



# COLLEGE of PHARMACY

WHAT STARTS HERE CHANGES THE WORLD

**Volume 2: Fall 2012**  
**The University of Texas at Austin**  
**UT-ISPOR**  
**Alumni Newsletter**

**Inside this issue:**

Alumni Updates	2-3
Students Updates	4-5
Meeting in the Middle Conference	6

**Special points of interest:**

- UT Austin hosted Meeting in the Middle Conference
- Save the date: Western Pharmacoeconomic conference: March 14-16, 2013 (University of Arizona in Tucson, AZ)
- ISPOR Annual Meeting: May 18-22, 2013 New Orleans, LA
- **Save the Date:** UT-ISPOR Reception, May 20, 2013, New Orleans LA , Venue TBA

**Greetings, UT-ISPOR Alumni.**

We are happy to reconnect with you through this newsletter. One of the big events this summer at the college was the Meeting in the Middle Conference (June 22-24, 2012) which combined two biennial conferences, the Southern Pharmacy Administration Conference and the Western Pharmacoeconomics Conference. This meeting provided an opportunity for networking and professional presentations for a total of 86 graduate students and

25 faculty members representing twenty schools, in addition to attendees from the Department of Defense and pharmaceutical industry (see more on page 6).

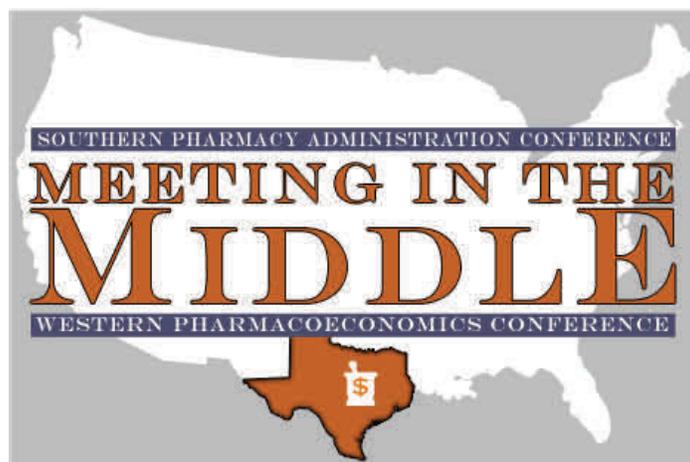
Summer 2012 PhD graduates included Lung-I Cheng who joined Amgen, Angela Winegar who continues her consulting work, and Natasha Shcherbakova and Marc Fleming who accepted positions as assistant professors at colleges of pharmacy. More information about Marc and Natasha can be found on pages 2-3.

A new faculty member, Dr. Kentya Ford, joined the Health Outcomes and Pharmacy Practice division in January 2012. Her research interests are health promotion, health behavior change, and health disparities. Dr. Ford received her PhD from The University of Texas School of Public Health.

Dr. Carolyn Brown has been appointed to a position on the UT Intercollegiate Athletics Council for Women.

Dr. Jamie Barner was named as a fellow of the American Pharmacists Association (FAPhA). She previously served as chair of the Economic, Social, and Administrative Sciences (ESAS) section of the organization.

Tatiana Makhinova's presentation was among finalists for the student poster award at the ISPOR 15th Annual European Congress in Berlin.



**Dr. Natasha Shcherbakova, Assistant Professor, Western New England University,  
College of Pharmacy, Springfield, Mass.**



**Natasha Shcherbakova, PhD 2012**

As a recent alumna of the Division of Health Outcomes and Pharmacy Practice graduate program, I am delighted to share my post-graduate experiences and give advice to current graduate students and UT-ISPOR chapter members.

I completed my doctoral dissertation under the supervision of Dr. Karen Rascati in August 2012. Following that, I joined Western New England University College of Pharmacy as an assistant professor. This appointment combines responsibilities of teaching in the college with health services research responsibilities at a local health plan, Health New England. The access to the health plan data allows me to continue to hone my idea generation, research design and data analyses skills. Meanwhile, the academic appointment challenges me to develop new approaches to teaching within the professional curriculum to get students passionate about pharmacoecconomics and outcomes research and its applicability to their future careers.

