



Fall 2023

# OU Pharmacy



## The Best Professional Decision of My Life

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Recognizing  
Alumni Award  
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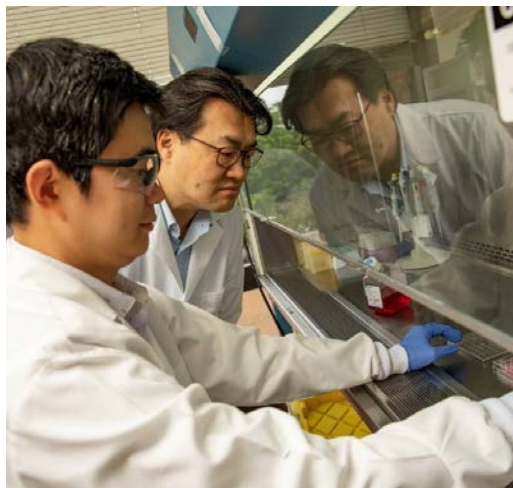


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Hats Off to Dean Draugalis!

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Dedicated to Exosomal Research



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The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER

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# The Best Professional Decision of My Life

My office is filled with a professional lifetime of books, papers, electronic files, periodicals, plaques and mementos – does anyone need an antique metal suppository mold, Darvocet N 100 bookends, or Abbott counting tray to get their collection started? And don't get me going on all the mortars & pestles we've been given over the years. Seriously, I have re-read a number of cards, congrats, thank yous, you go-girls, make your mark, lead the way and I can become verklempt many times throughout day.

You can't know where your pharmacy career will take you. As a young girl, my parents patronized "The Drug Shop." I never thought that I would become a clinical coordinator/assistant manager of the pharmacy in a 250-bed teaching hospital in Lansing, Michigan. five years after graduation. Neither did I imagine that two years later we would move to Tucson, Arizona. for me to pursue my graduate degrees. This meant we both left excellent managerial pharmacy positions and a home we loved so I could be a teaching assistant. My husband had to look for part-time pharmacy work at first. He ultimately landed his dream position in corporate chain pharmacy and I spent 20 years as a professor and administrator at the University of Arizona.

For as long as I can remember, I have written favorite quotes in a journal, saved cartoons in a drawer, and clipped editorials that inspire. Over the years, loose photos from meetings and gatherings and notes, cards, and letters have been added to the collection. Nowadays, much of this can be stored electronically so I really have quite a few gratitude boxes. The themes that emerge as I reviewed these collections are about hard work, dedication, responsibility, collaboration, having fun, sacrifice and ultimately – gratitude. Learn to be grateful and tell others; you may lift them up more than you know and for a much longer time than you know. And ultimately, you may be the source of inspiration when someone returns to their gratitude box/drawer/file for solace.

On March 1 of this year, I announced my retirement date of Sept. 1. I have served as your dean since June 17, 2007. Sixteen years ago, I decided to become dean at the University of Oklahoma College of Pharmacy. My pharmacy journey has taken me across three states, three academic institutions, and the final stop has been the best professional decision of my life. I thank all who have made my final professional chapter so invigorating and exciting. Your creativity, quest for improvement, and desire for excellence have kept me motivated. I wish each of you the best in continuing the work we've already been doing to carry on the college mission to educate and empower individuals to become highly qualified pharmacy practitioners, scientists, and educators.

Cheers,

*JoLaine R. Draugalis*

JoLaine Draugalis, R.Ph., Ph.D., F.A.Ph.A., F.A.S.H.P.  
Dean and David Ross Boyd Professor  
Edith Kinney Gaylord Presidential Professor  
Regents' Professor  
Phil C. and Fern Ashby Endowed Dean's Chair



## About the Cover

OU College of Pharmacy has maintained a tradition to commission an oil painting of each dean. These paintings are displayed in the dean's conference room, located on the third floor of the pharmacy building. The painting of Dean Draugalis was recently completed and will also reside with the other paintings.

# The Highest Calling of Leadership

***The final test...is that she leaves behind her...the conviction and will to carry on.***

There are many aspects of leadership, ranging from its simple meaning to its importance in an organization. It's agreed that it involves having a leader with the ability to motivate others to move together with a passion toward a common goal. According to Harvey Firestone, founder of Firestone Tires, "The growth and development of people is the highest calling of leadership."

Dean JoLaine Draugalis has expended energy in the past 16 years to direct the college in a specific pathway to make it more cohesive and coherent. As the college reviews the impact of her time as dean, according to Walter Lippman, a journalist, media critic and philosopher, perhaps "the final test of a leader is that she leaves behind her in other persons, the conviction and the will to carry on."

OU College of Pharmacy is composed of two major academic departments, Department of Pharmacy: Clinical and Administrative Sciences chaired by R. Chris Rathbun, Pharm.D., and Pharmaceutical Sciences led by Kelly Standifer, Ph.D. According to Rathbun,

"Dean Draugalis has always ensured that our academic programs were sound and in full compliance with accreditation standards. I deeply appreciated that she was always forward-thinking in positioning our programs for continued success."

His department is composed of faculty members in pharmacy practice and the social, administrative and behavioral sciences. Clinical faculty represent diverse discipline areas including ambulatory care, transitions of care, oncology, cardiology, geriatrics, infectious diseases, internal medicine, and pediatrics. They provide patient care services on the OU campus in Oklahoma City and throughout the greater metro area via professional service contracts with external partners. Faculty in the administrative sciences conduct research in health economics, health disparities, health outcomes, pharmacy management, and social and behavioral sciences.

Faculty members in this department are recognized nationally and internationally for their clinical and

scientific expertise and serve in key leadership roles within the university and in professional organizations.

As chair, Rathbun's area of leadership is to guide and manage the department. He said, "It was important to me that the dean always listened to the perspectives provided by faculty and sought to achieve the best balance when it came to difficult decisions."

