What’s Next: > Intern Recruitment Fair on Feb. 11-12 at the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy. > Class of 2014 graduation on May 24 in the Steinke Physical Education Center.

On the Cover: P2s celebrate donning white coats
More than 80 second-year professional student pharmacists joined in a ceremonial event on Sept. 7 where they received their white coats as a symbol of clinical service and care at the Edward N. Jones Auditorium.

Students reach South Texas in Project SHINE
Project SHINE, an interactive health clinic that focuses on servicing indigent populations in the Rio Grande Valley while helping students gain hands-on patient care experience, was in Penitas, Texas.

Texas A&M Health Science Center honored at Aggie game
Several Texas A&M Health Science Center leaders were on Kyle Field as the audience applauded the achievements of the center at the A&M-UTEP game. Included in the leadership, was Steven Peterson, Ph.D., professor and associate dean for academic affairs, who enjoyed the Aggie Spirit.
Howdy!

As we continue to grow and prepare our students for the challenging and ever-changing pharmacy profession, we remain committed to providing an enhanced and student-centered learning environment focused on active participation in and out of the classroom. Our faculty and staff empower students to hone their patient care skills through experiential opportunities through volunteering in the community; providing screenings, medication therapy management; and immunizations at health fairs, and mentoring children.

Your commitment to our students, through sustained and consistent support, is truly appreciated and has been essential in delivering our mission. In this time of global economic strain institutions of higher education rely even more on the generosity of private citizens, corporations and foundations. We know the successes and accomplishments we celebrate, the optimism we have for the future of our program, and the energy we feel on campus and in our community is thanks to you. With your continued support, we embark on a period of growth and excellence: diversifying the campus, developing signature programs, establishing research and drug development, and increasing admissions and enrollment. The results – an expansive network of exceptionally trained and patient-focused pharmacists, who are reshaping the landscape of health care in South Texas.

As we prepare to accept the Class of 2018, we will be interviewing more than 300 potential future leaders for the pharmacy profession. It is an honor to be training exceptional leaders from each of the now eight cohorts who are gaining hands-on, patient-centered health care educations. I look forward to expanding our exceptional teaching strategies to teach more professional student pharmacists in the years to come.

I am humbled as I reflect on the decade I have been able to be your dean, and I look forward to the many years to come as we tackle the challenges ahead together in improving the quality of life and health care for patients and discovering beneficial medications that aid in patient care.

Brett Giroir shares his vision

Brett Giroir, Interim Executive Vice President and CEO of the Texas A&M Health Science Center, spoke with professional student pharmacists and answered their questions on Nov. 21 at Dean’s Forum. Giroir also shared his vision for the future of the Texas A&M Health Science Center with faculty and staff.
Members of the Rio Grande Valley community, preceptors, students and alumni gathered at the first Dean’s Town Hall on Oct. 25 at the Art Gallery on Main in McAllen, Texas. Guests had the opportunity to ask questions of Indra K. Reddy, Ph.D., professor and founding dean of the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy. The dean reported that 39 percent of the alumni were from South Texas, more than 45 percent of the alumni are practicing in South Texas. Currently, 39 percent of the students enrolled in the program are from South Texas. He answered questions from the audience about the student expansion, the reunification of Texas A&M Health Science Center with the Texas A&M flagship, and the pharmaceutical consortium. Two third-year professional student pharmacists from McAllen, Javier Saenz and Melissa Hinojosa shared their experiences with Project SHINE. The next day, more than 20 preceptors were offered training at the School of Rural Public Health McAllen Campus.

**What’s next:**
Dean’s Town Hall at 7 a.m. Jan. 17 at the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy in Kingsville.
The battle lines were drawn on Nov. 18 as the college prepared for war – penny war. The winning class won an hour of free time Jan. 16.

The collective effort of the Class of 2015, Class of 2016, Class of 2017 and the faculty and staff raised a total of $1,533.27 for the Dr. James Robertson Jr. Memorial Scholarship Fund.

Although the faculty and staff jug contained the most pennies and the most total money, the sum of positive points and negative points of the jugs fell into the Class of 2015’s favor.

The contribution to the scholarship fund was accomplished by working together toward a common goal. In other words, “Team Work Makes the Dream Work.”

In memory of James Robertson Jr., Ph.D., and his legacy at the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy, professional student pharmacists are organizing the Ties and Tennis Shoes Memorial 5K Walk/Run on Feb. 21, 2014. Through the event, penny wars and a T-shirt contest, students aim to raise enough funds for the Dr. James Robertson Jr. Memorial Fund to provide an endowed scholarship in honor of Robertson.

Several students submitted T-shirt designs. The winner of the design contest was Angela Nguyen, third-year professional student pharmacist. The Class of 2015 received 2,000 pennies for the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy Penny Wars. The T-shirt will be worn by patrons at the event. The student-driven competitions were intended to increase awareness and excitement about the upcoming 5K and raise additional funds to support the memorial scholarship.

The Penny Wars were Nov. 18 to Nov. 26 between the three classes, faculty and staff currently at the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy. Each of the three classes, faculty and staff had jars in the Dean’s Office and place pennies in their respective jars counting as positive points. After tallying the positive and negative points, the winner of the penny wars was revealed and all funds went toward the Dr. James Robertson Jr. Memorial Scholarship Fund.

Robertson was a cornerstone at the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy. He died after complications from pneumonia on Nov. 21, 2012, in Corpus Christi, Texas.

"A student oriented event would make Dr. Robertson smile,” said Kelsi Gulick, third-year professional student pharmacist. "After all, Dr. Robertson loved his students and this school."

variety of free services such as cholesterol tests, diabetes check, bone density check and a body fat analysis.

Students elect Pharmacy Student Council
The leaders for the Pharmacy Student Council were elected to serve the student body. Javier Saenz, third-year professional student pharmacist, was elected to serve as president of the Pharmacy Student Council. Amanda Kennedy, second-year professional student pharmacist, will serve as vice president. Bryan Donald, second-year professional pharmacy student, will serve as secretary and Mahmoud Sabawi, third-year professional pharmacy student, will serve as treasurer.

Class of 2011 grad shares about new practitioners
Mike De Luna, Pharm. D., pharmacist with Scott & White Hospital in Temple, Texas, spoke with professional student pharmacists with Student Society of Health-system Pharmacy (SSHP) on behalf of the New Practitioner Executive Committee on Oct. 23 at the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy.

Clinical skills winners to advance to state
The top three finishing teams from the tightly contested 2013 ASHP Local Clinical Skills on Sept. 25-26 were: first place: Amber Bacak, Ashley Fox; second place: Regina Roy, Marium Kabir; third place: Rachel Musgrove, Kim Evans. Nineteen teams competed with students from all four classes being represented in the two-part case-based competition. As the winning team, Bacak and Fox will represent the college at the 2013 ASHP National Clinical Skills competition in Orlando, Fla., at the 2013 ASHP Midyear Clinical Meeting in December.

