Greetings UC School of Pharmacy Friends and Supporters:

Welcome to the Fall 2020 edition of Scripts!

This edition of Scripts celebrates ten years of our graduates in the field. I am proud of the many accomplishments this school has had in the last 15 years. It is amazing that this past spring, UCSOP graduated its 11th class of pharmacists. The UCSOP is a small school, but its alumni are creating BIG impact across the country.

The UCSOP family has grown now to 718 alumni who are serving across the nation, in community pharmacies, hospitals, industries, as well as preceptors and professors. Our alumni have received national recognition by providing valuable healthcare to the nation. We are delighted that our alumni serve as role models for all future pharmacists. We are eager to share in this issue of Scripts just a few of the many incredible things our alumni give to the profession.

This past year, our faculty, staff and student pharmacists have once again, gone above and beyond. Through a series of outstanding academic and community outreach achievements, our school has had a lasting effect on its community on the local and national level. Our faculty research has raised to a new height in both basic sciences research as well as opioid related service and research activities. The faculty brought in over $1.9 million in grant funds to the UCSOP.

Our students are continuing to break barriers and exceed expectations. Glenn Schiotis, Class of 2020 graduate, was named the top recipient of the United States Public Health Service Excellence in Public Health Pharmacy Award. He was selected out of a nationwide group of candidates. Glenn was also selected as the UC Graduate Student of the Year. Rija Saleem, Class of 2020 graduate, has been awarded a fellowship at Rutgers University and was selected as grand champion of the UC Innovation Competition.

Our faculty are recognized by the State Board of Pharmacy for excellence in service. Mr. David Bowyer received the WVRA President’s Choice Award & James H. Beal Award this past year. Mr. Bowyer has dedicated countless hours to the pharmacy profession and healthcare in West Virginia through legislative work and service. He is an invaluable member to us here at the UCSOP. Dr. Sandy Bowles completed her last year with us here at the University of Charleston. We were fortunate enough to have Sandy as UCSOP faculty for 12 of her 50 years with the University. Thankfully, Sandy will join us as an adjunct faculty member this fall. Thank you for the many years of service and knowledge that you shared with our students, faculty, and staff.

I feel honored to be surrounded by such dedicated members of the UCSOP community, and I look forward to continuing to watch it grow. Please enjoy reading about what great things our students and alumni have been up to. How they are uplifting our mission and vision by serving their communities. This is a testimony of how our faculty and staff pride themselves on being student-centered and teaching focused.

For ongoing information pertaining to UCSOP events, community outreach, and academic offerings, please visit our website at www.ucwv.edu/pharmacy, and follow us on Facebook and Instagram.

Sincerely,

Dr. Faruk Khan
Interim Dean, UC School of Pharmacy
Q&A WITH INTERIM DEAN
DR. FARUK KHAN

“Our primary focus is now to overcome all the odds and operate all the educational programs under the new normal environment and ensure the highest possible educational outcome.”

You have been interim dean for a full academic year now. What are your thoughts on this past year?

The last academic year had been full of exciting events including the COVID-related challenges that the world is still experiencing. While COVID-19 has changed everything, our progress is moving ahead. The new leadership team has been fully functional under the redesigned organizational structure. Personally, for me, it was a challenge to transition to the interim dean position as well as leading a new executive team. However, I was fortunate to have an outstanding, highly motivated leadership team who made substantial progress in the last year. We built upon our ongoing strong infrastructure and legacy and made great progress in several areas. We have finalized a new strategic plan, implemented a new comprehensive recruitment plan and updated multiple policies for a smoother operation of all the school activities that is conducive to a bright future for the UC School of Pharmacy. All the steps we have taken will ensure the continued success of our students for many years to come. The most recent of all these initiatives is curricular revision; the Class of 2024 will be beginning with new, revised curriculum. We look forward to exciting years ahead of us with all these positive programmatic changes in place with significant improvements and growth expectations!

One of our 2020 graduates has already set a very high standard by achieving the highest honor in the Excellence in Public Health Pharmacy Awards by the United States Public Health Service. It is a very timely recognition under this pandemic era when public health services are the most needed by our community.

When did you become interested in pharmaceutical sciences?

This is quite a fascinating question and interestingly enough I consider myself as an “accidental” pharmacist/pharmaceutical scientist. I was always interested in physics and math but was also a natural in chemistry. By securing the 59th position of the merit list among about 40,000 applicants seeking admissions to the University of Dhaka, the top ranked university in Bangladesh, I had the liberty to select any subject area I desired. I selected the field of pharmacy as my choice of study because it was ranked the top subject area of study in the University at that time for job prospects. I had little knowledge about this field at that time, and I basically went with the flow. However, in the second year of my studies, when we were introduced with the concepts of medicinal chemistry and drug discovery. I was fascinated and decided to specialize in this area. This finally led me to continue my higher study in this area. I never regretted my decision to become a pharmaceutical scientist and enjoyed every moment of it. I am glad that I selected this field “accidentally.”

Did you think you would work in academia or ever become a dean?

After completion of my BPharm degree securing the first place in the class by merit, I decided to become a teacher and a researcher and completed the master’s in pharmacy degree. In fact, in Bangladesh it became a custom that students who secure the first place in the class will become a teacher of the same university. Naturally, after completing my master’s in pharmacy, I was offered the position of lecturer at my alma mater, taught there for two years before leaving to pursue a PhD from the University of Manchester, UK. To further my research and academic career, I went to Japan and then finally came to the USA for postdoctoral research before joining as a faculty member at Southwestern Oklahoma State University (SWOSU) College of Pharmacy. I never thought to become an administrator and was dedicating my time in teaching and research as a typical faculty member focusing on scholarly and research publications and grant opportunities.
In 2013, two of the senior most professors of my school at SWOSU approached me to take charge of the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences as a new chair. Being the second most junior faculty there and an associate professor who had just been awarded a tenure and promotion in the exceptional category, I was shocked with this offer. It was totally a different direction from my personal career goal, but with their encouragement and support I took this challenge. It gave me tremendous opportunity to learn and grow as an academic leader and my job performance was appraised by all faculty as well as senior leaders of the school and the university including the president. I then completed my MBA and it was a turning point of my academic career. My experience there as a department chair was invaluable in becoming a very successful chair at the newly established Marshall University School of Pharmacy. Again, the experience at MUSOP was the key to become the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at the UCSOP and then the Interim Dean. I miss my teaching and research that has always been my passion, but again I do not have any regret that I am now a full-fledged administrator. I am glad that I took the challenge to become the department chair in 2013 that paved the way to becoming the dean. I take this as a call of duty, and I will do my best to become an agent of change as a dean.

You grew up in Bangladesh. Tell us about your childhood and life.

I grew up in a small village of about 370 families in Northern Bangladesh with the best childhood one can ever imagine. I was the ninth child of 11 siblings (2 sisters and 9 brothers). What was more exciting is that I grew up with over 50 cousins living at the same home. We were a fortunate business family that was considered as a noble family in the region. My family was known for many philanthropic activities. Thus, I grew up surrounded by a lot of love and respect in our community. I was in the mindset to continue the family legacy in the business, and I had the opportunity even after I completed my pharmacy degree. In my childhood, I was doing my studies only because I had to under the pressure of my parents. I was reluctant to pursue my education, yet I was always first or second in the class beginning in my fifth grade. So, I continued on with my studies but enjoyed my life with so many brothers and sisters as well as many other friends around with lots of indoor and outdoor activities. As I was growing up in such a family, I also had to follow some rules and regulations, but stress could never get in my way, which is possibly the reason of always doing reasonably good in whatever I did including my studies and sports. This made me a people person and gave me the natural talent to become a leader, which I never realized and explored until my university days and beyond.

After completing my master’s in pharmacy degree and serving as a lecturer for two years, I got married to my wife, Sefat Shums, before leaving the country to complete my doctoral studies at the University of Manchester. This was an arranged marriage following our Bangladeshi culture. She also came from a noble family of the country and completed graduation in economics from University of Dhaka. I have always been very fortunate to have her by my side as strong support. Our only child, Fahmida Khan, was born in Manchester while I was working toward my doctorate. She grew up in Oklahoma and considers herself as an Oklahoman and is still living and studying there in her second year of pharmacy school.

