The UHCOP Chapter of the Student National Pharmaceutical Association brought home not only the 2015 Chauncey I. Cooper Chapter of the Year Award, but the chapter also accumulated the most points to win the top chapter award in the Large Chapter Category.

The awards were presented at the 2015 SNPhA Annual Meeting July 24-27 in Orlando, Fla. Prior to this year’s win, the UHCOP chapter had been among the top three finalists in four of the past five years.

Among the individual honors, third-year student Marc Tran became the fourth consecutive UHCOP student to be appointed to the Regional Facilitator for Region 4 post on the SNPhA National Executive Committee. In addition, Tracey Thomas won the Walmart Health and Wellness Endowed Scholarship and Chiemeka Ike won the Jonathan and Carmita Mills Book Award.

UH SNPhA Claims Top Chapter Awards, 4th Regional Post

New VA Center of Excellence in Primary Care Education Teams DeBakey VA, Baylor and UHCOP

UH College of Pharmacy is among the institutional collaborators in the newly established Houston Center of Excellence in Primary Care Education at The Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center (MEDVAMC).

Funded by the VA Office of Academic Affiliations, the Houston Center is one of two new sites competitively selected to join the five existing Centers of Excellence nationwide. The center proposal was led by MEDVAMC, Baylor College of Medicine, and the Center for Innovations in Quality, Safety, and Effectiveness.

The goal of this program is to educate interprofessional trainees from medicine, mental health, undergraduate nursing, advanced practice nursing, pharmacy, and other health professions to deliver high quality, patient-centered, team-based primary care. Also part of the project are The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, Texas Women’s University and Texas Southern University.

UHCOP’s role will be spearheaded by Cathy Hatfield, Pharm.D., clinical associate professor, director of Interprofessional Education, co-director of Introductory Pharmacy Practice Experiences. The center will be led by director Dr. LeChauncy Woodard, assistant professor of medicine-health services research at BCM, and co-director Dr. Jane Anderson, assistant professor of neurology at BCM and nurse practitioner at the DeBakey VA.

UHCOP Team Secures Victory in TPA Self-Care Competition

Fourth-year Pharm.D. Ryan May, Heather Harrison, Katie Williams and Ciara Will, pictured below, comprised the winning UHCOP team in the Self-Care Competition at the TPA 2015 Conference & Expo July 10-12 in The Woodlands.

UHCOP students Eric Kao and Allison Phuc Nguyen were awarded a TPF General Fund Scholarship and the TPF Larry “Neal” McLaugherty Scholarship, respectively, and Pari Wafayee was one of three third-place finalists in the Patient Counseling Competition.

The University of Houston is an EEO/AA institution.
The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has approved the Hispanic Healthcare Certificate Program for Pharm.D. students. The program involves advanced instruction in Hispanic culture and Spanish language, with an emphasis on Medical Spanish, and the completion of at least two Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experiences at sites serving predominantly Spanish-speaking patients.

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The UH Chapter of the Student National Pharmaceutical Association has received its fourth consecutive $2,000 grant from Target Pharmacy in support of the chapter’s annual spring community wellness event.

Pharm.D. student Holly Ryan attended the 16th Annual Cardinal Health Student Leadership Conference May 14-16 in Houston. The conference presentations focus on personal and professional leadership, workshops and introductions to health-system pharmacy.

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Allison Phuc Nguyen and UHCOCP alumnus Ryan Hudson, Pharm.D., who recently completed the Walgreens-UHCOP PGY1 Community Pharmacy Residency, were panelists at the “Students as Pharmacist Extenders: Making Precepting a Win-Win for You and You” CE session at the TPA 2015 Conference & Expo July 10-12 in The Woodlands.

$2.69M in New NIH Support Aids Work in Alcohol Abuse, Heart Disease and Anxiety

UHCOCP faculty members Joydip Das, Ph.D., Bradley K. McConnell, Ph.D., FAHA, FAPS, and Samina Salim, Ph.D., have been awarded new multiyear funding totaling $2.69 million from the National Institutes of Health.

Das has received a five-year, $1.79 million R01 award for his project, “Role of Munc13 as a Presynaptic Effector of Alcohol Action,” which will utilize atomic level resolution, in vitro biochemistry, and in vivo behavior and physiology, to understand the function of an ethanol-effector interaction. His project seeks to elucidate the importance of a general mechanism by which ethanol impacts presynaptic function, and how this mechanism is critical in the process required for alcohol dependence.

McConnell has been awarded a three-year, $451,500 R15 grant from the National Heart, Blood and Lung Institute for his project, “Scaffolding Protein Interaction Network REgulates Cardiac Cell Signaling.” In this study, McConnell is working to characterize mAcap scaffolding-protein-protein interactions to improve understanding for this central regulator of kinase, phosphodiesterase and phosphatase cardiac intracellular signaling.

Salim has received a three-year, $451,500 R15 award from the National Institute of Mental Health for her project entitled “Oxidative Stress: A Recipe for Anxiety and Cognitive Impairment.” Salim’s lab will further explore the role of chronic psychological stress in increasing oxidative stress, compromising mitochondrial function and integrity, leading to activation of proteolytic and apoptotic pathways. This contributes to degradation of antioxidant enzymes, reducing antioxidant defense, impairing detoxification and resulting in behavioral and cognitive deficits.

