Writing, editing and design
Arturo Niño, Andrew Ramirez, Cheri Shipman

Photography
Andrew Ramirez

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Communications Director
Cheri Shipman, M.Ed.

special thanks to the academic administration and the pharmacy student leadership for contributing to this edition.

For corrections or changes, please contact the Office of the Dean, Communications Department at cshipman@pharmacy.tamhsc.edu or call us at 361-221-0606.

What’s Next: The White Coat Ceremony will be at 2 p.m. Sept. 7 at the Edward N. Jones Auditorium on campus of Texas A&M University-Kingsville. The White Coat Ceremony is a nationwide tradition that welcomes first-year pharmacy students to the profession.

On the Cover: Welcome Class of 2017!

Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy complies with the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 in its admission, accessibility, treatment, and employment of students in its programs and activities. The Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy provides academic adjustments and auxiliary aids to students with disabilities, as defined under the law, who are otherwise qualified to meet the institution’s academic requirements. Requests for accommodations of a disability should be directed to the Office of Student Affairs, 1010 W. Ave. B, Kingsville, Texas, 78363, or call (361) 221-0648. The Texas A&M University-Kingsville Office of Disability Services for Students accommodates Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy students to provide assistance and programs that benefit individuals covered under the statute. For additional information, contact the Office at (361) 593-3024.
a glimpse of some of the cultural traditions of Europe, Asia, India, the Islands, Mexico and South America, where student pharmacists exchange ethnic foods, share an understanding of the health benefits of these ethnic foods, showcase multilingual lyrics and music, and play multicultural games that are unique to different parts of the world.

This fall a new cohort of 87 students, the Class of 2017, begins their educational journey in the College. It is impressive to note that our College continues to receive large pool of qualified applicants for pharmacy programs in the state, year after year. This incoming class includes 10 students from Texas A&M University-Kingsville and 42 percent are from South Texas.

Opened its door to students in 2006 to meet a critical need in the South Texas community where there is a shortage of pharmacists, the College has now established an exceptional pharmacy program, obtained full professional accreditation with flying colors, and has graduated four cohorts of students.

Today, 103 out of 309 of the college’s graduates have returned to South Texas to help underserved populations. The college’s leadership strives to entrench a culture of excellence, education, research, practice and patient care to each professional student enrolled. Guided by a set of core values, the College continues to advance the profession of pharmacy and to enhance the quality of peoples’ lives in South Texas, Texas and beyond. No wonder it is ranked in the Top 50 for pharmacy programs in the country within a record time, as per the recent US News and World Report rankings.

We are growing in strength. As mentioned by State Rep. J.M. Lozano in his column this month: “In a move that gives students and faculty increased educational and scientific opportunities, the Texas A&M Health Science Center recently merged as a unit within Texas A&M University. This aligns the college with a flagship university and allows faculty to build innovative, multi-location collaborations with colleagues in fields such as veterinary medicine. Cutting edge pharmaceutical and biomedical research leads to better health care.”

The College has plans in the works to expand its program as it continues its focus to serve South Texas. Expansion will allow for a modest increase in enrollment and open more seats for students who meet the competitive standards for the professional program. The student pharmacists at the College attain and practice skills with the largest preceptor network in the state of Texas, 915 members strong.

The College, emboldened by its mission and vision, endeavors to change the face of South Texas through its unbridled commitment to exceptional pharmacy education, superior science and compassionate patient care. The college is proud of its past and is poised for the timely growth to meet the needs of South Texas residents.

Honoring the Dean

The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents on Aug. 8 honored Indra K. Reddy, Ph.D., for his outstanding leadership as the founding dean of the Texas A&M Health Science Center Irma Lerma Rangel College of Pharmacy. “The members of the Board of Regents of The Texas A&M University System, express our deepest gratitude and respect for Dean Reddy's expertise, dedication and leadership,” the board stated at the College Station, Texas, meeting. “This resolution … is a permanent mark of this Board’s appreciation and gratitude for all that he has done for the Texas A&M University System Health Science Center’s Irma Lerma Rangel College of Pharmacy and for the state of Texas.” The Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy, on the Texas A&M University-Kingsville campus, was created in response to the shortage of pharmacists in the border region. Reddy has served as dean for 10 years.
Dr. Gregory Sawyer  
Associate Professor and  
Assistant Dean for Student Affairs

Since arriving at the Texas A&M Health Science Center Irma Lerma Rangel College of Pharmacy, I have been very impressed by the enthusiasm, dedication and professionalism of the student body. I have also been impressed by the level of commitment that the student organizations have for participating in the community through service learning events. In addition to the wonderful student body, I have had the great pleasure of working with the dedicated and compassionate staff in the Office of Student Affairs. I have also had the pleasure of meeting many of the staff, faculty and administrators in the College and I look forward to meeting more of them as I continue in my new role.

My family and I are delighted to be here and we have been warmly welcomed into our community and at the College. We have enjoyed exploring the area, visiting the beach and eating delicious seafood. We are grateful to have this opportunity and I am excited to be working for the College and with the professional student pharmacists.

Sincerely,

Dr. Gregory Sawyer

Christine Carney  
2012-2013 Pharmacy Student Council President

Welcome back, Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy!

I hope that all of you had a great summer and are ready for the next year of your education as a student pharmacist!

First of all to my fellow Class of 2014 members, I cannot believe we are already P4s. I feel like we were just where the Class of 2017 is now… excited and anxious about our next four years at the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy.

Class of 2016, be confident. Best of luck on your IPPE rotations this year, I know you all will represent our school well out there! You may feel like you still have a while to go in your education, but I guarantee it will go by very quickly.

Class of 2015, try hard not to get “P3-itis.” I know how exciting it is to be almost done with the classroom and out on rotations, but P3 year is definitely not something to overlook. Enjoy the time with your class, you’ll miss everyone next year! Keep going strong and I hope you are enjoying the “big kids’ room!”