What are you looking forward to most this year?

COVID-19 has taken all the attention of the academic year 2020-21. Naturally, the primary focus is now to overcome all the odds and operate all the educational programs under the new normal environment and ensure the highest possible educational outcome. Yet, I look forward with a clear vision for advancing all programs by implementing the strategic plan, strategic priorities and the new revised curriculum in collaboration with all stakeholders to ensure the best educational outcomes. In addition to embracing the ongoing educational and research missions, we will expand to include the Master of Science and Bachelor of Science in pharmaceutical sciences programs to offer more career pathways by next year. I will continue to oversee development activities, committees and student organizations to ensure strong educational and research programs and outstanding programmatic outcomes. Recruitment, retention, revenue generation and services to the profession will be strengthened over the next year. In collaboration with the executive director of enrollment and admissions and other relevant personnel, we will continuously explore new targeted marketing strategies to increase enrollment. A clear blueprint for fundraising activities will be developed by creating an advisory board of SOP stakeholders including representatives from alumni, chain pharmacies, healthcare industries, and philanthropists. Policy and procedures will be developed in the near future to expand professional networks and alumni engagements.

“it is very striking to think back on my past. I began my life in a very small village and started my education at an unknown high school (that was built by my grandfather) and was selected to attend the top-ranked university in the country and later the top-ranked pharmacy school in the United Kingdom. I was very blessed with all these opportunities.”

– Dr. Faruk Khan
Interim Dean, UC School of Pharmacy
Dr. Victoria Oyewole is a member of the Class of 2018 from the University of Charleston School of Pharmacy. She is currently in a PGY2 residency as a critical care pharmacy resident at the Detroit Medical Center. Oyewole was attracted to Detroit’s diverse patient mix and the hospital’s progressive pharmacy practice. Her PGY2 research project explored the impact of methadone use for weaning patients on prolonged opioid infusions in the ICU, especially those with a history of opioid dependency or illicit IV drug use. Oyewole completed a PGY1 as a Pharmacy Practice Resident at the St. Joseph Medical Center in Tacoma, Washington. During this year, she completed a research project on the prophylaxis of neonatal refeeding syndrome in intrauterine growth restricted neonates.

Oyewole was extremely involved as a student pharmacist at the University of Charleston. She was the Pharmacy Student Governance Association (PSGA) president and parliamentarian. Oyewole was instrumental in consolidating the former Honors and Awards/Rites of Passage event and the PSGA sponsored semi-formal to the Honors and Awards/Rites of Passage event followed immediately by the gala. Combining these two events brought a dramatic increase in participation by student pharmacists, faculty members, staff members, and family/significant others. She was a member of both the Student National Pharmaceutical Association (SNPhA) and the American Pharmacists Association-Academy of Student Pharmacists (APhA-ASP).

Oyewole was awarded the Walgreens Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Award and the University of Charleston School of Pharmacy Leadership Award for her role as the Pharmacy Student Governance Association president during her days as a student pharmacist.

Oyewole is originally from St. Paul, Minnesota, and holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in biology from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. Her professional interests include critical care, emergency medicine, research, and leadership. She is dedicated to tackling the complex challenges faced in the inpatient care setting and gaining unique experiences that will allow her to practice at the top of her license. After completing her PGY2 residency, she would like to secure a position as a critical care specialist at a tertiary referral hospital, mentor future pharmacists, and conduct research addressing the healthcare gaps for critically ill patients.
Bowyer Receives WVRHA President’s Choice Award & James H. Beal Award

By: Carly Stover Williams, BS, Communications Coordinator/Asst. to Dean

David Bowyer, assistant professor, has been a pharmacist for over 36 years, with his knowledge and experience he now dedicates a lot of his time to working for change in the profession. Bowyer was appointed to the West Virginia Board of Pharmacy in 2017 and has been very active in legislative efforts in the pharmacy realm.

Bowyer worked alongside colleagues on a bill to enable pharmacists to be immunizers, and in 2019 legislation that would recognize pharmacists as medical providers. He also took part in the update of the Pharmacy Practice Act. Bowyer served two terms as president of the West Virginia Society of Health System Pharmacists and served on the legislative committee. Bowyer has brought together various pharmacy leaders and stakeholders to help form relevant and crucial legislation to advance the pharmacy profession while keeping public health at the forefront.

Through all these meritorious acts, Bowyer was selected as the recipient of the James H. Beal Award and the West Virginia Rural Health Association (WVRHA) President’s Choice Award. The James H. Beal Award is selected by the West Virginia Pharmacists’ Association (WVPA) based upon an individual’s contribution to the profession. The award was presented to him at the Association’s annual conference at the Charleston Marriott Hotel on October 19, 2019.

Bowyer has been working with the WVRHA since 2009. He was selected as the representative for the School of Pharmacy and was later selected to serve on the board in November 2012. During his time at the WVRHA, Bowyer served on the finance committee, workforce and policy committee, and conference planning committee.

Debra Jenkins, President of the WVRHA, commented on her experience working with Dave. “I have known Dave for about eight years. Integrity sticks out most in my mind. Dave was very thoughtful about our strategy for growth, and he was sometimes in the minority with his opinions, but he was always eloquent and very respectful. He always put West Virginia students first as well as the health outcomes and lives of West Virginians,” she said.

Bowyer worked relentlessly educating the legislature and lobbying for changes to incite positive health outcomes for West Virginians and students pursuing higher education in the state. “He came from a very rural part of West Virginia,” Jenkins said. “He never forgot that and what students from there face. He has a passion for his students and higher education and to keep students in West Virginia. If he felt really strongly about something, he did not want to let it go. He is a real West Virginian.”
have been busy with contributions to the profession of pharmacy and scholarly endeavors. Below is a sampling of some of their activities:

DR. LINDSAY ACREE
received the Prescription Drug Overdose (PDO) Grant Year 3 8/20/2019
8209.186, State Targeted Response (STR) Grant, 8/2019 $1,002.110
Prescription Drug Overdose (PDO) Grant, Year 4 11/2019 $84,510
State Opioid-Response (SOR) Grant, 3/2020 $100,000 First
Responders-Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (FR-CARA)
Grant 5/2020 $320,250

DR. JENNIFER DETTRA
co-authored a poster along Kima C “Duration of INR suppression in a
patient taking aspirin and warfarin.” Poster presentation at the
2020 ASHP Midyear Clinical Meeting and Exhibition in Las Vegas, NV
(December 2019). She was also the treasurer for WVSHP for 2020-
2021, and she was named the Residency Program Director for the
Fifth/Midwest Chapter of CPA Community Pharmacy-Residency
Program at the beginning of 2020. She also spoke at Try This WV
Healthcare Professionals Day Conference “Pharmacists on Your Team
session - June 2019 about Collaborative Practice Agreements

DR. JULIE TESTMAN
was re-certified as a Board-Certified Pharmacotherapy Specialist (B.C.S.)
American Board of Pharmacy Examining Authority and Education Section Newsletter 2020;
7(2) 1-6. 3. (Member) Education and Planning Committee; West Virginia Geriatrics Society 6.
Board of Directors; West Virginia Geriatrics Society 5. (Member)
Committee; American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy 4. (Member)
Colleges of Pharmacy Experiential Education Section Newsletter 2020; 7(2): 1-6. 3. (Member)
Experiential Education Section Committee; American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy 4.
Member Board of Directors; West Virginia Geriatrics Society 6 (Member)
Education and Planning Committee; West Virginia Geriatrics Society 6. Chair- Elect; Mid-Atlantic Experiential Education Consortium

DR. JULIE TESTMAN, MR. DAVID BOWERY, MRS. JANE CONDEE
J. Elkins A. A longitudinal, interprofessional simulated patient
care experience to enhance APPE and team-readiness. American
Association of Colleges of Pharmacy Experiential Education Section Newsletter 2020;
7(2) 1-6. 3. (Member) Experiential Education Section Nominating Committee.
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy 4. (Member)
Board of Directors; West Virginia Geriatrics Society 6. (Member)
Education and Planning Committee; West Virginia Geriatrics Society 6. Chair- Elect; Mid-Atlantic Experiential Education Consortium

DR. FARUK KHAN
co-authored Medicinal Chemistry of Drugs Affecting the Nervous
System and was also appointed to the WV Medical Cannabis Board.