Standifer has served as department chair for the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences for over 10 years. This department is responsible for providing the basic pharmaceutical sciences curriculum for the professional degree program. It also provides curriculum for three different tracks within the Pharmaceutical Sciences Graduate Program. Department faculty conduct research and are responsible for the majority of the grant funding received by the college.

"The dean has been particularly supportive of research and research initiatives, both internally and to the wider university and national audience," said Standifer. "Her support of the Radio-Imaging Facility and the radiosynthesis lab has enabled the college to provide a unique service to the university community and Stephenson Cancer Center investigators and patients."

Standifer said that the dean has

been supportive of her in two specific areas that strongly impacted both research and service efforts. "My appointment as the Richard T. Anderson Endowed Chair provided funds that enabled my lab to characterize and validate two traumatic brain injury models and generate data that resulted in the award of three new research grants. These awards from the Department of Defense allow us to study the ability of two novel drug classes to treat and/or reduce the severity of traumatic brain injury-induced neurological and behavioral changes and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Without those funds, we'd never have been able to do the work that allowed us to be selected to conduct these studies," she said.

"I find the dean's history of service both extraordinary and inspiring," said Standifer. "She was very supportive of two important service roles I assumed. The first was as chair of the Neuropharmacology Division of the American Society of Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics, a national organization whose mission is to "transform discoveries into therapies." The second has been as Chair of the Executive Committee of Women in Science, Dentistry, Medicine, and Health, a university community that supports women faculty progression to full professor, so that their progress is equivalent to that of male faculty. This purpose

aligned with some of the dean's own research that women faculty progression up the academic ladder and into leadership positions tends to lag behind that of men. Though extra work was required for both committees, the dean encouraged me to continue my efforts."

Melissa Medina, Ed.D., associate dean for assessment and evaluation, teacher preparation and the co-curriculum, has worked closely with the dean on a variety of activities, since they share many similar professional interests. For example, they are both very involved in AACPE, where they have both received the AACPE Chalmers Distinguished Pharmacy Educator Award. They also share a common interest in conducting educational research and the scholarship of teaching and learning.

"I am very grateful that over the past 16 years we have collaborated on several educational research projects that have resulted in articles that have had an impact on the pharmacy academy," said Medina. "One recent research project was related to gender equity in academic pharmacy, medicine, dentistry and in graduate programs. This has provided insight into promotion, tenure, leadership, awards, and compensation for women and impact on career advancement."

They have also worked together on other projects such as updating the national profile of curriculum committees in pharmacy education; removing barriers to peer review; exploring research metrics; and writing teaching philosophies. “Her mentorship has helped me appreciate the importance of survey methods and the benefits of systematically evaluating curriculum, teaching, and assessment to make evidence-based decisions in these areas,” Medina said. “I am so grateful for the opportunity to work with her and recognize that her mentoring has impacted me, as well as all the individuals that read and use our publications; the ripple effect is overwhelming and humbling.”

During his time at the college, Michael Smith, Ph.D., has served in multiple leadership roles, such as assistant dean for Tulsa operations, associate dean for academic affairs, and currently as associate dean for the Office of Academic and Student Affairs. “The dean has made a significant impact on me as I have served in these roles because of her expertise in pharmacy education and research,” said Smith. “I have acquired a tremendous amount of knowledge on pedagogy and course design from Dean Draugalis, and I continuously apply it to the academic programming of the college. She has made a lasting impact on my life since I joined her administrative team.”

Smith said that he and Draugalis share a strength for learning at a detailed level. He points out that she also has the strengths of listening and deliberating when solving problems. “I’ve learned a great deal on how to methodically approach a complex situation by gathering as much information as possible and to carefully consider both expected and unintended outcomes that may result from decision-making,” he said.

“There is no doubt that Dean Draugalis has raised the prestige of the college among pharmacy schools nationwide. This has been achieved through her leadership to increase the research output of the college and to also raise the rigor of our academic programming,” said Smith.



**R. Chris Rathbun, Pharm.D.**



**Michael J. Smith, Ph.D.**



**Kelly Standifer, Ph.D. and her lab personnel: Panini Potankar, M.D.; Yong Zhang, Ph.D.; and Omar Al-Yacoub, Ph.D.**



**Melissa Medina, Ed.D. and Dean Draugalis holding Steuben owls as recipients of the AACP Chalmers Distinguished Pharmacy Educator Award.**

## Eric Johnson Earns Coveted Award



*OSCPA Board of Directors Chair-Elect Ross McKinney, CPA, and OSCPA Chair Vicky Petete, CPA, CGMA, presents the Accounting Hall of Fame Award to Eric J. Johnson, CPA (middle).*

On Aug. 24, the Oklahoma Society of CPA recognized its 2023 Accounting Hall of Fame inductee, Eric J. Johnson, CPA, at its annual award ceremony. His selection was spearheaded by a secret nominating committee of prior recipients of this award. The selection criteria are what the individual has contributed to the society and the accounting profession in the state of Oklahoma. His service included a year as chairman of the OSCPA.

Suggested criteria for selecting nominees could include:

- State society roles and activities such as past chair, committee service, publications, and public relations.
- With American Institute of Certified Public Accountants roles and activities such as council membership, committee service and publications. Also, there should be professional attainments such as publication of professional articles in accounting journal textbooks, inter-office journals or tax services.

Johnson said, "After receiving the coveted CPA designation, it was just natural to be involved in the CPA society at different levels, as they were such a welcoming group of individuals. I appreciated the opportunity to be mentored and then later to mentor others. While it's not something I expected, I was honored with the induction as the latest member of the Oklahoma Society of CPA's Hall of Fame."

Johnson serves as the senior associate dean for OU College of Pharmacy.

