Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Fall is finally upon us, and it's been quite a whirlwind since my newsletter message in September. In just over a month, the WSU CougaRx Nation has been in leadership roles at conferences in Spain (FIP) and Kansas City, Missouri (NCPA). We also held our 2022 Crimson Gala and Pharmacy Reunion Weekend here in Spokane. What an exciting time to be a Cougar pharmacist!

Let's start with the trip to Seville, Spain, where Associate Professor Kimberly McKeirnan and I represented the WSU College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences at the 80th World Congress of FIP. For those of you who may not be aware, FIP is the International Pharmaceutical Federation or Fédération Internationale Pharmaceutique. It was founded in 1912 and is based in The Hague, Netherlands. FIP’s motto is, “Advancing Pharmacy Worldwide” and it’s an organization that Emeritus Dean Linda Garrelts MacLean ('78),
helped our college become affiliated with. As I have become more involved with FIP, I believe it’s been a worthwhile endeavor to meet and learn along with pharmacists from all over the world. While other countries may have different medications and methods, at the end of the day our goals are the same: to help our patients be as healthy as they can be, by providing the most accessible health care.

Learning about other cultures and getting out of our comfort zone helps us better serve patients of all backgrounds. And certainly, this trip provided many learning opportunities centered around this. Professor McKeirnan was asked to give a presentation for a speaker who could not attend at the last minute, and she did so with professionalism and polish. Her topic: “Telehealth Services Offered by Pharmacists” was well-received as she discussed the pros and cons of pharmacist-provided care through videoconferencing and telephone, particularly for patients in rural areas. She also shared some lessons learned from a recent research project in this regard, and a couple of bullet points are worth noting:

Pharmacists appreciate how telehealth increases access to care
Pharmacists believe their quality of care is not compromised by telehealth for most patients

If you would like to learn more about Professor McKeirnan’s presentation, please reach out to her at kimberly.mckeirnan@wsu.edu.

At the National Community Pharmacists Association’s Annual Meeting (NCPA), fourth-year student Kennedy Erickson, was able to present their team’s poster which placed in the Top 10 nationwide for NCPA’s Business Plan Competition. Congratulations on this very exciting accomplishment! At the conference, we also hosted a CougaRx Nation Reception, sponsored by Prescriptive, and welcomed more than 60 guests to network with independent pharmacists from across the country. It was great to be in Kansas City and hear the positive energy building within independent pharmacy. The future looks bright!
Finally, the Crimson Gala on October 7 was a long overdue evening to honor two exemplary leaders whose dedication to our college and the practice of pharmacy are unparalleled. John Oftebro, ’65, and Linda Garrelts MacLean, both received the R. Keith Campbell Lifetime Achievement Award that evening. In addition, we honored our Preceptors and Mentors of the Year, whose efforts to teach and mold our students’ education are critical to our curriculum. And I would be remiss if I didn’t make a special effort to acknowledge our 2021 Alumnus of Year, Leon Alzola, (‘91). Leon was recognized for his many years of service to the college as a member of the Dean’s Advisory Council, and for his leadership in pharmacy practice and mentorship of student pharmacists. His love for the pharmacy profession continues to propel him forward in his career at Kroger, and we are honored to have him as part of the CougaRx Nation.

There’s even more exciting activities coming up this fall, so please visit our website at pharmacy.wsu.edu to get involved and make a difference.

As always, GO COUGS!

Julie Akers, Associate Dean of External Relations WSU College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
As a high school student who immigrated from Russia to Los Angeles, class of 2014 alum Alex Heyfetz never would have imagined that he would become a pharmacist one day. His hobbies at the time included judo and weightlifting; advertising, construction, and personal training were the many jobs he tried on before pursuing his doctor of pharmacy at Washington State University. 15 years later, Heyfetz says that the career choice has been better than what he could have ever imagined.

“The most important thing that you need to do in life is to try different things,” he impressed on an audience of pharmacy students during the college’s monthly Career Seminar Series. Heyfetz is the co-owner of Sixth Avenue Pharmacy, an independent pharmacy which has thrived in Spokane for over 60 years. He and class of 2013 alumnus Erik Nelson own the pharmacy together.

You are in a very good position...Pharmacists' wages are going up and signing bonuses for pharmacists are now $50,000 to $70,000 for retail chains.

