

# UGA **RX**

THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
COLLEGE OF PHARMACY MAGAZINE

S P R I N G 2 0 1 6

**Drug  
Information  
Career**

**Curbing Opioid  
Addiction**

**Focus on Orphan  
Diseases**





Dear Friends,

Although we have made significant progress in treating cancers, and while we continue to increase funding for cancer research, e.g., see the latest initiative by President Obama, cancers continue to increase as the cause of death among humans.

On May 27, a sobering op-ed article related to this dichotomy appeared in The New York Times. The conclusion was simply, yes we have been able to better treat cancers, yes we have seen some spectacular breakthroughs, and yes we have been able to “cure” some cancers, but we need to accept the fact that the burden of cancers will increase not diminish in the future.

Why this pessimistic view in light of our progress? Simply stated it is based on human physiology: Cancers are inextricably linked to aging. As cells age, they become less and less able to withstand and repair damage, we also accumulate epigenetic modifications that change cellular functions including repair, and our immune system becomes less effective. Even when we cure a person of a cancer, the person is marked as a person who is more likely to experience a second cancer than the average person simply because the first cancer would suggest a decreased biological ability to withstand damage and resist the development of cancers.

From this standpoint we should not simply focus on “curing” cancers, but we should spend more time on determining how we may slow the aging process. Only a combination of these efforts will provide the progress we are aiming for. Although there is much we do not know about the aging process and extensive research is needed, there is also much we do know.

Some of the emerging consensus regarding acceleration of the aging process relates to chronic inflammation and accumulation of waste products and misformed proteins. Life style changes are a key component of slowing the physiological aging process. Smoking cessation, reduction in pro-inflammatory food products (e.g., sugars), sunscreens (to reduce skin damage), adequate intake of anti-inflammatory food products (vegetables, fruits, berries all high in phytochemicals), and high fiber diets are all factors that will slow aging and reduce environmental assaults on our bodies. Exercise and limited caloric intake stimulate autophagy reduction in accumulation of damaging cellular products. Exercise also increases our cardiovascular function and provides for a stronger immune system that is important in slowing aging and combating infections and cancers.

As pharmacists, we must not be satisfied simply by being the drug experts. It is equally important that in addition to knowing what is the best drug to use, optimizing drug treatment, limiting side effects, and assuring compliance, that we also recognize and understand the limitation of drug treatment, the cumulative effect of prolonged drug use and even more important how to advocate for life style changes. Our ability to advocate for these changes is critical and must become part of our pharmacotherapy recommendations. For example, in a recent publication in the British Medical Journal the old Victorian recommendation of “an apple a day (keeps the doctor away)” is reported to be as effective in preventing cardiovascular incidences as a standard dose of statins in at-risk people. Our armamentarium in preventing diseases is growing! 🍏

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Svein Øie', written in a cursive style.

Svein Øie, Dean

# UGARX

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# Drug Information Reviews and Government Audits Help Patients and Support Rewarding Career

by Sheila Roberson

## NorthStar HealthCare Consulting's Mission

- *Improve quality, clinical adoption and decision-making*
- *Implement and accelerate best practice processes*
- *Increase safety of medication use through reduction of adverse events*
- *Enhance performance and ease of administration*
- *Improve cost predictability*
- *Deter and track potential fraud and abuse*
- *Define and measure metrics for success*



Emily Baker

**Emily Baker ('99)** of Alpharetta is a very busy lady; she's the owner and CEO of a successful consulting firm that contracts with Medicaid and private companies to conduct drug information reviews and make decisions on drug formularies and expenditures. What free time she has goes, in part, to training horses, rescuing dogs and other animals, and serving on a board of directors for disadvantaged youth. The best part of her day, however, begins and ends as the 43-year-old mother of nine-month-old fraternal twin boys, Thomas and William.

"I'm very happy with my life and wouldn't trade it for anything," said Baker about her non-traditional career path and motherhood. By anyone's standards, her life has been a success story.

Baker has orchestrated her career around her love of drug information services and clinical pharmacy. During pharmacy school, she was thinking about a clinical career but a single drug information course taught by Rusty May quickly changed her mind about her career plans. She had found her niche.

After graduation, she completed a residency in Drug Information at Samford University and earned board certification

in pharmacotherapy. She then took a position with a company in Atlanta that needed someone who understood Medicaid claims and had experience in clinical pharmacy; she had both and quickly "fell in love" with her responsibilities. After three years doing what she loved, she realized that she could do the same job as owner of her own company. She set out to prepare herself for the career shift and opened NorthStar HealthCare Consulting of Alpharetta in 2005.

"So there began my success story," said Baker who admits to being very focused and very determined when she has a goal in mind. "In order to further shore up my qualifications to possibly become a business owner someday, I had continued my education with master's degrees in both business administration and healthcare administration."

"I've been very satisfied with the way my company is growing," said Baker, noting that she has 10 fulltime employees including five pharmacists. "We operate nationwide but are most active in Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky, Florida and Washington, D.C. We earned our state Medicaid contract in our first year of business and now a majority of our effort is on the clinical side helping states decide on clinical decisions."

Services include formulary design, drug spend analysis, pharmacy systems consulting, durable medical equipment, Fraud, Waste and Abuse (FWA) audit programs, and physician and consumer education. All are geared to eliminate waste and improve cost savings and health outcomes.

“Only three other businesses in the country do this work and theirs is only a small amount of what our company earns. Our specialty is identifying opportunities to reduce pharmacy spend without compromising quality,” she noted, adding that as an independent and privately owned company they can craft cutting-edge cost containment solutions that are anchored in clinical and fiscal excellence.

The state Medicaid contract, she explained, is aimed at controlling drug spends by selecting the most cost effective prescription with the best value. As the consultant/contractor, Baker and her staff of clinicians collect and analyze massive amounts of clinical information about a particular drug to help each state’s Drug Utilization Review Board (DURB) determine the most effective option for the state.

“By law, a drug utilization review must occur for drugs used by Medicaid. The Georgia DURB meets four times a year and reviews the entire Medicaid formulary of 100 drugs once a year. We may not choose the most inexpensive drug but recommend the best drug at the best price that can also save taxpayer dollars,” noted Baker, adding that this DURB is technically an advisory board only, but it does make drug recommendations to the state based on NorthStar’s research.

When a drug comes up for review, the NorthStar clinical team accesses all the information available through Medline or carries out a thorough clinical search on drug utilization and information.

“For example, we might be looking at a proton pump inhibitor,” she said. “After our review of other drugs in the same class and available clinical data, we create a summary document that could be 100 pages or more,” she said, adding that the information gathering process can take several weeks. “It’s very tiring and stressful but allows me to use my clinical skills and keeps me updated on clinical literature and new drug therapies.”