## A Look at JoLaine Reiersen Draugalis, Ph.D., FAPhA, FASHP

For the past 16 years, JoLaine R. Draugalis served as dean at the University of Oklahoma College of Pharmacy. Additionally, she has held the positions as the Phil C. and Ferne Ashby Endowed Dean's Chair, Edith Kinney Gaylord Presidential Professor, David Ross Boyd Professor and Regents' Professor. Prior to arriving in Oklahoma in 2007, Draugalis served as professor of pharmacy practice and pharmaceutical sciences and also as associate dean for Assessment/Evaluation/Curriculum in the College of Pharmacy at the University of Arizona, where she received over \$1 million in extramural funding.

She earned an undergraduate degree in pharmacy with distinction from Ferris State University in her native state of Michigan. After practicing within hospital pharmacy for six years, Draugalis entered graduate school and completed a M.Ed. in educational psychology and a Ph.D. in pharmacy (administrative and behavioral sciences) at the University of Arizona. Her research interests are in pharmaceutical education program design and administration, pharmacoeconomics and outcomes research, the scholarship of teaching, and learning and survey research methodology.

Draugalis has over 130 peer-reviewed publications, book chapters or monographs; and over 200 contributed and/or invited presentations. She is a past president of the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy, becoming the first woman to receive the AACP Distinguished Pharmacy Educator Award and, in 2019, received the AACP Lifetime Achievement Award. She has been honored with numerous research and service awards. She was a member of the 2020 cohort named to the Oklahoma Higher Education Hall of Fame.

Since leading the OU College of Pharmacy, annual publications, extramural funding, national /international presentations and student national recognition have substantially increased, as has annual giving.





## Appreciating Leadership Skills as Board Members

OU College of Pharmacy National Advisory Board-May 2023. First row: Nhat Nguyen, Josephine Li-McLeod, JoLaine Draugalis, Becky Johnson. Second row: Joe Harmison, Thomas Kupiec, Doug Hoey and Scott Lason. Not pictured: Brian Nightengale, Kasey Thompson, G.T. Dolan.

One of the many responsibilities assumed by Dean JoLaine Draugalis was to actively involve members of the college's National Advisory Board. These members represent a broad spectrum of accomplished and successful leaders in several significant markets that highlight strong ties with pharmaceutical education. At the spring board meeting, Draugalis announced her retirement plans. Here are some comments from board members about the impact made by the dean in regard to her leadership of the National Advisory Board.

**Josephine Li-McLeod, R.Ph., Ph.D.**

*Chief Strategy Officer, Stratevi*

Josephine Li-McLeod, R.Ph., Ph.D., has served as chair for the board for more than 15 years. She remarked that this role has provided her with a meaningful way to give back to OU College of Pharmacy. "The college has provided me with the foundation and resources needed for me to build a successful and rewarding career," she said. "It's been fun and energizing to interact with the pharmacy students. I know that many of them will make a difference in improving the health of Oklahomans or they'll make an impact in other ways, such as through research or pharmacy leadership."

She added that Draugalis has changed the trajectory of the college with her laser focus on improving the quality of the graduating pharmacy student. "She has been able to take a good idea such as the one by the board to improve the skills of graduating pharmacy students, and turn it into an actionable initiative that is now an optional leadership track that is offered to all students," she said. McLeod appreciated the time the dean has spent at the college. "She has worked hard to bring the college to the national stage, and it is evidenced throughout the year with the school's presence at national pharmacy and health research conferences. She will be missed."

**B. Douglas Hoey, Pharm.D., MBA**  
*CEO, National Community Pharmacists Association*

"The profession of pharmacy is a huge part of my life and OU College of Pharmacy helped prepare me for my career," said Hoey. "Being on the college's National Advisory Board for over 10 years gives me a way to contribute just a little bit back to the college and hopefully, have a small influence over the next generation of graduates."

He commented that Draugalis has given faculty and students opportunities to present their work to the board and, in return, they received hopefully some valuable feedback. Hoey said that this format has also exposed the board members to new information or ideas that shape their own thinking. "I especially appreciated hearing from OUHSC leadership at various times," said Hoey. "Likewise, in my opinion, it was also important for OUHSC leadership to see and hear from pharmacists on the National Advisory Board."

"Dean Draugalis didn't hesitate to give us the non-candy-coated version of her perspective on certain topics she considered important to the college," said Hoey. "It was refreshing to hear the true thoughts of the leader of the college versus some altered version of reality!"

**Brian Nightengale, B.S., Ph.D.**  
*President, Community Retail and Long-Term Care Pharmacy –*

*Amerisource Bergen Corporation; Immediate Past Chair, National Association of Chain Drug Stores*

"I don't actually recall how long I've been a member of the National Advisory Board," said Nightengale. "I think I started in either 2005 or 2006. Either way, I've thoroughly enjoyed reconnecting with the college, providing any support and insight I can, and engaging with other board members. The college has given me so very much, and it's my small way to give back," he said.

Nightengale didn't hesitate to share his view on Draugalis's impact. "As an alum who has lived and worked outside of Oklahoma now for over 27 years, I can state with certainty that the national stature and respect of OU College of Pharmacy and its graduates has risen substantially under the dean's leadership," said Nightengale. He mentioned the impact of supporting future pharmacy leaders through the support of both the board and the dean through the curriculum track has been a differentiator for the college.

Nightengale said that the impact that Dean Draugalis has had on the college is immeasurable. "I cannot thank her enough for her commitment and service to OU and our profession."

**Scott Lason, B.Sc., R.Ph.**  
*Senior Manager, Talent Acquisition, CVS Caremark*

"Simply put," said Lason, "I have been a member for over 14 years because Dean Draugalis has made the National Advisory Board an effective group that has a voice and has been heard. The dean has implemented many ideas and has always looked to the board for guidance."

