

## TEXAS PHARMACY CONGRESS REPORT

TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER  
JERRY H. HODGE SCHOOL OF PHARMACY

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### GRADUATES HONORED DURING 2020 VIRTUAL COMMENCEMENT

The TTUHSC Jerry H. Hodge School of Pharmacy celebrated the Class of 2020 on June 27 during a virtual commencement ceremony. The ceremony, broadcast via Facebook Live and Zoom, allowed a special opportunity for faculty, staff and students to express sincere congratulations in a live chat-- a real bright spot for all of the participants.

Sidney Phillips, Pharm. D., delivered the commencement address.

Phuong T. Huyen earned the Class of 2020 Banner Bearer award as the graduate with the highest four-year grade point average. As the Banner Bearer recipient, Huyen recited the Oath of the Pharmacist at the conclusion of the ceremony.

Justin Langreck received the Bowl of Hygieia, the internationally recognized symbol for the pharmacy profession that signifies pure and potent medicines. The School of Pharmacy's award is presented annually to the graduating class member who is deemed to best exemplify the qualities most desirable in a pharmacist: leadership, high ethical standards, dedication and promotion of the pharmacy profession.

Honors for high achieving students in the Class of 2020 were honored during a separate virtual ceremony earlier in the week. The Wolters Kluwer Excellence in Clinical Communications award went to Matthew Bigelow. The Excellence in Community Practice Award went to Katy Jacobs. The Mylan Award went to Tarak Patel. The Geriatrics Award went to William Beathard. The Pediatrics Award went to Mackenzie Smithee. The Superior Patient Care Award went to Jason Chau. The Community Outreach Award of Excellence went to Kelsie Basso. The Hannah L Thompson Perseverance Award went to Xuan ngoc Mimi Dao-Catano.

The Class of 2020 selected Dr. Craig Cox as its Harold Miller – Most Influential Professor in recognition of his superior leadership, dedicated service and teaching excellence. Cox is an associate professor of pharmacy practice and Vice Chair for Experiential Programs.



# TTUHSC SCHOOL OF PHARMACY UPDATES

The accreditation status of the Jerry H. Hodge School of Pharmacy was reaffirmed to full term (June 2028) by the Accreditation Council of Pharmacy Education at their July 2020 board meeting. ACPE Board of Directors found the Doctor of Pharmacy program to be in compliance with all accreditation standards. Dean Quentin Smith thanked all stakeholders of the School for their extensive self-study of the School's programs. Dean Smith also mentioned the immense technological success during the Board's visit-- a testament to the commitment to innovative learning happening on campus.

"Every day our great university exemplifies our values through integrity, collaboration and excellence, which has culminated in a successful reaffirmation process with no formal recommendations for improvement," TTUHSC President Lori Rice-Spearman said.

Renovations to the Dallas Southwest Building are well underway as the growth of TTUHSC's presence in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex continues. The multi-million dollar renovations include improvements to the roof, and exterior walls of the facility and to new facilities within the building, including four classrooms, simulation center, student center, sterile products lab, and other facilities. The space will be shared by the Schools of Pharmacy, Nursing, and Health Professions.

The Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences is considering expansion of its programs to the Dallas area, but this would not occur until 2022. Dean Smith said "this is a tremendous step forward for the School of Pharmacy and completes a process that was under planning for 10 or more years".

The Jerry H. Hodge School of Pharmacy has promoted two faculty members. Russell Snyder, Ph.D., is now an associate professor of pharmaceutical sciences in Amarillo. Kaylin Clifford, Pharm.D., is an associate professor of pharmacy practice in Dallas.

Dipongkor Saha, D.V.M., Ph.D., a cancer immunologist and assistant professor of immunotherapeutics and biotechnology at the Abilene campus, has received a \$550,491 grant from the U.S. Department of Defense designated for expanding and improving treatments for oncolytic virus immunotherapies against tumor-associated antigens (TAAs) and/or vasculature in glioblastoma (GBM).



## LAWMAKERS RECOGNIZE THE WORK OF SCHOOL OF PHARMACY VTM TEAM

Since March, a team from the TTUHSC Jerry H. Hodge School of Pharmacy has produced 250,000 vials of Viral Transport Medium (VTM). Thousands of vials have been shipped out to support COVID-19 testing across Texas. Since that time, Gov. Greg Abbott has praised the work in Amarillo-- calling it critical to the fight against COVID-19 in Texas. In August, U.S. Senator John Cornyn toured the VTM production lab and offered additional accolades for the work being done on the Amarillo Campus.

The TTUHSC team has been a resource for health care communities across the state for education about on-site production of VTM. The group produced a webinar on the production process that was shared with other universities and labs around the state who may also be able to help. Providing protocol and resources to other health care communities will help to provide a sustainable supply of VTM to support Gov. Abbott's testing goals. While providing a critical supply to the state, this production exercise has also allowed for impact on teaching and learning at the University.

The production began when TTUHSC Associate Professor of Pediatrics Todd Bell, M.D., partnered with Professor and Chair of Pharmacy Practice Eric MacLaughlin, Pharm.D., Mikala Conatser, Pharm.D., assistant professor, and Ulrich Bickel, M.D., professor and associate dean of Sciences in the TTUHSC School of Pharmacy to find a solution to a local shortage of VTM. Once word got out that the team had successfully produced the VTM, communities began to reach out asking for help replenishing supplies.