Balancing consumer and payer demands to deliver clinical excellence and contain costs is always our priority,” said Baker, noting that growth comes from doing a good job.

Audit work, on the other hand, takes up a lesser amount of time but is their fastest growing business line. Baker’s first contract with Medicaid also included an auditing component.

“Initially I was not interested in auditing work, but it has been a very visible business offering and keeps other contractors aware of us,” she said. “We operate in every state and most U.S. territories doing audits for Medicaid and commercial insurers. Although we make suggestions, our clients make the recommendations on whom to audit and what to look for.”



Emily Baker with ribbon-winning Fred and trainer Tori Heck

Although no one likes an audit, Baker noted that very few audit findings are the result of true fraud.

“If the doctor wrote the prescription, the pharmacist filled it as written and the patient took it, then money usually cannot be recouped by an audit,” she said. “Mainly what we see are errors, such as fat fingering claims whereby a prescription quantity may be submitted as 300 when 30 was the intended quantity.”

Their total program approach includes review of policy and potential suggested revisions, comprehensive claims review, stakeholder management, and extensive reporting capabilities. NorthStar also assists clients by identifying further opportunities found during the audit process including provider education and system revisions.

“Our key audit personnel have extensive experience in pharmacy audits, collectively possessing over 30 years of experience. Further, the company is a Pharmacy Audit Bill of Rights company and its audit system is designed to handle the intricacies associated with Bill of Rights states as well as individual policies among clients. NorthStar advises all clients to consider providing an appeals avenue within the audit process,” she added.

“I’ve proven myself clinically and business-wise, but the most challenging job I’ve had so far is being a parent. That role has turned a high-powered woman into a business owner who is learning to continue her company’s success by relying more on her staff.” 🐾

# UGA researchers to study effects of Georgia policy designed to curb opioid addiction

by Erika Hensley, UGA Science Writer

Researchers at the University of Georgia will use a grant from the National Institute on Drug Abuse, part of the National Institutes of Health, to study the effect of public policy aimed at limiting potential misuse and potentially inappropriate prescribing of opioids in vulnerable populations.

The research grant provides \$675,000 over three years to fund the study.

In the last few months, the federal government has mandated stricter warning labels for prescription painkillers and handed down the first-ever set of practitioner guidelines for prescribing painkillers. Also, U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy's office is planning to release the first-ever Surgeon General's Report on substance use, addiction and health this year.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that almost 29,000 people died by opioid overdose in the U.S. in 2014, a rate that has quadrupled since 1999.

Research suggests the steady increase in opioid overdoses is linked to both poor prescribing methods from physicians, like over-prescribing and refilling too soon or often, and patient prescription misuses. Both have been linked to heroin use, often seen as a cheap, accessible alternative to prescription medications.

In 2013, Georgia became one of the few states to enact a policy to try to curb opioid addiction. The state is doing so by adapting its Medicaid program to more carefully monitor prescription opioid refills, limiting the number of prescriptions for opioids a patient can receive per month, and ensuring that certain medications are not used at the same time as opioids. However, until now, the policy's effectiveness has not been tested.

In the UGA College of Pharmacy, assistant professor Jayani Jayawardhana and professor Matthew Perri are leading

the investigation to study the impact of the Medicaid policy change.

The study focuses on two aspects of opioid prescribing practices that potentially lead to addiction—prescribing too much and refilling too soon—both of which are risk factors for patient misuse. If prevented, it could lead to lower addiction rates and decreased associated health care costs, according to the research hypothesis.

The research comprises a statewide study of opioid prescriptions and overdoses within Georgia's Medicaid population from 2009 to 2014. North Carolina will be used as a control group, as the state has not implemented a policy change and has a similar Medicaid population.

Jayawardhana and Perri are using Medicaid pharmacy prescription drug claims data because it provides opioid-use data from a vulnerable population often comprised of people from low socio-economic backgrounds or with substance use disorders. For the five years of data, the researchers will be poring through over 50 million prescriptions from Georgia alone.

"The study was developed so Georgia Medicaid could effectively evaluate the full impact of its policy changes on patients' health outcomes," Perri said.

"The Georgia policy provided us with a natural experiment, but no one has studied the effect of the implementation in curbing potential opioid misuse and

inappropriate prescribing,” Jayawardhana said. “Our goal is to evaluate this policy—is it doing what it’s meant to do?”

The study will examine data from before and after the Georgia policy to track trends and evaluate its impact on several variables: overprescribing of opioids by health care providers and misuse by patients; patterns in patients’ use of health care facilities, like doctor and emergency room visits; and deaths by opioid overdose.

“Having a policy for the sake of having a policy is not enough,” Jayawardhana said. “If it’s not achieving what it’s supposed to, we need to change it.”

Jayawardhana said this research is unique not only because it hasn’t been done before and is vital to determine the efficacy of opioid policy, but it can also help other states find cost-effective ways to curb prescription misuse.

“These policies are extremely low cost; and, if it’s effective, other states can adopt this and put it into place,” she said. “By

looking at Georgia, we can provide policy strategies to curb the national crisis.”

The study was inspired by Perri’s longstanding work with Georgia Medicaid, including his work as chair of the Georgia Drug Utilization Review Board from 2003-2010.

Plus, “Dr. Jayawardhana’s background in health economics and policy, as well as public health, was critical to the development of the study methodology,” Perri said.

In addition to Perri and Jayawardhana, the research team is comprised of Amanda Abraham, Henry Young and David Bradford, in the UGA

College of Pharmacy and School of Public and International Affairs. As co-investigators, the researchers contributed to the grant’s development and will play an important role in its completion.

The research is being supported by the National Institute on Drug Abuse of the NIH under award number R01DA039930. 

## The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that almost 29,000 people died by opioid overdose in the U.S. in 2014.



