I am tremendously honored to have served as Interim Dean since July 2022 and to be named the eighth dean of the Thomas J. Long School of Pharmacy this May.

My career has been a series of wonderful opportunities. From earning my doctor in pharmacy at Pacific, to a residency at Children’s Hospital National Medical Center in Washington D.C., to a pediatric pharmacotherapy fellowship at Hartford Hospital in Hartford, Conn., to joining the pharmacy practice faculty at Pacific, to transitioning to a role in the Provost’s office, Pacific has always been my home.

In 2020, I helped launch Pacific’s new School of Health Sciences. It was (intended to be) my last big project for the University. I was content with the work I had done, and I felt like it was a perfect time to step away.

During my brief retirement from the University, my faithful canine companion, Smalls, and I set out on a road trip. Along the way we visited my children, Andrew, Daniel and Kirsten. I came away feeling refreshed and re-energized. Little did I know it would prepare me to return to Pacific. My daughter summed it up nicely for me, saying, “How amazing is it that you get to bookend your career with the thing you are most passionate about, pharmacy education.”

When asked about my vision for the School, two ideas are top-of-mind: building a network of support for first-generation students and creating an incubation hub.

As the daughter of Norwegian immigrants and a first-generation college student, I can deeply empathize with students who are trailblazers. If no one in your family has walked the path before you, higher education can be very difficult to navigate. Among other things, I envision peer mentors coming alongside first-year students to provide them the support they need to thrive.

We need an incubation hub. The incubator would be a space focused on synergy and creativity where faculty, students, alumni, industry leaders and entrepreneurs could exchange ideas. In this collaborative environment, individuals could come together to launch new ventures or develop concepts that will ultimately transform patient care.

I look forward to seeing what we can build together.

Sincerely,

Berit Gundersen ’84, PharmD
Dean
Explore the Annual Report

The 2023 Annual Report includes updates on current students, recent graduates, scholarships and health care outreach. Plus, learn about the noteworthy accomplishments of our faculty and staff.

READ NOW

pacific.edu/pharmacy/annual-report

On the cover

Berit Gundersen ’84, PharmD was named dean of the Thomas J. Long School of Pharmacy on May 10, 2023. Dean Gundersen has been a highly respected leader at Pacific and the School for more than 35 years, serving in roles from assistant professor to vice provost. Pictured with Dean Gundersen are Adam Buie ’24 and Keerat Kandola ’24.

Features

5

Shaping future pharmacists through the pre-college program

The Future Pharmacists program is offered through the Pacific Summer High School Institute, a two-week residential summer program designed for curious high school students to live, learn and grow on the Stockton campus.

7

Immersive summer programs empower graduates and incoming students

The School launched two innovative programs designed to support students prior to starting the doctor of pharmacy program and after graduation.

13

Research could revolutionize treatment for opioid overdoses

Mamoun M. Alhamadsheh, PhD, professor of pharmaceutics and medicinal chemistry, received a $1.7 million National Institutes of Health R01 grant to study a more potent and longer lasting antidote for opioid overdoses.

15

Expert advice on choosing clean beauty products

Alumni offer guidance for selecting products that are gentler on the skin and the environment.

17

Hidden talents fuel creativity

Multi-talented faculty use farming and the arts to inspire their teaching.

In this issue

1  Dean’s message
11  Philanthropy
21  Alumnus of the year
23  Alumni
25  Class notes

Explore the Annual Report

The 2023 Annual Report includes updates on current students, recent graduates, scholarships and health care outreach. Plus, learn about the noteworthy accomplishments of our faculty and staff.

READ NOW

pacific.edu/pharmacy/annual-report

On the cover

Berit Gundersen ’84, PharmD was named dean of the Thomas J. Long School of Pharmacy on May 10, 2023. Dean Gundersen has been a highly respected leader at Pacific and the School for more than 35 years, serving in roles from assistant professor to vice provost. Pictured with Dean Gundersen are Adam Buie ’24 and Keerat Kandola ’24.

Features

5

Shaping future pharmacists through the pre-college program

The Future Pharmacists program is offered through the Pacific Summer High School Institute, a two-week residential summer program designed for curious high school students to live, learn and grow on the Stockton campus.

7

Immersive summer programs empower graduates and incoming students

The School launched two innovative programs designed to support students prior to starting the doctor of pharmacy program and after graduation.

13

Research could revolutionize treatment for opioid overdoses

Mamoun M. Alhamadsheh, PhD, professor of pharmaceutics and medicinal chemistry, received a $1.7 million National Institutes of Health R01 grant to study a more potent and longer lasting antidote for opioid overdoses.

15

Expert advice on choosing clean beauty products

Alumni offer guidance for selecting products that are gentler on the skin and the environment.

17

Hidden talents fuel creativity

Multi-talented faculty use farming and the arts to inspire their teaching.

In this issue

1  Dean’s message
11  Philanthropy
21  Alumnus of the year
23  Alumni
25  Class notes
Prior to attending the Pacific Summer High School Institute, Samuel Lee ’28 had only interacted with pharmacists at community pharmacies. With a passion for biology and chemistry, Lee chose the Future Pharmacists program to further explore the pharmacy profession.

“I didn’t know about the innovation with compounding pharmacy and how one can make custom medications,” said Lee. “Understanding compounding and dosage is so important to pharmacy as a whole.”

During the two-week immersive program, high school students explore the breadth and depth of pharmacy. In addition to hands-on activities in the pharmaceutical compounding lab, students practice vaccination techniques, blood pressure screenings and CPR. They also learn how to make IVs and are introduced to the clinical trial process by designing a blood glucose monitoring research study.