Finally, Class of 2017, I may not get to meet many of you, but some advice that I can offer is to take in all you can over the next four years. Our faculty and staff are amazing and full of knowledge, absorb as much as you can. Take it one week (sometimes one day) at a time. What I didn’t know as a P1 was that I would be making lifelong friends and colleagues. Help each other and enjoy your time in pharmacy school.

I hope everyone has a great year and you accomplish everything you set out to do!
Dear Alumni and Friends,

On Aug. 5, 2013, I became a P1 again. I picked up an orientation packet, sat down a few chairs away from my old spot in room 132, and I went through pre-orientation for half the day. The Class of 2017 was sitting down, getting to know each other and finding ways to battle the August humidity of South Texas. Of course, I was not there to re-enroll in the pharmacy program, but I was there to invest in our future as an association. More importantly, I was there to share with them the pride and honor that has grown within me as the years go by after pharmacy school. I have met several of our students as they proceed through the fourth-year rotations, and many as residents and co-workers. The students continue to be well-mannered, highly educated and represent the College well. This to me is a sure sign that the Texas A&M Irma Lerma Rangel College of Pharmacy has kept its promise in delivering high quality pharmacists to the world. I hope to find you in good spirits as I greet you through this inaugural newsletter, and hope to share with you some information about the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy Alumni Association.

As an Alumni Association, we are very young, and those who helped start it know this as much as I do. Some of you may not even know that you are already members of this Alumni Association or have forgotten this fact. Frankly, I don’t blame you. We are so young that at the moment we are fueled by goals, ideas and the hopes of what will one day come to fruition. The first step we are taking is trying to connect to all of our alumni, both through electronic mail and this newsletter. I hope you take time to read what is presented to you and to continue to follow up with our activities. As we connect and keep in touch, I hope the values of the Alumni Association will begin to spread. This is in part why I spoke to the P1’s so early on in their careers, and why I am writing this letter to you.

You are a member simply because you graduated, but I am asking that you take another step, if you so choose. Ask yourself: “Is there anything I could do to help give back to the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy?” This is a question I asked myself when deciding to take the position of Alumni Chair, and, to be honest, there was silence at first. I could not think of anything that didn’t involve donating money. I left it alone for a few days, but then a pharmacy student who I mentor asked me to review her curriculum vitae and had questions about rotations. An avalanche of ideas hit me on how I could help “give back” to my College without writing a check. We often forget that “time” is an extremely valuable currency. I took the position and since then have donated some of my time to the College by speaking to the graduates of 2013, the Class of 2017 and brainstorming with administrators to help set up activities. I know what I am asking for at the moment may be unreasonable for some, especially if your family has just begun to grow or your priorities lie elsewhere. I am simply looking to spark the idea in some of you that we can give back in other ways and all of it is appreciated. Once you make the decision to give back and get involved, we will step in and give that desire direction.

Involvement in our association will be sought out for board membership (executive and non-executive), community service activities (in Kingsville and surrounding areas), regional alumni gatherings to meet other alumni in your area, Professional Development seminars, editing the alumni newsletter, or any number of activities that will help make our association strong and active in the further development of our students and our College. If you have any questions about the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy Alumni Association, feel free to contact me at mdeluna85@live.com or Leslie Currie at currie@pharmacy.tamhsc.edu. Thank you for your time and I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Mike De Luna

Class of 2011
Alumni Association – Chair
What is the White Coat Ceremony?
The White Coat Ceremony is a solemn, but joyful, recognition of the students’ introduction into the pharmacy profession. The ceremony is a meaningful tradition in which the College welcomes those students who have completed their first year of study as colleagues dedicated to patient care. Students are donned a white coat, the symbol of clinical service and care, and recite the Pledge of Professionalism to publicly acknowledge their new responsibilities and willingness to assume the obligation of the profession.

White coat ceremonies traditionally mark the student’s transition from preclinical coursework to professional level clinical coursework. The White Coat Ceremony, as it is known today, first occurred in 1993 at the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, and has since been adopted by numerous colleges and schools involved in the education and training of a range of health and medical professionals.

The Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy introduced the White Coat Ceremony to the Pharmacy Doctoral program in 2007. The current coat worn by students is embroidered with the College’s official logo and the student’s name.

H-E-B’s Intern of the Border Region

Performance, integrity, adaptation and reaction: these are just four of the many qualities necessary to receive the H-E-B Intern of the Summer for the Border Region. Adam Riezenman, a second-year professional student pharmacist at the Texas A&M Health Science Center Irma Lerma Rangel College of Pharmacy, epitomized these characteristics throughout his internship at H-E-B in San Benito, Texas.
Riezenman of Brownsville, Texas, will join his colleagues at 2 p.m. Sept. 7 in receiving his white coat at the Edward N. Jones Auditorium on campus of Texas A&M University-Kingsville. The White Coat Ceremony is a nationwide tradition that formally welcomes student pharmacists to the profession.

The top intern at H-E-B is chosen through a point system in which points are awarded for various evaluations that must be conducted.

“A regional director makes visits to various locations and takes a couple of days to spend time with the intern,” said Oscar Ramirez, Pharm.D., Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy Class of 2010 graduate and Riezenman’s mentor and supervisor. “In the end, they complete an evaluation on the work of the intern. I had to do my own mentor evaluation of Adam. There is also a presentation or project that must be completed toward the end of the internship.”

For each evaluation or presentation, the intern is given points. The recipient of the highest point value is given the recognition as intern of the summer. Riezenman earned the most points out of all of the interns in the Border Region and Laredo.

The pharmacy workplace was a new environment for Riezenman, but that did not stop him from learning everything he needed to know which proved him to be a great asset throughout his internship. He acquired the knowledge that was necessary to work in the pharmacy and used it to excel beyond expectations. Even as an intern, he offered suggestions on how to improve the pharmacy and make things run smoother, helping Ramirez see things in a new perspective.