Jayani Jayawardhana and Matthew Perri

## Pegan Research Focuses on Orphan, or Neglected, Diseases

by Sheila Roberson

*In 2009 a United States soldier stationed in Afghanistan was infected with a tick-borne virus called CCHFV, or Crimean Congo hemorrhagic fever virus. Without effective treatments available, the soldier died and became another mortality of an illness that has been classified as a Category C Biothreat agent by the U.S. Department of Defense.*

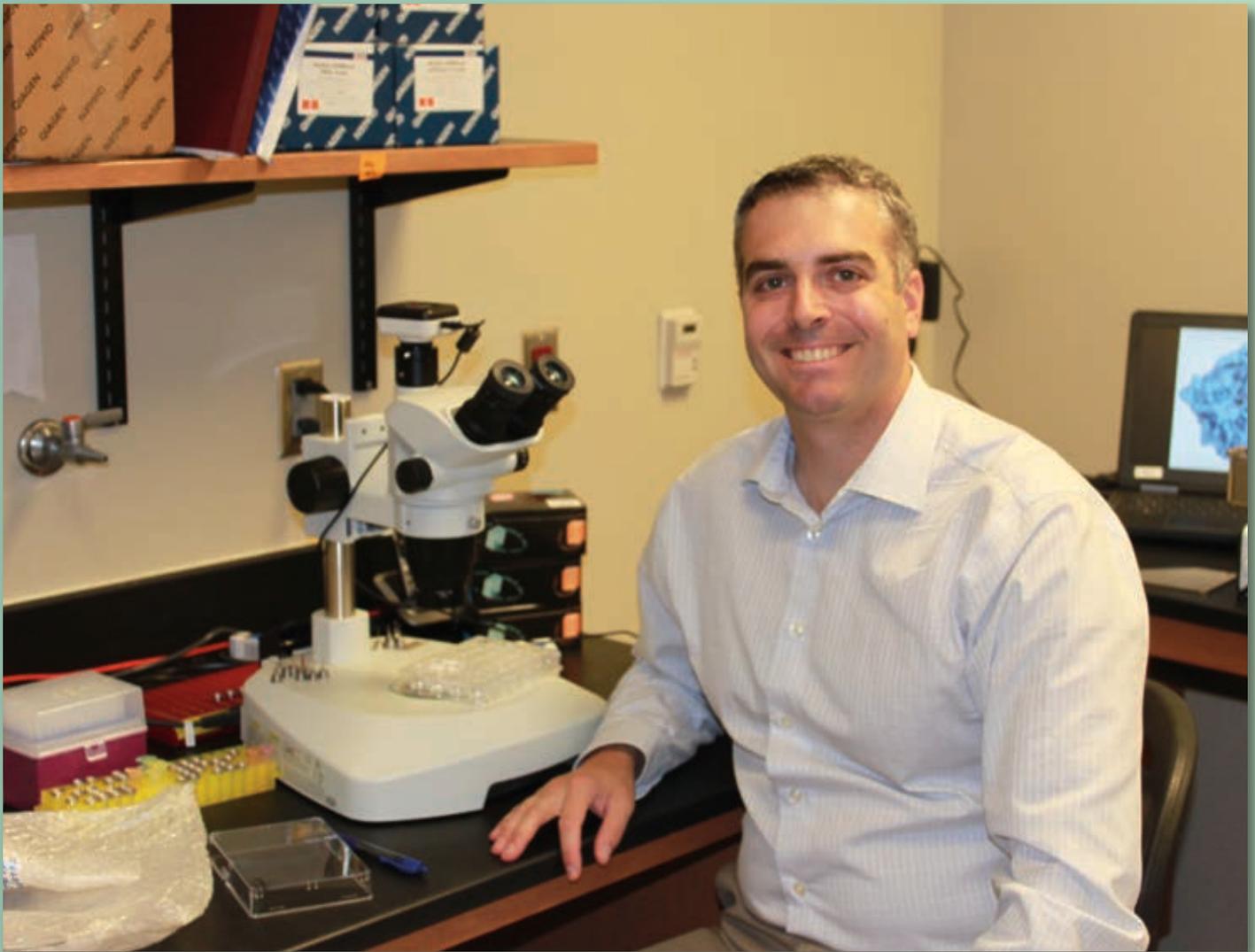
“CCHFV is one of several untreatable diseases known as orphan, or neglected, diseases. These diseases currently have no cure and there is little commercial interest to drive private, for-profit development of treatments,” said Scott Pegan, associate professor at the University of Georgia College of Pharmacy. His interest in orphan viruses stems in part from the challenge of studying and developing new drugs against these highly lethal illnesses, particularly CCHFV and another orphan disease named ERVV.

As of 2011, 6,545 cases of CCHFV have been reported, according to a report published by Pegan. Typically fatality rates for patients infected with the CCHFV range from 5% to 33%; however some outbreaks suggest fatality rates may be as high as 80%. An outbreak in Turkey has lasted for a decade, he added.

Clinical symptoms include hemorrhagic bleeding of the gastrointestinal, genital-urinary and respiratory tracts, as well as the brain, including high fever, debilitating nausea, brachycardia and abdominal pain. In addition to tick-borne transmission it can be spread via close proximity in the absence of infection control practices and can accelerate the spread of the virus. The majority of diagnosed cases occur in sub-Saharan Africa, southeastern Europe and central Asia.

As a U.S. Army Reserve Medical Service Corps Captain, Pegan’s interest in CCHFV also stems from concern that his fellow troops may be exposed to these viruses. With substantial U.S. civilian and military presence in CCHFV-affected areas, such as Afghanistan, Iraq and other close endemic geographic regions, the risk of transporting CCHFV to the U.S. in recent years has risen.

Curiously, CCHFV, along with ERVV, are the only two among the 33 viruses of theairovirus genus that cause severe human disease. This genus is actually named after the Nairobi sheep disease virus that is often fatal in sheep but does not cause overt disease in humans. Although CCHFV, like most otherairoviruses, can only be transmitted to humans by ticks, ERVV is believed to be spread through contact with mice and other rodents in northern Europe. ERVV has been found to be one of the causative agents for thunderclap headaches. This symptom has been suggested to be the outcome of severe brain hemorrhaging, making ERVV less lethal than CCHFV but still a debilitating disease, said Pegan.



Scott Pegan

Pegan's research has revealed that one of the keys to why nairoviruses are limited to causing severe disease in certain animals, such as humans, may lie in the ability of individual nairoviruses to utilize a type of viral protein that allows them to efficiently circumvent only the immune response of a certain species.

"In the cases of transmission of CCHFV to mice, studies have shown that mice can clear the infection in days without developing the disease that mirrors the clinical course of CCHFV in humans," said Pegan.

The discovery surrounding this viral protein, also known as a deubiquitinase, or deISGylase (DUB), has led Pegan to initiate research on several other severe orphan diseases, including Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and the economically damaging Porcine Reproduction and Respiratory Syndrome.

As Pegan noted, "In drug development we look for several orphan diseases that contain the protein systems that the virus needs to survive and proliferate; this type of viral protein is an essential part of those processes."

In essence, his overall focus is identifying the viral, or host proteins, that can serve as suitable broad spectrum drug

targets, specifically for treatments that disrupt a virus's ability to down regulate the innate immune response, he added.