DRS. KARRIE MURPHY, LEAH HALL, JULIE TESTMAN AND STUDENTS:
Community Service Presentation in collaboration with Geriatric Task
Adherence (Do medications work when they aren’t taken as
prescribed), Medication Safety Part 2. Cover the Counter (OTC)
Medications (The safety and dangers for seniors), and Medication
Safety Part 3: Safe Medication Storage and Disposal (Keeping
medications from harming family and others). Nitro Senior Center, Nitro,
West Virginia.

DR. JULIE TESTMAN, MRS. JANE CONDEE, MR. RYAN JENKINS, MR.
MIKE BELLER OFFICE OF EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION
ominated for UC Shell Award.

DRS. TAMER FANDY, AYMEN SHATNAWI

DRS. AYMEN SHATNAWI AND TAMER FANDY
alongside Malkaram S. Toloue E co-authored “(2019). ‘Identification of
the inhibitor of growth protein 4 (INK4) as a potential target in prostate
Chapters

DRS. FARUK KHAN, TAMER FANDY, MICHAELA LEFFLER
co-authored Antipsychotic drugs. In Medicinal Chemistry for Pharmacy
Students. Edited by Faruk Khan, Bentham Science, Sharja, UAE. Chapter 6 (In Press).

DR. AYMEN SHATNAWI
was awarded WV-INBRE ($1,600) to attend the American Association for
Cancer Research (AACR), April 2020, San Diego, CA.

DR. TAMER FANDY
co-authored alongside Gabala R, Al-N, Gabala M, Harred A, Abd
migration and invasion of breast cancer cells.” American Association of
Pharmacists Scientists (AAPS) annual meeting, November 6-9, San Antonio, TX. 2. Gabala R, Gabala M, Harred A, Abd
Elmageed Z (2019). “Exosomal shuttling of PTEN promotes aggressive
behavior of prostate cancer cells derived from local tumors by increasing their metastatic abilities.” American Association of Pharmacists Scientists (AAPS) annual meeting, November 6-9, San Antonio, TX, 3. Gabala R, Gabala M, Harred A, Abd
Elmageed Z (2019). “Exosomes-associated miR-7704, miR-6086 and miR-6776 as novel diagnostic and prognostic biomarkers
in prostate cancer patients.” American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists (AAPS) annual meeting, November 6-9, San Antonio, TX.

DRS. AYMEN SHATNAWI, TAMER FANDY, AND ALADIN SIDDOG

DRS. AYMEN SHATNAWI, TAMER FANDY, AND ALADIN SIDDOG

DR. AYMEN SHATNAWI

DRS. AYMEN SHATNAWI AND TAMER FANDY
presented the “Biomodal function of INK4 in prostate cancer reveals its potential role in the disease therapy,” at AACR 2020.

DR. GANNETT MONK
served as Chair of the UC Academic Integrity Review Board.

DRS. ALICE GAHBAUER, LEAH A. HALL, KARRIE MURPHY, BETH H.
TODD, AND KRISTY H. LUCAS
post-publication to AACP Annual Meeting. Impact of Specialty
Tracks on Workforce Preparedness: Students, Post-graduate Training Coordinator, and Employer Perspectives.

DR. ALICE GAHBAUER
co-authored “Interprofessional peer teaching: The value of a pharmacy
Champion for UCSOP through ACT (Academia-CPESN T ransformation)
Networks”. Acceptance of status as a pharmacist through Network
in the profession of pharmacy. 29th Annual Meeting, September 15-17, Chicago, IL. Clin Pharmcol Drug Dev. Vol. 6(1).

MRS. BARBARA DOAK
gave a presentation about her diabetes elective (Phar5651X - Everyone
with Diabetes Counts) at the Try This WV Healthcare Professionals
Day conference “Pharmacists on Your Team” session – June 2019
Recognized as a Lead Trainer for the Diabetes Empowerment
Education Program (DEP) Presented “Managing Your Diabetes” for
the WVU Extension Agency’s Living with Diabetes series on 9/16/2020.
Also conducted a blood pressure screening at the session. Facilitated
with Dr. Karrie Murphy and UC P4 students a monthly Lunch & Learn
series for Drop Chemical employees in South Charleston - July,
August, September 2019. Facilitated with UC P4 students a lunch
& learn education center for Washington County, Ohio employees
and residents - Sept 2019, Oct 2019, Jan 2020. WVU 2020 USOP’s
Diabetes Prevention Program received CDC Full Recognition status
February 2020. Mrs. Barbara Doak, Mrs. Jane Condee, Dr. Jennifer
Dotria, Dr. Julie Testman, Dr. Karrie Murphy alongside Natalie Tappa,
BNI Quality Insight, and Susa Sims, BNI (Quality Insight) lead the
First cohort of 26 session held over a one-year long period - Sept
at the O’Neal Center, Marietta, Ohio - 11/10/19 Lead a Go Red for
Women Event - Belpre Senior Center - 2/6/20.Performed in the
UCSOP Go Red Event held at the UC Storefront in the Charleston Town
Center Mall - 2/21/20. Distributed child ID kits at the end of
Summer Bash in Parkersburg, WV 9/15/2019. Educated the public
about diabetes meal planning at Unity Plaza, South Parkersburg
and at Community Resources, Parkersburg. Conducted blood pressure
screenings, diabetes meal planning, and medication reviews with PAs
and P3 - Pleasantview Towers, Parkersburg, WV - 9/15/19 and 10/15/19.
Medication Safety & Adherence - Presentation & Med Reviews with P4
O’Neal Center, Marietta, OH - 11/15/19; 12/15/19 - Healthy Holidays
presentation at the O’Neal Center, Marietta, OH.

DR. GREGORY POLINNELLI
was awarded the WV-NBPE Faculty Research Development Grant
(800,000) and Dr. Faruk Khan collaborated on this project.

DR. BETH T OOD
was re-certified as a Board-Certified Pharmacotherapy Specialist
(B.C.S.) through Board of Pharmacy Specialties (BPS). Appointed as ACT
Champion for UCOP through ACT (Academia-CPESN Transformation)
Pharmacy Collaborative.
Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome and Long Acting Reproductive Control Outreach at the South-Central Regional Jail in Kanawha County, West Virginia

By: Rebecca S. Linger, Ph.D., Professor of Medicinal Chemistry

In February of 2020, faculty and students from UCSOP began an outreach program with the South-Central Regional Jail in Charleston. It was the results of four years of planning, discussions and proposals to educate the incarcerated women of this facility about the risks of opioid use while pregnant. Because opiates can cross the placenta, when a pregnant mother takes any type of opioid, it will enter the bloodstream of the baby. Depending on the severity of use, the baby could be born dependent on opioids. This dependence is known as Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) and is defined by a series of symptoms that range from irritability and upper respiratory issues to diarrhea, vomiting and trembling. If left untreated, NAS can continue for up to six months. Babies born with NAS typically stay in the hospital longer, can become severely dehydrated and may need to be fed special infant formulas to ensure their growth.

Our outreach program described the risks of NAS and ways to receive long-acting reversible contraception (LARCs) after incarceration. The students developed a PowerPoint presentation and a survey to give the women afterwards that gauged their interest in receiving LARCs. Before visitation by volunteers to the regional jail was prohibited, we were able to present the program five times to a total of 29 women. The results of the surveys indicated a strong need for such outreach. Fifty percent of the women surveyed indicated a previous use of opioids and over 98% had given birth. A large majority of the women indicated a strong interest in receiving LARCs.

Our students were profoundly impacted by this community outreach program. To illustrate that, P2 student, Maryheather Walsh writes the following:

“When I first volunteered to assist in the outreach program at SCRJ, I had no idea the profound impact that this experience would have on my life. Initially, I was nervous of what this opportunity was going to hold. I would focus on all of the negative aspects of the situation and was filled with worry and fear over what might happen during our sessions. However, this attitude changed drastically as the outreach program became my favorite part of each week.

