

COLLEGE of PHARMACY

WHAT STARTS HERE CHANGES THE WORLD

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The University of Texas at Austin UT-ISPOR Alumni Newsletter

Inside this issue:

Alumni Updates	2-3
Students Updates	4-5
Conference Announcement	6

Special points of interest:

- Annual ISPOR International meeting Accomplishments
- Restructuring of Divisions: Pharmacy Administration and Pharmacy Practice merge
- Save the date: Southern Pharmacy Administration & Western Pharmacoeconomics conference: June 22-24, 2012

Greetings UT-ISPOR Alumni. It was a pleasure to see everyone at the annual ISPOR meeting in Baltimore in May and reconnect during the alumni reception at the Rusty Scupper. We had a chance to formally announce the creation of the Pharmacy Administration Alumni Endowment fund, as well as express our great appreciation to the early-bird donors who already contributed to the fund.

The UT-ISPOR current students and alumni garnered several prestigious awards during the past meeting. Lung-I Cheng, a graduate student working under the direction of Dr. Karen Rascati

won a student podium award for his presentation titled "Validation of the Updated Charlson Comorbidity Index to Predict Healthcare Utilization for Diabetic Patients Us-

ing Administrative Data." Dawn Kim, who conducted her research with Dr. Rascati and a fellow graduate student, Haesuk Park, was recognized for a best student poster presentation for her work titled

"Measures of Medication Adherence in Oral Versus Long-Acting Risperidone in Texas Medicaid Patients with Schizophrenia." Dr. Leticia Moczygamba, Pharm.D. '04 and Ph.D. '08, was cited as one of the best new investigators for her podium research presentation titled "MDM2 - 12 month outcomes of a pharmacist-provided telephone medication therapy management (MTM) program." Co-author of the presentation was Dr. Jamie Barner, who supervised Dr. Moczygamba's Ph.D. work. Natasha Shcherbakova, a graduate student and UT-ISPOR outgoing chapter president 2010-11 was recognized with the ISPOR Distinguished Service Award.



Dr. Michael Smith, Assistant Dean and Associate Professor, The University of Oklahoma College of Pharmacy, Tulsa, OK



Michael Smith, PhD 2002

Upon graduation in 2002 with a doctorate under the supervision of Dr. Karen Rascati, I joined the faculty at West Virginia University School of Pharmacy where I served for seven years. Afterward, I joined the faculty at the University of Oklahoma College of Pharmacy where I currently am appointed Assistant Dean for Tulsa Operations and Associate Professor. Academia offers a variety of opportunities for career growth and development. My academic career offered me several experiences through which I have grown both professionally and personally. I have the pleasure of working with pharmacy students, graduate students, and colleagues in pharmacy and other departments. I derive great satisfaction in serving as a mentor to PhD students and following the role that Dr. Rascati was to me when I studied under her guidance. I enjoy having the flexibility to pursue research of interest to me and developing an independent research program. I partnered with the West Virginia and Oklahoma state Medicaid Programs to conduct secondary data research using Medicaid data, and presented several posters of my findings at ISPOR. Serving in an administrative role, I have a direct impact on managing academic delivery and student affairs for the OU College of Pharmacy. I play an active role in student development at a programmatic level beyond the classroom. My passion is facilitating student leadership opportunities and engaging students in service to their patients, community, and profession. My fulfillment is observing how individuals change through the educational process and become different persons after completing their degrees. Advice: 1) Graduate school is temporary so make the most of your time and enjoy your graduate experience. Take advantage of both the research and teaching opportunities of your graduate program and gain as much experience as you can. 2) Talk to several people in different career areas so you can be an informed decision-maker in discerning your career path. Your professors and fellow alums are a great support network, so never hesitate to solicit their input. 3) Nothing is forever; if you find yourself in a work environment that is not appealing or fulfilling, your education allows you to choose a different path. 4) Above all else – BE HAPPY!