His research in viral DUBs and CCHFV has already led to the development, in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, of novel genetically modified strains of CCHFV that are no longer able to evade the immune system. Now in preclinical animal trials these severely attenuated strains are being considered as potential therapeutics to thwart CCHFV and other viruses containing DUBs.

His work has been supported by the National Institutes of Health, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the National Pork Board. 🐷

## Employee of the Year Named for 2015 Others Cited for Service

Katie Smith was named Employee of the Year 2015 at a recent celebration at the University of Georgia College of Pharmacy. She is an instructional technology development professional associate at the College's Kroger Learning Center. She has been praised for using her background in instructional design and media development, caring personality, and strong work ethic to achieve effective results.

One letter of recommendation stated that "she has the capacity to work as a graphic designer, videographer, e-learning author and implementation consultant all in the same day when needed...While her skillset brings tremendous value to the College's instructional mission it is her patience and caring personality that make her such an outstanding colleague and teammate."

Another stated that "her passion for improving the culture of learning for our students is evident by the time and detail she puts into her work.... Her creative mind, desire to create an interactive classroom that promotes motivational learning, and her highly effective style of collaboration makes her an excellent and deserving person for the Employee of the Year Award.

Other staff members honored for their service to the College were: five years, Annelie Klein, administrative specialist I; Arvinder Makker, program coordinator I, and Demetrius Smith, student affairs professional II; 10 years, Robyn Ansley, administrative specialist II, and Russ Palmer, instructional technology development professional specialist; 20 years, John Anderson, IT associate director; and 25 years, Mary Eubanks, administrative associate I; Becky Glosson, administrative specialist I, and Joy Wilson, administrative manager I.



*Dean Svein Øie and Katie Smith*

### **Preceptors Honored for Service**

Three preceptors at the University of Georgia College of Pharmacy were recently honored for service to the College. They were: Micaela Carroll of Augusta, Augusta Medical Center; Kelly Ouellette of Atlanta, St. Joseph's Hospital; and Daniel Chastain of Cairo, Phoebe Putney Medical Hospital, Albany. Also pictured, at right, is Lindsey Welch, Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experiences (APPE) director.



*Micaela Carroll, Kelly Ouellette, Daniel Chastain, and Lindsey Welch*

# Kudos

## Amber Clemmons Named 2016 Teacher of the Year

Amber Clemmons has been named the 2016 Teacher of the Year at the University of Georgia College of Pharmacy. A quote by Plutarch, “The mind is a fire to be kindled, not a vessel to be filled,” reflects her teaching style, which focuses on critical thinking and refinement of skills rather than acquisition of factual knowledge.

Clemmons, a clinical assistant professor at the College’s Augusta campus since 2011, stated she has always had a passion for teaching others, whether they are pharmacy students and residents, other healthcare professionals, or patients and their caregivers. Her own experiences on rotations during pharmacy school and residency training solidified her interest in continuing to be an educator.

“My goal is to challenge each learner to enhance their critical thinking process regardless of the type of activity we are engaging – whether it is a lecture, patient case discussion, or skills laboratory setting.”

“I hope that my time as a faculty member educating pharmacy students will result in the enhancement of care for many patients in the future,” added Clemmons, who earned a Doctor of Pharmacy from the University of Michigan College of Pharmacy in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in 2009, and was credentialed as a Board Certified Oncology Pharmacist (BCOP) in 2012.

As a clinical faculty member, she focuses her research on reviewing patient care processes for enhancement in outcomes. These projects include medication use evaluations and retrospective reviews of patient charts as well as prospective clinical studies comparing different medication interventions. The topic areas involved in these research efforts are bone marrow transplantation, treatment of hematologic malignancies, and supportive care.

“What I enjoy the most about being a faculty member is the ability to be engaged in a variety of activities covering the domains of teaching, research, and patient care,” she said, enumerating such activities as providing education to students through lectures, skills labs, and experiential rotations;



Amber Clemmons

enhancing the curriculum through scholarship of teaching and learning projects and discussion in committees with fellow faculty; facilitating pharmacy residents in improving their patient care, research, and teaching skills; participating directly in patient care activities with a multi-disciplinary healthcare team at Augusta University Medical Center; educating patients and other healthcare providers; and performing research and disseminating results through posters and publications. 📖

# Our Amazing Students

## Students receive clinical training at local health fairs



The UGA College of Pharmacy's American Pharmacists Association-Academy of Student Pharmacists (APhA-ASP) chapter participated in two health fairs this spring--one at the Pinewood Estates subdivision in Athens and another at Pendergrass Flea Market in Jefferson, Georgia. These outreach events targeted a primarily Hispanic population with limited access to healthcare.

At Pinewoods students and faculty volunteers provided blood pressure and blood glucose screenings to approximately 25 patients during the two-hour event. In addition, students educated patients on disease risk and referred patients for physician follow up if necessary.



At Pendergrass six pharmacist faculty and more than 50 student pharmacists participated in the event. Student pharmacists performed blood glucose, blood pressure, and BMI screenings to a primarily Spanish-speaking population with the help of several volunteer interpreters. Patients were educated on disease risk, the management of any diagnosed disease states; referrals for physician follow-up were provided as appropriate. Patients also received information on cancer risk, immunizations, and drug abuse information during the fair. This year, the chapter served 44 patients over a 3-hour period, including four referrals for physician follow-up.

## 5k races benefit students and charities



Student Oncological Advocates in Pharmacy (SOAP) raised a total of \$8,000 dollars for Winship Cancer Institute's clinical trial research fund from their annual 5k and other small fundraisers throughout the year. Khushbu Tejani and Alia Reid presented the check.



Lambda Kappa Sigma raised \$6,900 in the In Their Shoes Walk to benefit the Loran Smith Center for Cancer Support in Athens.

In other news LKS was named the Southern Region Chapter of the Year at the National Convention in St. Louis, MO. Ally Holland was awarded the Ruth Davis Flaherty Service Award from LKS.

Shannon Bear and Brittany Chambers were awarded Ethel J. Health Scholarship Keys from LKS for graduating in the top 10% of the class.

Charlotte Dunderdale was the national recipient of the Marilyn & Joe E Haberle National Grant from LKS. She was also selected for membership by the Blue Key National Honor Society at UGA.

## Awards Banquet Honors Excellence

Festivities at the 2016 University of Georgia College of Pharmacy graduation weekend began with the 68th annual Senior Awards banquet on Friday, May 6. Fifteen exemplary Doctor of Pharmacy students received 12 separate awards for special achievement, academic excellence and professionalism.