Back by popular demand, the Future Pharmacists program was designed by co-directors Kate M. O’Dell, PharmD, BCPS, professor of pharmacy practice, and Melanie A. Felmlee, PhD, associate professor of pharmaceutics and medicinal chemistry and director of Pre-Pharmacy Advantage Program, to be an engaging, collaborative learning experience.

“Our priority is to help students explore the many career opportunities in pharmacy and how a Pacific education can help them achieve their future goals,” said Dr. O’Dell.

During the program, students are mentored by faculty, practicing pharmacists and current doctor of pharmacy students. They attend real-time lectures and participate in patient care simulation cases.

A year after Lee’s participation in the program, he is starting his journey at Pacific as a pre-pharmacy student. He chose Pacific for its beautiful campus and small class sizes.

“I had such a great experience in the program,” said Lee. “Being able to make personal connections and interact with my professors and classmates definitely attracted me to Pacific.”

Future Pharmacists is one of more than 50 programs offered through the Pacific Summer High School Institute, which was launched in 2022. During the residential pre-college summer program, curious high school students live, learn and grow on the Stockton campus.

After academic programming wraps each day, students can explore the campus’s many amenities and connect with peers through a variety of activities, such as movies under the stars, karaoke, volleyball, rock climbing and eSports.

This year, the University’s partnerships expanded to include school districts in Ceres, Lodi, Lincoln and Stockton as well as Aspire Public School and the City of Stockton, bringing nearly 1,600 students to campus. The School is thankful for the support of the Legacy Health Endowment of Turlock, which funded 10 scholarships for students to attend the Future Pharmacists program.
"Just getting by and cramming at the last minute are not options," Dr. Stackpole said.

Results and feedback from students in last year’s inaugural program were positive.

“My office saw a real uptick in terms of connection. Students felt more supported and informed,” Dr. Stackpole said.

“Of the students who completed the modules in areas where they scored 70 percent or less on the baseline assessment, all have been successful this year,” Dr. Jenkins said.

While not mandatory, the program is a valuable resource to gain confidence in key topics. Additionally, through the virtual sessions, incoming students can connect with peers and establish a network of support.
Rx4Success prepares graduates for licensure exams

Carissa Leung ’23, PharmD returned to campus this summer with a singular focus: studying for upcoming pharmacist licensure exams.

Nearly 130 PharmD graduates took part in a newly launched, one-of-a-kind immersive board preparatory program designed to provide intense preparation for state and national licensure examinations. Pacific provided the comprehensive three-week program, including on-campus housing, at no cost.

Offering dozens of presentations from carefully selected alumni and pharmacists, the program was designed to boost pass rates of licensure exams. Featuring nearly 90 hours of intensive programming, the program and custom-designed app are distinctive in pharmacy education, where existing preparatory classes are both expensive and short in duration.

“Our program and the accompanying app were intentionally designed to provide a more comprehensive review of material to ensure our graduates get the most benefit and place them in the best position to succeed,” said Rajul A. Patel ’01, ’06, PharmD, PhD, professor of pharmacy practice.

To create Rx4Success, the planning committee surveyed third-year students to assess potentially problematic subjects, solicited feedback from recent test takers about material they felt underprepared for and carefully evaluated the licensure exam blueprints as to the breadth of topics covered on the two exams. In total, 44 themed areas were identified. The team received 112 speaker nominations, highlighting the desire of practicing pharmacists to support their future colleagues. Ultimately, 39 program speakers were chosen: Jessica Song, PharmD, FCSHP, professor and chair of the Department of Pharmacy Practice, and Sian M. Carr-Lopez ’85, PharmD, FCSHP, clinical professor of pharmacy practice, lent their expertise to the review of the presentation material.

“The speakers helped us pinpoint what is being asked during the exam and provided real-life applications,” said Dr. Leung. “The program was well-organized, with speakers who were experts in their fields.”

Katilin Highsmith ’12, PharmD, BCOP, clinical pharmacy specialist at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, presented an oncology session.

“The program is much needed and a great idea,” Dr. Highsmith said. “It’s good for students to have a program in place that allows for concentrated review.”

Participants were also given access to a powerful study tool — an app that maps out hundreds of the most commonly used medications in a wide variety of pharmaceutical settings, including the drugs’ generic name, brand name and uses, with particular attention paid to drugs recently approved by the Food and Drug Administration. The app was the result of the teamwork of Dr. Carr-Lopez, Dr. Song and James “Jim” A. Uchizono, PharmD, PhD, professor of pharmaceutics and medicinal chemistry and associate dean of student affairs and admission.

Rx4Success underscores Pacific’s commitment to support alumni throughout their careers.

“Many thanks to the core team who made this vision a reality, the presenters who shared their time and talents and President Callahan who supported this program,” said Dean Berit Gundersen ’84, PharmD. “I commend the participants for their engagement and professionalism and wish them the best of luck in their careers.”

Grades of the Class of 2023 celebrated their accomplishments during the Diploma and Hooding Ceremony at the Alex G. Spanos Center on May 13, 2023.
From the first time Ivan W. Rowland, PhD, the School’s founding dean, stepped foot on campus, he had a vision for the third school of pharmacy in California. Raising up leaders was a key component of his strategic plan to help the School reach its potential. One of the ways he encouraged leadership growth was through the Phi Delta Chi pharmacy fraternity. Serving as the fraternity’s grand president, the national executive role, Dean Rowland knew the transformative impact a chapter could make on a university, and the Alpha Psi chapter was established at Pacific in 1956.