"Dean Draugalis is a service leader who respects the opinions and ideas of her board, faculty, and staff. Her ability to make meetings a two-way dialogue has allowed us to share our ideas and implement changes, where appropriate. She utilizes the board to see what's happening, identify what could happen and then implement new ideas and changes to make a great school even better," he said.

Lason points out that he has been amazed at the many awards that the dean and school have received through her tenure. He agreed that the leadership cohort remains one of the best efforts jointly sponsored by both the board and college. This cohort was designed to grow leadership capabilities in pharmacy students. Lason added, "As a board, we were able to not only learn and improve the current leadership cohort, but actually add to the program with the summer leadership institute."

"I have great respect for my alma mater," said Lason.

# Open-Door Policy Influences Students

Having an open-door policy in any institution should positively increase communication between an employee and their supervisor. For a college, having such a policy between a student and a faculty member is vital to maintain good morale and discussion. Such a policy is long remembered even after a student graduates.



*The George family: Liz, Emory, Gavin, David*

David George, Pharm.D., Ph.D., said that Dean JoLaine Draugalis had such an open-door policy that any student or staff could access. He said, "During one of my impromptu meetings with her, she shared a research method to improve one of my surveys. It is a method that was well-grounded and now foundational in every survey that I've created since that day. I will never forget how she explained the use of this method and how she made me feel more confident in the research I was producing.

I think Dean Draugalis produced positive results in research, clinical and funding growth. This

was accomplished while maintaining quality of staff, researchers, instructors, resources and students at the College of Pharmacy," said George. "I appreciated her support of the graduate program that allowed funding for multiple students pursuing additional education after pharmacy school. Without her support, many of my colleagues and I would not have obtained our Ph.D.s, of which vary in focus and contributions to the profession of pharmacy."

Today, George is the director of finance and strategies for TotalDose Pharmacies in Oklahoma. The company now has six locations across the states. "My life as a student at OU College of Pharmacy provided me with opportunities to meet and network with mentors and other future pharmacists. I was able to meet a mentor who owns multiple pharmacies and was a priceless asset in guiding me when I opened my first location. I also met most of my partners during my time at OU," he said.

"It was our P4 year of pharmacy school at OU College of Pharmacy. JJ and I had our rotation schedules perfectly mapped out," said Leigh Peek, Pharm.D., BCPPS. "We were residency bound and looking forward to our spring

clinical rotations.

"Then, suddenly we each were notified of last-minute changes in rotation site availability, which left us without a clear alternative," said Peek. "We decided to take a chance and approach Dean Draugalis about possibly taking us as rotation students for the month...both of us. It would be the first leadership rotation of its kind at the college. We would need some sort of official plan, including topic discussions, measurable objectives and a significant amount of time in the dean's already very busy schedule. Oh, and this brand-new rotation would start in less than a month. What could possibly go wrong?"

Peek doesn't recall whether they waited outside the dean's office until she finally agreed or whether she graciously accommodated them right away. She does remember that the dean rearranged her schedule that month to provide that rotation. Peek said, "both Dean Draugalis and Dr. Melissa Medina engaged JJ and I with meaningful topic discussions, profound leadership insights, and professional mentorship. We even got to accompany the dean to the American Pharmacists Association annual meeting in San Antonio, where she gave a

presentation highlighting professional opportunities and challenges she had faced throughout her career.”

She added, “The same award-winning educator and research who presented on that stage was the same humble, personable mentor who invested in these two eager pharmacy students. JJ and I will always be grateful for the dean’s commitment to academic service, dedication to professional integrity and passion for investing in future pharmacists. She inspired us as we set out on our careers.”



**The Peek family: Charlotte, JJ, Lillian, Leigh, Adeline**

For Leigh, she spent her years at the college investing in community and global service projects, from organizing the inaugural Oklahoma City Homeless Health Fair to coordinating annual multidisciplinary medical trips to South America. Those years of learning how to provide collaborative team services sparked a love for working with

medical teams in many capacities, from founding a PGY-2 pediatric residency program to serving as a clinical specialist on pediatric multidisciplinary hospital teams. She is also the founder of a clinical pharmacy consulting business, Peek Perspectives PLLC. “That pharmacy business and entrepreneurship elective came in handy after all,” said Peek.

She said that many of the learning opportunities they had during their student years continue to impact their careers today. JJ served as the OUHSC student body president, an opportunity that challenged him to integrate service opportunities across multiple health care disciplines. These experiences have served him well throughout his career from the completion of a PGY-1 community pharmacy residency to his current role as a leader of a clinical team that integrates services across independent pharmacies in Oklahoma.

John Little, Pharm.D., currently serves as director of practice-based research with the American Pharmacists Association Foundation. He said that he won’t forget that the dean invited him to attend a highly respected APhA event, The Remington Dinner at the 2019 national convention. “I had no idea at that dinner that I was surrounded by my future work colleagues!” said Little. He said that the dean facilitated his relationship with APhA and opened the doors necessary to establish his future career with them.

“Dean Draugalis impacted me and other students through encouraging professional development through attendance of pharmacy conferences,” he said. “Reimbursing students for a portion of conference travel makes a big difference when budgeting for the trip and hosting OU College of Pharmacy-specific events at the conferences increases camaraderie and pride.”

During the 2019 NCPA student business plan competition, Little recalls that the dean equipped them with support that contributed to the team’s first-place standing. “She made sure we had the right advisors to oversee our group and set us up for success through travel arrangements and just verbal encouragement that we were making the college proud. That was very meaningful to hear from her,” he said.

Little said he is very grateful for having graduated from OU College of Pharmacy. “I believe Dean Draugalis is to thank for the pride and gratitude I feel for my alma mater.”