Earning top awards were: Bliss Alayne McMichael of Dublin - the Robert C. Wilson Award for professional integrity, personality, positive attitude and intelligence; Huong Lan Pham of Cumming - the Kenneth L. Waters Award, which recognizes academic excellence, leadership qualities, professional attitude and service; Michelle Arielle Borg of Conyers - the Durward N. Entreklin Pharmacy Student Leadership Award.

Samantha Julia Kolofske of Suwanee received the Lilly Achievement Award for ethics, scholarship and leadership. Brittany Leigh Chambers of Bonaire, Payal Pravin Kakadiya of Lilburn, and Brent Hiroshi Sasaki of Savannah were recipients of the Merck Award for academic excellence.

The APhA-ASP Senior Recognition Certificate went to Jessica Arnette Kupstas of Suwanee, recognizing professionalism, excellence in patient care, exceptional service and commitment to the profession.

The Facts and Comparisons Award of Excellence in Clinical Communications went to Shannon Flanley Bear of Peachtree City for high academic achievement and outstanding clinical communication skills.

The McKesson Award, based on exemplary performance during clinical rotation, was presented to Daniel Victoria Co of Brunswick.



Bliss McMichael



Huong Pham



Michelle Borg

The Mylan Pharmaceuticals Inc. Excellence in Pharmacy Award for high academic achievement and professional motivation and proficiency in drug information services was awarded to Megan Marlene Seddon of Calhoun.

The Pharmdawg Award for service to the profession, college and community was presented to Zachery Frank Childs of Bishop and Harrison Thomas Jozefczyk of Savannah.

Dana L'Rae Brock of Whigham received the Redfearn Award for professionalism and community service.

Patrick Daniel Walker of Evans received the TEVA Pharmaceuticals USA Outstanding Student Award for excellence in pharmacy study.

Rebeca White, J. Alton Hosch Professor Law at the UGA Law School, gave the keynote address. Grace Lee of Cumming was Master of Ceremonies and Payal Kakadiya presented Senior Superlatives.

The Georgia Pharmacist magazine was dedicated to Associate Dean George Francisco.

## Class of 2016 graduation held

The College of Pharmacy graduated 141 Doctor of Pharmacy students in ceremonies on May 7. Of those students, 93 graduated with honors: 20 summa cum laude, 37 magna cum laude and 36 cum laude.

Thirty-eight graduates were selected to attend postgraduate residency programs, 18 in Georgia and the remaining 20 in other states.



**Michael Azzolin ('02)**, Distinguished Alumnus of 2015, was grand marshal at the Doctor of Pharmacy graduation. **Andre Mackey ('88)** is president of the College's Alumni Council.



Doctor of Pharmacy Graduates



Bachelor of Science in Pharmaceutical Sciences Graduates

## Class of 2017 Pinning Ceremony

Parents, friends, faculty and staff of the University of Georgia College of Pharmacy recently attended the annual pinning ceremony for the 142 members of the Class of 2017. The ceremony, which was sponsored by Rite Aid, marked the students' transition from classroom instruction to the clinical training that occurs during the fourth year of the pharmacy curriculum. Each class member received a pin to commemorate the event.

Pharmacy alumnus **Hugh Chancy ('88)**, co-owner of Chancy Drugs in Hahira, was the keynote speaker. Class president Titus Gates was master of ceremonies, with Rachel Stephens presenting the invocation and William Ellisor, vice president, introducing the keynote speaker.

Gates presented the I.Z. Harris award to Beau Sinyard, Class of 2017, as an outstanding member of the class.

Rite Aid was represented by Matt Walker, Director of College Relations and Professional Recruitment; Earl Pace, Rite Aid Regional Recruiter; Sophia Novak, Regional Pharmacy Vice President; Eddie Minton, Rite Aid District Manager, NE Atlanta District; and Elizabeth Dunn, Rite Aid Pharmacy Manager, East Atlanta District.



Third-year class officers, **William Tyler Ellisor**, vice president; **Titus Gates**, president, and **Rachel Stephens**, secretary / treasurer.



**Chelsea Dodd**, current 4th year Pharm.D. candidate, won **Best Student Poster** competition at the *Georgia Society of Health-System Pharmacists spring meeting* held in March in Savannah. Her poster "4-Factor Prothrombin Complex Concentrate (Kcentra®) Medication Use Evaluation" detailed her research, which was completed in concert with Drs. Karen Rodeghiero, Becky Waltman, and Trisha Branan at Athens Regional Medical Center.



**LEAD DAWG AWARD WINNERS** -- Beau Sinyard, Class of 2017; Natalie Moran, Class of 2017; Justin Moore, Class of 2018; and Seth Garner, Class of 2019, were chosen by their classmates as Lead Dawgs for 2015, based on their leadership capabilities as viewed by fellow students, faculty, and/or staff.



Fourth year PharmD students, **Joeanna Sams** and **Harrison Jozefczyk**, won an **Excellence in Research Award** at the 2016 annual *Critical Care Summit of the SE region of Society of Critical Care Medicine* presented at Emory University. Their research, titled "Impact of Maintenance Intravenous Fluids on Length of Stay in Critically Ill Adults," was a collaborative effort with two intensive care physicians and was mentored by Clinical Assistant Professor Anthony Hawkins.

**Sudepti Kuppa** received the **Junior Student of the Year** award in *Pharmaceutical and Biomedical Sciences* recognizing the student showing great potential for excellence in academics, research and leadership.