Class of 2014 alum Alex Heyfetz pictured in front of his pharmacy which he co-owns with class of 2013 alum Erik Nelson. The independent pharmacy is located in the heart of Spokane’s health care hub and prides itself in tailored patient care.
“You are in a very good position,” he told students. “Pharmacists’ wages are going up and signing bonuses for pharmacists are now $50,000 to $70,000 for retail chains.” Despite pharmacists’ salary growth in Washington state, Heyfetz says that it’s most important to be passionate about a job. The most rewarding part of his career has been precepting more than a hundred students from the college, said the 2020 Preceptor of the Year.

I learn as much from my students as they do from me. WSU is a great school for pharmacy. It has all the resources for students and alumni to network and get a great job.

“I learn as much from my students as they do from me. WSU is a great school for pharmacy. It has all the resources for students and alumni to network and get a great job,” said Heyfetz who received his doctor of pharmacy degree in 2014 and his bachelor of science degree at UCLA in 2009.

Along with managing Sixth Avenue Pharmacy, Heyfetz has also expanded into various business ventures including investing in real estate and stocks. He says that being a business owner is not without its challenges. Along with competing with chain pharmacies, he had to get creative with various revenue streams and managing staff.

“Pharmacy is a great career no matter what. It’s better than what I expected. It can be rewarding or difficult. It all depends on you.”
SMILES, HUGS USHER IN RETURN OF ANNUAL CRIMSON GALA

OCTOBER 25, 2022 TIA WEYRAUCH

There's no feeling quite like that of seeing an old friend after years apart. This October, Cougar pharmacy students and alums greeted one another with hugs and smiles as they came together at the first Crimson Gala since 2019. The annual Crimson Gala is a celebration of pharmacy leaders who shape the profession for future generations as well as all of those who help to pave the way for future Cougar pharmacists through their guidance and leadership.

Proceeds from the Gala are further put towards the advancement of future pharmacy leaders in the form of scholarships for current and future doctor of pharmacy students. Thanks to the sponsors, attendees and donors to the two new scholarship endowments, the gala raised over $50,000 this year. If you would like to contribute to student scholarships, please contact Kelly Sylvester, director of development and alumni relations, at kelly.sylvester@wsu.edu or call 509-368-6675.

Congratulations, to the awardees celebrated this year:

R. Keith Campbell Lifetime Achievement Award

This award recognizes a track record of excellence in pharmacy, patient care, advocacy, research, service and mentoring or teaching. At this year's Gala, John Oftebro ('65) Linda Garrelts MacLean ('78) were honored for their outstanding commitment and service to the college and the pharmacy profession.

JOHN OFTEBRO

After John Oftebro was selected for the award in early 2020, pandemic restrictions put a pause on events. This year the college was finally able to recognize Oftebro and honor his 50-year career spent advancing the profession and mentoring student pharmacists.
During his time as owner of Kelley-Ross Pharmacy in Seattle, Oftebro expanded to six locations, and established a residency program. One of the most important lessons John instills in the pharmacy students he mentors is that advocacy for the pharmacy profession is critical to future success. He has spent years walking the talk serving as president of the WSPA, American College of Apothecaries, and WSPA Foundation. Following his retirement in 2008, Oftebro started serving on the college’s Dean’s Advisory Council and as a WSU Foundation Trustee. He credits his success to building relationships, taking risks, and not just filling prescriptions.

**LINDA GARRELTS MACLEAN**

As co-owner of Jones Pharmacy and during her 25-year career at the college, MacLean has always been an inspiration to all those around her. She is known for her business acumen and leadership, as well as her warm personality. MacLean has served as vice dean for external relations and interim dean at the college as well as the advisor for the National Community Pharmacists Association’s business plan competition, helping lead students to national recognition with several first-place and top 10 wins. In her current role as professor emeritus, MacLean serves as the president of the board for BAVI Health and continues to advocate on behalf of community pharmacists as vice president of the Community Pharmacist Foundation.

In addition to her Lifetime Achievement Award, the college took the opportunity to recognize MacLean’s 25-years of dedication to the college with an award in the shape of a glass heel to recognize her retirement in 2021.

**Alum of the year**

The Outstanding Alum award was established by the College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences Dean’s Advisory Council in 1991. The award recognized alums for personal achievements and contributions to community, society at large or the health care profession.

The 2021 awardee, Leon Alzola (’91), National Director for Kroger Health, has spent the majority of his career continually creating opportunities not just for himself, but for the many people he has mentored in pharmacy for over 30 years.
These efforts are well exemplified by his hand in the creation and growth of the Fred Meyer Alum-Student Mentor Program at the college, which has since benefited hundreds of WSU student pharmacists.

In addition, the college chose to recognize all the frontline workers who put others’ health above their own every day during the pandemic as the 2020 Alums of the Year.