“From this program, I learned how important education is in a setting where people do not have access to information. Being able to answer questions and provide insight into the importance of reproductive health was eye opening. I was fascinated by how interested the women were and was blown away by the participation. In every session, the women were insightful, respectful, and attentive. I initially thought that I was going to go into this situation to lecture to a basically empty room. However, especially as the weeks went on, each session turned into a conversation. We started experiencing women coming back week after week and they would offer suggestions of how to tweak our presentation to be as successful as possible. Some of the women even offered suggestions on additional programs they would be interested in which shows their genuine interest in learning. This program also taught me the importance of conversing with people with different life experiences from your own. Having a conversation and being open to criticism not only provides you with valuable insight, but it also makes you more relatable to your target audience and your message can then be better received. While I initially saw the outreach at SCRI as a volunteer opportunity, it turned into potentially my most valuable learning experience.”

The University of Charleston School of Pharmacy is dedicated to working with community partners to improve the health and welfare of our fellow citizens. The NAS and LARC educational outreach at the regional jail is just one example of the fine work faculty and students are achieving in West Virginia.

My laboratory focuses on translational research. Translational research translates knowledge from basic science to tools that cure diseases like cancer. Development of anticancer drugs has been the main objective of my research program in the last 33 years with special focus on drugs that treat hematologic (blood) malignancies like leukemia and lymphomas.

The 2019-2020 academic year was full of research activities and collaborations. I continued my collaborative project with colleagues from Cleveland Clinic in Ohio to study the mechanism of action of a relatively new class of anticancer drugs known as DNA hypomethylating agents (DHAs). We are using the tissue bank of Cleveland Clinic to supply us with bone marrow cells derived from leukemia patients to study these drugs. DHAs demonstrated efficacy in treating different forms of blood cancer and we are trying to understand how they can be combined effectively with other anticancer drugs. Discovering new drug combinations is a very effective tool to overcome drug resistance and increase the response rate to cancer therapy.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected everyone’s life and therefore the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) established several grant opportunities for scientists to discover drugs to cure and manage the disease. In collaboration with Dr. Mike Boyle (former Professor of immunology at the Medical College of Ohio), we are working on submitting a grant application to develop a rapid and sensitive method to monitor IgA antibodies secretion in biological fluids like saliva. IgA antibodies are secreted by our mucosal tissues in the lungs and gastrointestinal tract in response to invading pathogens like SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19). Monitoring the level of IgA secretions could be of diagnostic and prognostic value. Additionally, a saliva-based test would be particularly helpful because of the ease of sample collection without the need for swabs, needle sticks or skilled healthcare professionals.

I also started a local collaboration with CAMC and established an initiative to investigate the role of natural products and herbs as anticancer agents. We are currently studying the anticancer effect of the oil purified from the black seed (Nigella Sativa). The black seed has been used in folkloric medicine for centuries to treat different diseases. We believe that the oil can stimulate the immune cells in our blood to fight and kill cancer cells. Another advantage of utilizing black seed oil is its known safety profile as it has a long history of safe use without undesirable side effects.

I am very excited about the outcome of these projects and I look forward to seeing the participation and contribution of our PharmD students to research and scholarship at UC.
My first involvement with the University of Charleston School of Pharmacy was when the University was seeking approval to offer a doctoral level program from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). The proposal had been written and as an experienced member of the HLC Peer Review Corp, I was asked to review it prior to submission. As I knew very little about pharmacy, this review provided a great introduction to my new career in pharmacy!

I have now been at this institution for over 52 years. In the summer of 1964, I interviewed with Dr. Leonard Riggleman and subsequently joined the faculty at what was then Morris Harvey College to help open an Associate Degree Nursing program. With the exception of four years (1978-1982) when I went to Vanderbilt University to complete a doctorate, I served four decades as faculty, nursing department chair, dean of the division of health sciences, interim vice president for academic affairs. In 2008, 44 years after coming to this institution, my plan was to retire. However, the School of Pharmacy which had admitted its first class in 2006, was seeking to achieve accreditation for the new program. Those in authority at the time asked me to consider joining the pharmacy faculty to assist with that process since I had been so heavily involved with specialized accreditation and assessment. I agreed to do so for ONE year and came to the SOP in the early summer of 2008.

Coming “across the street” to the School of Pharmacy was an adventure. Although I knew a great about health sciences and accreditation, I really knew very little about pharmacy or the responsibilities of pharmacy faculty. Simply coming into the building was new because while the school had been in full operation for two years, I had never been inside the building. As dean of the division of health sciences, I had the most beautiful office on campus - one with floor to ceiling windows which overlooked the Kanawha River and the Capitol. My initial office in the SOP was a third-floor windowless box! I also accepted an appointment as an assistant dean although I had been a dean for almost 25 years. At the time it really didn’t matter to me as I was only going to be with the SOP for ONE year!

Coming to the School of Pharmacy from nursing and other health science programs, I was very aware of the workload and demands for taking students into the clinical setting. At the time, I did not fully appreciate the pharmacy practice faculty’s response for maintaining a clinical site to precept students in addition to their teaching load. I also did not appreciate the demand for research which was expected of the pharmacy faculty offering the science component of the curriculum. It was a hectic year or so trying to sort out the faculty responsibilities and how these differed with the “second and third floor” faculty.

In addition to helping with achieving initial accreditation, I was responsible for assessment and developing a comprehensive assessment plan (CAP) for the SOP. This was one of my most enjoyable experiences – working with faculty to pull together what was in place and developing instruments and a schematic for the entire program. From the outset, I was given "full rein and responsibility” for putting this together by Dr. Easton, and with the help of the faculty, we were successful. Our comprehensive reports to the University Assessment Committee always achieved the top score and we consistently received positive feedback from the pharmacy accrediting body (ACPE). Two years ago, we reorganized the CAP around the newly developed accreditation criteria and sadly, as in this last year I was no longer responsible for assessment, will never have the opportunity to share this as it should be through the ACPE. It has been personally very difficult to go from total involvement in a responsibility to being simply invisible.
One of the most interesting assessment activities utilized in the SOP involved focus groups with graduating students. Initially, with the first graduating class, all students were invited to dinner at the Marriott in a series of sessions so that all members of the class were involved. In subsequent years, small groups of volunteers met over lunch or dinner to share their observations of the strengths and areas of concern about the program as well as suggestions for improvement. It was always interesting to hear students’ perceptions of their readiness (or lack of same) to enter pharmacy practice.

A particularly interesting challenge I encountered was the development of appropriate program outcomes for the SOP. Originally, the school had twelve general outcomes referred to as “UC Comps” and included terms such as “communication”, “problem solving” and “learning of pharmaceuticals”. Chairing a committee made up of faculty, students, and a pharmacy practitioner, we came up with twelve program outcomes which, while more appropriate, greatly exceeded the number recommended by the UC Assessment Committee. The committee reevaluated these and came up with five very comprehensive but measurable outcomes. A sixth outcome was added with the development of the ePortfolio to reflect the six areas of focus incorporated in this program.

While an ePortfolio was in place prior to 2014, the creation of a more effective ePortfolio is something of which I am most proud. I remember being very concerned with the increasing attention on assessment of co-curricular activities in accreditation and recognized the need to put a program in place to make this happen. I remember well the night I sat down to develop a course and outcomes which, under the guidance of an ad hoc ePortfolio committee, provided the early structure for what has now become an effective way for students to document their involvement and learning through co-curricular activities. A work still in progress, it has evolved over recent years to become an important aspect of documenting and assessing student development outside the classroom.

Another activity I am pleased to have developed is an online professional ethics course. This has been in place since the first graduating class in 2010. At the time, I didn’t have a clue how to develop and implement an online course, but with help from Don Hodges, our IT staff person at the time, we found a way to make it work. Beginning in 2007, physician assistant, nursing students and faculty were recruited, they simply did not stay for more than one year! When the associate dean for academic affairs resigned at the end of the 2016-2017 academic year, I was asked to serve in this capacity on an interim basis. At the same time, the individual responsible for student academic records, student registration and a million other things left the University. I was faced with an impossible situation but in the previous academic year I was always responsible for taking care of the underpinnings. Thank goodness for the registrar, Carol Spradling, who led me through the process for course scheduling and student registration, or I never would have survived that year!