Ramirez is no stranger to hard work and dedication. He began his studies at the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy in 2006 after completing his undergraduate studies at Texas A&M University-Kingsville. Throughout his pharmacy coursework, he completed an internship with an H-E-B store in Weslaco. He took a job as pharmacy manager a year ago at the San Benito H-E-B.

The coursework and similar internships are not the only things that helped Riezenman and Ramirez build a relationship that ended with Riezenman receiving recognition as intern of the summer.

The supervisor-intern role was new for both of them and was a benefit.

“Adam was the first intern that I supervised. So, at the start of this all, I was very nervous; I didn’t know exactly what to do or what to expect,” Ramirez said. “I had nothing to base his or my learning on. It was all new to us both, but along the way, we learned together. It helped us learn more about our field. It ended up working for us and Adam was given the recognition that he deserves. I was beyond surprised and pleased, starting from scratch to winning this recognition.”

Although Ramirez attributed the award to Riezenman’s hard work and willingness to learn, Riezenman saw it much differently.

“Ramirez was the deciding factor,” Riezenman said. “When I walked in the first day, I was nervous and didn’t know what to expect; he made me feel welcome and like I was an asset to the company. That really helped.”

When it came to sharing what he thought made Riezenman a great recipient of the award, Ramirez said the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy was a major contributor to his work ethic.

“Compassion—a want to help your patient—that’s what I believe I have and I definitely see it in Adam every day,” Ramirez said. “He always wants to do what is best for the customer, regardless of the result for the pharmacy. The customer comes first. Adam is also a go-getter. There are not enough good things to say about him. I believe the staff at the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy had a major impact on him.”

Riezenman also credited the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy for much of his success.

“They prepared me. The Introductory Pharmacy Practice Experience (IPPE) classes with Dr. [Anna] Brozick helped,” he said. “I used what I had learned in the classroom. I knew what the prescriptions would do without having to read off of the computer. They taught me what I needed to know. I am thankful for everything and this was the experience of a lifetime.”

Adam Riezenman, a second-year professional student pharmacist, receives the H-E-B Intern of the Summer for the Border Region from Daniel Gomez, Border Region director of pharmacy, and Jennifer Lopez, human resources corporate recruiting.
Many diseases cause us to change personally. Some diseases cause us to want to create change for others.

Dai Lu, Ph.D., assistant professor of pharmaceutical sciences at the Texas A&M Health Science Center Irma Lerma Rangel College of Pharmacy, tackles multiple diseases and disorders in his research, including pancreatic cancer, cerebral disorders like Alzheimer’s disease and traumatic brain injuries, and metabolic diseases like diabetes and obesity. He collaborates with scientists nationwide in order to find ways to battle diseases that cripple family and national budgets.

Dr. Lu’s father died of pancreatic cancer in 2003. The hopeless and helpless feeling he experienced at his father’s bedside influenced his commitment to search for an effective cure for pancreatic cancer, which is one of the deadliest types of cancer. At present, most patients are diagnosed at a late stage because symptoms do not appear until the tumor grows to a significant size. By then, cure is not feasible since the cancer has already spread beyond the pancreas to other organs. According to the American Cancer Society, one-fifth of Americans diagnosed with pancreatic cancer survive for a full year, and 94 percent die within five years.

“There are no indications that we cannot manage pancreatic cancer as we have done with other types of cancer such as colon and breast cancer,” Dr. Lu said. “There are just more challenges because pancreatic cancer is a highly invasive malignancy and the metastatic cancer cells are very resistant to currently available chemotherapies.”

He emphasized that better treatments and, ultimately, cures for people with pancreatic cancer begin with scientific research.

Disabling pain together with malnutrition and jaundice are the most common symptoms in patients with pancreatic cancer. Pain management is one of the most important and difficult aspects of palliative care for inoperable pancreatic cancer. Approximately 90 percent of patients ultimately develop severe or intractable pain that quickly leads to deterioration of the quality of life and performance status of pancreatic cancer patients.
Dr. Lu has been working to find new types of chemotherapeutic drugs that both kill pancreatic cancer and suppress the cancer pain at the same time by targeting a special G-protein coupled receptor that belongs to the biological system responsible for cannabis effects. Dr. Lu said that pancreatic cancer cells have more type 2 cannabinoid receptors than do healthy cells. Drug molecules that selectively activate this receptor can induce cancer cell death without affecting normal pancreatic cells. When given to mice with pancreatic tumors, the molecule prevented tumor growth and suppressed the spread of cancer to healthy organs. Meanwhile, this class of compounds generates painkillers comparable to morphine’s pain killing effect. His research, in collaboration with other researchers, has had promising results in the testing stage. It will begin the drug development stage with grant support from state and federal resources in the next few years.

Dr. Lu’s lab is also researching new ways to treat acute and chronic brain disorders such as traumatic brain injury and Alzheimer’s disease. Dr. Lu is investigating a drug that can augment the effects of some of the brain’s own molecules that can prevent inflammation before or after injury that are linked to the biological system responsible for cannabis effects. Recently Dr. Lu’s lab discovered new molecules that potentially can protect the brain from traumatic and inflammatory injuries. These molecules are in early drug discovery stage. His research is currently pending financial support from the National Institutes of Health and Department of Defense to advance the research.

Recent data from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows that approximately 1.7 million people sustain a traumatic brain injury annually. The direct and indirect costs of traumatic brain injury in the U.S. are estimated at $48.3 billion annually.

“Given the enormous impact of traumatic brain injury on this nation, our research may someday help millions of people including men and women who serve in military forces and suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder,” Dr. Lu said.
Part of successfully leading a new organization is to exhibit the core values in our daily lives.

And that is what colleagues say that Beverly A. Talluto, 71, did as she helped form the experiential education for professional pharmacy students of South Texas. She exhibited care in how she loved, concern in how she made things happen, courtesy in how she treated everyone justly, compassion in how she made sure things were done right, and competence in how intelligent, dynamic and professional she carried herself.