Students take back drugs in community
Several of the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy students helped to take back drugs at various locations in the Coastal Bend area Oct. 26. In the four previous Take-Back events, the DEA in conjunction with our state, local and tribal law enforcement partners have collected more than 2 million pounds (1,018 tons) of prescription medication removing them from circulation. Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy students who participated in the Coastal Bend area were: Annie Lozano, Adaku Onwubuya, Jennifer Hicks, Daniel Benavides, Katie K. Taylor, Daniel Tapia, Gordon Ang, Lori Watkins, Chelsea Garcia, Kris Newman, Monica Partida.

What is your reason for choosing pharmacy as a career?
When I was 11, my mother underwent a triple bypass surgery; soon, doctor visits became frequent. At the clinic, I could not enter the patient room with my mother, but at the pharmacy I was allowed to experience what helping a patient was like. The pharmacist became a symbol of hope that acknowledged me and my mother. From those moments, I knew that I wanted to help and comfort families like he did for us.
Students donate more than 700 cans of food

More than 700 cans of food were collected by the professional student pharmacists at the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy. They are competing with fellow pharmacy schools in Texas. Jessica Schneider, third-year professional student pharmacist, led the effort for the Texas Pharmacy Association Canned Food Drive. The students collected canned food donations for two weeks in hopes of donating as much food to those in need in Kingsville that they could. But the giving did not stop there. The faculty at the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy matched the students’ donations. “I suggested we match the student donations because I feel like it is the least that we can do,” said Ayman Hamouda, assistant professor of pharmaceutical sciences. “Why tell the students that it is good to give back, but not do it ourselves. As a staff member, I feel like we do not need to be thanked for what we are doing, we do not deserve the recognition. The students are doing all of the work.” The students gave the donations to the First Baptist Church in Kingsville, Texas, for the annual holiday food distribution. Food boxes, including a turkey dinner, will be distributed to the community Nov. 25 for the holiday. “The first Saturday of each month we distribute food to the community,” Linda Koehler, financial secretary at the church. When the church first started in 2010, there was a small number of families who needed the donations. “Now we are serving more than 100 families each month. We are hoping that this Thanksgiving we can help out at least 200. We want to give to those that are really in need.”

Students support diabetes awareness day

Rebekah Martinez, chair for the SNPhA Diabetes Committee, encouraged students to wear a shade of blue, a color that represents diabetes awareness, for Diabetes Awareness Day. The professional student pharmacists at the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy wore blue clothing in recognition of Diabetes Awareness Day on Nov. 14.

First-year students share health topics at fair

Seventh annual IPPE P1 Health Fair in the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy lobby. First-year professional student pharmacists have been working in groups this fall semester to create pamphlets and posters on the Healthy People Health Disparities 2020 topics to present the public. The project was a joint collaboration between four first-year classes: Clinical Communications, Intro to Patient Care, IPPE and Pharmacoepidemiology/Public Health. This event is every fall semester giving first-year students an opportunity to share information on health care related topics.

Scholarships ease cost of education for students

A record number of professional student pharmacists at the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy applied for scholarships this academic year and several were awarded this week from various donors. The students earned the scholarships based on the basis of their scholastic record, contributions to their community, and other pertinent criteria.

First-year professional student pharmacists Sasha Cruz and Jeffrey Moran both of San Antonio, Texas, received a $1,000 Bexar County Pharmacy Endowed Scholarship. Jose Garcia of Kingsville, Texas, and Ruth Gonzalez of Eagle Pass, Texas, both second-year profession student pharmacists, and Brittany Bateman of Boerne, Texas, and Pamela Bosse of Sugar Land, Texas,
Students receive more than $600,000 in scholarships

More than 150 professional student pharmacists received, on average, $4,000 each in scholarship money to help defray educational costs.

The Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy provides a number of scholarships that support its mission of providing health care training for students who serve the underserved areas of Texas.

“This award means more to me than words could express,” said Nicole Garza of Corpus Christi, Texas, third-year professional student pharmacists. “I am honored to have the privilege of receiving something that lightens the financial burden of achieving my goals and dreams.”

The college has received the funding each academic year since 2012 as part of a four-year, $2.6 million grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services-Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) under the Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students (SDS) Program. It is used to supplement the educational costs of qualified students attending the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy and provide much-needed assistance to those qualified students pursuing their professional studies in the college.

This year, the HRSA grant funding was reduced after the federal sequester. Students were awarded $650,000 in the 2012-2013 academic year, and $609,635 in the 2013-2014 academic year. Approximately 100 first-, second- and third-year professional student pharmacists received more than $3,950. Fourth-year professional student pharmacists, 53 total, were awarded more than $4,100.

“These scholarships are significant to our deserving students to successfully complete their education and training, affording them to offset their expenses and to lessen their financial burden,” said Indra K. Reddy, Ph.D., professor and founding dean of the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy.

These programs fit in well with the pharmacy college, which was created in 2006 by the Texas Legislature in response to the shortage of pharmacists in the border region. The scholarships do not have to be paid back and the cost of professional programs, such as the doctorate of pharmacy at the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy, adds up for many students.

“All of my college education has been paid with loans, as I do not qualify for grants and my parents cannot afford to pay for my tuition and living expenses,” said second-year professional student pharmacist Ruth Gonzalez of Eagle Pass, Texas. “My debt will continue to increase until I graduate. This scholarship is greatly appreciated, as it will reduce my financial burden and help me further my education to achieve my professional goals.”

The HHS Health Resource and Services Administration health professions programs emphasize providing health care to the underserved. For instance, almost 40 percent of students trained by HRSA-funded programs complete some of their training in underserved areas, which has been shown to increase the likelihood that the individual will remain and practice in those areas.

Approximately 40 percent of graduates to date from the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy have remained in South Texas to practice pharmacy.

Fourth-year professional student pharmacist Purvi Patel has received this scholarship each year for college.

“The Scholarship for Disadvantaged Students in particular has definitely been a sizable award over the last four years and although I’ll still have a big financial burden to tackle when I graduate, every little bit helps,” said Patel, who is from Hamilton, Texas.

More than half of the students participating in HRSA-funded programs are from disadvantaged backgrounds. Studies have demonstrated that individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds also are more likely to practice in underserved areas.

Fourth-year professional student pharmacist Thongsamuth Bee Noymany appreciates the grant award.

“I plan on utilizing the scholarship towards my tuition and living expenses,” said Noymany, who is from Fort Worth, Texas. “It has been a big help in being able to focus on school and studies, while not worrying about having to work as much as I normally do.”

Two students received $5,000 from the 2013-2014 Hispanic Scholarship Fund/CVS Caremark Scholarship

“This will help me tremendously,” said second-year professional student pharmacist Monica Ayala of Sugar Land, Texas. “I am thankful that I was awarded the scholarship. The award will help me financially and allow me to pay for a part of my education. It will benefit me in the long run and help me pursue my dreams of becoming the first pharmacist in my family.”