One of my concerns, after being involved with the program for a time, was the retention of new faculty. While well qualified faculty were recruited, they simply did not stay for more than one or two years. Dave Bowyer, chair of the practice faculty, began to focus on finding faculty who would be a good fit for the Charleston area and for UC in particular. As I had done my doctoral research in the area of new faculty orientation and mentoring, I developed and implemented an orientation program for new faculty and many of these individuals involved in this orientation are still with us and currently serve as exceptional leaders. As an aside and a result of these activities, Dave and I did a presentation in Atlanta at the Leadership in Higher Education Conference entitled, “Find em, get em, keep em!!”

Program improvements have not been limited to students. One of the issues identified through assessment data was the need for faculty to be more involved with the University and as a result, a number of activities were initiated to foster pharmacy faculty involvement in a wide array of faculty committees and other University activities including serving as officers of the Faculty Assembly.

My official date of retirement is July 31, 2020 although I can’t really entirely retire. For the upcoming year at least, I will continue to teach the IPE ethics course as an adjunct, work with the Higher Learning Commission and the National League for Nursing Commission on Nursing Education Accreditation focusing on assessment and accreditation. I have also accepted an invitation to serve as a consultant to a college seeking HLC re-accreditation, so while I will be on the way to complete retirement I am not there yet!

Fifty-two years at one institution is a lifetime, but one I have enjoyed over those years and I have truly enjoyed the one year that turned into 12 working in the School of Pharmacy!!
Glenn Schiotis named the top recipient for the United States Public Health Service Excellence in Public Health Pharmacy Award for graduates in the Class of 2020.

In 2003, pharmacists of the United States Public Health Service (USPHS) established the Excellence in Public Health Pharmacy Award to encourage student pharmacists to become active in public health. They believe that pharmacists are trusted, accessible healthcare providers and they have the capability and responsibility to produce a positive impact on our nation’s health by educating members of their local community on the importance of living a healthy lifestyle. USPHS also believes that student pharmacists have similar opportunities to make positive impacts on public health in their communities and hope that they strive to continue and increase those positive impacts as pharmacists after graduation. Pharmacists and student pharmacists alike are pivotal in advancing public health.

This annual award recognizes student pharmacists who demonstrate a commitment to public health. It showcases student pharmacists who are active in developing innovative approaches to current public health challenges and those who will help lead our nation to a healthier future! Nominees for the Excellence in Public Health Service (USPHS) Outstanding Professional Development Project Award in October 2020.

"It is a great honor to be recognized as the top recipient for such a prestigious award. I’ve been inspired by a variety of people to use my role as a student pharmacist to have a positive impact in the community, and I am so grateful for all of the opportunities and support I have received from being a part of the USCOP family. These experiences have shaped the pharmacist I plan to be, and I promise to continue to serve the public throughout my career," Schiotis said. He continued, “I want to give a huge shout out to my friend, Tyler Leroy (Class of 2020) who was instrumental in co-creating the Change the Stigma Conference. I believe he deserves to be recognized for this award as much as I do. When we planned this event, we both agreed if we could positively impact the way just one person with substance abuse disorder was treated, it would be worth it. We had no idea the recognition we would receive for this concept (i.e. SSHP’s Outstanding Professional Development Project Award), but we are proud to represent USCOP in this light. As pharmacists, we are arguably one of the most accessible healthcare providers and our profession plays a crucial role in improving public health. I hope that seeing a UCOP student win this award inspires future classes to get out there and involved in the Charleston community.”

Glenn Schiotis served this year as Class of 2020 president and Phi Lambda Sigma Leadership Society vice president. Glenn served the Pharmacy Student Governance Association (PSGA) as the president during his P3 year. He represented the student pharmacist voice at University of Charleston and School of Pharmacy events. He served as the PSGA historian during his P2 year. Schiotis has been awarded the University of Charleston School of Pharmacy Leadership Achievement Award twice for his demonstration of outstanding commitment and service to his professional organization (PSGA). He served as vice president and later president of his class during his P4 year. Glenn was a strong student voice advocating for modifications as a member of the ePortfolio Committee.

Jamie Bero, director of student affairs, had the opportunity to work closely with Schiotis during his tenure on PSGA. “Glenn has been an exemplary leader within the School of Pharmacy,” she said. “He was always a student who could be counted on to step up and fill a void. He was able to see what needed to happen and was willing and able to implement a solution.”

Schiotis is an excellent student, and in addition to all of his leadership and co-curricular involvements, he has maintained an extremely high GPA in pharmacy school. Schiotis has been a member of the Dean’s List every year at the USCOP and graduated cum laude in May 2020. Schiotis was a member of the Pharmacy Fellows, the highly competitive program that provided leadership development, advocacy experiences, had research and community service opportunities. He was a Phi Chi tutor and Psi student mentor. Schiotis was selected to complete five of his eight APPE rotations at the competitive Cleveland Clinic rotation site.

A majority of Schiotis’ volunteer activities centered around substance abuse disorders and the opioid pandemic occurring in West Virginia and across the nation. He volunteered at the Harm Reduction Clinic offered through the Kanawha-Charleston Health Department and took part in a project for Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) prevention for use in the West Virginia correctional facilities. This project educates incarcerated women about the risk of NAS and informs them about the availability of long-acting reversible contraceptives. This project submitted by Schiotis and Logan White (Class of 2020) was a 2019 UC I3 Innovation Competition winner in the student process category. Schiotis also developed an influenza vaccination form to increase the efficiency of patients receiving the immunization at a Remote Area Medical (RAM) Volunteer Corps event. Under his organizational guidance, the University of Charleston School of Pharmacy contingent was able to administer 260 immunizations and 40 HIV and Hepatitis C tests over the two-day RAM event in October 2019.

Schiotis was selected as the 2020 President’s Award for Outstanding Graduate/Professional Student and was the graduate school speaker at the Virtual Commencement Ceremony in May. He has accepted a position with Stony Brook University Hospital.
Imagine the excitement level that must have been present in the UCSOP building in August 2006. For two years, the founding administrative team and faculty members had been preparing for students to arrive, and now the day was finally here. This group of students descended on Charleston, WV from all over the United States to begin their journey toward fulfilling their goal of earning a Doctor of Pharmacy degree and were the first to experience all that UCSOP had to offer. Beginning a professional program is never easy, and typically full of angst. When you are part of the very first class at a school, with no upperclassmen to show you the way, no student organizations in existence, no one to tell you what to expect, no one to tell you what to expect from each faculty member or classes, it surely was intimidating. But the members of the Class of 2010, who called themselves “First Class,” were a special group of pioneering spirits. If they wanted a student organization, they had to start it. Don’t know what a class president is expected to do? They had to figure it out themselves, or seek guidance from advisors, faculty members, national groups, etc. And so, the four years went, with every activity (White Coat Ceremony, Pinning Ceremony, APPE rotations, Graduation, etc.) being the first for the UCSOP community. The UCSOP had planned to hold a special alumni reception in June 2020 to commemorate the 10th anniversary of their founding administrative team and faculty members had been preparing for students to arrive, and now the day was finally here. This group of students descended on Charleston, WV from all over the United States to begin their journey toward fulfilling their goal of earning a Doctor of Pharmacy degree and were the first to experience all that UCSOP had to offer.

GEMMA ATTLEY:
Following graduation, Gemma completed a Rutgers Pharmaceutical Industry Fellowship, and currently holds a position of principal clinical scientist with Roche. Coming from the New York tri-state area, the southern charm of Appalachia had me captivated from the moment I stepped onto the University of Charleston School of Pharmacy campus. The warm, genuine welcome of the staff during my on-site interview was enough to assuage any concerns I had about becoming a part of the 2010 inaugural class. I can still remember the discordant feelings of excitement and anxiety at our Fall 2006 White Coat Ceremony knowing that we were the students chosen to pave the way for all the future UCSOP classes. Four years flew by in a blink and we were faced with the next challenge, the NAPLEX, the gatekeeper to the practice of pharmacy. As it turns out, we took a leap of faith on a new school, and it did not disappoint – our class had a 97% pass rate! (above the national average)

Ten years later, where am I? I chose a non-traditional pharmacy career path and pursued a post-doctoral fellowship in clinical research after I obtained my pharmacy license. Since then, I have been working as a principal clinical scientist conducting research across various therapeutic areas and indications, most recently in infectious diseases. Although not direct patient care, my work furthers scientific advancements in the field of pharmacy by bringing new medicines to patients. I keep my pharmacy license active and ready to learn and give my 100% to the program. Those at UC recognized my passion and my drive and gave me the opportunity to pursue my education and my dream, and for that, I will be forever grateful.

