College Establishes Formal Ties with Jordan University

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The agreement is an extension of research and outreach activities focused on refugee mental health by UHCOP Associate Professor Samina Salim, Ph.D., who completed a Fulbright Specialist assignment at JUST last summer.

UH/UHCOP faculty and administrators, including then-Interim UH Provost Robert McPherson (far left), UHCOP Executive Associate Dean Paige Pitman (second from left) and Samina Salim (far right), attended the MOU signing event with JUST Vice President & Professor Suhad Al-Jundi (third from left).

Organizers of the 2023 Geriatric Medication Safety Symposium have issued a call for abstracts to be submitted by March 3 for consideration as poster or podium presentation during the hybrid event April 13-14 at the Texas Medical Center in Houston.

There is no cost to submit abstracts. Awards will be given to the best poster and best podium presentations, and accepted abstracts of original research are eligible for publication in the journal Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy (RSAP).

A National Institute on Aging-funded collaboration of UHCOP and McGovern Medical School at UTHealth Houston, the symposium is aimed at practitioners, researchers, students and residents/fellows in pharmacy, medicine, nursing and dentistry. The event also will feature plenary sessions and workshops led by nationally recognized speakers. For more information, visit https://tinyurl.com/gmss-houston.

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After his own bout with COVID-19, Blacc discovered a journal article by Guo and Udugamasooriya on “molecular mask” and provided support for their pre-clinical/toxicological studies on two candidate compounds identified by the UHCOP researcher using Udugamasooriya’s unique on-bead two-color (OBTC) cell screening process. The compounds offer high selectivity to the specific ACE2 receptor domain, which blocks virus entry to the cell without affecting the receptor’s expression, stability or function.

Bin Guo, left, and Gomika Udugamasooriya, right, coach Aloe Blacc on pipetting during a recent visit to UHCOP laboratories.

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The UHCOP Student Society of Health-System Pharmacists held its annual Residency Showcase Nov. 4 at the UH campus, with nearly 50 residency programs in attendance.

Among the chapter’s activities during the 2021-22 academic year were workshops on candidacy, personal branding, leading from behind, resilience and grit, mock interviews, conflict resolution/crucial conversations, and a leadership retreat with representatives from four other PLS student chapters for officers of all of UHCOP’s student organizations.

In addition, APhA National President-elect Designee and UH-COP alumnus Alex Varkey served as the James McCarty Leadership Lecturer for a talk on well-being and resilience.

Among the chapter’s community outreach efforts, the chapter organized events and raised funds for a local anti-human trafficking organization, sorted and packaged donated medical supplies for a Houston-based international medical relief organization, and combined awareness with fundraising to purchase “wish list” items for a local LGBTQ+ housing and services organization.

The top chapter will be announced at the PLS Awards Ceremony during the APhA Annual Meeting and Exposition March 24-27 in Phoenix, Ariz.

The UHCOP Student Society of Health-System Pharmacists held its annual Residency Showcase Nov. 4 at the UH campus, with nearly 50 residency programs in attendance.

The UHCOP chapters of the Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy and Industry Pharmacists Organization hosted their 8th Annual Round Table Event Jan. 20 at UH, with participation by pharmacy students from Texas Southern University, University of North Texas and the University of Texas.

A total of 33 UHCOP Pharm.D. students participated in the APhA-ASP Lynn Simpson Patient Counseling Competition, with Pharm.D. candidate Dana Elder taking the title and moving on to represent the college at the national level during the APhA 2023 Meeting & Exposition March 24-27 in Phoenix, Ariz.

The UHCOP and Texas Southern University chapters of the Student Society of Health-System Pharmacists will host their 18th Annual Residency Mentoring Social April 10 at UH. The round-robin style networking event allows students to interact with representatives from more than a dozen Houston-area residency programs.

The Houston Program in Health-System Pharmacy Administration and Leadership concurrent M.S./PGY1-PGY2 residency program has welcomed HCA Houston Healthcare Kingwood as its newest member institution.

UHCOP Ph.D. students are now eligible for the highest level of academic specialization from leading analytical software developer SAS Institute through the college’s Health Analytics and Real-World Evidence certificate program. SAS academic specialization also offers a range of benefits for students, including webinars, academic discounts on products, and other professional development resources.

The Pharmacology Ph.D. student Anika Nusrat, working under mentor/major advisor Mingfu Wu, Ph.D., has been awarded a two-year, $65,106 American Heart Association Predoctoral Fellowship.

Nusrat and Wu are seeking to elucidate the molecular and cellular contributors to fibrosis in cardiac disease development, including hypertrophy, chamber dilation and the progression of cardiac failure.