The 50th anniversary of the chapter energized a core group of alumni to establish an organization to encourage alumni to give back to the fraternity and support current students. In 2008, the Alpha Psi Education, Scholarship and Leadership Foundation achieved nonprofit status and three of the foundation’s founding members, Edward Larimer ’69, RPh, Ralph L. Saroyan ’64, RPh, and Jack Schlegel ’67, RPh, set an ambitious goal — raising $1 million. The foundation achieved this goal in 2021 through the exclusive support of approximately 250 alumni.

In December 2022, the Alpha Psi Foundation Endowed Scholarship was Powell matched, which was made possible by the generosity of Robert C. and Jeannette Powell. The scholarship supports undergraduate and doctor of pharmacy students at Pacific.

This year, Jasmine Heinemann ’25 received the Phi Delta Chi - Alpha Psi Foundation Founding Directors’ Scholarship. She was inspired to pursue a career in clinical pharmacy by her mother, who is a pharmacist. Heinemann’s family immigrated from China. When her grandfather was gravely ill, a language barrier made it difficult for his family members to understand the communications relating to his medical care. Heinemann’s mother served as a liaison for the family, working tirelessly to ensure everyone adequately understood all the medical exchanges. Heinemann plans to use her training to empower others.

“My goal is to maintain a knowledge base that may be used to help members of my community and family feel more at ease when facing health scares, instilling confidence and encouraging others to take control of their own health,” she said.

Megan W. Tri ’26, the recipient of the Phi Delta Chi - Alpha Psi Foundation Endowed Scholarship, shares a similar experience. When Tri was in high school, her father underwent an intensive heart surgery. The procedure was followed by a long, difficult recovery.

“Having a pharmacist explain the goals of therapy brought reassurance for me and my family,” said Tri. “My father made a full recovery thanks to the team of medical professionals and the assistance of the medications provided.”

The Alpha Psi motto is “leaders in pharmacy, brothers for life.” Both Heinemann and Tri have gained confidence through the support of mentors and the fraternity’s leadership development training.

“I can confidently state that I am a better version of myself from the influence of my peers in the fraternity,” said Heinemann.

Joining Phi Delta Chi prompted Tri to take on the role of president of Pacific’s Pre-Pharmacy Society as an undergraduate pre-pharmacy student, which led her to serve as the Alpha Psi chapter president. Heinemann, Tri, and their fellow fraternity brothers are standing on the shoulders of giants. Scholarships empower the next generation of leaders while honoring those who have come before.

“Scholarships are one of the best ways of honoring their legacy,” said Larimer, president and chief executive officer of the Alpha Psi Education, Scholarship and Leadership Foundation. Larimer believes Ivan and Helen Rowland would be very pleased with the accomplishments of the School and the Alpha Psi chapter.

To support the Alpha Psi Foundation Endowment Scholarship or other endowed scholarships, use the attached giving envelope or give online.

CONTACT US
Susan E. Webster
Senior Assistant Dean of Development
209.946.3116 | swebler@pacific.edu

bit.ly/supportpharmacy

LEADERSHIP
Honoring the legacy of Phi Delta Chi

By Anne Marie H. Bergthold
Momoun M. Alhamadsheh, PhD, professor of pharmaceutics and medicinal chemistry, received a $1.7 million R01 grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to study a more potent and longer lasting antidote for opioid overdoses.

"An R01 is the toughest NIH grant to get and the most prestigious among all NIH grants Pacific has received," said William K. Chan, PharmD, PhD, professor and chair of the Department of Pharmaceutics and Medicinal Chemistry.

Dr. Alhamadsheh is only the third Pacific faculty member to receive an R01 in more than 20 years.

With a team of graduate students, Dr. Alhamadsheh is working to discover a stronger opioid antidote. The research is urgently needed. Illicit synthetic opioids, such as fentanyl, account for about two-thirds of drug overdose deaths in the United States.

"Current antidotes are not very effective with synthetic opioids because the opioids stay in the body much longer than the antidotes, which causes people to relapse and stop breathing again," said Dr. Alhamadsheh. "That’s why many patients may require multiple doses of the antidote after the initial rescue."

The team is working to extend the duration of antidotes in the body for 24 hours or more using antidotes already approved by the Food and Drug Administration — naloxone, known as Narcan®, and nalmefene.

Hala Aldawod ’24 provided the majority of the preliminary data using a novel drug delivery approach previously discovered by Dr. Alhamadsheh. Aldawod optimized the technology to counter overdoses by designing a new molecule that stays in the body and releases the antidote slowly rather than all at once.

"The significance of this finding is tremendous. This is the first time someone has increased the half-life of naloxone, while maintaining its full efficacy. The beauty of our approach is that we are empowering drugs that are already approved by the FDA," Dr. Alhamadsheh said.

Bioelectrical research uncovers interactions between proteins

Carlos A. Villalba-Galea, PhD, associate professor of physiology and pharmacology, received a $364,250 R21 National Institutes of Health grant to investigate the interaction of three proteins involved in electrical signaling in neurons and the heart.

Every cell in the body has electrical activity and specialized proteins turn the electrical signals on and off. When these proteins are mutated or have been deleted from the genome, hyperactive electrical activity can ensue, resulting in arrhythmias, epilepsy or pain. Dr. Villalba-Galea’s research is focused on the proteins KV7.1, Naβ1, and KCNE1, which are found in the brain and the heart and are essential for modulating electrical activity in those organs.

The Naβ1 protein regulates the activity responsible for initiating fast electrical signals. This bioelectrical activity can be described as neuronal and cardiac “spikes.” Following the onset of spikes, proteins like KV7.1 terminate these types of electrical signals. KV7.1 plays an important role in the cycle of electrical signals behind every heartbeat. The way these proteins behave was thought to be separate processes, but Dr. Villalba-Galea’s research demonstrates there is an interplay between these proteins. This research shows that, unexpectedly, Naβ1 shuts down KV7.1 when KCNE1 is absent. This led to the proposal that KCNE1 shields KV7.1 from the inhibitory action of Naβ1.