AMY BRYAN:
Following graduation, Amy completed a community pharmacy residency with The University of Missouri-Kansas City/Price Chopper Pharmacy.

Of course, there is always a bit of concern with a new program, wondering whether or not it will work out. UC’s faculty, staff, and administration were reassuring and transparent when answering the questions that I had, and I quickly knew that UCSOP was the right place for me. I applied to UCSOP as a non-traditional student and had been out of school for several years at the time, but I was motivated and ready to learn and give my 100% to the program. Those at UC recognized my passion and my drive and gave me the opportunity to pursue my education and my dream, and for that, I will be forever grateful.

STEPHEN COOK:
Following graduation, Stephen completed a pharmacy practice residency at Cabell Huntington Hospital in Huntington, WV.

When I came to UC for pharmacy school, I had a narrow vision of what pharmacy was about. I never imagined I would become a pharmacy faculty member. The academic environment allows me to apply my knowledge and skills I learned in school and residency. I get to learn, teach, provide patient care, collaborate with other providers, research, and provide service to the University and community as part of my career, which is fulfilling and always evolving. The next 10 years are hopefully as exciting as the last.

My most memorable experience as a student at the UCSOP would be the five-hour clinical kinetics exam that was supposed to last an hour. My career highlights include being named UCSOP Teacher of the Year in 2014, as well as chairing the self-study committee that lead to an eight-year accreditation for the UCSOP.

MATT RAFA:
UCSOP provided me the elements necessary to thrive and develop as a pharmacist and as a person. I enjoyed being part of something new. In my ten-year long career, I have had many opportunities provided to me that have been because of my education at UCSOP.

The profession of pharmacy, and specifically community pharmacy, has changed drastically in the last decade, and I’m happy to see a number of our graduates advocating for change in ways that will protect and move us towards a brighter future for patient care.
ERIN (CIPOLAT) JAMES:

It’s been ten years since I was a student at the UCSDP, and yet I still have vivid memories from my time there. I was happy to continue my higher education journey at the SOP since I had just completed my undergraduate degree in Biology at UC. It was exciting to know that I would be part of the first ever class from their SOP! I remember when the first dean and assistant dean came to speak to the biology students during my second year of undergrad, and it was then that I changed my mind from going to medical school to pharmacy school. Sixteen years later, I still keep in touch with the first assistant dean from the SOP.

The pharmacy landscape has changed drastically in those ten years since my graduation. More than ever, you have to be willing to step outside your comfort zone in order to find something that works for you. I would encourage any pharmacy student to explore different opportunities than the more traditional roles in pharmacy. I always saw myself working in a hospital, but after six years of inpatient hospital work, I transitioned to home infusion for several years. After that, I took a leap of faith on a contract job that was only for six months, while not entirely sure whether the job would become permanent. Luckily it did, and I now work in the managed care space as a population health pharmacist for Highmark Health. The knowledge and experiences I have in my current role are not possible in traditional pharmacy roles.

The biggest piece of advice that I could give anyone currently in pharmacy school is to maintain relationships with those you meet along the way who acknowledge your worth. You never know when that one connection you have will be the one that helps you land a new job or is the connection that hires you down the road because they know you’re worth having on their team. Choose your connections wisely and build trust in people who value your work ethic.

CALI MOTHERAMGARI:

As I look back to 2006, I was really excited when I received the acceptance letter from University of Charleston School of Pharmacy in West Virginia. I was nervous and excited about attending a new pharmacy school and spending the next four years of my life in a state that I had never even visited. My time in pharmacy school was exciting and rewarding because I made friends for life and pharmacy school taught me lessons for life. My first memory was when I entered the dorms to meet my fellow classmates and left with a memory of being called to the stage as “Dr. Kalicharan Motheramgari” to receive my degree.

For the last 10 years, I have practiced as a pharmacist in both inpatient and outpatient settings. Pharmacy as a profession has been very rewarding for me, and I am planning on giving back to the profession. Currently, I work for HCA as a clinical staff pharmacist for two of their hospitals located in Nashville, TN, and I recently received a scholarship to pursue an MBA at Belmont University.

MILLION WOLDEMARIAM:

What was it like to join an inaugural class and wonder what would happen next? I don’t believe any one of my dearest classmates knew where we were heading to. We, as new members of the class with no mentorship and tutorship of upperclassmen available, had to sail the wonder-ship with some of the greatest and most caring professors in my lifetime. The energy and motivation started with the deans and flowed down to each professor, scientist and clinician. Everything I needed to know and explore was granted and guided with delight from these professors. Topics such as pharmacology, medicinal chemistry, immunology, clinical practice, PK, PD, outcomes, drug research, compounding and so many others were covered generously.

After graduation, I leaped into a two-year fellowship as a clinical research scientist at a drug company, Upsher-Smith. I have been practicing as a clinical research scientist and clinical pharmacist ever since. I have been able to conduct, lead and participate in various novel and existing drug studies. I have also practiced as a traditional pharmacist and been able to interconnect what I see in drug studies with real life patient consumption of medications. I have had the pleasure to work with so many like-minded professionals that care so much about patients and their safety. I have moved from state to state at least four times for jobs and other reasons, and there is something I carry at all times, even after 10 years, boxes of binders that are stuffed with lecture notes and notes from the University of Charleston School of Pharmacy courses. I am thankful to my professors, and I am totally and completely proud of my school—You Learn to Give!

THeresa (CarBiOn) TaumbAN:

It’s hard to believe I’ve been a pharmacist now for 10 years. To be perfectly honest, I had no idea what I signed up for when I accepted the offer to be part of the UCSDP Class of 2010. I just knew I finally got into pharmacy school and really wanted to be a pharmacist. It was probably during orientation, it finally hit me when Dr. Easton clearly pointed out what it meant to be the “inaugural” class. In my gut, I just really believed it would all work out. In the end, that deep belief paid off. At first, it was a bit of a culture shock moving from the Philadelphia area to Charleston, WV, but over the four years eventually I learned to fall in love with West Virginia. A part of me will always feel at home there. Some of my fondest memories are running along the Kanawha River and of course, trying to make it back up Bridge Road to my apartment. My most fortunate experience was the friendships that were forged over those four years. We survived it all and to this day remain close. The “Supergroup” will forever have each other’s backs.

Early on, I knew I had wanted to attend a residency program after I graduated UCSDP. Because of my previous years working as a nursing assistant, I knew I wanted to specialize in geriatrics. I applied to many programs and was fortunate to match at my first choice, which was the Veterans Affairs Maryland Healthcare System General Practice Residency. After graduation, I married the love of my life and we moved to Baltimore, MD, so I could complete my residency program. It was a hard and challenging year. I hustled every second while I was there, working during the day as a resident and nights/weekends as a staff pharmacist. It was a nerve wracking time because clinical pharmacist positions were limited and not easy to come by anywhere. The end of my residency year was fast approaching with limited job prospects - out of fear, I ended up accepting a job as a consultant for a health insurance company.

In 2008, my dream job became available - clinical pharmacy specialist in geriatrics for the VA’s Community Living Center (CLC). I immediately applied, interviewed, and eventually was told I had the position. All I can remember during that time was working around the clock, completing my residency requirements, still working nights as a VA staff pharmacist, and working during the day at the insurance company until I was officially signed on as the clinical pharmacy specialist at the VA.

Nine years later, I am still in my dream position as a clinical pharmacy specialist in geriatrics. There is not a day that goes by that I am not grateful for taking that leap of faith 14 years ago. As my team noted when I first arrived, they were not used to having a pharmacist give recommendations, or in fact, any input. The medical doctors were used to practicing with no clinical pharmacist for 30 plus years. I had my work cut out for me, because I had to prove my worth. The first thing I took over for them was the anticoagulation monitoring (and they were very happy about that) Slowly, over time, I was doing more and more clinical work. So much so, that three years into my career when I left to go on maternity leave there was both panic and relief when I returned back to work. That’s how you know you made it. I knew then a pharmacist was officially a necessary and accepted part of the team. Now, I am one of the longest serving members on my team as my initial medical doctors have long retired. As the new providers like to remind me, they’re only use to practicing with a pharmacist, so I am not allowed to go anywhere.