**John Little, Pharm.D.**

# Faculty Member Collaborates With National Organization

It's no secret that Melissa Medina Ed.D., professor and associate dean for assessment and evaluation, remains busy at the college with her focus on the scholarship of teaching and learning. Medina joined the faculty at OU College of Pharmacy in 2000. She teaches student pharmacists in all four years of the curriculum and delivers presentations to students in the other six colleges on campus. She also oversees the college residency teaching certificate program, teaches in the Faculty Leadership Program, and offers teaching methods courses for faculty across campus and nationally. Medina has delivered more than 120 local and national teaching-related presentations, continuing education programs and faculty retreats and written over 85 peer-reviewed articles related to the scholarship of teaching and learning, and other educational research topics. Since 2010, she earned a Presidential Professorship, David Ross Boyd Professorship and Regents Award for Superior Teaching at OU.

She also earns continuous recognition through the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy. These awards have included the Robert K. Chalmers Distinguished Pharmacy Educator Award, Exemplary Service Award, and the Distinguished Teaching Scholar Award.

In July, Medina received the Rufus A. Lyman Award for co-authoring "Deficiencies of traditional grading systems and recommendations for the future." This award is presented annually to the author(s) of the best paper published in the *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, AACP's flagship journal. In this paper, the authors summarized that pharmacy educators should revise grading practices to be more accurate, interpretable, and beneficial to learner development.<sup>1</sup>

One area of interest for Medina regards evaluating outcomes of faculty, resident, and graduate student teaching development. As part of this interest, she was appointed associate editor of the AJPE in 2019.



In her role as associate editor, Medina searches for manuscripts on teaching and the scholarship of teaching and learning; solicits reviewers; initiates review of, provides reviews for, and makes the final decision on

manuscripts; and participates in journal meetings and activities. She also leads a task force on qualitative research for the journal.

“Dr. Melissa Medina brings a wide range of professional experiences to AJPE as scholar and author in the area of teaching and learning,” said Gayle A. Brazeau, Ph.D., editor of the journal. “She has an exceptionally strong record of scholarship, as documented by her many outstanding publications, presentations and awards. She works diligently with our authors and reviewers to enable the journal to continue to publish outstanding papers in pharmacy education.”

Medina was selected to chair the 2021-2023 AACP Academic Affairs Committee by the AACP Board of Directors to revise the Center for the Advancement of Pharmacy Education educational outcomes and Entrustable Professional Activities. This revision represents the fifth revision and Medina also previously chaired this CAPE outcomes revision committee in 2012-2013. Educational Outcomes represent the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of pharmacists that all students should demonstrate upon graduation. EPAs describe the work of pharmacists as workplace tasks and responsibilities that all students are entrusted to do in the experiential setting with direct or distant supervision. Since CAPE and EPAs were in two separate documents previously, the process of revising both at the same time

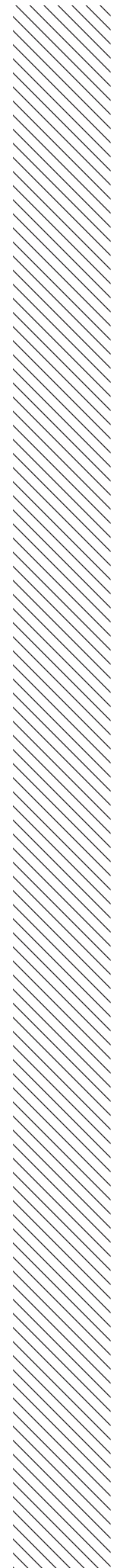
and streamlining them into one document led the committee to rename it to the Curricular Outcomes and Entrustable Professional Activities for New Pharmacy Graduates. The work from the committee will inform and influence the ACPE accreditation standards that are in revision right now.

It’s hard to measure all the impact Medina has made on the pharmacy profession. JoLaine Draugalis said, “Her efforts have been recognized both nationally and internationally. She is frequently asked to provide presentations and retreats for others schools. Most importantly, she has capitalized on collaborating with scholars across many other institutions. She has offered a national service and contributed to the improvement of pharmacy education, not only nationally but globally.

Deans come up to me frequently at AACP meetings and ask if I know how lucky I am to have Melissa working at OU,” said Draugalis. “I always answer with a wholehearted, ‘I do.’”

Editor’s Note: Medina has accepted the appointment as interim dean for the college during the search for a new dean.

<sup>1</sup> Am J Pharm Educ 2022; 86 (7): Article 8850



**Vibhuti Agrahari, Ph.D.**

"In vitro and In vivo assessments of bio-responsive formulations for prevention of cisplatin-induced ototoxicity and associated hearing loss." Presbyterian Health Foundation; 07/03/2023-07/02/2024.

"Topical hybrid nanomicelles for treating corneal injuries and repair." American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy; 03/01/2023-02/28/2024.

**Anthony W. Burgett, Ph.D.**

"Structure/function of oxysterol-binding protein (OSBP)." University of Oklahoma; 09/01/2022-05/31/2023.

"Cellular mechanism of oxysterol-binding protein (OSBP) in viral proliferation: A chemical biology approach (supplement)." National Institutes of Health/National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases; 12/22/2022-03/31/2025.

"Taking ovarian cancer maintenance therapy to the next level." Army Medical Research Acquisition Activity; 04/01/2023-03/31/2027.

"Drug targeting oxysterol-binding protein (OSBP) for SARS-CoV-2 and other RNA viral infections." Presbyterian Health Foundation; 07/03/2023-07/02/2024.

**Venkateswararao Eeda, Ph.D.**

"Cardiotropic atorvastatin liposomes for myocardial reperfusion injury." Nexakit, LLC/NSF; 05/15/2023-04/30/2024.

**Michael Ihnat, Ph.D.**

"A novel small molecule for the prevention and treatment of diabetic retinopathy." Excitant Therapeutics, LLC; 09/01/2022-06/30/2024.