"Our novel finding constitutes a shift in our understanding of how mutations in KCNE1 can affect cellular electrical signaling," said Dr. Villalba-Galea.

He explains that to develop effective, targeted treatments for complex diseases, we must first gain a deeper understanding of human physiology at a cellular level.

Aldawod was drawn to the research after learning of the dramatic increase in overdose deaths among high school students in the U.S., which has more than doubled since 2019.

"Many of these kids were taking pills that they thought were Xanax®, not knowing it was laced with fentanyl! I want to do something to protect these kids from overdoses," Aldawod said. "Our findings have the potential to lead to an opioid antidote that goes to the market."

The research team includes Joshua Ho ’25, PharmD, Arjun Patel ’24 and Rasha Emara ’24, as well as recent graduates Dengpan Liang ’22, PhD and Md Tariqul Haque Tuhin ’22, PhD. They are currently optimizing the technology in preparation of clinical trials.

Research could REVOLUTIONIZE treatment for opioid overdoses

$1.7M R01 NIH GRANT

$364K R21 NIH GRANT
CLEAN BEAUTY PRODUCTS

By Anne Marie H. Bergthold

When looking for personal care products that are gentler on the skin — and the environment — one may seek out products that are promoted as “clean.” But what lies behind this claim?

“Clean beauty is a term commonly used in the beauty industry, with each company having its own definition and standards,” said Yen Nguyen ’13, PharmD. “Although there is no standardized regulation, clean beauty can generally be understood as products that prioritize safer and more sustainable ingredients while avoiding those that are potentially harmful to human health and the environment.”

Dr. Nguyen is a drug information pharmacist at VeganMed, where she conducts research and develops content for the organization’s animal-free certification program. Co-founded by Sachin A. Shah, PharmD, FACC, FAHA, professor of pharmacy practice and regional coordinator for the Travis region, VeganMed is a group of pharmacists and professionals who support transparent product labeling and promote companies that make a conscious effort to avoid using animal-derived ingredients.

Minimizing exposure to harmful ingredients reduces the risks of adverse reactions.

“Many times, seemingly harmless chemicals can have serious consequences,” said Sundeep S. Gill ’00, PharmD, co-founder of Sun Deep Cosmetics, a prestigious and progressive private label manufacturer of natural and organic personal care and over-the-counter products.

Both Sun Deep Cosmetics and VeganMed advocate for ingredient transparency because they are passionate about empowering consumers to make informed decisions about the products they use.

“The benefits of clean products are their increased safety profile, the use of only essential ingredients and transparent labeling,” said Frank Son ’16, PharmD, medical scientist at VeganMed. Dr. Son leads research on medications, supplements and cosmetics to build a database of animal-free products. He also serves as an Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experience preceptor for doctor of pharmacy (PharmD) students.

The alumni say the comprehensive training they received in Pacific’s PharmD program prepared them for their roles.

“As a pharmacist, my role goes beyond just prescription drugs; it includes over-the-counter products, supplements, beauty and other health products, such as medical devices,” Dr. Son said. “Some patients, for example patients with alpha-gal syndrome, can have an allergy to animal ingredients in any product and it is within the role of a pharmacist to help them identify animal-free products.”

The cosmetic industry is vast and complex.

“My career in the cosmetic industry, during which we have pioneered many of the natural technologies and trends you see in the industry today, wouldn’t have been possible without the extremely good foundation I was able to obtain during my training as a pharmacist,” Dr. Gill said.

His PharmD education has been integral for being able to process expansive information, which, in turn, has given him the “the insight and foresight to create a major change in this industry through ingredient awareness, such as raising awareness of the dangers of parabens.”

Lengthy lists of potentially harmful ingredients can be overwhelming for consumers.

“While there is no standardized certification mark for clean beauty, other certifications, such as USDA Organic, Leaping Bunny, Vegan and Animal-Free, can indicate that a product meets certain standards,” Dr. Nguyen said.

KNOW YOUR INGREDIENTS

Without definitive guidelines for “clean” products, it is beneficial to be able to recognize commonly used ingredients that are potentially harmful.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INGREDIENT</th>
<th>WHAT IT DOES</th>
<th>REASONS TO AVOID</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coal Tar</td>
<td>Treats skin conditions</td>
<td>Increases risk of cancer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formaldehyde</td>
<td>Extends shelf life and prevents bacterial growth</td>
<td>A known human carcinogen, can cause skin irritation and allergies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydroquinone</td>
<td>Lightens skin</td>
<td>Can cause skin irritation and allergic reactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxybenzone and octinoxate</td>
<td>Absorbs ultraviolet rays</td>
<td>Detrimental to coral reefs and marine life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parabens</td>
<td>Extends shelf life and prevents the growth of microorganisms</td>
<td>Has been associated with hormonal disruption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phthalates</td>
<td>Increases the product’s flexibility and durability</td>
<td>Has been linked to hormone disruption and potential reproductive and developmental issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triclosan</td>
<td>Extends shelf life and prevents bacterial contamination</td>
<td>Has been associated with hormone disruption, antimicrobial resistance and environmental issues</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Environmental Working Group (EWG), an independent non-profit advocacy group, has a user-friendly resource. EWG’s Healthy Living app helps consumers review products by searching the database or scanning a product’s barcode.

