MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Our students have administered over 21,000 vaccines since spring 2021, and this number is a conservative estimate because we aren’t tracking vaccinations they’ve given while serving as interns or on clinical rotations. We are so proud of our students and the tremendous impact they have made on the health of our communities across Washington state. Let’s all show our students how much we appreciate their time and effort in our communities by supporting them during CougsGive on April 13—it’s a one-day fundraising event and your support need not be in the form of donation. You can also help by spreading the word, signing up to become a Cougar Ambassador, and amplifying our students’ impact in your social networks. Of course, you are certainly welcome to donate funds and we will use your generous contributions to go towards scholarships, retaining world-class faculty, and equipping our students with state-of-the-art technology in the classroom and on their rotations.

Our Rural Health team has been diligently recruiting our first cohort of students for the rural health track in our PharmD program. These students will begin their rural Introductory Pharmacy Practice Experiences (IPPEs) this summer. Our Rural Health Initiative was launched earlier this year with the goals of serving underserved patients across rural Washington, providing a pathway for students from rural areas to train in pharmacy and other health professions, and catalyzing economic development in these areas. Students applying to rural health track were required to write a statement describing their interest in and connection to rural communities and rural health. Reading these letters gave all of us goosebumps. Many of us are from rural Washington and we certainly saw a lot of ourselves in those student statements. I look forward to introducing our first cohort and sharing their unique stories with you in a future newsletter.

For those of you looking for CE credits or to expand your knowledge base I highly recommend our new online course on pharmacogenomics, which is run by Russ Crutchley, Terri Levien, and faculty from various institutions and health care systems. The course started on March 8 but registration is open until March 15. The program will teach you to use pharmacogenomic data to optimize medication therapy management. Pharmacists can receive up to 16 credits of CPE by completing this course.

Next week is spring break for the college and the entire WSU system. This will be the first spring break for our students in two years. We cancelled spring break last year to keep our students on track to graduate on time. Cancelling our students’ spring break last year was a tough decision, and one that was not received enthusiastically by anyone. I never considered the possibility that I would ever be the Grinch who cancelled spring break. Nonetheless, our students, faculty, staff, and community partners persevered and pressed on and I applaud all of you for your resilience and for staying the course amid waves of COVID-19 variants, testing, vaccinations, monoclonal antibodies, and antivirals. With a well-deserved week off for our students, I look forward to a refreshed and renewed second half of spring semester and the push toward completion of another successful academic year.

Sincerely,

Mark Leid, Professor and Dean
WSU College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
Gift launches Rural Health Initiative at WSU

A $2.2 million gift to Washington State University’s College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences (CPPS) will increase opportunities for PharmD students to focus on the health care needs of residents in rural Washington.

This extraordinary anonymous gift has helped to launch CPPS’ Rural Health Initiative (RHI) to improve access to health care in the rural communities of Washington. Started in the fall of 2021, RHI is an ambitious 10-year plan to create opportunities for student pharmacists and post-graduate pharmacists to specialize in delivery of rural health care. Access to health care providers in rural Washington continues to be a challenge for the nearly 800,000 residents living in these areas. It’s estimated that Washington needs 600 new providers to eliminate this gap in access to care. The Rural Health Initiative aims to alleviate this problem.

“As someone who grew up in rural Washington, this initiative is personal for me and a labor of love,” said WSU College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences Dean Mark Leid. “Our Rural Health Initiative will serve the underserved citizens across rural Washington, create pathways so that our students and graduates specialize in delivery of rural health care, and catalyze economic development in these underserved areas.

“Our efforts will initially focus on rural areas in the central and eastern regions of the state, but my hope is that the solutions and programs that we develop together will be scalable to include all rural areas of the state and beyond. My sincerest thanks to our donor for this transformational gift that, to my knowledge, is the largest single gift the college has ever received.”

WSU President Kirk Schulz praised the program for the difference it will make for rural communities who often find themselves many miles from adequate health care and guidance.

“This innovative initiative will help deliver access to health care to hundreds of thousands of people where they are, while also creating opportunities for WSU students to benefit from valuable real-world experiences,” Schulz said. “The impact of this program and the philanthropic investments made in it will change lives and make a tangible difference for the people and communities WSU serves, regardless of where they are located.”

EXPANDING SKILLS AND EMPOWERING RURAL COMMUNITIES

Funds invested for the initiative will help recruit students from rural areas, train students with a focus on rural health care, and embed faculty and residencies in these communities. Through this steady pipeline of trained health care professionals, the college aims to increase the number of health care workers serving rural populations over 10 years.