Having my graduate school experience still close and vivid, I'll take the opportunity to provide a few tidbits of advice to current graduate students. First, do take advantage of the magnitude of resources, student organizations, educational programs, world-renowned speakers, and activities that The University of Texas at Austin has to offer. Upon leaving, I realized how much I benefited from the richness of the UT graduate school experience. Second, try to reserve at least two summers during your doctoral studies for internship experiences. Not only will the internships expand your perspective on the type of a career path to follow upon graduation but they also will open up many professional networking opportunities – incredible resource regardless of the career path you choose. Finally, do not be afraid to reach out to faculty within and outside of the HOPP division and the College of Pharmacy to discuss recent publications or confer about your own research ideas. Given the more interdisciplinary nature of our field, reaching out to faculty at the School of Nursing, School of Public Health, satellite programs, or programs outside of UT will strengthen your abilities to interact with researchers from multiple backgrounds – a helpful asset for any employment opportunities. Last but not least, do enjoy Austin – an incredible city that may smooth the bumpiest periods of your graduate school journey with its music, culture and entertainment scenes.

**Dr. Marc Fleming, Assistant Professor, University of Houston, College of Pharmacy,  
Houston, TX**



**Marc Fleming, PhD 2012**

As some of you may know, I recently graduated from our wonderful program in August 2012. I completed both my MS and PhD under the supervision of Dr. Jamie Barner. Since I do not have years of work experience to share, I would like to highlight the importance of networking. Webster's defines networking as "the cultivation of productive relationships for employment or business." I want to stress the importance of networking at conferences with UT alumni and other conference participants. For most of you, this will be an important part of your success for any job; industry or academia. Your presentation skills and interactions with others may be the difference in obtaining a job, gaining important collaborators and achieving funding success.

I am currently an assistant professor of clinical and administrative sciences, Division of Pharmacy Administration and Public Health at the University of Houston, College of Pharmacy. I started on October 1, 2012. I feel like the luckiest man in the world, not

only because I have returned home, but because I am excited about my research. My research area focuses on prescriber and pharmacist use of the prescription drug monitoring program (PDMP), at the point of patient care. The PDMP is an online accessible database that houses patient histories on all controlled drugs dispensed from community and outpatient pharmacies. I have been asked to join a task force working with a group to connect electronic health records, including the PDMP, for all Houston area patients. Although it has only been two months, I have recently established a relationship with the director of emergency medicine at the MD Anderson Cancer Center. I have devoted a good amount of time developing networks within my department and with external colleagues. Networking is critical for me to accomplish my research and publication goals. Networking is also a critical component of successful research funding (i.e., contact program officer). Did I mention the importance of networking? No matter what your career goals, networking will be a critical element to your success.

My advice to UT-ISPOR students is to start developing your networking skills NOW, if you have not done so already. Talk to colleagues at conferences that have similar research interests and follow up with occasional emails. Persistence is often the key to establishing some of your networking connections. So, do not be afraid of rejection, and let the world know how passionate you are about your research.

## Summer Internship at Genentech By Shan Jiang, MS



### San-Francisco, CA

Summer 2012 was the most memorable summer I have spent in the US because of my internship experience with Genentech. I learned a great deal from the internship and was able to work with some really smart and motivated health outcomes researchers in the company.

I worked in the biometrics, health outcomes and payer support group in the commercial department. My project was a qualitative study assessing disease burden. I had the opportunity to get involved with patient interviews and listen to their needs. This experience ignited several research ideas and motivated me to conduct research for underserved patients who have the most urgent medical needs. In addition, this internship helped me gain skills in Excel modeling and large database analysis. With the help of my manager, I met with Genentech employees who have diverse research backgrounds, and gained insight into what it is like to work for a pharmaceutical company. During my internship, I also realized that our graduate program has been instrumental in educating us by offering the knowledge and skills needed to be successful. After I returned to the program, I felt more inspired and motivated to conduct health outcomes research.

## Summer Internship at Xcenda By Abiola Oladapo, MS



### Palm Harbor, FL

Last summer I had the opportunity to intern at Xcenda consulting company in Palm Harbor, Florida. The twelve-week internship program afforded me the opportunity to meet and work with a team of highly talented and purpose-driven individuals. I worked on a variety of projects which involved the development of economic models, large database analyses, dossier development, technical report writing and development of slides for syndicated training. I also assisted in preparing an editorial on cancer immunotherapy. Overall, the internship improved my research skills and increased my understanding of the consulting environment and the relevance of consulting firms to the healthcare industry.