“Consumers can also utilize resources like VeganMed who research and provide free medication, supplement and cosmetic information to consumers that come directly from the manufacturer,” said Dr. Son.
Melanie A. Felmlee, PhD
Associate Professor, Pharmaceutics and Medicinal Chemistry
Director of the Pre-Pharmacy Advantage Program

Prior to coming to Pacific in 2015, Dr. Felmlee and her family
lived in New York for 10 years, where they had an acre of land
she used for gardening. For the past five years, they have
operated a family farm on five acres of land in Sacramento
County where they raise a variety of goats, free-range chickens
and turkeys, as well as a pig every other year. Her husband runs
the farm, and she helps with chores like milking the goats. The
Felmlee family makes treats including custard, butter, caramel,
cheese and ice cream with the milk.

Her three children are learning the importance of agriculture
and are developing critical skills through helping on the farm
and participating in 4-H, an organization where youth complete
hands-on projects. They compete at the Sacramento County Fair
each year and their club, Sloughhouse 4-H, recently took home
Grand Champion.

Dr. Felmlee applies her professional expertise in
 genetics to raise their farm animals.

“There is a lot of science behind farming,” said
Dr. Felmlee. “With dairy goats, we focus a lot
on the improvement of the breed such as
producing quality milk and selecting the
right pairings for genetic traits.”

Since 2017, Dr. Felmlee has offered a
barbecue as an auction item for the
annual Senior Board Class Auction.
Students enjoy a feast on her farm
— a priceless experience.

Caroline L. Ko, PharmD, BCPS, BCCCP
Associate Clinical Professor, Pharmacy Practice

When Dr. Ko is not in the classroom, she is honing her
skills in the ballet studio. Dr. Ko has been doing classical
ballet on and off since the age of 3. Nine years ago, after
completing a PGY2 critical care pharmacy residency at
Stanford Hospital, she found herself in the studio again.

“Looking back to when I gave it up, there was always
something missing,” said Dr. Ko. “Between ballet and band,
those artistic outlets provided me personal fulfillment.”

Dr. Ko enjoys ballet for the precise detail and structure required in class and
during performances. She believes those characteristics are important in health
care careers.

“Ballet is very exact and precise. It is a close parallel to the health sciences field
where many things must be detailed,” she said.

Through her studio, the Conservatory of Classical Ballet in San Leandro, Dr. Ko
participates in two performances a year, “The Nutcracker Suite” and the
“Student Showcase.” Additionally, she teaches her own class at the studio and
encourages all adult dancers to pursue their dreams.

“There is an entire online community for adult beginners, and we all cheer
each other on.”
Xin Guo, PhD
Professor, Pharmaceutics and Medicinal Chemistry

For many years, graduates from the School had the pleasure of experiencing Dr. Guo’s rich and powerful vocals. Leading Pacific Hail, the University’s alma mater, Dr. Guo’s performance was a hallmark of the School’s Commencement Ceremony.

“I have always enjoyed performing at the event,” he said. “Understanding how to deliver a good performance and how to interact with the audience is very interesting to me.”

Dr. Guo’s love for singing started in early childhood, when he would sing with his father and sister. In kindergarten, he joined the choir and in his youth he enjoyed hip-hop karaoke. It was during his graduate studies when he joined a bel canto singing club in the Bay Area.

In addition to singing, Dr. Guo has various interests in the arts. He frequently attends art exhibitions with his wife, who is a fashion designer, and enjoys playing international chess. Recently, he started taking Latin dance classes to learn the rumba and cha-cha.

Suzanne Galal, PharmD
Professor, Pharmacy Practice

Music plays an important role in Dr. Galal’s daily life. A passionate fan of live music, she was compelled to start a band eight years ago after receiving an electric bass guitar as a birthday present from her husband, a professional musician and drummer.

“Deep down, I knew that I wanted more out of music,” said Dr. Galal. “I was always drawn to the rhythmic, groovy and driving force that the bass provides in a song.”

Within a few weeks of receiving the gift, Dr. Galal formed Sub Sub Par, an all-female band made up of beginner musicians. Eager to learn, they performed at events such as friends’ birthday parties and talent shows. In 2017, Dr. Galal traveled to Portugal, Bosnia and Croatia, where she learned the creative process of writing lyrics and crafting her musical voice.

Five years ago, she formed a new band with her husband called Suzanimal. The band, self-described as a “smart, playful psychedelic pop project from the San Francisco Bay Area,” has released two albums and will be releasing two additional albums next year.

In the classroom, she uses the lessons she learns from recording and live performances to inspire her teaching.

“I’ve been able to incorporate music into the classroom and my research as a learning tool and stress-reducing strategy,” said Dr. Galal. “I hope to continue to grow and develop as a musician and be able to pass on what I’m learning to my students through my teaching.”
The 2023 Pacific Pharmacy Alumni Association Alumnus of the Year’s journey into the field of pharmacy was somewhat accidental. In 1995, Lawrence “LB” Brown ’99, PharmD, PhD, FAPhA joined the U.S. Air Force with the intention of becoming an air traffic controller. Based on his test scores, the recruiter encouraged him to consider a career in one of four health care fields. Making a spur-of-the-moment decision, he chose to become a pharmacy technician.

Following his time in the Air Force, which included a recall to active-duty service for Operation Desert Storm, Dr. Brown joined Kaiser Permanente Pharmacy Operations in Livermore. He played a crucial role in implementing a new computer system at Kaiser pharmacies across Northern California. Along with his military training as well as the invaluable mentorship provided by the faculty at Pacific, he attributes his commitment to leadership to his Kappa Psi brother, Lawrence "LB" Brown '99, PharmD, PhD, FAPhA

Dr. Brown actively engages with the profession through his involvement in professional organizations. He has served as president of the American Pharmacists Association as president, trustee and fellow. A Kappa Psi brother, he has served as the fraternity’s grand regent. He attributes his commitment to leadership to the support and guidance of influential faculty members such as Ralph L. Saroyan ’64, RPh and Donald G. Floriddia ’71, PhD.