“We are setting into motion our vision to make health care more accessible for Washington’s rural and underserved communities in the context of our mission as a land-grant university,” Leid said. “If you know of a student who has great potential to return to their rural community armed with knowledge to treat patients, we encourage you to refer them to our PharmD program.”

Students in the rural health track will have exclusive coursework that emphasizes rural health topics, hands-on experiences in rural clinics, and completion of a capstone project focused on improving an aspect of rural health care.

For more information about the Rural Health Initiative at Washington State University’s College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, visit pharmacy.wsu.edu/rural-health-initiative.
Bringing health and wellness education to the Spokane community

Over the month of February, pharmacy student volunteers from the Washington State University College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences spent a few hours each Saturday at the Mobius Discovery Center teaching children and families in the Spokane community about health and wellness. The activities were arranged by Spokane chapters of the American Pharmacists Association – Academy of Student Pharmacists (APhA-ASP) and Kappa Psi (a professional fraternity).

Olivia Hiskey, class of 2023, served as the primary organizer and communicator between the college and Mobius, and helped organize the supplies and volunteers needed to successfully host the activities each week. Hiskey shares her experience and why she believes community outreach is important.

Tell us a little bit about the Mobius Health + Wellness events:
Our goal was to expand health and wellness education to Spokane youth through interactive and informative activities at Mobius. We had a different health and wellness focus each week including blood sugar, hand hygiene, vital signs, the heart and lungs, and all about blood. Each Saturday in February, volunteers from APhA-ASP and Kappa Psi hosted and assisted with these activities for the patrons of Mobius. Overall, we have been able to reach over 150 children with these events! Our hope is that the kids who participated came away with a bit more knowledge about the theme for the week and potentially a sparked interest in health and wellness!

Why do you think it’s important for student pharmacists to volunteer in community events?
I think community outreach is crucial for us as student pharmacists and as a college. It is important to engage in our community’s health and wellness and improve our community’s health through our education and outreach. By exposing ourselves to our community, we can pass on our health knowledge to members as well as identify additional areas of community health we can improve and become involved with.

What did you do while volunteering at the Mobius Health + Wellness events?
During the events, volunteers hosted and assisted with activities coordinated by APhA-ASP leadership. The volunteers would engage the kids in the activities while educating the participants on the topic of the week.

What was your favorite thing about volunteering at Mobius?
My favorite thing about volunteering at Mobius was seeing the kids excited and engaged in our activities! Witnessing that “ah-ha” moment on the children’s faces and knowing that they learned something from us was extremely rewarding. Also, being able to see kids get excited about our activities and interested in our health and wellness topics helped us to know we were inspiring the next generation of health care professionals!

What were the different activities children and families could try?
We had quite the variety of activities each week! Children and families learned about blood sugar and healthy eating through making their own healthy plate activity and playing “pin the pancreas on the body.” Kids and families learned about hand hygiene and how germs spread through our glow germ powder activity in which kids could check their hand washing technique after having powder that only glowed under a flashlight brushed on their hands. In another activity, they learned about the heart and lungs through interactive heart pumping models, lung models, and even made their own stethoscopes! They also learned about blood components and blood types through a sensory tub activity and a blood typing activity showing which blood types could mix and which could not.
Why do you believe it is important to teach children about wellness in a way they can easily understand?

I think it is extremely important to engage children in learning about health and wellness because the more we can educate our community at all ages, the better chance we have at improving public health. Education is the first step in making a conscious change in our choices and even at a young age, these children can receive information that impacts how they view their health. It is an amazing way to spark interest in health and wellness with these kids, and hopefully inspire them to engage their curiosity and learn more if they wish.

Anything else you want to add?

We had such an amazing time, and our goal is to continue this collaboration year after year!

Hiskey also took over the college Instagram page on February 12 to give a behind the scenes look at the events.

CPPS Announces Faculty Promotions

From the first days in kindergarten, to the last days of a doctoral program, educators serve a critical role in their students’ lives. They guide students through the curriculum, sharing their own experiences and expertise to help students forge their own paths.

At the Washington State University (WSU) College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences (CPPS) faculty members are passionate about inspiring the next generation of health care providers and scientists. By giving faculty the opportunity to excel through professional advancement and research, both faculty and students benefit. University promotions recognizes a faculty member’s growth through activities in teaching, research and service.

“These promotions represent years of hard work and sustained effort,” said CPPS Dean Mark Leid. “I am continually impressed by the productivity of our faculty as a whole and this new crop of associate professors instills confidence that this off-the-charts productivity will continue well into the future.”