Note: This year Abiola was awarded a Bill Powers Graduate Fellowship by The University of Texas Graduate School.

## Summer Internship at Bayer By Hitesh Chandwani, MS



### New York, NY

I worked as a Global Health Economics and Outcomes Research (GHEOR) intern this past Summer at Bayer HealthCare Pharmaceuticals in New Jersey, USA. Under the mentorship of Dr. Adriana Valderrama, I had the opportunity to assist in the development of a global value dossier for an oncology indication; conduct a project on the potential impact of real-world data on market access and value proposition of a product to help educate the regulatory and medical affairs functions in the company; and review analysis plans for cost-effectiveness projects and a systematic review. Overall, it was an enriching experience. The 12-week internship illustrated the collaborative nature of work in a pharmaceutical company.

Every project that we worked on included interfacing with vendors/consulting firms as well as teams from marketing, clinical development, advocacy, pricing, and regional and local HEOR groups.

The skills emphasized by the Health Outcomes and Pharmacy Practice (HOPP) division at UT helped tremendously in climbing the steep learning curve that I faced at Bayer. I got a chance to apply the training I have received at UT over the last three years including knowledge about health systems in different countries, modeling techniques, epidemiologic methods, and statistics. The regular Monday morning seminars at UT ensured that I was confident during my presentations to various audiences in the company as well as helped me answer their questions with poise.

For anyone interested in working in the pharmaceutical industry after graduation, I highly recommend an internship experience. Some aspects of the application of the knowledge we gain in school can only be understood with practical experience. That being said, the HOPP program at UT really helps in making that practical experience meaningful.

**Dear Alumni, if your company or institution is offering a summer internship position, please send a note to Dr. Karen Rascati at**

**[krascati@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:krascati@mail.utexas.edu)**

**Newsletter Editor : Tatiana Makhinova**

**Newsletter Faculty Advisor: Dr. Karen Rascati**

## Meeting in the Middle Conference at UT-Austin

The conference began with an icebreaker bingo activity during the welcoming reception. The factoids bingo game was a fun opportunity for everyone to get to know each other. The rest of the conference kept attendees busy with many different events - plenary sessions, poster sessions, podium presentations, workshops, and a career roundtable discussion. As suggested by the theme of our meeting, "At the Crossroads of Quality, Access, and Affordability", various issues were raised at the plenary sessions and workshops. Lou Garrison, PhD (University of Washington) addressed performance-based risk-sharing arrangements; Leticia Moczygemba, PhD (Virginia Commonwealth University) raised the question whether health IT is a solution for improving medication outcomes among homeless individuals; Commander Joe Lawrence, PharmD, MBA and Shana Trice, PharmD shared application of pharmacoeconomics and outcomes research to formulary decision making in the Department of Defense settings. Stephen Gruschkus, PhD (Xcenda), Michael Johnsrud, PhD (Avalere Health), Zeba Khan, PhD (Celgene) and Nick Patel, PhD (Competitive Health Analytics, Inc. – Humana, Inc.) provided students with advice on preparing for future careers and shared their graduate school and work experience during the career panel session. On the second night, conference attendees enjoyed dinner and entertainment at a local establishment, Esther's Follies, for an experience that personified the city's motto "Keep Austin Weird."



### Pharmacy Administration/Health Outcomes and Pharmacy Practice Endowment

Dear UT-ISPOR alumni, this is reminder to contribute to our endowment fund if you have not had a chance to do so yet. This endowment creates enduring financial support that is specifically designated for graduate students in the Health Outcomes and Pharmacy Practice (previously, Pharmacy Administration) Division at The University of Texas at Austin. We ask you to be a part of this initiative by considering the benefits you have received and making a contribution to the endowment for the next generation of alumni. Monies will be used to support the needs of Master's and Doctoral students in the form of stipends, travel funds, and other financial assistance. You may contribute a one-time gift to the endowment or make a pledge that is payable over five years. [You may give online at https://utdirect.utexas.edu/nlogon/vip/ogp.WBX](https://utdirect.utexas.edu/nlogon/vip/ogp.WBX) (choose [College of Pharmacy-Pharmacy Administration Endowment](#)) or contact Dr. Karen Rascati (krascati@mail.utexas.edu) for a gift form.

Newsletter Editor : Tatiana Makhinova

Newsletter Faculty Advisor: Dr. Karen Rascati