Sasha Cruz, first-year professional student pharmacist, is thankful for the $5,000 scholarship because it allows her to continue her education at the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy.

Founded in 1975, the Hispanic scholarship fund is a leading organization to assist Hispanic’s in overcoming the barrier that sometimes prevents them from earning a degree. The Hispanic scholarship fund partnered with CVS Pharmacy to provide a scholarship of $5,000 to a student that met the criteria that was given. The scholarship is open to students that are pursuing a doctorate of pharmacy degree and that are in their first or second year of a professional pharmacy program.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT >> SAMANTHA JO PERALES | Alamo, Texas

What is your reason for choosing pharmacy as a career?

Becoming a pharmacist is the perfect opportunity for me to make an impact on the place where I grew up. I want to give back to them in any way possible. As a pharmacist, I will get the opportunity to affect many people and make their lives better. It is also rewarding to know that the pharmacy profession is one of the most trusted professions.
third-year professional student pharmacists, each received a $1,000 Scholarship from the CVS Caremark Charitable Trust.

“I am honored to have received this scholarship. I have worked for CVS since 2004,” Bosse said. “It took me longer than most people to realize that pharmacy is what I am meant to do, but since then, I have given 120 percent effort in my studies. I am very thankful that CVS supports students as they are learning to become pharmacists.”

Fourth-year profession student pharmacists received scholarships. Rocio Olmedo of Laredo, Texas, was awarded the $1,000 D.D. Hachar Trust and the Lamar-Bruni Vergara Endowed Scholarship and Divya Manavalan of Houston, Texas, received the George Family Educational Scholarship. Rachel Musgrove of Sweetwater, Texas, received a $1,500 scholarship from the P.M. Rangel Family Scholarship Fund.

Second-year professional student pharmacist Ann Nguyen of Dallas, Texas, third-year professional student pharmacist Amanda Fuentes of Corpus Christi, Texas, and fourth-year professional student pharmacist Purvi Patel of Hamilton, Texas, each received a $1,000 Walgreens Diversity Scholarship.

First-year professional student pharmacist Monica Partida of Edinburg, Texas, received the $2,000 Walgreens Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Scholarship. Second-year professional student pharmacist Elizabeth Nkwocha of Houston, Texas, received the $1,000 Tarrant County Pharmacy Association Endowed Scholarship and the recipient of the Moore’s Pharmacy Inc./Texas Pharmacy Foundation Endowed Scholarship was third-year professional student pharmacist Katie Taylor of Menard, Texas.

“I am very grateful for being selected to receive the award,” Nkwocha said. “I know there were other qualified candidates, so being chosen is very gratifying. This scholarship will ensure that the high level of education provided by Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy is adequately funded. This will help achieve my goal of making a positive, direct impact on the community that I will serve in the near future.”

Annie Lozano, a third-year professional student pharmacist, was awarded the Wal-Mart Pharmacy Division Scholarship.

“I am proud to be the recipient of the scholarship,” Lozano said. “When I was informed that I was chosen to receive this scholarship, I truly felt honored. In addition to the fact that many qualified students applied for the scholarship, I was delighted to be awarded a scholarship from one of the companies I would potentially like to work for in the future.”

Since beginning her pharmacy career as a pharmacy technician, Lozano has wanted to work for Wal-Mart. “Because they were not hiring at the time, I started working for another retail pharmacy where I was able to get four years of experience,” she said. Fortunately, she was offered a summer internship with Wal-Mart which she accepted in June.

Currently, Annie works for a Wal-Mart pharmacy in a small community where she and the pharmacists know many of the patients by name.

Lozano, a Premont, Texas, native, was born and raised in a small, close-knit community, so that type of environment has always been favored by her. She often remembers going to the local pharmacy as a child and watching the pharmacist interact with all of the patients as if they were his or her own family members.

To Lozano, this type of family-like relationship is what makes the pharmacist the No. 1 trusted profession. This same pharmacist-patient interaction is also the main reason why she says she chose community pharmacy as her career upon graduating from the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy.

“I will continue to work with Wal-Mart once a week, despite my rigorous school schedule,” Lozano said. “This scholarship and the opportunity they have given me will help ease the financial burden and allow me to put more focus in my studies so I could learn as much as possible and become a successful pharmacist.”

College receives $10,000 grant for diversity

From left to right, Roy Armstrong, R.Ph., Walgreens market pharmacy director from Houston, and Oscar L. Ortiz, R.Ph., Walgreens pharmacy supervisor in Corpus Christi, give a $10,000 grant to support increasing diversity among professional student pharmacists to Indra K. Reddy, Ph.D., professor and founding dean of the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy. The grant from Walgreens funds the college’s 2013-2014 scholarships, programming and curriculum initiatives to support increasing diversity among professional student pharmacists.
Behind-the-scenes internship provides student pharmacists with corporate view

As the role of the pharmacist continues to evolve, student pharmacists at the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy prepare for all possibilities. For the summer of 2013, 62 second- and third-year professional student pharmacists, more than one third of the two-class total, participated in internships with hospitals, research labs and community pharmacies.

Two third-year professional student pharmacists spent their summer at the corporate headquarters at H-E-B, known as the Arsenal, in San Antonio.

H-E-B pharmacy has a summer internship program for first-year student pharmacists where interns practice at regional stores.

“We have about 30 to 50 interns across Texas,” said Jose Cervantes, Pharm.D., clinical manager of pharmacy professional services. “Once they complete this internship, students are qualified to apply for the second-year internship. This program exposes them to all the different aspects of corporate pharmacy.”

Brittany L. Bateman of Boerne, Texas, and Jacquelynn D. Sosa of Corpus Christi, Texas, participated in a six-week corporate second-year internship with H-E-B. They focused on patient-care programs, including immunizations, health screenings, medication therapy management and disease state management.

They shared their experiences on Nov. 26 with the first- and second-year professional student pharmacists in the Day in the Life of an Intern.

Today, pharmacists roles have been changing to provide patient care to residents in need.

Bateman and Sosa provided immunizations and patient-care information to H-E-B partners at Health Expos. In addition, they were trained for medication therapy management to provide that service to employees and patients.

“Corporate pharmacy is very different,” Bateman said. “We learned even more ways to apply our education. It was so exciting to see what other paths pharmacy could take.”

Student pharmacists were exposed to operations, learned ways to measure pharmacy managers, watched supply chain management, and worked with the technology team.

“The interns worked on dispensing system testing, where they made sure it works before it was sent to the stores,” Cervantes said, who has been with H-E-B since November 2009, and who graduated from the University of Texas at the School of Pharmacy in 2008.

Cervantes said it is important for students, especially students interested in retail or community pharmacy, to see the behind-the-scenes management of pharmacy.

“This will help me be a better pharmacy manager,” Sosa said. “It also helped us with networking and I feel like we made an impact in the short time we were there.”

The Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy will be providing an avenue for student pharmacists to begin their career at the Intern Recruitment Fair in February 2014, where many pharmacies searching for interns will interview candidates.
Students to learn what it takes to intern

P1 and P2 professional student pharmacists asked questions, listened to experienced interns and shared lunch as they participated in “A Day in the Life of an Intern” from noon to 1 p.m. Nov. 5-6 and Nov. 12-13 and Nov. 26 at the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy. Student interns and leaders from CVS/Caremark, Target Corp., Wal-Mart, Walgreens and H-E-B came to campus to get students ready for summer internships. This hour-long, lunchtime event provides an opportunity for first- and second-year students to learn from peers about internship experiences, gather information about company hiring policies and processes, and to better prepare for interviews.

P1 & P2 professional student pharmacists listen to partners from H-E-B, Jennifer Lopez, Robert Suarez and Patsy Cavazos, and interns at “A Day in the Life of an Intern” on Nov. 26. Interns who spent their summer at the H-E-B eight-week program who shared were Michelle Bastanjoo, Adam Villarreal, Kelsi Gulick, George Varas and Adam Riezenmann. Brittany Bateman and Jackie Sosa learned what it takes to run a pharmacy during their P2 summer at the Arsenal in San Antonio in a corporate internship.

H-E-B recognizes two interns

Alexandria Soulard and Lisa Albers, second-year professional student pharmacists at the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy, completed internships with H-E-B over the summer. Both were recognized for their presentations that were part of their internships.

Soulard, second-year professional student pharmacist, worked at H-E-B in Kingsville. During a 10-week internship, Soulard completed a variety of tasks that will prepare her for her future in a pharmacy career.

She completed medication therapy management (MTM), complete medication reviews and a technician in-service project developing a system for the technicians to learn how to implement MTMs in the store.

Soulard was awarded with Presentation of the Year for the Coastal Bend region.

“My project was developing an App for mobile devices for the H-E-B pharmacy,” she said. “I actually created a functioning app for H-E-B using flash that allowed patients to refill medications, look up recipes and look at local events at their stores.”

Albers, second-year profession student pharmacist, completed her summer internship at H-E-B in Corpus Christi. As part of her internship, she did a presentation on MTM services. She was recognized for her presentation and was awarded for being the best presenter.

Winning the best presenter award was an honor for Albers. She experienced successes at the store she interned with, but did not expect to earn the recognition that she had received.

“It was a rewarding experience that led the H-E-B location to continue her employment in order to maintain their MTM results.

“Twin a lot from this internship. I had no retail experience prior to this and was pleasantly surprised by what I learned,” Albers said. “I was very impressed with H-E-B’s movement toward wellness services, as well as how much the customers and patients really depend upon and trust their pharmacists. Before pharmacy school, I never really expected to be interested in retail. However, H-E-B is a great company and has truly made me think twice about where I would like to spend my career.”

Story by Art Niño, junior English major at Texas A&M University-Kingsville
Drug abuse is a problem that is faced by millions of Americans every day. According to a survey conducted by the National Institute on Drug Abuse in 2011, an estimated 22.5 million Americans 12 or older—or 8.7 percent of the population—had used an illicit drug or abused a psychotherapeutic medication in one month. That number was up from 8.3 percent in 2002.

Texas A&M Health Science Center Irma Lerma Rangel College of Pharmacy faculty and staff understands the importance of professional student pharmacists learning about addiction so they can put that knowledge into practice by serving as a resource for patients and their family members facing such situations.

Bree Watzak, Pharm.D., assistant professor of pharmacy practice, takes students to a week-long program on alcoholism and other drug dependencies at the University of Utah School of Medicine each summer. The experience challenges students both emotionally and professionally, as they are able to see how addiction truly works by sitting in on 12-step programs and group therapy sessions of addicts, learning that addiction is not purely a choice of an individual, it becomes a disease.

The program allowed students to see addiction from the perspective of others, while expanding their knowledge of the disease, using innovative strategies and methods. Each student participant was made aware of the signs of drug addiction and that ultimately, anyone from any background could suffer from the disease.

As an option for professional student pharmacists who are interested in treating addictions, the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy will offer an elective to students in substance abuse Advance Pharmacy Practice Experiential (APPE) rotations at the South Texas Substance Abuse Recovery Services (STSARS) in Corpus Christi.

Students who take this course as an APPE elective will gain an appreciation of the disease model of drug addiction. This six-week experience will serve as the culmination of an experience that will give students a glimpse of the other side of drug addiction, the illicit use of both prescription and street drugs. This is a unique pharmacy program offered to very few professional students and will allow for a niche in their education and pharmacy practice opportunities.

“My colleagues and I wanted to get the students from the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy involved in learning about substance abuse,” said Ron Garza, R.Ph., pharmacist at DeLeon’s Pharmacy and a preceptor for the college. “That way, when they get out in their own practice, they’ll understand the behavior of true addicts. They will be able to know what to do if they run into someone with these behaviors, because it is a very critical area and they can be involved in intervention techniques.”

Though many families experience addicts in their lives, they only understand the physical and emotional aspects of drug dependency, never the chemical side. The program allowed professional student pharmacists to see how a single chemical can change someone and their personality. Students will learn that overcoming an addiction is something that has to be done progressively. With the newfound knowledge, students can fight side-by-side with those facing a daily battle with addiction.

“I was truly inspired and impressed by students who are interested in substance abuse and addiction,” Garza said. “I attended a program at the University of Utah School of Medicine and was moved by them and the fact that they seemed to have a spiritual experience. We have to keep students like these going, as they are getting into something magnificent. They will be great citizens and professional pharmacists.”

Watzak shared her excitement for the new APPE rotation and the success that students have had.

Students who are interested in preventing addiction, identifying those who are addicted, and reaching out to families of drug abuse and offer support can receive hands-on training through this program. More than anything, professional student pharmacists will be able to assist people who are suffering with addiction and help them to become loving friends and family members again.
Entering something new and life-changing can be scary, yet adventurous. For **Eugenio Castillo, Pharm.D.**, that’s exactly how he felt when he entered the Texas A&M Health Science Center Irma Lerma Rangel College of Pharmacy.

Castillo, Class of 2010, said he was no “spring chicken.” As a 1989 graduate of the University of Texas in civil engineering, he immediately put his education into practice as an engineer at Celanese in Bishop, Texas. After 13 years of service in the engineering field, Castillo felt compelled to look at his long-term career options due to the impact the downturn in the economy had on Celanese in the early to mid-2000’s.

In 2004, he made the decision to return to college at Texas A&M University-Kingsville to continue his education. In 2006, he was accepted into the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy as part of the inaugural class. “Choosing the college was an easy decision for me,” said Castillo, who is now a practicing pharmacist in Alice, Texas. “It essentially provided three things for me. First, it gave me the opportunity to more effectively—and directly—work with people in providing care. Second, the school and the pharmacy field aligned two of the things that I love: math and science. The third was that it kept me and my family in South Texas, which was a very important thing.”

As a resident of Kingsville for the past 20 years, staying in this area was important.