Effective July 1, 2022, seven CPPS faculty in Spokane and Yakima will be promoted to associate professor:
In addition, the following four faculty were granted tenure by the University:

- John Clarke
- Zhaokang Cheng
- Senthil Natesan
- Boyang (Jason) Wu

To be considered for promotion, faculty must have a demonstrated record of contributing to the university through activities in teaching, research and service. Teaching courses and mentoring students also includes connecting teaching practices and course design to program-level goals and learning outcomes, and applying methods supported by the current pedagogical literature. The second element is original research, scholarship and creative activities that result in the dissemination of new knowledge and insights through a variety of media.

In addition to teaching and research, faculty duties include a substantive service component that is centered on outreach and public service that benefits communities and industries external to the university.

Promoted faculty from across the university will be honored at the **Celebrating Excellence Banquet**, on Friday, March 25, 2022.

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**A NOTE FROM JULIE AKERS**

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

It’s on! We are pleased to announce that after two years in hibernation, we will be hosting the Crimson Gala on October 7, 2022, honoring two extraordinary people: John Oftebro (‘65) and Linda Garrelts MacLean (‘78). I’ve had the privilege to know these two for over 20 years and look forward to when we can celebrate their contributions to pharmacy with the R. Keith Campbell Lifetime Achievement Award. We hope you will mark your calendars and save the date for an incredible night to reunite with old friends, win fantastic prizes, and celebrate life.

February has been a busy month—mostly because several faculty and I have been working hard to identify our first cohort to begin the rural health track. We have enjoyed reading their applications and learning more about our students and their inspiration to serve rural communities. We look forward to unveiling our first cohort soon and sharing more about the curriculum which will enrich their understanding of rural health care.

Also, I look forward to seeing everyone at the APhA Annual Meeting in San Antonio later this month. Dean Mark Leid will be hosting a CougaRx Nation Alumni and Friends event with beverages and bites at the Grand Hyatt San Antonio Lobby Bar (Bar Rojo). For all upcoming Coug pharmily networking events near and far, please check out our **events calendar** (we have several coming up!).

With my best and, as always, Go Cougs!

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

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**JOIN OUR TEAM**

We’re looking for dedicated individuals to join our Cougar community for positions in recruitment, experiential services, research, and more!

*Click to see positions available at the college and across WSU.*
Spotlight on Success

Preparing to become future telehealth providers
Third-year student pharmacist Olivia Hiskey discusses the growth of telehealth and the importance of student pharmacists learning about virtual care.
Read more from JAPHA: https://bit.ly/3wdVyyV4

Challenging stigma: starting from within
Third-year student pharmacist and 2021–22 APhA–ASP national president-elect Kennedy Erickson discusses mental health and how internalized stigma can serve as a barrier to seeking care.
Read more from Student Pharmacist: https://bit.ly/35YbHmM

Our doctor of pharmacy brochure is now online!
Learn more about the program

PHILANTHROPY FOCUS
Patty Akers Pike ('89) has let us know that her father Gary Akers ('58) passed away February 22, 2022. Our condolences to the Akers Family, who are a three-generation WSU pharmacy family. James Akers ('33) owned and operated Akers Drug in Newport, Washington. Perry Akers ('83) owned and operated Akers Drug in Chewelah, Washington. To honor Gary, the family is establishing the Gary Akers Memorial Scholarship at the college. Donations can be made to the Pharmacy Alumni Scholarship Fund with a comment that it is in memory of Gary Akers.

Gary began his career in Colville, Washington, and shortly thereafter moved to Coulee Dam, Washington, where he owned and operated Akers Drug Store from 1961-1980. He made it known that the store was available to the community whenever needed, occasionally receiving calls at home on evenings and holidays with a request to fill a prescription, or merely for “a roll of film or a bottle of aspirin.” The store also featured a soda fountain, which was a popular community gathering spot. In 1980, Gary sold his store and moved to Spokane, Washington, where he worked as a pharmacy manager for Albertsons until his retirement in 2000. View obituary

Alumni News
Congratulations to Nanci Murphy ('77), who will receive the Gloria Niemeyer Francke Leadership Mentor Award at the APhA conference later this month. The award recognizes an individual who has promoted and encouraged
pharmacists to attain leadership positions through example, acting as a role model and mentor. Nanci, who worked for the UW School of Pharmacy for more than 25 years, resides in Sammamish, Washington. Read more

Jessica Zering ('16) was recently featured in the Yakima Herald for her work leading the antibiotic stewardship program at Astria Sunnyside Hospital. Her department was praised as a model for advancing antibiotic safety practices, including addressing the over-prescription of antibiotics. Read more

Dalari Allington ('10) sent an update about her career and family. Dalari is currently the Director of Pharmacy at Providence St. Mary Medical Center in Yakima, and a busy mom of two boys, Tobias, age 5, and Judah, age 2. Both boys look to be future Cougs!