Preceptors of the Year

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. In a testament to the importance of preceptors, every year students submit over 400 nominations for the annual Preceptor of the Year award. In 2021, the college extended the award criteria to include not only Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experience (APPE) preceptors but Introductory Pharmacy Practice Experience (IPPE) preceptors as well.

2022
Glen Chase ('15), APPE
Will Grooms, APPE
Mays Vue ('10), APPE
Mussie Yonas ('09), IPPE and APPE

2021
Vikash Patel, APPE
Taylor Bertsch ('16), IPPE
Tyler Fischback ('09), APPE
Penny Melder, APPE
Garett Manion ('07), IPPE

2020
Aleksander Heyfetz ('14)
Daniel Healey ('15)
Mentors of the year

Eight years ago, the college established a mentoring program with Fred Meyer, which pairs alum mentors with students to share their wisdom and experience with the next generation of Cougar pharmacists. Through the program, alum mentors guide students through the four-years of their pharmacy education and help them prepare for their future careers. In recognition of this influential work, each year the college selects mentors from student nominations for the Mentor of the Year award.

2022
Mikayla Cornwall (’02)

2021
Doug Crafton (’78)

2020
Jimmy Leonard (’16)
Tyler Fischback (’09)

2020 Mentor of the Year Tyler Fischback (left) shakes hands with 2021 Mentor of the Year Doug Crafton.
Access to health care continues to be a challenge for nearly 800,000 Washingtonians, according to data provided by Health Resources and Services Administration. To combat this chronic issue, the Washington State University College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences is facilitating the pathway for Tri-City students to pursue their doctor of pharmacy degree with a specialization in rural health. Through a renewed agreement between the WSU College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences and Columbia Basin College, students can earn their doctor of pharmacy degree in as little as six years. Those who choose to specialize in rural health are eligible to receive up to $10,000 in scholarship per year.

“There are many people in rural Washington who live in pharmacy deserts. Students interested in pursuing health care are highly encouraged to consider this specialized path with Washington State University and Columbia Basic College,” said Associate Dean of the Rural Health Initiative Angela Stewart.

Students who complete the approved transferable Associate of Science-Transfer (AS-T) degree will be eligible for admissions into the WSU doctor of pharmacy program where they can apply to specialize in rural health.

The new pathway hopes to return health care workers to rural and underserved communities in the state, where health care services are in high demand, but often not easily accessible. Through the WSU-CBC collaboration, students benefit by saving on costs and completing their degree in minimal time. Following the completion of their AS-T degree, students will be eligible to pursue the WSU doctor of pharmacy program located on the WSU Health Sciences Spokane campus and the Pacific Northwest University campus in Yakima Valley.
An estimated 600 providers are needed to fill this gap in health care. The renewed collaboration between the WSU College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences and Columbia Basin College facilitates a pathway for students to become pharmacists to serve rural communities.

"CBC is proud to continue our partnership with the WSU College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences to give our students a streamlined path to a rewarding pharmaceutical career. The AS-T degree prepares our students to apply directly to the WSU Doctor of Pharmacy program. Given the continued need for health care services in rural communities, this program continues to support aspiring local pharmacists achieve their dream within their communities," said Dr. Rebekah Woods, President, Columbia Basin College.

The WSU doctor of pharmacy program does not require a bachelor's degree. Interested students should contact pharmacy.admissions@wsu.edu

High school students are encouraged to apply early through the Save-A-Seat program which guarantees students a spot in the WSU PharmD program once pre-requisites are met.

Access to health care in rural Washington continues to be a challenge for the nearly 800,000 residents who live in these areas.

An estimated 600 providers are needed to fill this gap in health care. The renewed collaboration between the WSU College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences and Columbia Basin College facilitates a pathway for students to become pharmacists to serve rural communities.
PHILANTHROPY FOCUS

Dean Emeritus Dr. Mahmoud Abdel-Monem passed away earlier this year in Oak Harbor, Washington. He was 83. On November 1, 1987 he joined what was then the WSU College of Pharmacy as professor and dean, where he served from 1987-1998. Monem, as he was known by colleagues, received his bachelor of science degree in 1959 from Cairo University in Egypt. In 1961, he was awarded a scholarship to study in the United States and was admitted to the graduate school of the University of Minnesota in the Department of Medicinal Chemistry and obtained his PhD in 1966. His distinguished career at the University of Minnesota as a faculty member and administrator began shortly after his return to the United States in 1968. Upon his retirement from WSU, a scholarship endowment was established by alumni and friends to honor his tenure as dean. Gifts in his memory can be made to the Dean Abdel Monem Scholarship Endowment.