**Anne Kasus-Jacobi, Ph.D.**

"Characterization of changes in pathogenic amyloid beta aggregation induced by peptide drug candidates for Alzheimer's disease." OU College of Pharmacy Seed Grant; 09/01/2022-08/31/2023.

**Dongin Kim, Ph.D.**

"Towards field deployment of smart molecular insecticide." US Dept. of Agriculture; 05/10/2022-05/09/2024.

"Translational studies on extracellular vesicles in ovarian cancer." Stephenson Cancer Center Team Award; 05/01/2022-04/30/2023.

"Exosome-based intraocular therapy combined with active targeting of ocular neovascularization." University of Southern California, 09/30/2022-09/29/2023.

"Cancer exosome-mediated antibody production for active tumor targeting treatment." Presbyterian Health Foundation; 07/03/2023-07/02/2023.

**Motolani E. Ogunsanya, Ph.D.**

"Validation of the cutaneous lupus erythematosus quality." UTSW; 09/30/2022-09/29/2023.

"Development of a theory-based framework and measures of acculturation for African immigrants." Georgia College & State University; 08/12/2022-07/31/2025.

**Amanda Sharpe, Ph.D.**

"Astrocytic melanocortin 4 receptors and their role in inflammation and obesity." OU College of Pharmacy Seed Grant; 09/01/2022-08/31/2023.

**Kelly Standifer, Ph.D.**

"Evaluation of PPL-138, a NOP/mu partial agonist, for treatment of alcohol abuse in the context of PTSD." Florida Atlantic University/Pharmacotherapies for Alcohol and Substance Use Disorders Alliance (PASA)/Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs; 12/01/2022-03/31/2024.

"NOP receptor modulator treatment optimizes cognitive, locomotor and sensory outcomes of mild concussive TBI with and without PTSD." U.S. Army Medical Research Acquisition Activity; 04/15/2023-04/14/2026.

"Neuropeptide modulation of cerebral blood flow to improve neurological and psychological outcomes following TBI in the presence and absence of traumatic stress." U.S. Army Medical Research Acquisition Activity; 07/01/2023-06/30/2027.

**Wei Yue, Ph.D.**

"Regulation of OATP1B1 and OATP1B3 by lysine acetylation and lysine deacetylase inhibitors." National Institutes of Health/National Institute of General Medical Sciences; 09/01/2022-06/30/2026.



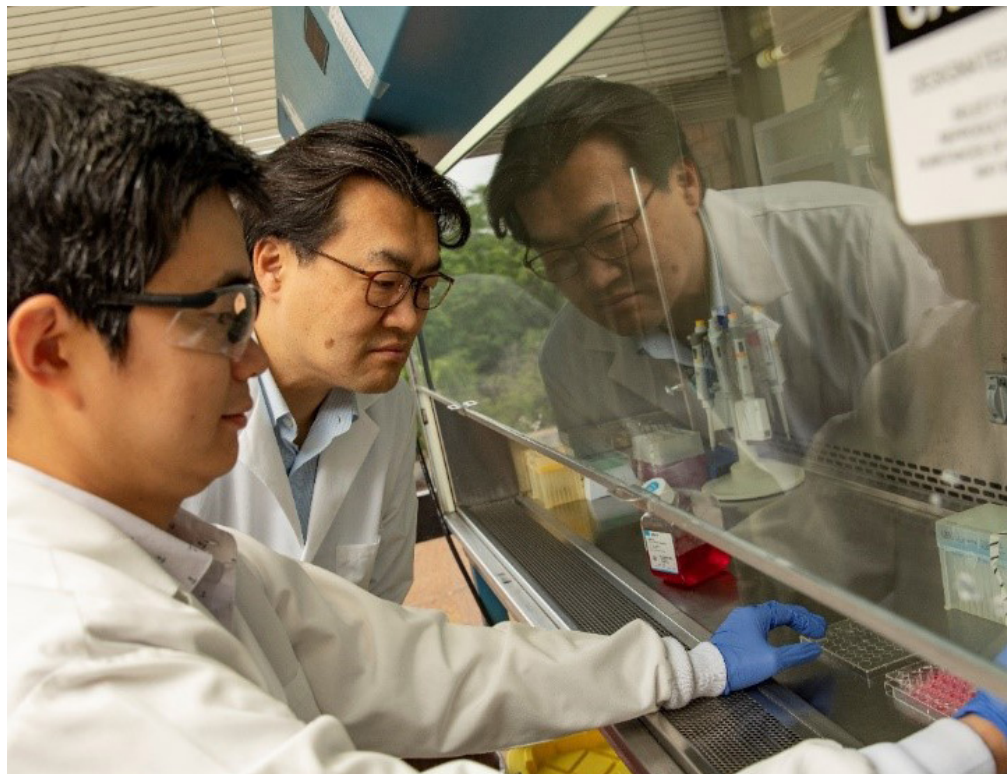
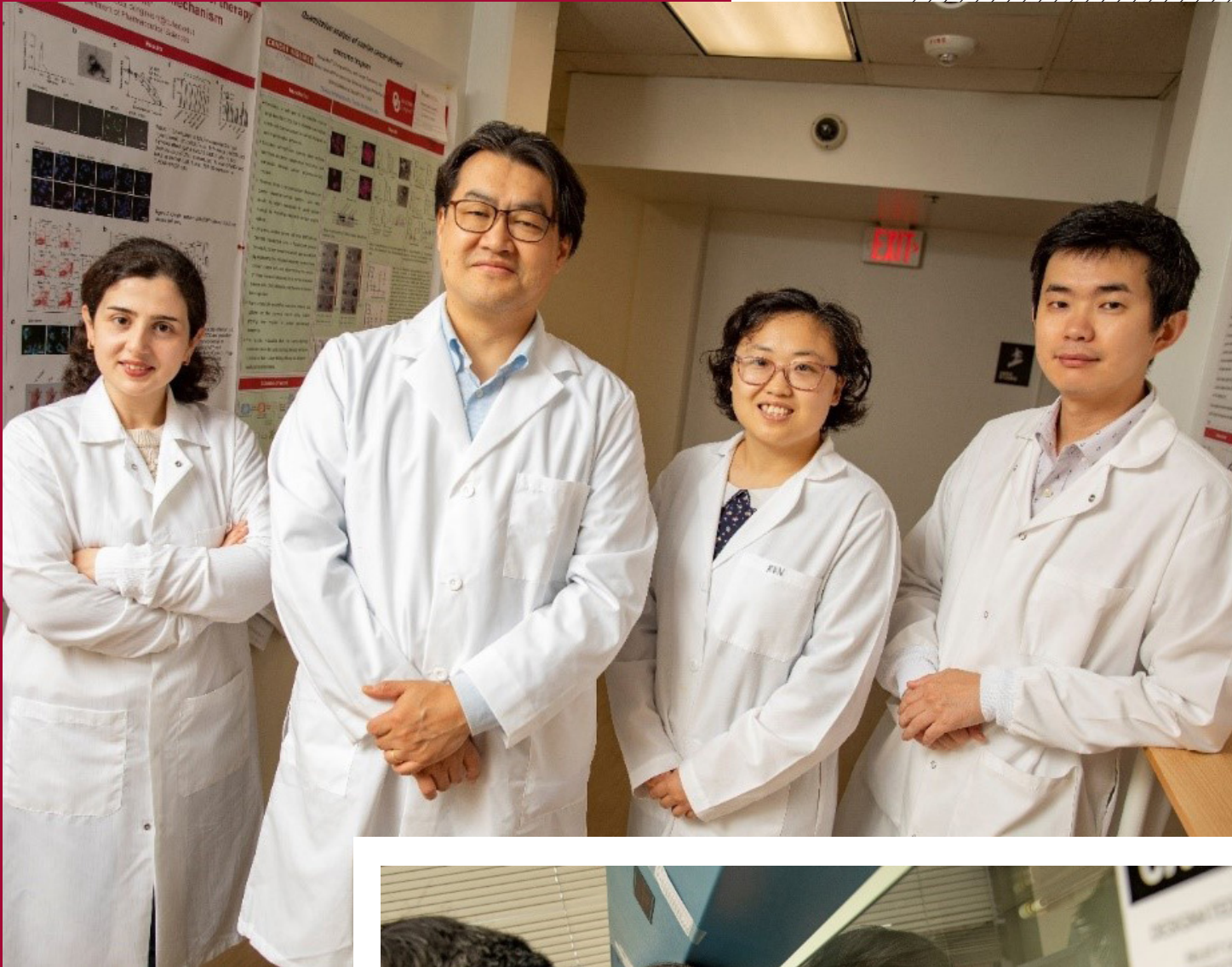
# Hats Off to Dean Draugalis!