The idea of attending a startup professional program concerned him a little. “It felt great to be part of something new, but I was worried about whether or not I would be prepared,” he said. “I knew I was being taught adequate information, but anyone part of something new would worry about the same thing.”

Castillo quickly changed his mind when he noticed the focus on patient care and pharmacy practice. The Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy provided Castillo with the best preparation any pharmacist could receive.

The most important thing he credits the college with is ensuring that the patient was the first priority.

“Each class drilled the importance of patient care into students,” he said. “The No. 1 priority was to ensure that the patient was No. 1 and nothing else takes precedent over him or her. A pharmacist must make sure that the medicine they are providing is helping not harming and that’s what I am helping students learn today.”

After graduating from the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy, Castillo worked full time with Bill Moore at Moore’s Pharmacy in Sinton, Texas. In December 2012, he accepted a position at Wal-Mart in Alice.

As an employee of both pharmacies, Castillo put everything he learned into practice. As a preceptor for the college, he shares that information with current professional student pharmacists.

“Being a preceptor is simply an extension of being a student. I am still learning every day,” Castillo said. “The Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy is taking in some excellent students and turning them into excellent pharmacists. Every student that I have precepted from the college has gone above and beyond; they are caring and well-educated. I can confidently say that the college is putting out some of the best pharmacists that truly care about patients.”
Imagine being sick and not being able to receive medication in the U.S. For many who live in the Rio Grande Valley, this is their everyday life. Too often, many Texans take for granted their access to health care and medication.

Students at the Texas A&M Health Science Center Irma Lerma Rangel College of Pharmacy took notice to this. In response, they traveled to underserved populations to help those in need.

In April 2013, the American Pharmacists Association Academy of Student Pharmacists (APhA-ASP) at Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy developed Project SHINE, or Service & Help through Interprofessional Networking Experience. Project SHINE is an interactive health clinic that focuses on servicing indigent populations in the Rio Grande Valley while helping students gain hands-on patient care experience.

Professional students from the fields of pharmacy, medicine and nursing volunteered health services to more than 60 patients on Nov. 16 in Penitas, Texas.

The event supplied residents with basic health care needs that they do not receive on a regular basis. Since the Rio Grande Valley is an underserved population, many residents there cannot reach a health care professional or simply cannot afford the treatment. At the event, professional student pharmacists from the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy were able to integrate in-school training and knowledge with hands-on patient care interactions to meet the mission of the college to reach South Texas.

“Originally, the idea for Project SHINE was much different than what it is today,” said Christine Gamble of Houston and a third-year professional student pharmacist. “We wanted to have a truck that would drive around the Rio Grande Valley and we would provide services from there, but we felt that wouldn’t work. What we are doing now just seems to make more sense and provides the opportunity for many people to get what they need.”

Students from the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy were fortunate enough to have the help of health care students from other schools. Nursing students from the University of Texas Pan American and medical students from the Texas A&M Health Science Center worked side-by-side with student pharmacists to aid in patient care.

When a patient arrived, he or she would sign in and was then sent to a triage location. There, the individual received a blood pressure screening, blood glucose levels, a total cholesterol panel, and A1C, a common blood test used to diagnose diabetes. After the time at triage, the patient went on to a small group of students. There, medical and nursing students were able to review multiple symptoms from the patient, while the pharmacy students analyzed the patient’s medications.

“I think that is one of the best things about Project SHINE,” said Pamela Bosse of Sugar Land, Texas, and a third-professional student pharmacist. “The pharmacy students are able to work with students from other health care fields. We were given the opportunity to learn from the medical and nursing students. This is beneficial because it allowed us to put what we have learned to use. We were also able to work with other professionals, just like we will when we enter the workforce.”

Story by Art Niño, junior English major at Texas A&M University-Kingsville.
Feb. 21, 2014
5 p.m. at the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy

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Bill Moore, owner of Moore’s Pharmacy in Sinton and Corpus Christi, is a strong supporter of professional student pharmacists, faculty and staff at the Texas A&M Health Science Center Irma Lerma Rangel College of Pharmacy. He said the staff is hard at work, teaching students the importance of two parts of pharmacy: patient care and advocacy.

“Without advocacy, without having a voice that can be heard, pharmacists will not be able to counter the opposition of their profession,” Moore said. “If someone does not know what is going on in their profession, they are going to be shortchanged, which is never a good thing. Students need to be aware of the challenges that they will face while they are working.”

Moore serves on the Texas Pharmacy Business Council (TPBC) board. He has been part of the TPBC for the past two years and remains active in it. The TPBC serves as the advocacy board for independent pharmacists in Texas.

“Pharmacy is about patient care—plain and simple. This profession is built around taking care of patients and seeing that they have a good outcome from what they are being prescribed.”

Being part of the advocacy board is beneficial for Moore and what he stands for. As a strong supporter of the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy, he regularly takes time out of his schedule to speak to students about advocacy and why it is important for them to be active in the pharmacy community.

Along with advocacy, Moore said the most important thing for students to learn is patient care. Moore has had patients go into his pharmacy with bags of medication, not knowing...
what each is or what it does. If this misunderstanding continues, the quality of life for patients declines.

“Pharmacy is about patient care—plain and simple. This profession is built around taking care of patients and seeing that they have a good outcome from what they are being prescribed,” he said. “Pharmacists also have to ensure that a good quality of life is being obtained by each patient. The Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy is teaching this to the professional student pharmacists.”

Moore graduated from high school in Edna, Texas, in 1955. He immediately enrolled in college in Victoria, taking courses in chemical engineering, believing that was his career path. That path soon changed. In September 1956, Moore decided that he wanted to major in pharmacy, enrolling for courses at the University of Texas in Austin.

In 1960, Moore graduated from the University of Texas College of Pharmacy. Since then, he has only had three pharmacy jobs. The majority of that time—more than 48 years—has been spent at his store in Sinton.

Over the years, Moore has garnered various accomplishments, recognitions and honors. He has been the president of both the Victoria Pharmacy Association in Victoria, Texas, and the Coastal Bend Pharmacy Association in Corpus Christi. He has been elected as a board member and the president of the Texas Pharmacy Association and served as the chairman of the association’s Insurance Trust. As part of the Academy of Independent Pharmacies of Texas, Moore has served as a board member as well as the president and chairman.

With the success rate of the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy, Moore knows that students will learn everything they will need for their future professions. The best part about the college, according to Moore, is that it prepares students to serve the underserved areas of Texas, giving back to those that are truly in need. As a preceptor, he is able to teach students from the College the importance of this.

“Mr. Moore has always been there for the students of the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy and supports us to no extent,” said Brittany Bateman, a third-year professional student pharmacist. “He is easily accessible and does his absolute best in teaching us the importance of giving back to our community.”