At Pacific, Dr. Brown fully immersed himself in his studies and took on several leadership roles, including class president and president of Pacific’s American Pharmacists Association–Academy of Student Pharmacists (APhA-ASP) chapter. He also served on the National Executive Board as speaker of the house for APhA-ASP.

"I wanted to devote my career to helping pharmacists learn how to give better care to patients," Dr. Brown said. "I wanted to devote my career to helping pharmacists learn how to give better care to patients."
Kevin Komoto ‘08, PharmD, MBA, the chief operations officer for Komoto Healthcare in Bakersfield, recognizes the importance of transitions of care (TOC) to improve patient outcomes and prevent adverse medication-related events. Inspired by the death of a patient post-hospital discharge, Dr. Komoto launched a TOC service in his community pharmacy. He believes that a well-designed TOC program can reduce hospital readmission rates and health care costs — and ultimately save lives.

“There are many aspects that contribute to the overall health of a patient, such as disease state, type of medications, housing and other social determinants of health,” Dr. Komoto said. “I believe his death was preventable.”

Dr. Komoto’s team of TOC pharmacists focus on patient-centered interventions to improve medication management. Daily responsibilities involve conducting medication reviews, providing medication consultations and coordinating with other health care providers to provide seamless care. He envisions a future where hospital-based TOC service becomes standard practice.

Fellow alumni Navi Braich ‘11, PharmD aims to accomplish this goal. After 10 years of working as a retail pharmacist, Dr. Braich accepted a transitions of care pharmacist role at Bakersfield Memorial Hospital, the only one in the region to offer a TOC program. Her team includes two pharmacists and four pharmacy technicians.

“Our goal is to promote and advocate for medication-use safety and address medication-related issues to prevent delays in the patients’ hospital discharge. Drug therapies should be optimized at discharge to prevent readmission to the hospital,” said Dr. Braich. “We want to be the bridge and resource for patients as they navigate their pharmacy care inside and outside the hospital.”

To achieve this, pharmacists review hospital discharge summaries, educate the patients on changes in their drug therapy and connect with community pharmacists to ensure patients have access to any new medications. When using a TOC approach, it is also the pharmacist’s responsibility to provide alternatives to costly medications and request drug coverage approvals from insurance providers.

Diana Hang ‘17, PharmD, APh was introduced to TOC as a doctor of pharmacy student at Pacific during an Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experience rotation. After graduation, she accepted a position with Komoto Healthcare helping health plans and medical groups reduce their 30-day hospital readmission rate. Dr. Hang is incorporating what she learned earlier in her career to help build the new admit-to-discharge program at Huntington Hospital in Pasadena.

“We are medications experts and as pharmacists we can help address the gap in the transitions of care to provide the best care to all patients,” she Dr. Hang. “I want to build a stronger relationship with the health care team to help patients live healthier lives.”

This approach to patient care has a positive, measurable impact. In 2017, Dr. Komoto and his research team found a TOC program reduced the risk of hospital readmission within six months by 32 percent. In the past year, Dr. Braich and her team contributed to a decrease in hospital readmission by 10 percent and discovered more than 150,000 medication discrepancies. These results have generated a high level of interest from surrounding hospitals who are requesting guidance and seeking collaborations.

Alumni advocate for transitions of care
Steven Thompson named CSHP Pharmacist of the Year

For more than four decades Steven J. Thompson ’77, PharmD has networked with colleagues and future pharmacists through the California Society of Health-System Pharmacists (CSHP). He served as CSHP president from 2017 to 2019 and in multiple leadership roles for his local chapter, South Bay Long Beach. In October 2022, Dr. Thompson was named the CSHP Pharmacist of the Year.

“I know there are so many deserving pharmacists who have done so much for our profession,” said Dr. Thompson. “It humbles me to receive this recognition.”

Dr. Thompson is currently the director of pharmacy at Torrance Memorial Medical Center. He and his team have implemented innovative programs to enhance the center’s clinical pharmacy services.

He encourages his fellow pharmacists to “be involved in whatever your passion is, whether it is being active in CSHP, taking on new responsibilities at work or taking advantage of all the opportunities Pacific has to offer.”

Reflecting on his time at Pacific, he said, “Some memories that stand out are working in a small independent pharmacy in downtown Stockton while going to school and being a member of Phi Delta Chi. Pharmacy is a very small community and the relationships you build will be with you always.”

He enjoys fishing and woodworking.

1970s
1 | Tony Chan ’77, PharmD and Virginia Chang Chan ’77, PharmD received the Medalion of Excellence Award at the Pacific Alumni Association’s 2023 Distinguished Alumni Awards ceremony.

1980s
2 | Gael Loris ’78, ’79, PharmD was named Employee of the Year at Salinas Valley Health. Dr. Loris has served as a pharmacist at Salinas Valley Health for more than four decades. In August 2022, she was promoted to clinical pharmacy coordinator.

3 | Suzanne Morealle ’85, PharmD published “Amara Sets Sail,” her debut children’s picture book. This charming cat adventure story incorporates her love of animals, especially cats, and her travels to 115 countries around the globe. Her other passions are photography and endangered animals. She uses these experiences to share glimpses of the world and its diversity to young readers.

1990s
4 | Maria Serpa ’87, PharmD, FASHP, FCSHP was re-appointed by Gov. Gavin Newsom to the California State Board of Pharmacy, where she has served since 2018.