“She was so passionate about what she did,” said Ramey Benfield, M.B.A., assistant dean for finance and administration at the Texas A&M Health Science Center Irma Lerma Rangel College of Pharmacy. “She had a unique ability to have joy in everything she did. She kept working it until she had the outcome she wanted.”

Talluto, R.Ph. M.H.Sc. Pharm.D., founding associate dean for clinical programs and associate professor of pharmacy practice at the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy died Saturday, July 6, 2013, in Frankfort, Ill.

“Dr. Talluto was the ultimate advocate for pharmacy and experiential education,” said Mary L. Chavez, Pharm.D., professor and chair in the Department of Pharmacy Practice. “She was an advisor and mentor for students, faculty and staff. She had a unique way of empowering people because of her genuine interest in what the person she was teaching could teach her.”

From May 2009 to May 2012, Talluto led the Office of Experiential Education (OEE) where she provided oversight of the daily operations of experiential education and the direction of the Introductory (IPPE) and Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experiences (APPE).

“Beverly was a consummate professional, an exceptional pharmacy educator, a wonderful colleague, and a very dear friend,” said Indra K. Reddy, Ph.D., professor and founding dean of Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy. “We all miss her very much.”

Messages of condolence flooded the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy from preceptors, students and colleagues.

“Her leadership was felt by many,” Chavez said, who knew her almost 20 years. “At the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy, by our preceptors and supporters, by the other colleges of pharmacy where she worked, at AACP, and throughout the academia of pharmacy. She was my best friend. She made me laugh. I miss her dearly.”

As a pioneer in experiential education, Talluto was passionate about advancing the profession of pharmacy and implemented an exemplary experiential program at the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy. The Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) site-visit team described the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy’s experiential education program as “Model Program,” thanks to the work of Talluto.

“Beverly was an outstanding representative for the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy,” said Paul F. Davis, R.Ph., executive director of the Texas Society of Health-System Pharmacists. “Her dedication to the profession and future pharmacists will be missed by all who knew and worked with her.”

Talluto led the way in experiential planning and delivery and achieved success in preceptor involvement, continuous program improvement and the expanded use of technology in the experiential program. Among her professional interests were outcomes assessment, professionalization of students and patient-centered service learning.

Talluto was awarded the AACP 2008 Crystal Advanced
Pharmacy Practice Experiences Award for the outstanding model partnership between the academic and practice components for advanced experiential education that she designed. She sustained performance of excellence in experiential education, ranging from preceptor and site development and assessment, to curriculum and course enhancement, to resource expansion on a national level. In 1999, she received the Albert E. Rosica Jr. Memorial Award, American College of Apothecaries.

Talluto was born in Chicago on Oct. 10, 1941, to Ann and Verl C. Elliott. She graduated in the class of 1959 from Maria High School in Chicago.

She was the pharmacist and owner of Frankfort Square Pharmacy, Frankfort, Ill., and Wolf Road Pharmacy in Mokena, Ill., and a member of St. Anthony Catholic Church, Frankfort, Ill. During the time of store ownership from the 1970s to 1990s, she was a preceptor for the University of Illinois for the Advanced Community Pharmacy. Talluto became the director of continuing education at Chicago State University College of Pharmacy in August 2012 after her departure from Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy. Talluto was associate professor of pharmacy practice and assistant dean for experiential education in the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Pharmacy in Richmond, Va. Talluto also had academic positions at the Creighton University School of Pharmacy and Health Professions in Omaha, Neb., and the Midwestern University in Chicago College of Pharmacy.

Talluto received a doctorate of pharmacy degree from the University of Illinois at Chicago, a master’s in health science degree from Governors State University in University Park, and a Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy degree from the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Talluto is survived by her husband, Joseph F. Talluto, daughter Charmaine (Jeffery) Jackson, sons: Joseph V. (Jodie) Talluto and Marc F. (Noel) Talluto, brothers: Richard (Judy) Elliott and Robert (Corrie) Elliott, and 10 grandchildren.

The Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy has several ways to contribute to the future of student pharmacists. Each fund will be utilized to epitomize and symbolize the legacy of the individuals who gave so much to the College.

**Dr. Martin Farias III Memorial Fund**
The Fourth Annual Dr. Martin Farias III Golf Tournament in May 2013, spearheaded by Juan J. Bustamante, Ph.D., assistant professor of pharmaceutical sciences, raised nearly $7,000. Tournament funds go toward the establishment of a Dr. Martin Farias III Endowed Scholarship. To date the fund is at $40,000. Planning is currently underway for next year’s tournament as it is our goal that the fund will reach the Presidential Endowment level in the tournament’s fifth year. To raise $50,000 in five years is a great accomplishment and will allow us to award multiple scholarships in Dr. Farias’ memory.

**Dr. James Robertson Jr. Memorial Fund**
As we start a new academic year the void left by Dr. James Robertson Jr.’s passing is severely felt by staff, faculty and students at the College. Dr. Robertson’s every effort was driven by a desire to create a student-centered College. He secured scholarships and grants to ensure student success. He helped to build our program and our reputation with passion and dedication. Through the years, he worked tirelessly, often staying late into the evening or on weekends and holidays to make certain that what he carried out was done with excellence. The students have decided to continue Dr. Robertson’s mission by working to establish a Presidential Endowment in his memory. With that in mind, a student committee has been formed, responsible for organizing an anniversary memorial in his honor. The event will allow students to support fundraising efforts to bring the Dr. James Robertson Jr. Memorial Fund to the Presidential Endowment level of $50,000 and provide scholarships for future students. The memorial fund is currently at $18,000. Look for information on the event in the next Prescription.