Along with MacLaughlin, Bickel, Conatser and Bell, other team members include Constantinos Mikelis, Ph.D, assistant professor, Behnam Noorani, graduate student, Siavash Shahbazi, graduate student, Ekram Chowdhury, graduate student, Desmon Dunn, unit manager, Heather Houser, pharmacy technician, Maegan Whitworth, Pharm.D., assistant professor, and Jill Frost, Pharm.D., assistant professor.

Amarillo, Brownfield, Lubbock, Snyder, Levelland, Denton, Eden, Brady, Littlefield, Tahoka, Lamesa, Odessa, Muleshoe, Pampa, Hemphill, Big Spring, Seminole, Friona, Shamrock, San Angelo, Slaton, Colorado City, Abilene, Dumas, Hereford and San Antonio have all benefited from the production in Amarillo. One shipment went to Georgia as an exchange for swabs, which at that time, were in shortage in Amarillo.



## CPRIT ANNOUNCES MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR GRANT FOR TTUHSC'S SCHOOL OF PHARMACY FACULTY

Cancer Prevention & Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT) announced that Ulrich Bickel, M.D., professor and associate dean of sciences for the TTUHSC- Jerry H. Hodge School of Pharmacy, has been approved for a \$2.8M grant for cutting-edge imaging equipment.

He said the funds will bring three new imaging instruments to TTUHSC's Amarillo campus, creating a state-of-the-art imaging facility that is an indispensable component of any competitive biomedical research institution.

"This is one of the larger grant mechanisms that CPRIT offers," Bickel said. "There were only four core support awards funded."

The first component the grant will fund is a microscope system that allows optical imaging of living cells at a resolution previously achievable only by electron microscopy. The inventors of the microscope received a Nobel Prize in 2014. The second instrument is an automated imager, which enables long-term observation of living cells under conditions causing minimal levels of phototoxicity. The third instrument is capable of whole-animal live imaging that uses fluorescent dyes emitting in the near infrared range. This instrument achieves very high resolution and a depth of imaging sufficient to visualize the entire body and internal organs of a mouse in completely non-invasive fashion.

"Collectively, these instruments will greatly enhance the quality of images obtainable in ongoing and future cancer research projects," Bickel said.

During the last 20 years, different cancers have been the focus of research activities at TTUHSC. At any given time, faculty members are working under grants from agencies like CPRIT, the National Cancer Institute at the National Institutes of Health and the Department of Defense programs in cancer research. The School of Pharmacy has a particularly strong research mission, with about 15 full-time faculty investigators conducting bench research. The equipment is anticipated to arrive in Amarillo in the fall. The Imaging Core Facility will serve current TTUHSC faculty and also will be open to researchers at the new Texas Tech University School of Veterinary Medicine.



# STUDENT UPDATES



Students in the TTUHSC-Jerry H. Hodge School Pharmacy attended the annual student leadership retreat. Each year, a select group of student leaders gather together to enhance leadership skills. This year's theme is "Changes – Adjusting and Adapting – Discomfort." Nearly 90 students representing all campuses, along with faculty and staff, worked on a year-long deliverable focusing on self-awareness.



Campuses hosted week-long bootcamps in Abilene, Amarillo and Dallas to welcome the TTUHSC Class of 2024 and prepare them for success as pharmacy students.

## 2020 CELEBRATION OF ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

**O**utstanding Clinician: Athena Brindle Cannon, Matthew Bigelow, Tarak Patel, Selina Anzaldua

Outstanding Patient Advocate: Lucas Cannon, Thao Nguyen, Gray Chatrath, Bibiana Enriquez, Haley Tierce

Outstanding Service: Quang D. Ta, Kori Adair, George Lee, Selina Anzaldua

Student Role Model: Elise Lawrence, Nikunj Govind, Mahboubah Ahmadi, William Beathard

P1 Go Getter: Terence Woods, Ryan Hardaway, Kate Ball

Excellence in Staff Services: Randall Best, Michal Hodge

Staff Mentor: Randi King, Cat Cox, Amanda Hines

Teachers/Teaching Teams of the Year

P1: Dr. Anna Karamyan  
Pharmacy Foundations & Compounding – Dr. Siva Koganti, Dr. Fakhru Ahsan, Dr. Sami Nazzal, Dr. Anna Karamyan, Dr. Rahul Jayant

P2: Prof. Debra Notturmo-Strong  
Basic and Applied Pharmacokinetics – Dr. Abraham Al-Ahmad, Dr. Maegan Whitworth, Dr. Fakhru Ahsan, Dr. Mark Haase, Dr. Siva Koganti, Dr. Sami Nazzal

P3: Dr. Sal Tejani  
Neurosensory/Psychiatric Pharmacotherapy: Dr. Monica Mathys, Dr. Anna Karamyan, Dr. Amie Blaszczyk, Dr. James Stoll

Preceptors of the Year  
Faculty: Dr. Chris Tawwater, Dr. Thomas Parker, Dr. Chelsea Krueger, Dr. Janie Robles  
Adjunct: Greg Young, Dr. Amber Elliot, Dr. Julie Edwards, Dr. Larry Pineda



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