Nusrat’s project, “Numb Family Proteins (NFPs) Regulate Cardiac Fibroblasts Differentiation During Development and Fibrosis in Aging and Injured Hearts,” will investigate whether and how NFPs regulate cardiac fibroblasts differentiation during embryonic development as well as whether and how NFPs regulate fibrosis in aging and adult injured hearts.
Nicholas Beyda, Pharm.D., BCPS, assistant professor, has received an 18-month, $198,916 grant from Jazz Pharmaceuticals Inc. for the project, “Using an at-home EEG headband to improve outcomes among narcolepsy patients initiating Oxybate therapy.”

Diana S-L. Chow, Ph.D., FNAI, John J. Lovoi Sr. Endowed Professor, has received a three-year, $310,000 subaward from the University of Texas Medical Branch for work on the National Institute of Mental Health-funded project, “Probing brain circuit and behavior with protein:protein interaction modulators.”

Austin De La Cruz, Pharm.D., BCPP, clinical assistant professor, has been accepted into the 2023 National Hispanic and Latino Executive Leadership and Fellowship Program, which is coordinated by the National Latino Behavioral Health Association and funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Jiukuan Hao, Ph.D., associate professor, has received a one-year, $155,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Defense U.S. Army Medical Requisition Activity for his project, “Application of Multifunctional RNA Nanoparticle for Lung Cancer Therapy.”

Jinhee Jo, Pharm.D., BCIDP, research assistant professor, has received a one-year, $8,500 grant from the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy for her project “Non-toxigenic Clostridioides difficile: Implications for Diagnostic Stewardship,” and a one-year, $4,320 UH New Faculty Research Program grant for her project “Gut Microbiome-Derived Short-Chain Fatty Acid Changes in Healthy Volunteers Receiving Antibiotics.”

Xinli Liu, Ph.D., associate professor, Tyler Varisco, Ph.D., Pharm.D., BCPS, assistant professor, and Elisabeth Wang, Pharm.D., BCCP, clinical assistant professor, were honored with the UHCO P Rho Chi Society Beta Omicron Chapter’s Teaching Excellence awards for 2021-22.

Onye Ononogbu, Pharm.D., BCOP, research assistant professor, was honored with the American College of Clinical Pharmacy Hematology/Oncology Practice and Research Network’s 2022 Patient Advocate Award, which “recognizes a pharmacist who has fostered hope and engagement, improving access to care and patient education or bridging the gap between patients and medical professionals through impactful interventions.”

Vincent Tam, Pharm.D., FIDSA, BCIDP, professor, has received a two-year, $95,352 subaward from the Methodist Hospital Research Institute for the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases-funded project, “Emergence of TonB-dependent receptor mediated ceftiderocol resistance among multidrug-resistant (MDR) Pseudomonas aeruginosa clinical isolates.”

Matthew Wanat, Pharm.D., BCPS, BCCCP, FCCM, clinical associate professor, has been appointed to a three-year term on the American College of Cardiology Education Standards and Outcomes Committee.

Austin De La Cruz, Pharm.D., BCPP, clinical assistant professor, presented “Safety issues in the use of sedative-hypnotics, muscle relaxants, and alcohol” at the Texas Society of Psychiatric Physicians’ 66th Annual Convention and Scientific Program Nov. 10-13 in Houston.

Among the UHCO P presenters at the 6th Annual Texas Medical Center Antimicrobial Resistance and Stewardship Conference Jan. 18-20 at the Rice Bioscience Research Collaborative in Houston were: Samantha Agyapong, research assistant, “Investigation of Fecal pH in Healthy Volunteers Receiving Oral Omadacycline or Vancomycin”; Brianna Eales, Ph.D. student, “Simulated Human Dosing of Ceftazidime in a Murine Pneumonia Model”; Taryn Eubank, Pharm.D., BCIDP, T32 Gulf Coast Consortia Texas Medical Center Training Program in Antimicrobial Resistance Fellow, “A Molecular Epidemiological Exploration of Reduced Vancomycin Susceptibility in Clostridioides difficile”; and Jinhee Jo, Pharm.D., BCIDP, research assistant professor, “The Effects of Oral Omadacycline and Vancomycin on the Gut Microbiome in Healthy Subjects.”

Natalie Rosario, Pharm.D., MPH, BCACP, clinical assistant professor, presented an AACP-hosted webinar “Hispanic Patients and Diabetes Distress” in November 2022.

Douglas Thornton, Pharm.D., Ph.D., associate professor, has been invited to co-present the panel discussion, “Ending the Opioid Crisis with Schools,” March 3 during the SXSW EDU Conference & Festival March 6-9 in Austin.
Recent Publications