**Dr. Beverly A. Talluto Memorial Fund**
To date, friends and family have contributed $2,300. The College is working toward bringing this memorial fund to an amount to provide scholarships to future students. If you’d like to give, please, write the memorial fund you wish to contribute to on the for or memo line of the check and mail to Leslie Currie, Director for Institutional Advancement, Office of Dean, Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy, MSC 131, 1010 West Avenue B, Kingsville, Texas, 78363.
347 STUDENTS = 176 WOMEN + 171 MEN

STUDENT DIVERSITY (2014-2017)

- White 29%
- Hispanic/Latino 33%
- Asian 34%
- Black/African-American 3%
- Other/Not Specified 1%

309 GRADUATES (2010-2013)

- 16% PURSUE RESIDENCIES
- 44% PRACTICE IN SOUTH TEXAS
- 60% PRACTICE IN UNDERSERVED AREAS

44 FULL-TIME FACULTY MEMBERS
915 PRECEPTORS
165 HEALTH CARE PARTNERSHIPS

(As of August 2013)
SSHP students win at TSHP conference

Student pharmacists received premier awards at the annual Texas Society of Health-System Pharmacists (TSHP) meeting April 26-28 in Austin. Jesse Castillo from Fort Worth, Texas, and Martin Strait from Fairport, N.Y., both fourth-year student pharmacists, won first place against more than 70 teams in the Clinical Skills Competition. The competition included addressing a patient case with multiple health problems. The students were given two hours to address the case in writing, and on the second day the students defended their decision orally. Madeline King, fourth-year student pharmacist from La Porte, Texas, won first place in the Disease State Management competition and Nola Finke, Pharm.D., Class of 2013, from Bryan, Texas, received honorable mention. King and Finke were presented with a patient with a chronic illness. The students were given an agreement with a physician to adjust medications to help the patient. They counseled the patient and composed their response for judging. Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy Student Society of Health-System Pharmacy (SSHP) had 29 students in attendance, 11 two-person teams participated in the Clinical Skills Competition and 10 individual students participated in the Disease State Management Competition. Twelve students presented a poster describing their research work. The Antibiotic Awareness and Immunizations Committee of the SSHP chapter was awarded the Innovation Award. Castillo, King and Purvi Patel of Hamilton, Texas, all fourth-year student pharmacists, received TSHP scholarships. The SSHP chapter president, Regina Roy, fourth-year student pharmacist of Dallas, was installed as chair of the Student Section Executive Committee (SSEC) of TSHP. Jacob George, third-year student pharmacist, and Justin Shanks, second-year student pharmacist, were also installed as members of the SSEC.

Students serve Kleberg County employees

Student pharmacists provided a valuable health care service to more than 90 Kleberg County employees May 3 at the first Kleberg County Health Fair at Dick Kleberg Park in Kingsville, Texas. Kleberg County employees and their families discussed a variety of adult and pediatric health topics with student pharmacists at health education booths. Students performed blood pressure screenings and medication consultations. The Honorable Juan Escobar, Kleberg County judge, said students were competent and professional. In addition, he said it was good for employees to know about their health and medications for prevention. The county plans to do it again next year and expand to include the entire county. The health fair was organized by Kleberg County and the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy students and faculty, and sponsored by Phil Esquivel and Associates.
SSHP shares medication safety with seniors

SSHP provided medication safety information to senior residents on April 26 using the medication use safety training for seniors program provided by the National Council on Patient Information and Education at the City of Corpus Christi Garden Senior Center. Members of the Garden Senior Center asking questions during the Medication Use Safety Training program provided by now third-year professional pharmacy students, Kyle Parker, Helen Cantu, Katie Taylor and Allison Bryce. There were 50 seniors in attendance, and in addition to the MUST program, the seniors participated in the following screening tests: HgbA1c, total cholesterol, BP and BG.

Students participate in drug dependencies conference

Bree Watzak, Pharm.D., assistant professor of pharmacy practice, attended the University of Utah School on Alcoholism and other Drug Dependencies, an APhA-sponsored conference, with three second-year professional student pharmacists, Nicole Garza, Annie Lozano and Jessica Schneider, in June 2013 in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Fourth-year student takes second in TPA statewide patient counseling

Three fourth-year professional pharmacy students competed on July 26 in the statewide patient counseling competition at the Texas Pharmacy Association Conference & Expo in Frisco, Texas. Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy state finalists were Divya Manavalan of Houston, Madeline King of La Porte, Texas, and Amber Bacak of Lake Jackson, Texas. Manavalan placed second in the statewide patient counseling program. “It was such an honor to represent our school,” she said.

Conference honors SNPhA in Top 9 in nation

The Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy Student National Pharmaceutical Association (SNPhA) brought home more than $6,800 in scholarships and awards and were honored in the Top 9 organizations in the nation. At the National Pharmacy Association opening session July 27 in New Orleans, third-year professional pharmacy student Meghan Dorosk of Houston received the $2,000 Kroger Co. Endowed Scholarship and fourth-year professional pharmacy student Sarah Shanks of Spring, Texas, received $1,000 for the Dr. Horace & Ethel Bynum Endowed Scholarship. The chapter president, fourth-year professional pharmacy student Purvi Patel of Hamilton, Texas, received $1,000 for the J.B. Hills Chapter President of the Year award, $2,000 for the Wal-Mart-National Pharmacy Association Future Leaders in Pharmacy award, and Wal-Mart covered her conference registration fee.
Area students participate in workshop

The Coastal Bend Health Education Center-Texas A&M Health Science Center sponsored the Health Careers Discovery Camp 2013 at the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy on June 12-14. More than 30 students in the seventh and eighth grades from 15 surrounding middle and high schools participated in 13 hands-on workshops facilitated by health care professionals from the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy, Coastal Bend Health Education Center, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, Del Mar College, CHRISTUS Spohn, Kindred Hospital and HCA. Students competed on a comprehensive assessment that tested the knowledge they acquired over the course of the camp. The student with the top score won a $50 Barnes and Noble gift card; second place won a $25 B&N gift card, and third place won a $15 B&N gift card. More than 85 families attended the camp closing ceremony and reception Thursday. During the closing ceremony, a slide show highlighting the camp’s activities was displayed, and winners of the competition were awarded their prizes. Each student who participated in the camp received a certificate of achievement.