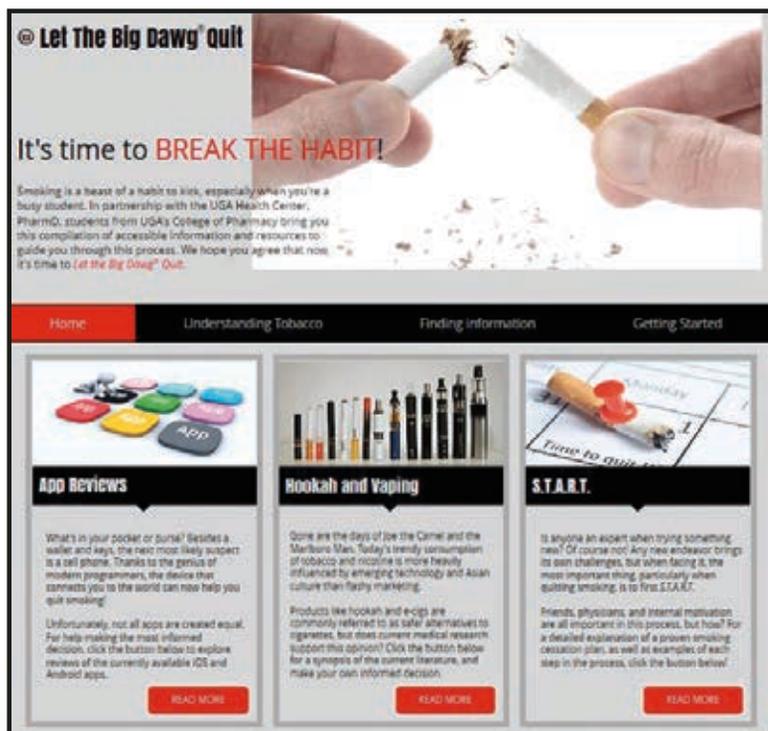


## Pharmacy Students Design Anti-Smoking website, Let the Big Dawg Quit

"Let the Big Dawgs Quit!" is the slogan for a new University of Georgia College of Pharmacy website that provides tobacco cessation resources for UGA college students. A team of third-year Doctor of Pharmacy students compiled accessible information to develop the website in response to the UGA Health Center's request for targeted tobacco cessation information for college students.

The website states, "Smoking is a beast of a habit to kick, especially for busy students." According to Kay Brooks, UGA Public Service Assistant in charge of the College of Pharmacy's tobacco cessation programs, this website is designed to empower students to review facts about tobacco and find resources they need to quit tobacco use. The website provides up-to-date tobacco cessation information, reviews various forms of tobacco and associated health risks, describes local and web-based resources for quitting, and links readers to additional information available on the web.

The web site development team included Lindsey Sellers, Student Health Advisory Committee member, and pharmacy students Leslie Peacock, John Stevick, and Hanna Park. Abigail Shell developed the web site. The website will be maintained by the College of Pharmacy's Academy of Students of Pharmacy (ASP) International Pharmacy Student Federation. For more information go to the website at: [letthebigdawgquit.uga.edu](http://letthebigdawgquit.uga.edu).



## Adeyemo Earns Dual Degree

AdeSubomi Adeyemo, a 2015 graduate of the University of Georgia College of Pharmacy, is the first UGA student to graduate from the PharmD/MPH (Doctor of Pharmacy/Master's in Public Health) dual degree program.



Adeyemo was accepted to the PharmD program in Fall of 2011 and the MPH dual degree program in Spring of 2012. After she graduated from the PharmD program, she continued her studies in epidemiology at UGA while working full time as a pharmacist with Walmart. She completed her internship in Spring of 2016 with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Division of Public Health Information Dissemination, as well as Morgan County Health Department/UGA Extension. Adeyemo graduated from the College of Public Health in May 2016.

During her academic career she was recipient of the Chapman Family Endowed, Broadrick Family Endowed, and College of Pharmacy Faculty Scholarships. Adeyemo also received her B.S. in biology from UGA, making her an official triple Dawg.



## Moore Earns Internship

Justin Moore received a highly competitive offer from the Atlanta VA Medical e-Center to serve as a **Pharmacy VALOR Intern (Veterans Affairs Learning Opportunity Residency)** for the summer of 2016.

## Graduate Student Awards

### Third-year Pharmaceutical Health Services, Outcomes, and Policy (PHSOP) Graduate Students Win Awards

- Shada Kanchanasuwan was awarded the Global Health Economics & Outcomes Research Internship by Shire for Summer Semester 2016.
- Surbhi Shah was awarded the Health Outcomes and Analytics Internship by Outcomes Incorporated for Summer Semester 2016.
- Shada Kanchanasuwan was awarded a Graduate Assistantship for FY17 from the Vice President for Public Service and Outreach (PSO) Graduate Assistantship Program.

### Clinical and Therapeutics (CET) Students Awarded

- Arwa Fairaq and Wael Eldahshan were both honored at the Augusta University Graduate Research Day, Fairaq for the Mahesh Award for Research Excellence in Endocrinology, and Eldahshan for the Award for Research Excellence in Clinical and Experimental Therapeutics.
- Sally Elshaer, 4th year CET student, Islam Osman, 5th year CET student, and Islam Osmassn, a 5th year CET student, were recipients for travel awards from the UGA Graduate School.

# Pilot Project Enhances Learning through Virtual Interactive Patient Care Scenarios

Colleagues at the University of Georgia College of Pharmacy are evaluating an innovative teaching tool they developed over the past year to make teaching case studies in the critical care elective more realistic for students.

Trisha Branan and Anthony Hawkins, both clinical assistant professors at the College, are typical of young faculty members -- they are passionate about enhancing student learning through use of innovative teaching methods. Case-based teaching in the critical care course, for example, was delivered primarily through paper-driven course materials. Branan and Hawkins wanted to improve delivery in the critical care course by taking advantage of technology to create a rich environment with sophisticated graphics that would support their learning objectives. Their vision became a reality when they partnered with the College's instructional designers, Russ Palmer and Katie Smith, to develop a virtual, interactive patient case scenario to create a more realistic learning environment.

"Videos have been used successfully in the past to create realistic case-based resources to facilitate course learning, but the critical care scenarios proved to be problematic in this format due to the difficulty of creating the appropriate amount of realism needed to depict emergency room and hospital settings," noted Palmer.

"The need for more realistic critical care scenes required creating a two-dimensional hospital room graphically and adding medical equipment, such as computers, heart monitors and blood pressure cuffs, plus patients and medical personnel," added Smith. "Drs. Branan and Hawkins also wanted to add patient information relevant to the illness, such as lab values, family history and medication lists."

"It was a matter of creating an interactive environment in which patients and pharmacists, whose roles are played by students, can 'speak' to each other to solve medical problems," noted Palmer. "We used graphic manipulation tools to create the scene so that students could evaluate the problem and find a solution."

At the outset Branan and Hawkins wrote case studies depicting the health care scenarios to be evaluated. Their scripts included conversations with patients or, as is often seen in a realistic setting, with health care professionals or family members of patients who may be incapacitated. Student teams then worked together on the scenarios, which involved student assessment of the patient in order to make a diagnosis and formulate a care plan. These findings were then discussed during class with the instructor and other student teams.

The goal was for the students to take on the role of a clinical pharmacist to develop clinical thinking skills, which included gathering information, making assessments, formulating treatment regimens and communicating plans to



Virtual interactive critical care scenario in hospital room

other healthcare providers. At the conclusion of the discussion, students felt more confident in their decisions and the cases continued to the next discussion point.

Students may encounter patient care issues with multiple reasonable treatment options or issues with a single most reasonable treatment option, added Branan. Since this is common in any practice setting, emphasis is placed on developing student confidence with their decision-making skills and defending their rationale.