**On May 5, faculty, staff and students gathered together wearing hats as a tribute to Dean Draugalis. Throughout her 16-year tenure at the college, you could find the dean with a stylish hat to complete her ensemble for the day. Hats off to the dean!**

Dongjin Kim's laboratory personnel include: Maryam Firouzi (graduate student), Kim, and postdoctoral fellows Dr. Xiaoyu Ren and Dr. Changsun Kang.



Kim watches as Kang isolates exosomes from cells.

# Dedicated to Exosomal Research

The popularity of exosomal research has increased tremendously over the past few years, thanks to its application to diagnosing and treating cancer, including preventing the spread of cancer cells in the body. An exosome is a tiny sac-like structure that is formed inside a cell and contains some of the cell's proteins, DNA and RNA. Exosomes get released into the blood by many types of cells, including cancer cells, and travel through the blood to other body parts. They can transfer the proteins, DNA, and RNA they contain into other cells. Also, exosomes can be used as a drug delivery system due to their multifunctional properties, including encapsulation of hydrophobic and/or hydrophilic payloads and attachment of targeting ligands and imaging agents on their membrane surfaces.

For Dongin Kim, Ph.D., assistant professor, Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, his specific research interest is to develop a novel approach to clinically relevant exosomal therapy or diagnosis to improve its disease-targeting efficacy and delivery of the therapeutic payload to various diseases such as cancer, heart disease and eye diseases. "Up to now, there has been a lack of a specific

disease-targeting system that significantly delivers drugs and diagnostic agents to the disease area," said Kim.

There has been quite a bit of collaboration on exosomal research between Kim and other research groups. At Yale University, Yang-Harwich, Ph.D. has been helping Kim with molecular biology in ovarian cancer. At the University of Southern California, Kim has partnered with Dr. Sun Young Lee on the clinical aspects of eye disease. At Texas A&M University, Dr. Hojun Song has asked Kim to help with his research on nanoparticle-mediated insecticides. And at OU Health Sciences Center, Drs. Ramesh and Kim partner with exosomal science.

Kim chose to transfer to OU from Texas A&M Health Science Center in 2020. He previously held postdoctoral fellow positions at Yale University, Icahn School of Medicine in New York and Georgia Institute of Technology/Emory University in Atlanta. He earned his Ph.D. at the University of Utah in 2009.

He is the principal investigator of a Presbyterian Health Foundation New Investigator Seed Grant Program, "Cancer exosome-mediated antibody production for

active tumor targeting treatment." Other grant projects include co-investigator for projects including: the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Disorders "Lymphatics and lymphangiogenesis in kidney function and inflammation; National Institutes of Health "Role of renal lymphatics in blood pressure regulation," and the Presbyterian Health Foundation Team Science Grant Program, "Translational studies on extracellular vesicles in ovarian cancer."