Fourth-year professional student pharmacist Rocio Olmedo of Laredo, Texas, has been selected as the winner of the Texas Pharmacy Foundation Scholarship for 2013. This $1,000 scholarship was presented to Olmedo during the awards and recognition luncheon at the Texas Pharmacy Association Annual Meeting and Expo on July 26, 2013, in Frisco, Texas.

Mark Bremick served as the college’s faculty delegate to the House of Delegates and participated in the Wal-Mart Scholars Program as faculty mentor to Amber Bacak, fourth-year professional student pharmacist. Bacak was one of 85 student and faculty recipients for the 2013 AACP Wal-Mart Scholars Program. The program provides $1,000 travel scholarships to attend the AACP Annual Meeting and the AACP Teachers Seminar at the AACP conference in Chicago, Ill. Bacak said: “Going to the conference was an enriching experience and Mark Bremick was gracious enough to serve as my mentor. It was such an honor to be the first Texas A&M student to represent our college at the conference.”

Fourth-year professional student pharmacist Thongsamuth (Bee) Noymany of Fort Worth, Texas, was awarded the Walgreens Diversity and Inclusion Scholarship in the amount of $2,000. The Walgreens Diversity Scholarship is awarded to a student who embraces diversity and promotes diversity and inclusion initiatives on campus. Fourth-year professional student pharmacists Margaret Dang of Stockton, Calif., and John Bangsal of Houston, and second-year professional student pharmacist Elizabeth Nkwocha of Dallas were awarded the Walgreens Diversity Scholarship, for $1,000 each. The Walgreens Diversity Scholarship is awarded to students of an underrepresented minority group with an interest in community pharmacy. The Walgreens Diversity Scholarship Program, established in 2009, is committed to supporting programs and initiatives which fosters diversity and inclusion within the pharmacy profession and communities in which it serves. The first scholarship was awarded in the spring of 2009 in the amount of $2,000. This year the Walgreens Diversity Scholarship increased their commitment to include three $1,000 scholarships.

Amy Morrow, fourth-year professional student pharmacist, received a $1,000 Kappa Psi Foundation Scholarship as she served as the Epsilon Epsilon Chapter delegate at the 56th Grand Council Convention July 30 to Aug. 2 in St. Petersburg, Fla.
Brandon Barnes of San Angelo, Texas, and Madeline A. King of La Porte, Texas, both fourth-year professional pharmacy students at the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy, will be on a six-week advanced pharmacy practice experiences elective rotation in February and March 2014 at an Indian Health Service (IHS) unit at Ship Rock, N.M.

They will practice clinical knowledge and skills at the Northern Navajo Medical Center more so than in many other settings.

“They will have access to the Indian Health Service Electronic Health Record,” said U.S. Public Health Service Lt. Justin Markley, Pharm.D., M.S., a pharmacist for the IHS at the Northern Navajo Medical Center. “They will learn how to review patients’ medical and medication history and suggest interventions to the medical staff.”

In addition, they will spend time at decentralized pharmacy stations during clinic hours as well as fielding drug information and formulary questions from the providers seeing patients in the outpatient clinics.

Markley, who graduated in the inaugural Class of 2010 at the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy, coordinates advanced pharmacy practice experiences with a variety of colleges of pharmacy that give students the opportunity to see the way clinical pharmacy is practiced with the IHS.

“They will also receive a lot of patient counseling opportunities, as we counsel on all new and/or adjusted medications including any over-the-counter medications we may dispense,” Dr. Markley said.

The Shiprock Service Unit is the largest unit serving The Navajo Nation in the Four Corners area of the U.S. where New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado and Utah meet.

The IHS provides health services for 2.1 million American Indians and Alaska natives residing on or near reservations.
“I am looking forward to a unique experience during my rotation with the Indian Health Service,” Barnes said. “IHS uses a computer system which allows pharmacists to see complete histories of patients including past medical history, medications, immunizations and any lab values from hospital visits. This access allows pharmacists to use their clinical skills in a way that improves patient care.”

Barnes is also looking forward to learning about a culture that is different from his own.

“I feel that a pharmacist should be compassionate and understanding of the practices and beliefs of different cultures, and should understand how these beliefs can impact medication use and patient-provider interactions,” he said.

The Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy has a strong commitment to cultural diversity and to meeting the needs of the culturally diverse student population.

“He will have a variety of opportunities to learn about the Navajo culture,” Dr. Markley said. “In general, the Navajo are a very friendly and welcoming group. He will have interactions with Navajo staff and patients every day. He will be encouraged to spend some of his time off traveling the reservation and learning more about the culture, taking in the beautiful landscape, and enjoying the abundance of Navajo art.”

King spent six weeks in summer 2012 at the El Reno Indian Health Center, an outpatient clinic, in El Reno, Okla.

“I think it’s interesting and important to understand cultural diversity because it makes you a well-rounded pharmacist,” King said.

King’s favorite part of pharmacy practice is the interaction with patients and with other health care providers. She was part of a team where she could facilitate the exchange of information to physicians to optimize patient care.

Both Barnes and King look forward to patient interactions to benefit them professionally and personally.

“I want to work for public health,” King said. “I think preventive health is important, especially vaccines. It’s important to educate people about preventative care.”

According to the IHS, the American Indian and Alaska Native people have long experienced lower health status when compared with other Americans. Lower life expectancy and the disproportionate disease burden exist perhaps because of inadequate education, disproportionate poverty, discrimination in the delivery of health services, and cultural differences. These are broad quality of life issues rooted in economic adversity and poor social conditions.
Students pursuing a doctor of pharmacy degree have an opportunity each summer to give back to the nation’s veterans through the Veterans Affairs Learning Opportunity Residency (VALOR) program.

Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy students have filled half of the summer positions for the past two years to serve a unique population of veterans at the Michael E. DeBakey Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Houston.

The VALOR program is designed to attract academically successful students of doctor of pharmacy programs to work at a Veteran’s Affairs (VA) facility as pharmacists. This program gives outstanding students the opportunity to develop competencies in clinical pharmacy while at an approved VA facility.

“Our pharmacy VALOR students have the opportunity to work with our outpatient, inpatient and clinical pharmacy services,” said Richard M. Cadle, Pharm.D., BCPS (AQ ID), FASHP, clinical pharmacy manager at the Houston facility. “They learn the responsibilities and duties of a Michael E. DeBakey Veterans Affairs pharmacist. This allows them to gain more experience and expertise as a future pharmacist. Pharmacy VALOR program is designed to increase participant’s clinical skills, clinical judgment and critical thinking while caring for our nation’s veterans.”

Arlis Hamann Jr. of San Antonio and Courtney J. Landry of Richmond, Texas, both graduated in May as part of the Class of 2013, were selected for the VALOR program in 2012.

“I want to serve our nations veteran’s and their families that have made sacrifices and indirectly served me,” Hamann said. “The VALOR program provided me with an opportunity to continue serving our nations veteran’s while providing me with an exceptional educational experience.”

The program gives each student a unique set of skills to reach the needs of the community.

Landry said the VALOR program was a tremendous learning experience.

“During the past year, I worked with pharmacists in inpatient and outpatient pharmacy settings, research pharmacy, internal medicine, ambulatory care, infectious disease and HIV clinic, mental health, and home-based primary care,” Landry said.

Through the VALOR program, Landry found that she wanted to continue to serve this population through clinical pharmacy, and applied for residency. She started her first-year post-graduate pharmacy practice residency this summer at the DeBakey center in Houston.

Madeline A. King of La Porte, Texas, and Mila Moroz of Houston, both fourth-year professional student pharmacists at the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy, were selected to fill two of four slots for the VALOR program this summer. This opportunity puts them in the middle of the action where they plan to start their careers after graduation.

“One-to-one preceptor relationships help students build confidence in their pharmacy skills, and VALOR students have a unique opportunity...
Student uses sound clinical judgment with patient’s care at heart

This past summer 2013, third-year professional student pharmacist Kristy Walker worked in the Veterans Affairs Learning Opportunities Residency (VALOR) program at the Central Texas Veterans Healthcare System in Temple, Texas. She spent most of her time working in the VA’s anticoagulation clinic, which is one of the ambulatory or outpatient clinics.

Walker managed warfarin dosing, adjusting weekly dosing as needed. She gave initial and follow-up counseling for anticoagulation—the hindering of blood clotting—medications, offering more counseling when bridging became necessary.

Although the VALOR program is highly competitive and difficult to get in, Charles Douglas, Ph.D., assistant professor of pharmacy practice at Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy, said Walker would be a great asset for the program even after only completing two years of college.

“Students who excel don’t just do the homework, don’t just get good grades. Kristy proved she was more than that,” Douglas said. “She passed my first test: she knocked on my door one day and asked me, ‘what can I do better?’”

Walker recognized the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy as a major factor in helping her prepare for the prestigious spot she earned in the VALOR program.

“College helped me prepare for my internship by teaching me how to manage disease states,” Walker said. “Although each hospital has its own policies and protocols for managing therapy, it comes down to basing your treatment options on sound clinical judgment. You work with the patient’s best interests at heart.”

One thing Walker was able to experience was being the head of her own class.

“I was able to teach a patient education class on smoking cessation. The veterans had already set a quit date, so I provided patient counseling on the VA’s formulary and nonformulary medications to help quit smoking,” Walker said. “Some of these medications have contraindications, or a symptom or side effect that makes a particular treatment or procedure inadvisable. Even though it was up to the patient to choose a smoking cessation agent, the pharmacist had to decide which one was best to dispense.”

The time spent in the VALOR program allowed Walker to have many opportunities that she might not have been given otherwise.

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The time spent in the VALOR program allowed Walker to have many opportunities that she might not have been given otherwise.

She was able to analyze medical profiles and offered suggestions on how to reduce polypharmacy to physicians and patients. Time was also spent changing medications and reducing pill burden using clinical practice guidelines, as well as utilizing the different practices that she had learned during her time at the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy.

Dr. Douglas, a mentor to Walker, said: “It is not just a regular internship or summer job. The VALOR program allows students the opportunity to earn more than 400 hours of experience. The program is also beneficial because it does not just train students to work as pharmacists; it allows them to see how the VA has pharmacists that also act as clinicians.”

According to Walker, the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy prepared her for much of her time in the VALOR program, but the program assisted in her learning how to apply the knowledge to real world situations.

“I knew about anticoagulation through my education at the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy, but this experience at the VA really helped me appreciate the challenges and complexities a clinical pharmacist may come across when managing anticoagulation therapy,” Walker said. “I wrote a patient education brochure on the risks associated with benzodiazepine use in post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) patients, providing alternative therapy options to manage and possibly treat PTSD.”

Walker will return to the Central Texas Veterans Healthcare System for a second internship in the summer of 2014.

Story by Arturo Niño, junior English major at Texas A&M University-Kingsville
From Fiji islands to the Wild Horse Desert, Leslie Currie ramps up development for college

When you think of joining the Peace Corps, you might imagine dropping everything you grew up knowing to adopt the lifestyle and customs of a new culture. That might not seem ideal, but that is what Leslie Currie did. She joined the organization with her husband, John Leonard, in 2008 and traveled to Fiji where she was placed in a traditional Fijian village in rural Viti Levu.

While there, she gained experiences and insight on the lives of others by living with the locals, learning their language and practicing their traditions. As a business volunteer, she taught fundamental business skills, personal finance, project design and management, and even an aerobics class. Not only did she improve the lives of others through the Peace Corps, she was also able to help the organization. Currie assisted in the training of new volunteers and developed feasibility study documents that are still used by the Peace Corps today. After being completely submerged in another culture, she left the South Pacific with a broader outlook on life and a desire to continue learning.