NCPA tours Moore’s Pharmacy

Members of the student chapter of National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA) toured Moore’s Compounding Pharmacy Oct. 7 in Sinton, Texas, and gained insight into the business side of pharmacy. The professional student pharmacists discussed some pharmacy advocacy topics that are happening at the capitol and they were encouraged to be active in legislation. Bill Moore, owner of Moore’s Pharmacy, discussed some of the changes that the pharmacy profession has seen during his career. He shared with students and guests that when he started as a pharmacist, only two antibiotics were available for patients, now there are multitudes of antibiotics. The students were also able to see the compounding room, where they learned about the processes that the technicians take when compounding, and the types of compounds they make at Moore’s Pharmacy. The group joined Mr. Moore for dinner and a question and answer session with him and three other pharmacists from Moore’s Pharmacy.
Walk into Harrel’s Kingsville Pharmacy, and take a step back in time.

Newspaper stands carry the daily paper. Odds and ends and knickknacks are scattered to tempt you to buy. A soda fountain serves fresh ice cream treats with the sound and smell of burgers cooking in the back. Community members meet for lunch to catch up on the goings-on — and a raised pharmacy is the center of the store.

For the month of October, the U.S. celebrates the American Pharmacist and Kingsville has three generations of pharmacists as community leaders.

On most days, you’ll see Nick Harrel III, a third-generation pharmacist who owns the store, behind the counter filling prescriptions for his longtime patients. Founded by Nick Harrel Sr. in 1916, the pharmacy has been owned and operated by the Harrel family since its inception. Nick Sr. and Nick Jr. also were bank directors and members of the school board in Kingsville.

At a time when independent pharmacies are declining, Harrel’s Pharmacy prospers. In fact, state officials on Sept. 8 proclaimed Harrel’s Kingsville Pharmacy a “Texas Treasure Business.” Harrel III contributes his success to the diversity of the store. Offering one product is a problem, especially when people need more things, he said.

“We offer specialty items, things people can’t get anywhere else,” Harrel III said. “We need to sell what someone is looking for in order to keep their business.”

Harrel’s serves up lunch, desserts and gifts to patrons, as well as necessary medicines. If you’re searching for a unique gift, the pharmacy has it. From Willow Tree art to Dallas Cowboys paraphernalia, the shelves have something for your collections. You can even find special candy treats or cards that say just the right message.

Employees and customers feel like Harrel’s Pharmacy is their store. “When they tell me when something’s wrong, I get it fixed,” Harrel III said as he sat at his cluttered desk that is made from the original front door of the pharmacy. “Employees treat customers the way they want to be treated, and they have the freedom to fix a problem.”

Born and raised in Kingsville and a graduate of H.M. King High School, Harrel III attended Texas Tech University to complete his pre-pharmacy course work and graduated in 1976 from the University of Texas as a registered pharmacist.

In 1990, Harrel III purchased Kingsville Pharmacy and learned how loyal customers were. “To this day, I have customers from that store mention how they trusted Gary Ellis and Al Gonzalez, previous owners; it was their pharmacy,” he said. “They developed a trust with them that I am only starting to gain after more than 23 years.”

Harrel’s Pharmacy has served generations of families in the Kingsville area, and Harrel III has developed those same ties to at least five generations he serves.

In the 1940s, patrons shopped at a pharmacy based on political affiliation, Harrel III said. But the three pharmacists on the block had to maintain relationships to serve their customers, no matter their affiliation.

“If we were out of medication, we’d go to one of the other pharmacies in order to fill the prescription for the customer,” he said. “Nowadays, you
can’t do that. I have to send a customer to the store that has the medication, and I risk losing them as a customer. I need to keep my customers happy and build loyalty.”

Harrel III serves patrons from days old to decades old and knows them by name.

In the community, Harrel’s Kingsville Pharmacy delivers to nursing homes and to patients who otherwise might go without medications. For example, on an average Monday, more than 50 deliveries are made in the Kingsville area.

“Some people live 10 minutes from downtown,” said Philip Krueger, an employee who makes deliveries. “Sometimes, I am the only person they see that day.”

Harrel III believes there is a need to serve those patients who cannot drive to pick up needed medication. Medicaid used to cover the cost of deliveries but no longer does so after mail scripts became available.

“My guys help people when they deliver to them,” Harrel III said. “We meet needs as pharmacists, and this is one that I see necessary.”

Harrel III has 25 employees serving as pharmacists, technicians, clerks, delivery drivers, cooks and servers. On a typical day, the pharmacy services 200 to 300 patients.

There is ample opportunity for younger pharmacists to take over businesses of independent pharmacies, as most are about to retire, Harrel III said.

“You start at the top as a pharmacist rather than working your way up,” he said.

To help him run the store, Harrel III hired a business manager about five years ago.

“One day, my staff suggested that I should spend more time managing the store, but I am a pharmacist, not a business manager,” he said. “Other places hire managers, so that’s what I did.”

Besides serving as a pharmacist and community leader, Harrel III participates in the Texas A&M Health Science Center Irma Lerma Rangel College of Pharmacy in various ways. He spends a few days each year interviewing prospective students, shares his advice in panel discussions and he serves as a preceptor, or experiential instructor, to student pharmacists.

“The interview process is a conversation where we can glean the same kind of information you could get in a more forceful way,” he said. “But our focus is part of our mission: service.”

The interview panel for admissions typically includes a faculty or staff member from the college, a practicing pharmacist from the area and a current student.

“The college encourages and teaches community service,” he said. “Pharmacists are service-oriented, and we should give back and be involved in the community we are in.”

The Harrel family also supports college students who hope to become pharmacists. Pre-pharmacy students who attended Texas A&M University-Kingsville and continue on to the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy, have the opportunity to earn the scholarship. This year 10 students matriculated from TAMUK. The Nick Harrel Scholarship Fund was set up by Mrs. Claudia Harrel, Nick’s mother, in 2006 as part of Texas A&M University-Kingsville Foundation’s “Building Our Traditions” capital campaign.

“We love the college of pharmacy,” said Claudia Harrel in a 2006 press release. “My husband was a pharmacist, his father was a pharmacist, and my son is a pharmacist. We think the pharmacy school is going to be good for Kingsville and South Texas. We are blessed to have people who could see into the future and see what a need there is for pharmacists in this area.”

The Harrel siblings contribute to the fund each year rather than give each other gifts, and the pharmacy employees donate, too.

“I have all I need, and this is a way to give back to someone who is building a future,” Harrel III said. “I like pharmacy. [Founding Dean] Dr. [Indra] Reddy has done an outstanding job, in a quiet way, to build a great program with a wonderful reputation. It is something I can be proud of.”

As more students prepare to lead communities as pharmacists, Harrel III continues to look for innovative ways to improve Harrel’s Pharmacy. He expands and remodels every 20 years, and he’s on year 17 since the last phase.

“I might look into busting out some walls and expanding the soda fountain,” he said. “I am also considering creating private rooms to counsel people in.”
As a preceptor for the Texas A&M Health Science Center Irma Lerma Rangel College of Pharmacy, an individual should assist professional student pharmacists in reaching their full potential. They teach. They assist. They inspire.

