University [Research Week Awards Ceremony](#) on October 15, 2021.

Student Achievement

PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES AND MOLECULAR MEDICINE STUDENTS

Christopher Szlenk (Natesan lab) was selected as a [Highlighted Trainee Author in Molecular Pharmacology](#) for October 2021.

DOCTOR OF PHARMACY (PHARMD) STUDENTS

Kennedy Erickson (class of 2023) served as a panelist for, "[Women in pharmacy: remembering our past, committing to our present and investing in our future,](#)" a virtual panel discussion organized by the APhA Foundation In celebration of American Pharmacists Month and Women Pharmacist Day on October 20, 2021.



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
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