The WVU School of Pharmacy is pleased to announce six new Ph.D. graduates from its Pharmaceutical and Pharmacological Sciences Graduate Program. The program has two pathways. The Pharmaceutical and Pharmacological Sciences pathway emphasizes basic laboratory research. The Health Outcomes pathway emphasizes research in health policy and population sciences. Three Ph.D.s matriculated from each pathway during the Spring commencement.

Robin Ayscue is from Clarksburg, WV. She completed her dissertation, “Computer modeling of dapsone-mediated heteroactivation of flurbiprofen metabolism by CYP 2C9,” under the guidance of Dr. Peter Gannett. Dr. Ayscue is currently a senior scientist with Pfizer in Groton, CT.

Deepak Bhatia is from Gurgaon, India. He completed his dissertation, “Transcriptional and post-transcriptional regulation of Gadd 45α in response to arsenic,” under the mentorship of Dr. Fei Chen. Dr. Bhatia is currently an assistant professor of pharmacology at Northern Ohio College of Medicine and Pharmacy.

Jarrett “Jay” Coffindaffer is from Spencer, WV. He completed his dissertation, “Pharmacists and tobacco cessation counseling: attitudes and beliefs, impact of cessation training on practice, and feasibility of training and implementation into the pharmacy practice setting,” under the mentorship of Dr. Irene Tessaro and Dr. Leslie Ann Miller.

Anuja Roy is from Calcutta, India. She completed her dissertation, “Impact of co-morbid insomnia on health-related quality of life and patient preferences in the primary care setting,” under the mentorship of Dr. Suresh Madhavan. Dr. Roy is currently a pharmacoeconomist with Walgreens Corporation in Chicago, IL.

Murali Sundaram is from Mumbai, India. He completed his dissertation, “Development and validation of a diabetes-specific health state classification system and valuation function based on the multi-attribute theory,” under the guidance of Dr. Michael Smith. Dr. Sundaram is currently employed at QualityMetric in Waltham, MA.

Islam Younis is from Nablus, Palestine. He completed his dissertation, “In vitro elucidation of the metabolic fate of the anticancer drug busulfan,” under the guidance of Dr. Patrick Callery. Dr. Younis is currently a clinical pharmacologist with the Food and Drug Administration in Silver Springs, MD.

We are proud of our recent graduates and wish them much success in their new careers.
In pharmacy, nanoscience is rapidly becoming an important research and development area, especially for drug development and delivery. Nanotechnology and nanopharmaceuticals is predicted to develop into a $1 billion dollar industry by 2010. It is thus important for pharmacists and pharmacy students to be exposed to this new technology.

The goals of the initiative are to foster interdisciplinary research at WVU and obtain necessary, state-of-the-art instrumentation to conduct nanoscience research.

In support of this, WVNano is also developing nanoscience education at the undergraduate, professional and graduate levels. "The WVNano Initiative is a great way to bridge research in the biological, physical and engineering sciences," Gannett said. "By working together, we bring our research expertise to use nanoscience approaches to improve human health."

Dr. Gannett discusses a project with Ph.D. student, Jarod Kabulski.

Mohannad A. El Khider and Sultan Juma Khamis Al Balushi visiting the WVU School of Pharmacy.
The Pharmaceutical and Pharmacological Sciences Graduate Program in the School of Pharmacy is pleased to welcome ten new students for the Fall of 2008.

The Health Outcomes pathway welcomes three first-year students.

Tricia Wilkins has a Pharm.D. from the State University of New York in Buffalo. Her interim advisor is Dr. Cindy Tworek.

WVU graduate Traci Lemasters will work with interim advisor Dr. Virginia Scott. Pallavi Rane has a master’s degree from Dusquene University. Her interim advisor is Dr. Virginia Scott.

Four second-year students are entering the Pharmaceutical and Pharmacological Sciences (PPS) pathway from the WVU biomedical gateway.