Currie, the Director of Institutional Advancement for the Texas A&M Health Science Center Irma Lerma Rangel College of Pharmacy, uses these life experiences as the inspiration to find new challenges every day.

Currie grew up in a small town in Oregon with dreams of eventually getting out and experiencing life in a larger, busier place. She followed through on this desire and left the Pacific Northwest to attend the University of Dallas, where she obtained both her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in 2004 and 2006, respectively.

“I received my bachelor’s degree in art – painting actually – with a concentration in psychology,” Currie said. “After a while, I decided that being an artist may not be the best choice for me, so I went back and pursued a master’s degree in business administration, with a focus on nonprofit business management.”

The time used on studying paid off for Currie.

In 2005, she landed her first job at the American Heart Association (AHA) and slowly worked her way up the ladder. By 2007, she was the Auction Director of one of the largest wine auctions in the southwest, the Côtes de Coeur. In her final year working on the event it raised more money than any of the AHA wine auctions in the past.

Currie left the AHA in 2008 to join the Peace Corps but that did not end career with the organization—in 2010 she returned to the AHA, this time in Seattle and as a Heart Walk Director—but after two years she sought new challenges to help her grow.

In April 2013, Currie accepted a job as the Director of Institutional Advancement at the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy.

As a business volunteer, Leslie Currie, Director of Institutional Advancement, taught fundamental business skills, personal finance, project design and management, and even an aerobics class to people in a traditional Fijian village in rural Viti Levu.
Job opportunities

Please note that listings are as current as the publication date of this newsletter. Please check with company to verify the position is still available. All positions listed are gathered from pharmacy organization websites and can be found through their websites.

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<td>Executive Director</td>
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“Although I could have continued with the heart association,” she said. “I saw this as a new opportunity for me, something that was a challenge. I had never worked in higher education before and I wanted that experience.”

As the Director of Institutional Advancement, Currie is responsible for directing fundraising initiatives for the college, planning events, managing donors and volunteers, helping to secure grants, and assisting with alumni affairs. She also has plans in trying to expand relations and interactions among students, faculty and alumni.

“The most important thing is keeping everyone connected,” she said. “We can create a network of strong community relationships and professional contacts for our College through events, webpages, Facebook, Twitter, any avenue to reach out.”

Currie has plans to help the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy excel in the future as much as it has in the past, hoping to secure new endowments, foundation grants and individual donations.

“I believe more endowments will be the key to our success,” Currie said. “If more of our students receive scholarships that will help with recruitment. The more endowments we have the more competitive we are as an institution.”

Story by Arturo Niño, junior English major at Texas A&M University-Kingsville
**Professor shares research at Harvard conference**

Mahua Choudhury, Ph.D., assistant professor in the department of pharmaceutical sciences at Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy, shared her research at the sixth international Epigenomics, Sequencing & SNiPs-2013 meeting on Chromatin Methylation to Disease Biology and Theranostics on July 10-11 at the Joseph B. Martin Conference Center at Harvard Medical School in Boston, Mass. Dr. Choudhury’s research focuses on the creation of an epigenetic biomarker test strip to indicate whether a pregnant woman at a very early stage of gestation could be at risk of preeclampsia. She joined more than 100 other research scientists from around the world at the conference to collaborate on current and future research opportunities.

Andrea Luce, Pharm.D., assistant professor of pharmacy practice, received the Dedication to Teaching Award on June 1 awarded by The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston Infectious Diseases Fellows.

Fadi M. Alkhateeb, B.S.Pharm., MBA, Ph.D., associate professor and director of assessment, was selected to serve as a member of editorial board for the International Journal of Management, Economics and Social Sciences.

Fadi M. Alkhateeb, B.S.Pharm., MBA, Ph.D., associate professor and director of assessment, has been invited to serve as a member on the 2013-14 AACP Program Committee.

Ola Oyetayo, Pharm.D., assistant professor of pharmacy practice, was elected president of the Heart of Texas Society of Health-System Pharmacists.

Elaine Demps, Ph.D., director of instructional technology, was elected to the AACP Technology in Pharmacy Education and Learning (TiPEL) Special Interest Group (SIG) for 2013-2015 and attended the AACP TiPEL SIG business meeting at the AACP conference in Chicago, Ill. She will serve as secretary.

M. Delwar Hussain, Ph.D., associate professor of pharmaceutical sciences, served as a chair-elect of the pharmaceutics section at the AACP conference in Chicago, Ill. He also attended and participated the Council of Sections and Teachers of Pharmaceutics business meeting.

M. Delwar Hussain, Ph.D., associate professor of pharmaceutical sciences, was selected as associate editor for the Journal Aging and Neurodegeneration (AND), Research Publisher Inc. http://www.researchpub.org/journal/and/and.html

M. Delwar Hussain, Ph.D., associate professor of pharmaceutical sciences, served as Organizing Committee Member and Moderator in First American Association of Bangladeshi Pharmaceutical Scientist Convention, Greenbelt, MD, June 8, 2013.

**new hires**

Teresa Olszewska, Postdoctoral Research Associate in Pharmaceutical Sciences

Arezo Noormohammadi, Pharm.D., Assistant Professor of Pharmacy Practice

Steven Gonzalez, Program Assistant in the Office of Experiential Education

David Potter, Ph.D., Professor and Chair of Pharmaceutical Sciences

Gregory Sawyer, Ph.D., Assistant Dean for Student Affairs
Publications

Elaine Demps, Ph.D., director of instructional technology, had majority of her dissertation (chapters three, methodology, and four, findings) featured as a case study in a book “The Constructivist Credo” by Y. S. Lincoln and E. G. Guba. The book was published in April 2013.


Presentations