"Our student evaluations showed nearly a 100 percent approval rating for this new teaching method. They have a better grasp of the problem with this new interactive, virtual approach," said Branan, who pointed out that the pilot project was a team effort with the technology experts and course faculty in Athens, Albany and Savannah. "This was the first year for this technology-enhanced case-based learning environment and we've very excited about future possibilities."

## DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS AWARD

The College of Pharmacy Alumni Association is seeking nominations for the 2016 Distinguished Alumnus Award. Nominees should:

1. Be distinguished in his/her business, profession, or life work,
2. Be of such integrity, stature, demonstrated ability, or renown that the faculty, staff, students, and alumni of the College will take pride in, and be inspired by, his/her recognition,
3. Have demonstrated a continuing interest in the College;
4. Be a person who recognizes and reflects the importance of his/her education at the College of Pharmacy, who demonstrates pride in his/her alma mater, and whose interest and loyalty are evident, and
5. Be a person who manifests an attitude of respect and compassion for mankind.

### Nomination Form

Name of Nominee: \_\_\_\_\_ Graduation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Address of organization or person making nomination:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

A resume or a letter of nomination stating the outstanding qualities of the nominee should be submitted along with this form. **All nominations are due September 1, 2016.** Mail the nomination form to: College of Pharmacy Alumni Association, c/o Kim Hamby, Director, Alumni Affairs, College of Pharmacy, The University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602-2351 or FAX to (706) 542-5269.

## Dana E. Strickland — An Example for Generosity

**Dana E. Strickland ('81)**, Executive Director of External Affairs, received his higher education from the University of Georgia College of Pharmacy. After graduation he was given the privilege to learn sales and management through his position as Business Unit Manager at Merck & Co.

When he was approached by the College of Pharmacy to join in the area of development he reasoned that in order to increase resources for the College he could use his experience from pharmaceutical sales.

Through his position at the College of Pharmacy, Strickland learned that in order to run an effective operation you need to have money to enhance the operation through sales, marketing, and development. This is why he created the **Dana E. Strickland Pharmacy Business Development Endowment Fund**. It is the purpose of this endowment to offset the expenses of running a successful business that would otherwise come from a limited budget. "It is my intent for me and my family throughout the years to continue to donate into this endowment and I hope others will do

the same." Many friends and generous individuals have donated into this new endowment and it is through its humble beginnings this endowment has grown tremendously. Strickland is very grateful to the many people who have donated. The scholarship was just recently given out to its first recipient and he says, "It makes me proud that when I am no longer on this planet one day that someone will continue to receive a scholarship and it will continue to change their life."

The College of Pharmacy Office of External Affairs is currently working on an 8-year campaign that will go live for the College and the University by the end of 2016. In 2012, the College of Pharmacy Comprehensive Campaign Board was given the responsibility of raising \$17 million. Now, four years since the campaign began, the Comprehensive Campaign Board is proud to announce they have raised 98% of the original \$17 million and have increased the Campaign goal to \$25 million, expected to be completed by the year 2020.

If you are interested in donating to the College, Strickland advises that you should start early and give along the

way in order to make a more sizeable endowment and therefore a bigger difference later. Tuition for pharmacy students is \$7,975 each semester, and with an additional \$1,129 of fees, annual cost of attendance is \$18,208 for in-state students. Additionally, the average student debt is between \$90,000 and \$100,000. Students at the College of Pharmacy work very hard, 65% of the class of 2015 graduated with honors, and almost every student was on the Dean's list at some point while in pharmacy school. However, more students at the College could be included in this honorable percentage if there were more scholarships.

The creation of a hybrid scholarship that rewards students for working hard, both inside and outside of the classroom, would allow them to focus more on their studies and less on making the money to go to school. Contact the College of Pharmacy Office of External Affairs for more information on how you can make a gift and create a ripple effect for the pharmacy profession, students, staff, and for generations to come.

### Ben and Denise Cravey – Leaving a Legacy

**Ben ('79) and Denise Cravey ('81)** own Batts Drug store in Hawkinsville, GA, where they have committed their pharmacy to enhancing patient care in the lives of thousands of people. Still, the care they have for others exceeds the four walls of their pharmacy. By remembering the College of Pharmacy in their will, Ben and Denise Cravey are creating future opportunities for students beyond their time. They encourage students to "study hard, keep your eyes forward on the goal, and make a difference in the lives of people."

## Al Dixon ('82) Adds to Gifts

**Al Dixon ('82)** is grateful for the education he received at the College of Pharmacy because he knows "it shaped the rest of my life and enables me to serve my fellow man. It is very important to me to support the College for future generations, because our support enables the College to be one of the premiere pharmacy schools in the nation." Being a pharmacist is a dream come true for Al. The College "allowed me the opportunity to fulfill my dreams of being a pharmacist and helping people in my community." Having been so fortunate himself, Al gladly accepts the duty of being a good steward to the College in order to help others. Al has left his legacy through the **Ferrell "Al" Dixon Jr Endowed Scholarship Fund** and two other major gifts, one of those being his most recent gift to the University of Georgia College of Pharmacy campus in Savannah, Georgia.



**Al Dixon ('82) and Dana E. Strickland ('81)**

Dana Strickland • Executive Director • External Affairs • [dstrick@uga.edu](mailto:dstrick@uga.edu) • 706-542-5293  
Lee Snelling . Director of Major Gifts . [snelling@uga.edu](mailto:snelling@uga.edu) . 706-542-1978

## A Word From Andre Mackey ('88)

Alumni Association President

*Hi*ello from the UGA College of Pharmacy Alumni Association. It's hard to believe it has already been another quarter since my last correspondence with you. I hope all is well with each of you. I am acclimating to the new role as President and it has been an exciting ride so far. I have met so many new alumni and it has only reinforced my tremendous pride in our alma mater.



If you ever questioned the future of our profession, I can reassure you that it is bright. I can say that with confidence because I have had an opportunity to meet and interact with not only some seasoned alumni, I've had the privilege to meet many of the current students and recent graduates. They are impressive. The annual Pinning Ceremony afforded me the opportunity to not only speak briefly to the third-year group, but I was able to chat with some of them one-on-one and I have never been more reassured that we are continuing to attract and develop the best of the best. The Pinning Ceremony gives the class their "rite of passage" as they prepare to go out on rotations in the final year. My classmate **Hugh Chancy ('88)** gave the keynote and I know he and his wife **Tina ('88)**, who was also in our class, must have been especially proud. Their son, Patrick, is in that class and was pinned along with some 140+ of his classmates. Hugh shared some wonderful words of wisdom that benefitted not only the students, but those of us who have been around awhile as well. I was also proud to interact with the first recipient of the scholarship I established in my name, Trinh Tran. She, and students like her, are why I don't hesitate when time comes each year to give back for our future.