I absolutely love what I do each and every day. I have happily served the US Veterans for almost 10 years. In that time, I have made some great friendships and have had some great losses. It is not easy to work alongside a clinical team, dedicating your time to patients who are getting older. Especially now, in light of COVID-19, you realize just how much your patients’ lives and health mean to you. Earlier in March, as we were closing down our nursing home to visitors, my very elderly patients were making their end of life wishes known. One veteran, whom I am very close with, said to me, “Theresa, I am 97 years old, I have lived a good life. I have survived the Holocaust, and I have served this country, if I get this virus, please let me go and give the medicine to someone else.” Nothing prepares you for this moment, but I can say that I am glad I get to wake up and serve them every day.

If you are an alumni yourself, please take the time to let us know what you have been doing since graduation. Send an email to carlystover@ucwv.edu. We look forward to hearing from you.
**CLASS OF 2024**

**STUDENT PROFILE**

- **67%** Women
- **33%** Men

35 Undergraduate Colleges & Universities

18 First Generation College Students

**STUDENTS BY RACE/ETHNICITY:**

- **30%** White
- **14%** Asian
- **22%** Hispanic
- **26%** Black or African American
- **2%** American Indian
- **2%** Multiple
- **4%** Did Not Report

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26

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27
Opioid overdose deaths have continued to rise, and West Virginia has led the country with the highest rate of overdose deaths for multiple years according to the CDC. Most recent statistics from 2018 identify West Virginia as having a fatal overdose rate of 31.5 individuals per 100,000 total deaths. With the current COVID-19 pandemic, we are seeing an increase in fatal overdoses throughout the state. Many individuals have lost connection to group meetings, treatment programs, and family. As a healthcare community, how can we fix this? How can we keep our wards from dying? Unfortunately, the answer is not an easy one. There is no “quick fix” to the opioid epidemic. It takes everyone tackling every aspect of substance use disorders including greater access to recovery, reduction of stigma, reducing infectious disease, treatment of underlying mental health issues, connection to care, counseling, support, education, prevention of use (programs focused on children and adolescents), and prevention of death (access to naloxone).

There are many ways that the University of Charleston has been able to impact many of these areas through Generation Rx, faculty and student involvement in syringe exchange programs, a conference held on campus to reduce stigma, and access to naloxone through PharmUC. At the beginning of 2018, UCSOP received a large donation of approximately 4,000 Narcan 4mg intranasal kits (8,000 doses) from Cardinal Health to be distributed to first responders in our state so they could carry this life saving medication. After all of the donated kits had been distributed, there was a large donation of approximately 4,200 Narcan 4mg intranasal kits (8,000 doses) to first responders in West Virginia. The last grant that was just recently received was from the First Responder - Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (FR-CARA) Grant for $913,250. This grant will supply approximately 2,100 naloxone kits (4,200 doses) to first responders in West Virginia.

Although education and access to naloxone are just small pieces of the puzzle, these grant opportunities have allowed UC to make a significant impact in the community. Every dose of naloxone that has been provided to someone is potentially one less fatal overdose but most importantly a potential life saved. Naloxone is not the solution to the opioid epidemic, but it keeps people alive with hopes that they may recover.

In April 2018, the brothers of Gamma Chi, the University of Charleston chapter of Phi Delta Chi (PDC), hosted the Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference (MARCC). Led by their Worthy Chief Counselor (President) Nneoma Imo, Gamma Chi welcomed over 100 students and alumni from chapters in neighboring states to Charleston for a weekend of strengthening fraternity bonds, establishing and maintaining traditional values of the fraternity, networking and continuing education. It was a grand event that was praised by visiting chapters as one of the best conferences they had the pleasure of attending.

Gamma Chi's membership numbers waned after the event; however, this reflected a national trend. At one point, PDC did not have enough members to fill positions in their executive board, and it was uncertain if the chapter would continue to exist.

In response, the 2019-2020 Worthy Chief Counselor, Mark Salem, and his officers doubled down. They initiated various events to promote PDC, including activities such as an annual bonfire on the river, pizza nights, study groups, an ugly Christmas sweater contest, and a charity Christmas card-making event (over 100 cards were made and sent to children at St. Jude Children’s Hospital). The chapter also worked side-by-side with other organizations such as SNPhA, Lambda Kappa Sigma, and the Class of 2021 to establish and maintain traditional values of the fraternity, networking and continuing education. It was a grand event that was praised by visiting chapters as one of the best conferences they had the pleasure of attending.

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When Mark became Gamma Chi’s President, he stated, “I want the PDC to be the best organization when I graduate.” He and a few other members were initiated to PDC when it had a record number of members, so they had experienced the comradeship that was possible from belonging to a fraternity whose motto is “Alterum Alterius Auxilio Eget,” or “Each needs the help of the other.” They knew that lifelong friendships were formed through participating in PDC’s events and rituals. They also recognized the value of belonging to a national fraternity with a long history and a large network – nearly 1 in 12 pharmacists is a PDC brother. They wanted to keep the opportunity to be part of this community alive for their peers and for pharmacy students in years to come.

As a result of Mark’s and all the PDC brothers’ dedication this past year, participation in the fraternity improved, the executive board was filled, and 17 new brothers were initiated, growing the chapter from a membership of seven to twenty-four. PDC-Gamma Chi came together not only to have fun, serve the community, and achieve academically, but also to support one another, especially when we lost our beloved brother, Nneoma Imo. PDC-Gamma Chi was awarded University of Charleston’s “Organization of the Year” in April 2020.

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It’s no surprise that our UCSOP community has been very active in efforts to help others during this time. Take a look at what everyone has been up to. We are proud of you, Golden Eagles!

LOGAN WHITE (P4) was able to assist Cleveland Clinic and Cleveland Whiskey make hand sanitizer. White helped gather supplies, assemble bottles, and add labels for easy identification. For this project, Cleveland Clinic supplied the glycerin, denatonium benzoate, and other resources. Cleveland Whiskey also provided volunteers, the bottling site, and 80% ethanol.

EMMA HYSON (P1) has been crocheting masks and ear savers for people in her community. Eric Constant, senior at UC, has been 3D printing buttons to assist with the project.

TRISTAN MAYNARD (P3) has been activated to work as the non-commissioned officer of the Joint Reception Staging Onward Movement and Integration for medical screening and tracking of all military members and government contractors working the COVID-19 relief in West Virginia. His job is to record baseline information regarding symptoms and review medical history to determine if the individual is fit for duty. Thank you for your service Tristan!

WESLEY JONES (P1) has been a participant in the Drug-Free All-Stars basketball team for the past seven years. This grant-funded group is comprised of volunteers who are former collegiate or professional basketball players that put on performing shows along the East Coast. The team spreads the message of a drug-free and bully-free environment. Drug-Free All-Stars is now focusing on a message of staying healthy and safe at home. Jones created a video for the team’s YouTube and social media channels to promote this initiative.

DR. GANNETT MONK, Troop 19 Boy Scouts Master, has been working alongside his scouts for the past month to assist the local food pantry to run food distribution. Several members of their community, who are high-risk individuals, are unable to perform their usual duties and asked the Boy Scouts for assistance. Food is distributed by curbside pickup at the Sissonville Community Center at Aldersgate United Methodist Church. (Picture provided)

SARAH EMBREY has been working hard treating her patients at Thomas Memorial Hospital. We appreciate your hard work and dedication Dr. Embrey!

PharmD/MBA Program

PharmD/MBA Program now more student friendly with MBA classes fully online.