5 | Dharma Nosido ’95, PharmD, BCOP, APH, assistant clinical professor of pharmacy practice and regional coordinator for Monterey at University of the Pacific, was named Employee of the Year at Community Hospital at the Monterey Peninsula

6 | Stacey Raff ’96, PharmD, BCPS helped lead a preceptor panel discussion for students interested in seeking residency or fellowship programs at the California Society of Health-System Pharmacists (CSHP) Seminar, Nov. 9-13, 2022 in Anaheim.

2000s
7 | Gina Celius ’08, PharmD, BCACP, APH presented “Less is More: Deprescribing Medications in the Elderly to Improve Quality of Life” at the 2022 CSHP Seminar. She also presented “Strategies for Culturally Effective Care: Diverse and Tailored Health Communication and Patient Education” at the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) Midyear Clinical Meeting & Exhibition, Dec. 4-8, 2022 in Las Vegas.

8 | Johanna Liu ’09, PharmD welcomed a daughter, Aveline, on Dec. 3, 2022 in San Jose.

10 | Zhu Zhou ’14, PhD was awarded a four-year National Institutes of Health research grant. Dr. Zhou is an assistant professor of chemistry at York College, City University of New York. Dr. Zhou also received the 2023 Darrell Abernethy Early Stage Investigator Award presented by the American Society for Clinical Pharmacology & Therapeutics.

2010s
9 | Yoshiko Stowell ’14, PhD accepted a position as head of regulatory affairs at Neuron23 in South San Francisco in May 2023.

11 | Chihara Talavera ’15, PharmD, APH, BCPS was promoted to advanced clinical pharmacist at Sutter Santa Rosa Regional Hospital in September 2022.

12 | May C. Lui ’16, ’19, PharmD, MS, BCPS, practicum facilitator for University of the Pacific, is a board member of CSHP – Central Valley.

Be in the next issue
Did you start a new job or earn a promotion? Get married or welcome a new addition to your family? Share the news with your fellow alumni.

SHARE YOUR UPDATE
bit.ly/pacific-pharmacy-class-note

CLASS NOTES
Bill Yee named CSHP - Central Valley Pharmacist of the Year

Dr. Yee continues to stay connected to Pacific by serving as an Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experience preceptor. Through this role he has helped train future pharmacists for almost four decades.

“Pacific has meant so much to me,” he said. “I was the first of my family to go away to college and the first to complete a professional degree.”

Dr. Yee credits the theater for changing the trajectory of his life. Acting in “The King and I” at San Joaquin Delta College gave him a reason to stay in Stockton and he met his wife, Kimberlee, on the set of “Into the Woods.” He recently performed in his 50th local production.

For 32 years, Dr. Yee served in various roles at St. Joseph’s Medical Center in Stockton, including director of pharmacy from 2012 to 2016. He is currently a lead ambulatory care pharmacist in the oncology department at the Kaiser Permanente Stockton medical offices.

Dr. Yee said, “I was the first of my family to go away to college and the first to complete a professional degree.”

2020s

17 | Taola Ataya ’20, PharmD, MBA
serves on the CSHP Healthcare Reform committee and is the alternate delegate for CSHP to the ASHP House of Delegates. Dr. Ataya completed a combined PGY1 and PGY2 health system pharmacy administration and leadership residency program at University of California, Davis Health, where she was the resident manager of the Investigational Drug Services and now is the infusion pharmacy manager for the cancer center at UC Davis Health in Sacramento.

18 | Cynthia Lee ’19, PharmD, MS, BCPS, is president of CSHP - Central Valley.

19 | Kristina Hoh ’19, PharmD, BCPS accepted a position as a clinical pharmacist at City of Hope in Duarte in October 2021.

20 | Bella Ukeni ’20, PharmD accepted a position as a clinical pharmacist at Sutter Health in June 2023.

21 | Ting Wang ’20, PharmD, BCPS completed a PGY1 residency program at University of California, Davis Health, where she was the resident manager of the Investigational Drug Services and now is the infusion pharmacy manager for the cancer center at UC Davis Health in Sacramento.

22 | Jennifer Ko ’19, PharmD, BCPS accepted a position as a medical science liaison, oncology solid tumors at the Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies of Johnson & Johnson in June 2023. Prior to this role, she completed her PGY1 residency at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center and worked as a clinical oncology pharmacist at City of Hope. At City of Hope, she held multiple leadership positions and oversaw seven infusion clinics.

23 | Tiffany Chan ’20, PharmD accepted a position as a clinical pharmacist at Kaiser Permanente in Roseville in July 2022 after completing a PGY1 pharmacy residency.

24 | Lucas Harjono ’21, PharmD accepted a position as a clinical pharmacist at Sutter Health in June 2023.

25 | Natalyne Ho ’22, PharmD accepted a position as a clinical pharmacist in charge at TinRx in Turlock in March 2023.

26 | Allison Mai ’22, PharmD accepted a position as an inpatient clinical pharmacist at Scripps Mercy Hospital - San Diego and matched with a PGY2 oncology residency at Loma Linda University.

27 | Sehyun “Harry” Jeong ’21, PharmD accepted a position as an inpatient clinical pharmacist at Scripps Mercy Hospital – San Diego and matched with a PGY2 oncology residency at Loma Linda University.

28 | Jinyun Chen ’20, PharmD accepted a position as a medical science liaison, oncology solid tumors at the Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies of Johnson & Johnson in June 2023. Prior to this role, she completed her PGY1 residency at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center and worked as a clinical oncology pharmacist at City of Hope. At City of Hope, she held multiple leadership positions and oversaw seven infusion clinics.

29 | Eric Shih ’20, PharmD accepted a position as a clinical pharmacist at Prime Therapeutics in December 2022.

30 | Joshua Kyle Dayrit ’21, PharmD accepted a position as a pharmacist at CentralRx Pharmacy in Brentwood in January 2023.