Hosam Elbaz is working with Dr. Yon Rojanasakul, Brian Train is working with Dr. Peter Gannett, Michael Seminerio is working with Dr. Rae Matsumoto and Eric Zaccone is working with Dr. Jason Huber.

In addition, two third-year students, James Fishback and Nidhi Kaushal, are re-joining Dr. Matsumoto’s lab in Morgantown. They are transferring into the PPS pathway from the University of Mississippi.

Arunprasad Sivaraman is also entering the PPS pathway as a part time master’s student. Arun is an employee of Mylan Pharmaceuticals in Morgantown. His interim advisor is Dr. Peter Gannett.

We look forward to working with all of our new students.

Jason Huber, Ph.D., assistant professor in the WVU School of Pharmacy Department of Basic Pharmaceutical Sciences, was awarded a $1.6 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to investigate the role of aging in stroke injury. Charles Rosen, M.D., Ph.D., director of WVU Neurosurgical Research, is a co-investigator on the project.

“This project started with a basic question of how we could help stroke patients,” Huber said. “The government spends billions of dollars testing stroke drugs on young animals only to have them fail when put to real use in patients, who are often older. We thought: why not test these drugs on older animals?”

Young rats suffering a stroke all survive. Older rats have a 30 to 40 percent death rate from stroke, which is comparable to humans. Similarities in mortality rates, stroke volumes and behavioral deficits led the research team at WVU to believe that older rats are more representative of humans than are younger rats in their response to a stroke.

The grant will allow the researchers to better understand the role age plays in stroke development, progression and recovery. The long term goal of the project is to improve functional outcomes in people who suffer a stroke.

Welcome new graduate students!

SAVE THE DATE

Inaugural STITZEL LECTURESHP

Darryle Schoepp, Ph.D.
Senior Vice President Merck & Company

October 10, 2008 1:00 P.M.
1901 Learning Center
Research at the WVU School of Pharmacy is a thriving and growing enterprise. As the new Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Programs in the School of Pharmacy, I am heartened by the resourcefulness and tenacity of the faculty during these tough funding times.

This past year has shown unprecedented growth in the number of grants submitted to external funding agencies. More importantly, our faculty have managed to garner their share of successes. So far in 2008, faculty members in the School of Pharmacy serve as the principal investigator of 14 active grants and contracts, totaling over $2 million. Many of these programs will continue to be highlighted in subsequent issues of the Research Quarterly.

The current issue highlights our Graduate Program. The Pharmaceutical and Pharmacological Sciences Graduate Program is one the largest and fastest growing among the Health Sciences Center biomedical programs. The many achievements of our students and graduates are noteworthy, and would not be possible without the diligent mentorship of our graduate faculty.

This combination of promising trainees and dedicated faculty is an unbeatable recipe for success, and we look forward to many new notable achievements in 2008!

Rae Matsumoto

Congratulations to three outstanding graduate students who were recognized at the School of Pharmacy’s awards ceremony.

Vorasit Vongsutilers, a fifth-year student, received the Outstanding Research Award in Basic Pharmaceutical Sciences. Mr. Vongsutilers research focuses on the effects of DNA conformation on carcinogenesis. His mentor is Dr. Peter Gannett.

Rahul Khanna, a fourth-year student, received the Outstanding Research Award in Pharmaceutical Systems and Policy. Mr. Khanna has made six presentations at scientific meetings with an international audience, published a peer-reviewed paper and is preparing two additional publications of recent work. He has received research awards from The Susan G. Komen Foundation as well as the Association of Rheumatology Health Professionals. His co-advisors are Dr. Michael Smith and Dr. Suresh Madhavan.

John Jett, a fourth-year student, received the Outstanding Achievement Award. This award recognizes a student who’s impact extends beyond the boundaries of the graduate program. In addition to demonstrating noteworthy progress in his research, Mr. Jett is recognized for his leadership role, including the organization of a regional scientific meeting which was held at WVU. His research mentor is Dr. Peter Gannett.

We congratulate these students and wish them continued success in their programs.

Want to know more about the WVU School of Pharmacy? Visit www.hsc.wvu.edu/sop

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