**OLYMPIC CHAMPION RELATED TO WSU PHARMACIST!**

We received this note from proud Cougar pharmacist, John Oftebro ('65):

Hello Cougs—we were thrilled to watch my cousin, Jens Oftebro (21 years) win a Silver Medal in the Large Hill Nordic Combined and a Gold Medal in the Nordic Combined Relay for Norway! We’ve known Jens from our travels to Norway and several family reunions and are so proud of his accomplishments after so many years of dedication.

**WITH SYMPATHY...**

We received this message from Sam Deliganis ('66):

With sadness I am reporting the death of my sister, Christina Georgia Deliganis on January 15, 2022 at the age of 83. Christina graduated from WSU College of Pharmacy with a Bachelor of Pharmacy degree in 1961. She was also a faculty member teaching hospital pharmacy from 1966 to 1968. May her memory be eternal.

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

The biggest WSU research stories of 2021

Recent research out of Lazarus lab made the Top 10 research stories out of WSU! #9 Cannabis use can cause harmful drug interactions. Research suggests using cannabis alongside other drugs may come with a significant risk of harmful drug-drug interactions.

Read more from the WSU Insider

An uneasy interaction: WSU researchers say cannabinoids are found to interfere with how medications metabolize in the body

Cannabis use appears to have an effect on how certain prescription drugs metabolize in the body – perhaps negatively – leading to toxicity or accidental overdose. Pharmaceutical scientists from the college looked at cannabinoids – tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), cannabidiol (CBD) and cannabinol (CBN) – along with the cannabinoids’ major metabolites in users’ blood and found that they interfered with two families of enzymes in the body that help metabolize a wide range of prescribed medications.

Read more from The Spokesman Review

Upcoming Events

Celebrating Excellence & Generosity

Yakima - April 8
Spokane - April 14

Crimson Gala
October 7, 2022
Spokane, WA

Faculty Scholarship

PUBLICATIONS

Pharmaceutical Sciences Associate Professor Sayed Daoud and four co-authors published, “Perturbation of Wnt/b-catenin signaling and sexual dimorphism in non-alcoholic fatty liver disease,” in Hepatol Research, a peer-reviewed journal from the Public Library of Sciences.

Pharmaceutical Sciences Assistant Professor Anil Singh, Mahamudul Haque (PhD ’20), Pharmaceutical Sciences Assistant Professor Abdul Basit, Pharmaceutical Sciences Associate Professor and Director of Industry Engagement Bhagwat Prasad, Pharmaceutical Sciences Professor and Executive Director of Graduate Programs Salahuddin Ahmed and six co-authors published, “Ets-2 propagates IL-6 trans-signaling mediated osteoclast-like changes in human rheumatoid arthritis synovial fibroblast,” in Frontiers in immunology in December 2021.
PRESENTATIONS

Allen I. White Distinguished Professor of Pharmacotherapy Joshua Neumiller presented “Non-insulin therapy updates,” at the American Diabetes Association (ADA) 2022 Clinical Update Course on February 6, 2022.

SERVICE

Pharmacotherapy Assistant Professor Cheyenne Frazier was quoted in the article “Transgender care is patient care,” by Kate Traynor in the American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy in March 2022.

Student Achievement

PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES AND MOLECULAR MEDICINE STUDENTS

Peter Obi (Natesan lab) presented “Cell membrane lipids are integral components of the cannabinoid CB1 receptor’s transmembrane allosteric site,” at the Biophysical Society Annual Meeting, February 19-23, 2022, in San Francisco, California.

Peter Obi received College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences Travel Award through the James and Diann Robbers Student Research Fund to present his research titled, “Cell membrane lipids are integral components of the cannabinoid CB1 receptor’s transmembrane allosteric site,” at the Biophysical Society Annual Meeting.

Deepak Ahire (Prasad lab) has been selected as the Drug Metabolism and Disposition Highlighted Trainee Author for March 2022.

DOCTOR OF PHARMACY (PHARMD) STUDENTS

Kayla Leland, class of 2022, was selected for the 2022 Pharmacists Mutual Community Scholarship from the APhA Foundation.