31 | Jinyun Chen ’21, PharmD, BCPS accepted a position as a clinical pharmacist at Kaiser Permanente in Roseville in July 2022 after completing a PGY1 pharmacy residency.

32 | Rohan Bhullar ’21, PharmD accepted a position as a pharmacist at Rite Aid in Redwood City in November 2022.

33 | Bella Ukeni ’21, PharmD accepted a position as a clinical pharmacist specialist in August 2022 at VA Palo Alto Healthcare System.

34 | Noveleen Thiara ’21, PharmD accepted a position as a pharmacist in charge at TenK in Turlock in March 2023.
Christopher Allen Woo '88, PharmD, FCPHA can add another recognition to his list of commendations — induction into the California Pharmacy Hall of Fame.

"I am honored, humbled and still in a state of shock," said Dr. Woo. "I am included within the ranks of leaders who I personally met and knew of when I was a UOP student is incredible."

His many accolades include Pharmacy Foundation of California president in 2006, California Pharmacists Association (CPHA) Pharmacist of the Year in 2005, CPHA president in 1999 and CPHA Distinguished New Practitioner of the Year in 1992.

"Being active and involved in the profession made me a better pharmacist, created a larger network of pharmacist colleagues and peers, and was just plain fun," he said.

Since 2013, Dr. Woo has been an inspector for the California State Board of Pharmacy. Prior to this, he spent 25 years in various hospital and community practice sites. Dr. Woo is passionate about empowering others to reach their potential, which is why all of the roles he has had within the pharmacy profession, he has found serving as preceptor to be the most fulfilling.

He loves spending time with wife, Denise, son, Johnathan, daughter, Ashley, and granddaughter, Rose. He is also an enthusiastic San Diego Comic-Con attendee.

Christopher Woo to be inducted into Hall of Fame

Stay connected
Don’t miss invitations to upcoming alumni networking mixers.

UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFO

bit.ly/pacific-pharmacy-contact

Remembering Professor Emeritus Donald Shirachi

Donald Y. Shirachi '60, PhD
AUG. 8, 1932 – APRIL 21, 2023

The life of Professor Emeritus Donald Y. Shirachi '60, PhD can be characterized by a relentless pursuit of knowledge and a steadfast support of students.

Born in Watsonville in 1932, at age 10, he and his family, along with other Japanese American families, were detained in internment camps during World War II. After the war, his family returned to Watsonville, where he finished high school. After graduating, he served in the U.S. Navy.

Dr. Shirachi earned his bachelor of science in pharmacy from University of the Pacific in 1960, his master of science in pharmacology from University of California, San Francisco in 1965 and his doctor of philosophy in pharmacology from Purdue University in 1968. After completing a U.S. Public Health postdoctoral research fellowship at UC San Francisco, he joined the Pacific faculty in 1971.

He taught at Pacific until 1993. In recognition of his years teaching and mentoring students, Dr. Shirachi was awarded the Order of Pacific, the University's highest honor. He is particularly remembered among alumni for teaching the physiology and pharmacology of endocrine function.

Students who interacted with him over the years, in the classroom or at any annual scholarship ceremony, remember him as an attentive listener and keen researcher. Dr. Shirachi's research was funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for almost a decade to investigate the carcinogenic potential of arsenic in drinking water. He also extensively researched the neuropharmacology of hyperbaric medicine, the use of air pressure to raise the level of oxygen in a patient's body for therapeutic purposes.

His legacy will continue through the endowed scholarships established in his honor by Frank and Joyce Roscoe.

In memoriam

Donald Y. Shirachi '60, PhD
Gilbert G. Toso '60, BSPharm*
Samuel L. Bergen '61, BSPharm
John P. Latour '61, BSPharm
Ervin L. Radanovich '61, BSPharm
Alan B. Combs '62, BS, MS, PhD
Haymon Gong '62, MD*
Karen E. Fisher '62, BSPharm
Arthur J. Mowry '64, BSPharm
Marie R. Zarett '64, BSPharm
George R. Davis '65, BSPharm*
Frank Gong '65, BSPharm
Geraldine Rowan '65, BSPharm*
Perry K. Tip '65, BSPharm
Loyal D. Hutchinson '66, BSPharm*
Elin S. Johnson '66, BSPharm
Thomas W. McKey '66, BSPharm*
Robert King Austfeld '68, BSPharm
Carl G. Britto '68, BSPharm
Robert R. Carrico '68, BSPharm*
James J. Tsunekawa '69, BSPharm*
William Honda '70, BSPharm*
Jerry W. Wallace '70, BSPharm*
Gary G. Duda '71, BSPharm
Andrew L. Mizzaro '72, BSPharm
Gary P. Forsell '73, PharmD
Albert P. Mastelli '73, PharmD
William G. Sigillo '73, BSPharm
Timothy P. Chapman '74, PharmD
Michael W. DeHart '74, BSPharm
Wayne Y. Ouchida '77, PharmD
Joseph C. Woo, III '77, BSPharm*
John H. Abeel '78, BSPharm
Jeffrey S. Bohman '78, PharmD, PhD
Thomas G. Szczotka '79, PharmD*
Valorie Y. Avants '80, BSPharm
Kim Diana Le '84, PharmD
Albert L. Rizos '84, PharmD*
Mae Lee '85, BSPharm*
Fiti Thai-Phuong Truong '95, PharmD*

*Prior to current reporting year
The Jie Du Center for Innovation and Excellence for Drug Development promotes innovation in drug development through education, training and mentorship. Gain skills in pharmaceutical regulation, entrepreneurship and business.

Programs offered at the Center are open on a non-credit basis to alumni and scientists currently working in the industry.

REGISTER TODAY
pacific.edu/pharmacy/jie-du-center