Emory Martin, Pharm.D., is not just a preceptor to his students. Teaching them is his main priority, but he goes beyond teaching. He treats the students as if they are his own, helping them feel comfortable and appreciated throughout every step that they take—a major contributing factor when it comes to students’ success.

This is part of the reason students voted him as the 2013 Preceptor of the Year for the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy.

“Although I say I did not deserve the award, I really appreciate it all,” he said. “It was kind and I was really honored by the recognition. The students make each day a meaningful day.”

Students view Martin as humble.

“Dr. Martin has plenty of experience yet he never makes anyone feel inferior, and he has a great attitude about work and life,” said Carlos Robledo, Pharm.D., Class of 2013. “I consider myself lucky to have been a student of Dr. Martin’s, and I am sure that I will look to him for guidance as my career progresses.”

Martin has been affiliated with the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy as a preceptor since the inaugural class of students began their fourth-year rotations in 2009. He is currently vice president of pharmacy services at Scott & White Health System in Temple.

“Most of these students are about the age of my children. I act fatherly, trying to encourage them. I want them to be comfortable,” Martin said. “They are so eager to learn, but sometimes feel intimidated. That makes it easier for me to help them in their transition. It would be smart for me to give 100 percent of my time to my pharmacy administrative duties, but if I did, I would find things less rewarding. I love teaching the students.”

His dedication to his role as a preceptor also impresses his students. Although he has other duties and commitments, Dr. Martin has a positive impact on those he teaches.

“He completed two years of pharmacy residency training at the University of Michigan hospitals. Martin’s goal in completing two years of post-graduate clinical pharmacy residency was to pursue a career in hospital-based teaching—one of his biggest passions. He returned to Texas in 1986 where he pursued a career in the pharmacy field. He became a member of the University of Texas College of Pharmacy’s teaching faculty.

“Dr. Martin has practiced at Brackenridge Hospital, Seton Main and the North Austin Medical Center. He is also a past president of the Austin Area Society of Health-System Pharmacists and the Heart of Texas Society of Health-System Pharmacists.

Although Martin is able to use his life and work experiences as inspiration when it comes to teaching, he gives much credit to those around him.

“I am fortunate that I have services that assist my students,” he said. “When I am not available, I am lucky enough that other staff members are available to act as assistant preceptors. They share their experiences, which greatly helps.”

After raising five children, he and his wife, Carolyn, now reside in rural Williamson County. His hobbies include fishing, birding, building and Boy Scouts. He is currently president of the Texas Society of Health-System Pharmacists.
Student pharmacists on six six-week rotations in their fourth year are often vulnerable. The transition from the classroom setting to clinical practice is jolting; the learning curve is very sharp.

“I have seen many students struggle with the responsibilities and expectations of a pharmacist out in practice,” said Charlotte Farris, assistant professor of pharmacy at the Texas A&M Health Science Center Irma Lerma Rangel College of Pharmacy practice in Temple, Texas. “However, one of the most rewarding parts of precepting students is witnessing them recover their confidence and realize the impact they can have on the quality of someone’s life by ensuring safe and appropriate medication use. In those moments, I see students reinvigorated about their role in the profession and it becomes clear to them that all of their hard work over the past several years has finally paid off.”

Farris received the Faculty Preceptor of the Year award in the spring, as chosen by her professional student pharmacists.

“Dr. Farris has a vast amount of knowledge, but enforces the need to check what she says and not take her word for it, which is an important lesson to learn when it’s your license on the line,” said Garrett Goode, Class of 2013. “I think her high expectations are good because she really pushes her students to levels they didn’t realize they could achieve.”

As the health care community continues to recognize the impact pharmacists have on the quality of patient care, Farris’ clinical site has built an excellent relationship with other members of the health care team.

“I expect this to continue to grow with the implementation of the Affordable Care Act,” she said. “The need for competent care and preventative services will increase and this is the perfect opportunity for many pharmacists to reach beyond their predominantly distributive models of practice and take a more active role in impacting the decisions made about the medications prescribed to our patients.”

Carlos Robledo, Class of 2013, said that it wasn’t too long before he realized that Farris’ rotation was taking him out of his comfort zone.

“I realized that the change from classroom to this general medicine rotation was gonna be so ... uncomfortable,” he said. “Dr. Farris took my personal goals, along with her goals for me and made me accountable for attaining those goals.”

Farris’ philosophy on preparing students on rotation to become competent, caring practitioners revolves around focusing on improving the skills and abilities they will need to take care of patients in the future.

“I do not believe that my role as an educator is to simply exchange knowledge over a six-week rotation,” she said. “I often tell students at the beginning of the rotation that my goal by the end is for them ‘not to need me anymore.’ I want to prepare my students to be confident, independent, compassionate practitioners, capable of ensuring every patient they come in contact with is on the safest and most appropriate medication regimen available.”

Robledo said he has Farris to thank because she knew what to say and not to say as she guided him through the rotation and allowed him to find himself to become a confident student.

“She fostered an environment for learning and I do believe going through this rotation has made me a better student,” he said. “It was not easy, but I’m glad we made it through and I will always appreciate Dr. Farris’ help.”

Farris said her role focuses on her teaching contributions which take place in two different settings, her clinical practice at Scott & White Memorial Hospital and inside the classrooms of Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy.

“I am extremely lucky to have these two diverse teaching experiences continually impact my approach as an educator,” she said. “In the classroom, I bring my practice experience as a clinical pharmacist in internal medicine to simulate ‘real-world’ scenarios for students to apply and practice their newly acquired knowledge, skills, and abilities.”

At her practice site, her teaching experiences help her create a structured learning environment that allows fourth-year student pharmacists and pharmacy residents to focus their time on achieving their professional goals and objectives.

Farris is from San Marcos, Texas. She graduated with a bachelor’s degree in biology from Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas. Farris received her doctorate in pharmacy from the University of Texas at Austin.

Farris went through her pharmacy practice residency at Scott & White Memorial Hospital in Temple, Texas, where she is currently a clinical pharmacist for internal medicine.
Competence, accuracy and confidence; these are three characteristics that a health care professional needs to develop, according to the chair of the department of pharmaceutical sciences at the Texas A&M Health Science Center Irma Lerma Rangel College of Pharmacy. Applying these three qualities can enable the achievement of many goals.

David Potter, Ph.D., professor and chair of pharmaceutical sciences, joined the staff of the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy in August.

Potter said the college prepares professional student pharmacists to succeed in the careers as drug information experts.

“Heart of the college are able to solve drug-related problems as well as serve as repositories of information about drugs,” Potter said. “In addition, students are aware of the cost and effectiveness of generic and proprietary medications as they render appropriate service to the underserved patients in South Texas.”

He views pharmacists as the future gatekeepers for the reliability of drug information that is transmitted to patients. In this regard, the information they provide needs to be accurate, relevant and up-to-date. It is the challenge of faculty at the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy to instill a desire for lifelong learning in the graduates.

Potter has extensive experience managing and teaching courses to medical and graduate students in medical pharmacology, environmental toxicology, sports medicine, grant and manuscript writing as well as fundamentals of intellectual property. For his excellence in teaching, Potter has received special recognition from students, faculty and administration.