Dr. Simran Tiwana, Research Associate, HealthPartners Research Foundation, Minneapolis, MN

When I joined the PhD program in Pharmacy Administration in 2004, it seemed like I had five long, challenging years ahead of me. I remember feeling isolated in the first class (Dr. Wilson's pharmaco-epidemiology); it was just a matter of chance that I was the only international student and the only non-PharmD in my cohort of graduate students. The initial apprehension began to change into self assurance as I began to grasp the key concepts being taught in class (the breakfast tacos and bagels that Dr. Wilson brought to each class also helped!). Of course on more than one occasion, I was the only one in the class who could not tell the difference between a beta-blocker and a proton-pump inhibitor! A rigorous curriculum and supportive faculty helped build competence and a professional demeanor. My dissertation committee was very supportive when I chose a PhD topic that was heavily focused on public health and not pharmacy. Dr. Lawson's attention to detail, Dr. Barner's focus on methods and Dr. Rascati's natural ability to strike balance between giving autonomy and gentle prodding helped me graduate in less than 5 years, despite the fact that I was working full-time with the Texas Department of State Health Services in the last year of PhD program. Since graduating in 2009, I have been working as a research investigator at HealthPartners Research Foundation in Bloomington Minnesota. I am responsible for conducting comprehensive cost-effectiveness analyses of all the anti-smoking interventions recommended by the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF). Our group periodically reports to the National Commission on Prevention. It is satisfying to know that findings from this project will inform key decision makers in public health. I also get to do some epidemiological studies, such as assessing the prevalence of Autism in immigrant populations. My job requires me to conduct systematic reviews of the literature and be competent in data analysis. I realize now, more than ever, that having a strong foundation in research design and methodology, and statistics is the key to success in real world. Of course, good communication skills, both written and oral, are also crucial.



Simran Tiwana, PhD 2009

Milli Reddy Won the Granof Outstanding Graduate Student Award



Milli Reddy, PhD 2011 and the faculty

Millidhashni (Milli) Reddy was named recipient of the Granof Outstanding Graduate Student Award at the Graduate School/University Co-op Awards Banquet on May 18. The award includes a \$10,000 prize, underwritten by the Co-op. "The University of Texas at Austin has nearly 12,000 graduate students," said Dean Lynn Crismon. "The College of Pharmacy is a relatively small program, representing less than one percent of all graduate students at UT. To have one of our graduate students win this award is an exceptional honor; however, this is reflective of the extraordinary individual that Milli is." Reddy is conducting her graduate research under the supervision of Dr. Karen Rascati, professor of pharmacy administration. Other professors nominating her for the award include Drs. Jamie Barner, associate professor of pharmacy administration, and Marv Shepherd, division head and professor of pharmacy administration. "In addition to meeting all of the criteria for this award, Milli is also an eloquent speaker and leader," said Rascati. "She was inspiring when she was interviewed on the Today show about her project in South Africa. Her leadership skills were showcased when she was elected as student president for the International Society for Pharmacoeconomics and Outcomes Research. Her enthusiasm is infectious and she has convinced many to become involved in her mission to improve healthcare in under-

served areas. She is truly deserving of this award." The Granof Outstanding Graduate Student Award was established in 2008 to recognize a University of Texas at Austin graduate student of exceptional distinction. Criteria for selection include: scholastic achievement at the highest level, creative contributions beyond degree or departmental requirements, commitment to diversity, and exceptional service to UT Austin. Each graduate program may nominate only one doctoral student for the award. In his letter nominating Reddy for the award, Dean Crismon wrote: "Milli is one of those rare individuals that a faculty member typically has the opportunity of supervising only a few times in his or her academic career. Milli came to UT Austin as a Fulbright Scholar, and she has excelled in every aspect of her graduate education. Her research is creative, and importantly, it addresses a major societal need – the health outcomes and cost of care for the people of South Africa who are infected with HIV and drug resistant tuberculosis. She is collaborating with the World Health Organization in these efforts, and her research will likely lead to the development of a global model for the analysis of such data." Reddy was one of three College of Pharmacy students invited to participate in the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) when it came to campus in 2009. As a result of that initiative, she received funding from CGI as well as from the Patrick Tillman Foundation to establish a library for citizens in a remote area of South Africa. She organized other pharmacy graduate students to be involved in this effort and several travelled with her to South Africa in December 2009 to personally deliver books for the library. In her comments upon receiving the award, Reddy announced that she would use her \$10,000 award to further her efforts to provide library services to the citizens of rural South Africa. During her time at the college, she has distinguished herself as an outstanding teaching assistant, receiving the Texas Excellence Teaching Award for a graduate student teaching assistant in 2008. She is an active member of the Pharmacy Graduate Student Association and the UT Graduate Student Assembly. "At UT Austin, we like to say that what starts here changes the world," Dean Crismon continued. "Milli is utilizing her experiences at UT Austin to change the lives of people in South Africa and perhaps ultimately the world. She represents the type of excellence that we aspire to achieve at the university."