Another impressive bunch is this year's graduating class. The Class of 2016 received their degrees on Saturday, May 7th. **Michael Azzolin ('02)**, UGA College of Pharmacy Distinguished Alumnus 2015, led the processional. I had the honor of inducting the 140+ graduates into the College of Pharmacy Alumni Association. Their class president, Bliss McMichael, gave a very moving and well-delivered message to her classmates. Sitting next to me on stage was Dana Brock who gave the invocation. As it turned out, not only was she from a town 15 miles from my hometown, she had met my mom the previous week at a local college event in South Georgia. I was reminded of how small the pharmacy world is and how we are connected in so many ways. During the induction, I reminded the graduates of something that is fitting for all of us. I reminded them that when they reflect on how much they have given of themselves for their accomplishments, that they should also reflect on how much was given to them not only through the learning experience but the mere privilege it is to serve someone else. I reminded them that their journey of learning and giving is just beginning, as they will be required to be life-long learners and life-long givers. I reminded them of the importance of staying connected with our awesome alma mater. And I challenged them to take seriously the privilege and duty they have to ensure the legacy continues so that others may follow their footsteps on the road to helping improve the health and lives of the patients we serve. As I spoke to them, I realized that I was speaking to myself and to all of us who enjoy the distinct honor of being called "Pharmdawgs"!

Go Dawgs and I hope to see you this fall at Homecoming!

Best Regards,  
Andre Mackey ('88)

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Kimberly Hamby • Alumni Affairs Director • khamby@uga.edu • 706-542-4536

# Golf Classic Celebrates 24th Year

Seventy-seven golfers participated in this year's Albert W. Jowdy Memorial Golf Classic at the Georgia Club; the event netted an estimated \$3622 for student scholarships.

Hole sponsorships were: Ouida & Terrell Wiggins, \$2000; Walmart, \$1,000; Bloodworth Wholesale, \$1000 and golf balls; Susan Fagan and William Anderton, \$500; Lake Country Pharmacy & Compounding Center, \$250; Sam Hunt, \$250; Bruce and Mary Broadrick, \$250; Clay & Andrea Lewis, \$250; Steve Purvis, \$250; Eric Durham, \$250; and Frank and Reba Landrum, \$100.

Beverages were provided by Terrell and Ouida Wiggins, Walmart and Fanning Brewing Company. Silent auction donors were UGA basketball program, Georgia Club, Harbor Club at Lake Oconee, UGA golf course, Renew You Massage Therapy.

First place winners of the First Flight were Taylor Antioco, Dustin Blalock, Dan Kiser, Mike Rogers; second place winners were Michael Conner, Kevin Florence, Bill Lynch, Bobby Moody. First place winners in the Second Flight were Deven Broadway, Jake Davis, Ty Ellisor and Dustin Orvin; second place winners in that flight were Bobby Melnich, Chris Thurmond, Steve Purvis, Shannon Spillman. First place winners in the Third Flight were Bobby Harrell, Mark Morton, Bill Ozburn, Russ Rainwater; second place winners were Billy Chambers, Buck Chapman, Terry Greenwood, Eddie Madden. Pro Shop gift credit in the amounts of \$50 and \$35 were given to first and second place winners in each flight.

Closest to the pin winners were Dustin Blalock, Al McConnell, Chris Thurmond, Russ Rainwater. Taylor Antioco made the longest drive and Andrew Wynne won the putting contest.



*Hairy Dawg greeted alumni golfers Spencer Tally ('83, '87) and Heather Lindell ('93, '94) at the tournament.*

## LET US HEAR FROM YOU!

Please take a minute to fill out this questionnaire and **mail it to the Editor, College of Pharmacy, The University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602, or FAX it to Sheila Roberson at 706-542-5269 or email it as an attachment to [roberson@rx.uga.edu](mailto:roberson@rx.uga.edu)**. Many of our alumni have inquired about former classmates, so we are trying to keep current information available.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DEGREE and YEAR \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ CITY, STATE, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

BUSINESS PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ FAX \_\_\_\_\_

PROFESSIONAL INFORMATION (Employer Name and Address, Job Title, Duties...) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

AWARDS AND HONORS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

FAMILY INFORMATION (Spouse's Name. Is Spouse a UGA Grad? Is Spouse also a Pharmacist? Any Children?) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

INTERESTS AND HOBBIES \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



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Pharmacy Alumni Society  
Athens, Georgia 30602-2351

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### PRINT/ONLINE

Beginning with the Fall 2014 issue of UGARx, we only printed and mailed the UGARx magazine to those alumni donors and friends who have contributed more than \$500 to the College of Pharmacy.

All issues of UGARx continue to be posted on our website ([www.rx.uga.edu](http://www.rx.uga.edu)) for alumni to download and print. We will send emails and online notices to everyone about the quarterly postings of UGARx.

If any alumni would prefer to continue receiving a printed copy, please contact the director of public relations and publications, at 706-542-5303.



*For up-to-the-minute news, log on to Facebook at The University of Georgia College of Pharmacy*

## Upcoming Programs and Events

### ALUMNI EVENTS and STUDENT PROGRAMS

**GPhA Alumni Dinner**  
**June 16**  
**Sea Grass Grille**  
Hilton Head

**White Coat Ceremony**  
**August 13**  
Performing Arts Center, Hodgson Hall

**Visitor's Day**  
**August 27**  
8:30 a. m. to noon  
Pharmacy South Room 101

**Career Fair**  
**September 29**  
Noon to 2:30 p.m.  
Tate Student Center  
Interviews, Clarke Howell Hall

**Homecoming Tailgate**  
**October 15**  
Football Game and Class Reunions  
Rite Aid Courtyard

Contact Kim Hamby, director of alumni affairs, at 706-542-4536 for information on alumni events, or look on the college website at [www.rx.uga.edu](http://www.rx.uga.edu).

### Continuing Education LIVE FALL PROGRAMS

**Howard C. Ansel Symposium**  
August 5  
College of Pharmacy

**STaR Conference**  
September 22-23  
Georgia Hotel & Conference Center

**Medical Device Regulations Conference**  
November 1-2  
Georgia Hotel & Conference Center

For more information contact the Office of Continuing Education and Outreach by email at [pharmce@uga.edu](mailto:pharmce@uga.edu) or by phone at 706-542-6232.

For the latest information on College events and activities, check out our website at:

**[www.rx.uga.edu](http://www.rx.uga.edu)**