Mount Sinai Neuroscientist Hurd Headlines Aug. 13-14 Symposium Showcasing Latest PPS Research

Internationally renowned neuroscientist Yasmin Hurd, Ph.D., whose translational research examines the neurobiology of drug abuse and related psychiatric disorders, will serve as the Scholar-in-Residence for the 3rd Annual PPS Research Symposium Aug. 13-14 at UH.


The symposium will feature poster and oral presentations by graduate students and post-doctoral research associates working in the college’s Department of Pharmacological & Pharmaceutical Sciences.
Bondesson, Li Join College’s Pharmacology & Pharmaceutics Faculty

UHCOP recently welcomed two new faculty members into the Department of Pharmacological and Pharmaceutical Sciences: Maria Bondesson, Ph.D., and Xiang Li, M.D., Ph.D.

Bondesson joins the department as a clinical assistant professor of Pharmacology from UH’s Department of Biology and Biochemistry and the Center for Nuclear Receptors and Cell Signaling, where she has worked since 2009. Bondesson earned her B.S. in Microbiology/Molecular Biology, Ph.D. in Cell and Molecular Biology from the Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm, Sweden.

Her current research projects include studying how endocrine disrupting chemical bisphenol A in combination with phytoestrogens affect signaling of the estrogen receptors; the applicability of zebrafish as a model system to detect chemical pollutants that perturb embryonic development; and the use of zebrafish screening methods for detection of chemicals that cause obesity and diabetes. Bondesson has authored/coauthored more than 30 papers in such peer-reviewed journals as PLoS One, Reproductive Toxicology and Biochimica et Biophysica Acta (BBA) - Gene Regulatory Mechanisms, as well as more than 40 published abstracts.

A paper entitled “Transcriptional Regulation of Renal Dopamine D1 Receptor Function During Oxidative Stress” by UHCOP faculty members Anees A. Banday, Ph.D., and Mustafa F. Lokhandwala, Ph.D., FAHA, FASN, which was originally published in the journal Hypertension in June, was featured in the June issue of Nature Reviews-Nephrology.

E. James Essien, M.D., DrPH, FRSHP, professor, recently served on grant review panels for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Special Emphasis Panel for the Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Research Centers Special Interest Project Competitive Supplements) in May and the National Institutes of Health’s Center for Scientific Review (Special Emphasis Panel [Mobile Health: Technology and Outcomes in Low and Middle Income Countries] Study Section and the Behavioral and Social Consequences of HIV/AIDS Study Section for the AIDS and Related Research Integrated Review Group) in June and July, respectively.

Julianna Fernandez, Pharm.D., BCPS, CGP, clinical assistant professor, Samina Salim, Ph.D., assistant professor, and Bradley McConnell, Ph.D., FAHA, FAPS, associate professor, received the UHCOP Faculty Excellence Awards for Teaching, Research and Service, respectively.

Julianna Fernandez, Pharm.D., BCPS, CGP, clinical assistant professor, and Anne Tucker, Pharm.D., BCNSP, clinical associate professor, have received a $24,588 UH Teaching Innovation Program grant for their project, “Incorporating Simulation to Create Practice-Ready Pharmacists.”

Ming Hu, Ph.D., professor, has received $152,758 subcontract award on a National Institutes of Health-funded R15 project entitled “UGT Engineering for Detoxifying Anticancer Drug SN-38,” which is being led by Xiaoqiang Wang, Ph.D., at the University of North Texas.

Bradley K. McConnell, Ph.D., FAHA, FAPS, associate professor, has received a $62,657 subcontract award on a National Institutes of Health-funded project, entitled “Effects of Chronic Catecholamine Exposure on Post-Burn Wound Healing and Scarring,” awarded to University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston’s Celeste Finnerty, Ph.D.

Ke-He Ruan, M.D., Ph.D., professor, has been appointed editor-in-chief of the British Journal of Pharmaceutical Research; associate editor for BMC Biochemistry; and associate editor of Future Medical Chemistry. A paper by UHCOP pharmacology doctoral student Hironari Akasaka, research associate Shui-Ping So and professor Ke-He Ruan, M.D., Ph.D., entitled “The relationship of the topological distances and activities between mPGES-1 and COX-2 verses COX-1: Implication of the different posttranslational ER organizations of COX-1 and COX-2,” was featured on the homepage of the Biochemistry journal website.

Maria V. Tejada-Simon, M.Ed., Ph.D., associate professor, was invited to participate as an organizer and speaker in the 4th International Conference on Neurology and Therapeutics - 2015 Neuro in July in Rome, Italy.

Matthew Wanat, Pharm.D., BCPS, has been appointed consulting editor on the Journal of Vascular Health and Risk Management.
Recent Publications


Predictors of concomitant use of antipsychotics and stimulants and its impact on stimulant persistence in pediatric attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Bali V, Kamble PS, Aparasu RR. J Manag Care Spec Pharm. 2015 Jun;21(6):486-98. PMID: 26011550