Anandaroop Dasgupta, Graduate Student, UT-ISPOR Member



Anandaroop Dasgupta, PhD 2012 (expected)

The journey towards my Ph.D. in Pharmacy Administration at UT started in Fall 2008.

The diverse coursework within and outside the College of Pharmacy helped me learn various tools necessary to conduct research in the area of health economics. My interest in this field started taking proper track as I delved into Pharmacoepidemiology and contributed to a peer-reviewed educational article focusing on the methodological standards followed in equivalence and non-inferiority trials. Furthermore, courses also fostered my interest in various types of health policy issues related to the U.S. healthcare system.

One of my ongoing projects addresses the factors which may contribute toward the eroding market share of brand-name selective-serotonin reuptake inhibitors in a state Medicaid program.

My dissertation work, supervised by Dr. Ken Lawson, assesses the economic issues pertinent to the treatment of movement disorders among antipsychotic users. I aim to use the national Medical Expenditure Panel Survey database to address its research objectives.

In addition to graduate school at UT, I had the opportunity to gather important outcomes research experience during summer internships in pharmaceutical firms located in the U.S. (Takeda) and Europe (Novartis Pharma GmbH, Germany).

The internship (2010) at Takeda enabled me to understand the pharmaceutical pricing and reimbursement issues followed in different nations. Additional projects at Takeda included learning about budget impact modeling and conducting extensive literature reviews on the comparison of different risk adjustment tools.

The summer (2011) internship experience at Novartis Pharma GmbH, Germany, allowed me to gain insight into the pricing strategies followed in the German healthcare system. Other relevant topics included assessment of NICE guidelines pertinent to different indications and comparative assessments of product-specific HTA regulations followed in countries in the North America, Europe and Asia Pacific.

I consider the experience I gathered during the summer internships to be valuable in terms of broadening my knowledge base and furthering my understanding about health economics before the onset of my professional career in outcomes research.



Restructuring of Pharmacy Administration and Pharmacy Practice Divisions

After years of dedicated service, Drs. Marv Shepherd and Jim Wilson stepped down from their respective division head roles and will continue to serve as vital faculty within the College. Thanks are in order for their many years of leadership. These two divisions were combined in order to foster collaborations in research, teaching, and community engagement. The name of the new division is Health Outcomes and Pharmacy Practice. Dr. Ken Lawson was named the Division Head, Dr. Jim Karboski as Assistant Division Head, and Dr. Karen Rascati will continue to serve as the division graduate advisor. This leadership team will assure that the division moves programs forward in a collaborative and synergistic fashion. Dr. Shepherd will continue to serve as Director of the Center for Pharmacoeconomic Studies and Dr. Wilson has been appointed chair of The UT Institutional Review Board.

Southern Pharmacy Administration and Western Pharmacoeconomics Conference: June 22-24, 2012

UT-ISPOR is currently planning a conference to be held in Austin, that combines the Southern Pharmacy Administration conference (SPAC) and the Western Pharmacoeconomics conference (WPC). For this joint meeting, invitations will be sent nation-wide. The main focus is to provide a forum for professional and graduate students to present their research, and to interact with other students and faculty. Please save the date in your calendars and pass this information on to any faculty/students that might be interested.

Pharmacy Administration/ Health Outcomes and Pharmacy Practice Endowment Fund

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 masters 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> (choose College of Pharmacy– Pharmacy Administration Endowment) or contact Dr. Karen Rascati (krascati@mail.utexas.edu) for a gift form.

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