- Dual degree offers considerable cost reduction in obtaining MBA degree
- A large portion of the MBA classes are given online making it more manageable while simultaneously working towards pharmacy degree
- Individual instruction and small classes
- Students apply in P1 year of pharmacy school

Examples of these position include but are not limited to:

- Pharmaceutical Marketing
- Institutional Formulary development and management
- Chain or Independent store pharmacy management
- Pharmacoeconomics in industry and managed care
- Managed Care Management
- Biotechnology
- Management of any health care institution (hospital, health-system, etc)
- Professional association work (e.g., APhA, NCPA)
- Outcomes research
- Monitoring clinical trials
- Project management in health care
- Teaching in a college of pharmacy
How long have you worked at Tug Valley ARH? What made you want to pursue employment there after graduation?

I have worked for Appalachian Regional Healthcare (ARH) and more specifically the Tug Valley ARH Regional Medical Center since May 5, 2018. I started off as the pharmacy intern for both inpatient and outpatient where I learned everything from the ground up. During my P4 year, I was offered a position and I was scheduled to take on the role of a pharmacist immediately following graduation. I wanted to pursue employment at ARH because it meant something to me. From the time I was in high school I volunteered at the hospital; was in programs the hospital offered, and many of my friends worked for this organization. Our community is very small, this hospital is the only means of medical access to a vast majority of people. I wanted to bring my education, ideas, initiatives, and charisma to a place that was home to me so that I could be a reason for its growth into the future. I wanted to give back to my community and by working here I would be able to do so through a variety of outreach programs. Being from my small town I am a familiar face that individuals feel comfortable reaching out to, which makes staying here that much more important. Another reason to pursue employment is that during my years as an intern I put in a lot of work to help build what we have now. I want to continue building and advancing the hospital and region. I was knowledgeable of almost all the systems the hospital used so taking on the role of a pharmacist would be a smooth transition. In the end it is all about passion and my passion is for myself to strive, the hospital to strive, and the community to strive all together while providing the best patient care.

You volunteered extensively and did a lot of outreach with ARH during your time at UIC. What were some of your most memorable events/experiences?

If I was not at the University studying, in class, or working on an assignment then the rest of my time was spent working or volunteering with ARH. I have a collage of memories to choose from, but there are a few specific ones that mean more to me than others. Every fall ARH partners with a variety of local organizations to administer flu shots and we also take other immunizations that patients may need as well. This stuck out to me because it allowed me to begin networking. Networking in the sense that I now have contacts at a variety of places that I can give a phone call to if I needed something and networking allows for yourself/job to be publicized. On these clinic days we would often give advice on a variety of things beside immunizations which emphasizes the decentralization concept of the pharmacy/pharmacist. Through this we were able to promote public health for the greater good. Another experience was being able to go back to my high school while representing ARH and present the pharmacy occupation and schooling before students still pondering on a career. To me this brings myself full circle because I was able to go back to where I came from and potentially impact the lives of countless kids in my community. A final notable event was health/wellness clinics we offered at schools across the county. This was interdisciplinary bringing several healthcare professions together to give children the opportunity to be screened for multiple disease states. On one of these outings we specifically made an impact in one child’s life because on initial examine we found him to be extremely hypertensive and from that point he was further evaluated by a physician. All these events allow yourself to grow as a provider and allows you to bond with individuals you will potentially be interacting with in clinical practice. No matter the event, I encourage all outreach because it benefits the public health of the community.

What does a typical “day in the life” look like for you now?

A typical day for my current position is very complex when comparing it to other jobs due to the structure of my hospital. I am primarily located in the outpatient retail setting where I process prescriptions along with the help of my technicians, care navigator, and my partner: One of the benefits of my location is that I am located within our hospital’s clinic building where I can communicate heavily with prescribers about recommendations, interactions, and other ideas. Often times the prescribers will give me a phone call when they want my input into the medication selection, or they are unfamiliar with some aspect of a medication. At our facility we also offer a “Meds to Beds” service where discharged patients receive their prescriptions before being released. With this I am able to offer counseling to these patients in the privacy of their hospital room on the discharge meds, but I am also able to analyze the discharge medications and contact the prescribers if I feel there needs to be a change made. On site we have a skilled nursing facility and we manage all of the long-term care patients’ medications. My partner and I do a clinical review once a month of all the patients in this facility. Throughout the day I may even be seen assisting if a code, trauma alert, or rapid response is called to offer a pharmacist service quickly in the most critical of times. If our inpatient pharmacists need some help, I can also assist them with any of their workflow. Working for my small rural hospital offers me the ability to be a little of everything all at once.

What piece of advice would you give yourself as a P4 student?

Looking back if I could give myself advice as a P4, I would tell myself to not stress over the small stuff. Being in any graduate program there is a multitude of work expected and while it may not be without stress, we need to know how to manage it. Whatever is stressing you will more than likely be there tomorrow; if it is an assignment then take a step back to breathe, get yourself together, and come back to it. Everything comes to an end eventually but just because there is one inconvenience (ex: missed exam, bad grade, showed up late) that does not mean it is the end of the career. A lot of times our mistakes are what we learn from and prosper from the most. Knowing now that stress only causes hypertension, headaches, and anxiety I would surely tell myself to manage it better and to not stress the small stuff.

“I wanted to bring my education, ideas, initiatives, and charisma to a place that was home to me so that I could be a reason for its growth into the future.”

– Dr. Zachary Grimmett
Memorials on Campus for Students

By: Gannett Monk, PharmD, Executive Director of Professional Affairs

If you take a walk around the UCSOP building this fall, keep your eyes open for two new memorial plaques that were placed to honor two students that impacted the school, but were sadly lost before they could complete their journey toward a Doctor of Pharmacy degree. Though you may not have known them, it is important for us all to reflect on what they contributed to the legacy of the UCSOP.

MAGGIE JANE KING:

Maggie attended UC as an undergraduate student and was very involved in her church in her hometown of Clay, WV. As a student, Maggie held the office of historian for the Class of 2013. On February 4, 2020, at the beginning of only her second semester at UCSOP, Maggie was killed in a vehicle accident due to black ice on her way to school. Though she was only with us for a relatively short time, Maggie left a lasting impression on all who were blessed to know her. Class of 2013 classmate Dr. Lindsay Acre notes, “Maggie was a fun and loving spirit that could brighten up any room with her big smile. Maggie was always smiling regardless of the day or stress and was always kind to everyone.”

I still vividly remember the day that we received the news of Maggie’s passing, and her loss made us all appreciate just how delicate life is, and how we should appreciate each day that we are blessed with.

Maggie’s Class of 2013 raised money to sponsor an annual student travel scholarship named in her honor (outside of the UCSOP building in her honor). 

NNEOMA CYNTHIA IMO:

Nneoma was a bright light at the UCSOP with her helpful, friendly manner and radiant smile. Nneoma attended UCSOP from 2015 to 2020 (her education delayed by her medical diagnosis), and as such had an impact on the Classes of 2019, 2020 and 2021. In fact, due to her extraordinary leadership and community service hours contributed to several organizations at UCSOP, particularly the Phi Delta Chi (PDC) Fraternity and the Student National Pharmaceutical Association (SNPhA), Nneoma made an impact on nearly every student that she encountered.

Nneoma was instrumental in hosting and planning the 2018 PDC Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference which brought together 100 student pharmacists and pharmacists to Charleston for three days. According to PDC co-advisor Dr. Alice Gahbauer, “the conference was an outstanding success thanks to Nneoma’s leadership and enthusiasm.” In honor of her exceptional involvement in student organizations, Nneoma was awarded the Most Involved Student Award at the For the Love of UIC Gala in 2019.

In December 2019, while at home in Houston, Texas, Nneoma learned that her cancer had returned, and that her treatment options were exhausted. In January 2020, she left the UCSOP administration know that she wanted to return to school and try her best to complete the PharmD degree that she had devoted so much of her life to, despite knowing that the months she spent here would likely be her last. Sadly, Nneoma lost her battle with cancer on February 12, 2020, only two days after taking an exam in pharmacotherapy. “That same evening, despite not feeling well, Nneoma spent time gathering supplies for the SNPhA Cultural Awareness Week activities, to ensure they would be a success. This last measure of devotion is a testament to Nneoma’s commitment to her fellow students, her organizations, and the UCSOP.

In the words of SNPhA co-advisor Ms. Jane Condee, “Nneoma’s demonstration of perseverance in the face of adversity is one we can all strive to and admire. She will be missed, but not forgotten by all those she touched.”
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