Read obituary

Alum Updates

Randy Legg ('87) recently spoke to our students as part of the Career Seminar Series, which highlights the many different career opportunities a PharmD degree can provide. Legg, who began his career in community pharmacy, decided to make a bold career move and 22 years ago began working at AstraZeneca. Today he is a National Clinical Accounts Director for the company. In fact, his presentation to the students had to be done virtually because he and his team were receiving a national award from AstraZeneca in Boston on the same day he was scheduled to speak to student pharmacists. His most important advice? “Find a few good mentors and take advantage of their wisdom.” Congratulations Randy!
Shon Volk ('07) is now working at Costco Pharmacy in Spokane Valley after leaving Yoke’s Pharmacy. Shon was also previously a manager with Albertsons, where he was instrumental in piloting a clinical pharmacy program to test for minor ailments such as strep throat in the grocery store. He continues to precept and mentor WSU student pharmacists.

Charlotte Valleroy ('20) is working as the manager of CVS Health Pharmacy in the Target store in North Spokane. After graduation, she began her career first as a staff pharmacist at that location before being promoted to manager. She also worked as an intern at Highline Hospital in Burien, Washington while in pharmacy school. Charlotte worked for almost 10 years as a pharmacy technician before attending pharmacy school and earning her doctor of pharmacy degree. Kudos to you, Charlotte, and congratulations on your new career!

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

Other News

Rheumatoid arthritis research finds key protein that could be targeted in future treatment
College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences researchers have identified a protein playing a critical role in the inflammation damage caused by rheumatoid arthritis. Now they hope their discovery might help treatments of a condition that afflicts 1.5 million Americans.
Read more from The Spokesman-Review

Establishing roots in rural regions
The WSU doctor of pharmacy rural health track is one of several innovative programs aimed at strengthening the rural pharmacy pipeline. They are recruiting a new generation of pharmacists to serve rural communities to help improve access to health care for those populations.
Read more from Academic Pharmacy Now

Student Pharmacist Spotlight: Kennedy Erickson
WSU fourth-year student pharmacist and APhA-ASP National President Kennedy Erickson shares her tips on managing burnout.
Read more from Drug Topics
FACULTY SCHOLARSHIP

PUBLICATIONS

J. Roberts and Marcia Fosberg Distinguished Regents Professor of Pharmacotherapy and Director of the Drug Information Center Danial Baker along with multiple other authors contributed to the recently released sixth version of the United States Pharmacopeia COVID-19 Vaccine Handling Toolkit Operational Considerations for Healthcare Practitioners.

Danial Baker and eight co-authors published, “Agreement of medicine and pharmacy students on quality of drug information,” in Pharmacy Education in August 2022.


Director for the Center for Pharmacy Practice Research and Associate Professor of Pharmacotherapy Kimberly McKeirnan and five co-authors published, “Correlations to and potential implications of resilience among certified pharmacy technicians,” in the August 2022 edition of Journal of the American Pharmacists Association.

Pharmaceutical Sciences Associate Professor Senthil Natesan and one co-author published “Membrane lipids are an integral part of transmembrane allosteric sites in GPCRs: a case study of cannabinoid CB1 receptor bound to a negative allosteric modulator, ORG27569, and Analogs,” in Journal of Medicinal Chemistry, a peer-reviewed scientific journal from the American Chemical Society, in September 2022.

United States Transuranium and Uranium Registries (USTUR) Director and Professor Sergei Tolmachev and five co-authors published, “Radiochemistry and nuclear chemistry workforce,” in the Journal of Applied Clinical Medical Physics in September 2022.

PRESENTATIONS

USTUR Postdoctoral Research Associate Martin Šefl gave an invited seminar, “Application of principal component regression at the U.S. Transuranium and Uranium Registries,” to undergraduate mathematics and statistics students from Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington on Sept 19, 2022. This seminar is a part of the Mathematical Sciences Foundry Talks series.

GRANTS

Senthil Natesan received an industry grant from Genentech for investigating the role of membrane lipids in the access and binding of TRPA1 antagonists (as potential therapeutics for treating pain and asthma).

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES AND MOLECULAR MEDICINE STUDENTS

Peter Obi (Natesan Lab) with faculty co-author Senthil Natesan published “Membrane lipids are an integral part of transmembrane allosteric sites in GPCRs: a case study of cannabinoid CB1 receptor bound to a negative allosteric modulator, ORG27569, and Analogs,” in Journal of Medicinal Chemistry, a peer-reviewed scientific journal from the American Chemical Society, in September 2022.