His current ambition is to implement courses for undergraduate students in basic pharmacology and toxicology as well as perform research to establish further the scientific validity of alternative and complementary medicine in western health care paradigms. He is also interested in establishing relevant courses and research in pharmacogenomics.
Potter said the most important thing that must be taught to the professional student pharmacists is confidence in the knowledge and training that they receive throughout their experiences at the college. He said with confidence, they can be effective educators of patients in the use of medications.

Before he joined the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy, Potter’s teaching experience involved second-year medical students, graduate students and those completing their residency; much of the subject matter was clinically related. He suggests this level of instruction is relevant to the professional student pharmacists at the college who will be interacting with physicians throughout their careers.

Prior to joining the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy, Potter was a faculty member in the Department of Ophthalmology at the Medical University of South Carolina and is currently professor emeritus. Potter was also professor and chairman of the Department of Pharmacology & Toxicology and director of graduate education in the biomedical sciences doctoral program at Morehouse School of Medicine in Atlanta, Ga.

Potter has also served on the faculty at the Baylor College of Medicine, University of California at Irvine, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center and the University of Texas Medical Branch.

In addition to his academic experience, Potter has worked in the pharmaceutical industry where he played an active role in the discovery of ketamine, a nondissociative anesthetic, and brimonidine, a drug currently marketed to treat open-angle glaucoma.

Potter’s leisure activities include baseball, golf, fishing, kayaking and engaging in other outside adventures with his Weimaraner, Dierk.

career EXPO

Corporate representatives met and interviewed third and fourth year professional student pharmacists interested in applying for permanent positions.

8 companies were represented
17 pharmacy representatives meet with our students
Over 260 interviews took place
57 P4 students returned to campus for the event
76 P3 students participated in the Mix & Mingle
While taking a medication is oftentimes as simple as popping a bottle cap and filling a glass of water, many patients do not realize the complexity of the work that led to manufacturing that drug. Researchers spend lengthy periods of time designing formulations that can extend the efficacy of medicine or increase its impact on relief.

One such researcher, Mohammad Nutan, Ph.D., associate professor of pharmaceutical sciences at the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy is interested in bioavailability, or the rate and extent at which a substance is absorbed in the body.

“When you take a tablet of medication, it lasts for maybe just a few hours,” Nutan said. “We have the ability to extend the medication with design, whether it is prolonging it in some way or having someone consume the medication by an alternative method—intramuscularly for example. If we developed a formula that could extend the release of the medication, it could ease this process for patients.” An example of such release is Allegra® medications. A consumer can purchase a 12-hour formula or a 24-hour formula, depending on the needs of the patient.

Nutan is looking for ways to ease patient care and rehabilitation; and so far, has found means of prolonging the duration of action of medication in the body, making it more convenient for patients. His current research focuses on improving absorption of fat soluble drugs obtained from natural sources, thus the advantage of extending drug release is combined with the benefits of using natural products.

“One thing we often do is look at the effects of different factors used in different formulations to increase bioavailability,” Nutan said. “How do these factors truly affect it? We occasionally use experimental design, prepare multiple formulations and see which model works.”

By using experimental design, Nutan uses less time and resources to complete his research, which allows him to gather more data to find the formulation with optimized properties.

“The design allows you to measure the effects of various factors, such as particle size of the drug and the amount of each ingredient used, on some important factors including extent of drug release and product stability,” Nutan said. “The formula with the best desirable characteristics can be predicted by using software and consequently such formulation can be prepared to verify the expected outcomes.”

Nutan is currently studying curcumin, which is a natural substance in turmeric that is helpful in treating certain cancers and used as an antioxidant. Using animal models, he looks at the relationship between the changes in the experiment and the outcome after discovering how much of the drug is released at certain specific time points throughout the process.

More than just advancing discoveries himself, Nutan also encourages his research students to test things on their own. He allows them to propose what they’d like to research and he supports them as they learn.

“The first thing they learn – and I learned – is that not every experience works on the first try,” he said. “In fact, more times than not, you get to start all over. But that is the beauty of research – finding solutions where you least expected them.”

Nutan hopes his work in the area of medical absorption will offer patients solutions that will ease, and sometimes expedite, their health and rehabilitation journey.
Abstract accepted for Oral Plenary Session

Mahua Choudhury, Ph.D., assistant professor of pharmaceutical sciences, “Epigenetics and microRNA as a unifying mechanism in severe preeclampsia,” was selected Oct. 1, 2013, for an oral presentation in Oral Plenary Session I which will be on Feb. 6, 2014, in Grand Ballroom A-C at the Hilton New Orleans Riverside, New Orleans, La. Choudhury’s abstract received high marks in the blinded peer review process and was considered by the 2014 Program Committee to be of high scientific quality as well as of interest and importance to the overall field of Maternal-Fetal Medicine. From a field of 1,741 abstracts submitted for review, hers was one of only 86 to be singled out for presentation in an Oral Session.

Faculty prepare for OSCEs

The faculty had a workshop on Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCEs) in with Dr. Deborah Sturpe, associate professor and director of OSCEs at University of Maryland School of Pharmacy, a well-known expert who has done extensive research on OSCEs.

Fadi Alkhateeb, Ph.D., associate professor and director of assessment won “Best use of critical thinking (CT) or evidence based teaching (EBT) in research by faculty,” in the Texas A&M Health Science Center 2013 CARE Fair Poster Competition on Oct. 18.

Dr. Alkhateeb has been invited to serve as a member of the 14th Annual Texas A&M Assessment Conference Committee in Feb 16-18, 2014, in College Station, Texas.

Andrea Luce, Pharm.D., is featured on NPR’s Houston Matters segment where she discusses how best to fend off antibiotic-resistant diseases. http://bit.ly/1cmEWgd

Heather Miller, Pharm.D., assistant professor of pharmacy practice at the Texas A&M Rangel College of Pharmacy, discusses the importance of Vitamin D and Calcium with WebMD. http://bit.ly/169SWF9

Rabaa Al-Rousan, R.Ph., Ph.D., who joined the department of pharmaceutical science as assistant professor in October, was an NABP Item Writer for the Foreign Pharmacy Graduate Equivalency Examination (FPGA) & Pharmacy Curriculum Outcomes Assessment (PCOA), NABP Headquarters, Chicago, Ill., October 2013.

Jayshree Mishra, Ph.D., research assistant, received the Gordon Research Travel Scholarship 2013 to present her work at the Gordon Research Conference on Mucosal Health and Diseases at Stonehill College in Easton, Mass.

Jayshree Mishra, Ph.D., research assistant, was an organizing committee member for the Pharmacovigilance-2013, 2nd International Conference and Exhibition on Pharmacovigilance & Clinical Trials in San Antonio, Texas. She chaired the sessions on “Pharmacokinetics and Pharmacodynamics” and “Case reports in Clinical trials.”
Presentations


Publications


Transforming Health