In his spare time, he enjoys reading and playing both tennis and pickleball. He is married and has two daughters.

Kim said that being a part of the faculty at OU College of Pharmacy has been advantageous to his research and to his career. He has enjoyed connecting with potential collaborators on both the OUHSC and Norman campuses and being introduced to several funding local and federal grant opportunities.

But, according to him, it's important to pursue exosomal research. "I want to help out sick patients to either prevent or cure their diseases."



# Faculty Highlights

**National Association of Chain Drug Stores Foundation Presents Scholarship.** OU College of Pharmacy received one of four 2023 NACDS Foundation innovation track scholarships. This award will expand medical support for an inter-professional, student-led community shelter. The initiative will support clinical education and offer health care screening and services to underserved and vulnerable populations. The NACDS Foundation Scholarship Program is designed to fund prospective projects that advance patient care by creating new learning opportunities for students and fostering diversity in pharmacy. The college's application was submitted by Eric Johnson, C.P.A. (left), Katherine O'Neal, Pharm.D., M.B.A. and Michael J. Smith, Ph.D. (right).

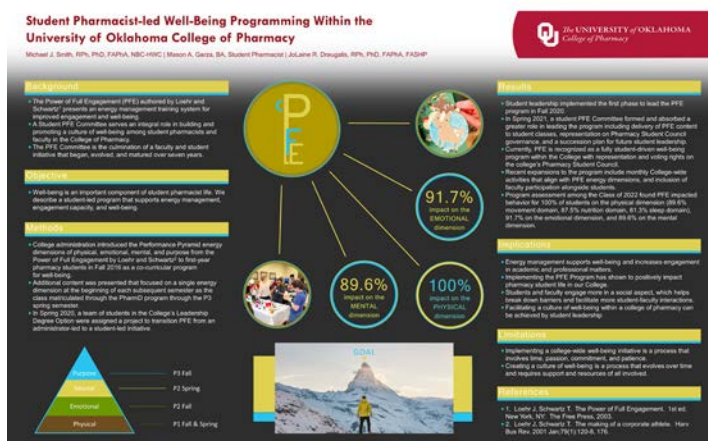


**Boylan Selected for New Educator Award.** Paul Boylan, Pharm.D., was selected by the 2023 American College of Clinical Pharmacy awards committee to receive their prestigious New Educator Award. The award will be presented in Dallas at the Awards and Recognition Ceremony of the 2023 ACCP annual meeting. The Awards Committee noted in its report to the ACCP Board of Regents that in terms of classroom innovation. Boylan utilized techniques such as remote asynchronous lectures with adaptive learning and the flipped-classroom models. Boylan's colleagues describe him as a "bright, creative, and scholarly academician" and his students as "highly empathetic, very receptive, and student-centered." Boylan is an active member of the Pulmonary Practice and Research Network, the Adult Medicine PRN, and the ACCP Task force on Career Transitions.

## Faulty Earns Awards at Spring 2023 Ceremony

- **Vincent Dennis, Pharm.D., BCACP, CDE** earned the University Hospital Authority and Trust Faculty Excellence Award.
- **Katherine O'Neal, Pharm.D., MBA, BCACP, CDES, BC-ADM, AE-C, CLS, FACDES** earned the Faculty Senate Governance Award.
- **Jamie Miller, Pharm.D., BCPS, BCPPS, FPPAG** earned a Presidential Professorship.

**Research Work Featured in Prominent Newspaper.** Motolani Ogunsanya, Ph.D., is an assistant professor, Department of Pharmacy, Clinical and Administrative Sciences. Her research work on prostate cancer, funded by the U.S. Department of Defense, was featured in one of the most prominent newspapers in Nigeria, Punch Newspapers. Punch's headquarters is in Lagos, Nigeria, and has a nationwide circulation, making them the most widely read newspapers in the country.



## College Poster Presented at National Meeting.

Michael J. Smith, Ph.D., student pharmacist Mason Garza and JoLaine Draugalis, Ph.D. presented "Student Pharmacist-led well-being programming within the University of Oklahoma College of Pharmacy" at the AACP annual meeting in July. They reported on a Student Power of Full Engagement Committee that was charged to promote a culture of well-being among student pharmacists and faculty in the college. The student PFE committee was the culmination of a faculty and student initiative that began, evolved, and matured over seven years.

# Rinaldi Receives Highest Staff Recognition Award

Every year, the University of Oklahoma recognizes superior staff accomplishments at an annual luncheon. In addition to significant milestone work anniversaries, the luncheon takes time to honor employees of the month and announces the employee of the year. The Regents' Award for Superior Staff is also presented.

R. Kevin Rinaldi, senior administration director, was recognized at the luncheon on June 9 and earned the Regents' Award for Superior Staff for 2023. Regent Rick Nagel presented the award to Rinaldi.

Rinaldi has been an employee on the OUHSC campus for more than 18 years, starting at the Poison Control Center. He was instrumental in instituting policies and procedures that allowed the center to run efficiently on a small budget.

On both the college and university level, Rinaldi has served on campus committees and was involved in the staff senate as the Provost's designee. Staff Senate as the provost's designee. For the college, he has served on numerous recruiting efforts of high-caliber faculty.

Most recently, he has been instrumental in the OU employee COVID vaccination clinics. According to Eric Johnson, senior associate dean for administration and finance, OU College of Pharmacy, "With his participation over the past 12 years organizing logistics and workflow for the campus flu program, it was only natural that he oversaw the efforts in seeking out space that would



accommodate large clinics, ensure adequate supply on-hand (especially during a time of scarce resources due to the pandemic), and systematically set up each site when the clinic was held." His commitment and dedication often had him on campus as early as 6 a.m. and as late as 9 p.m. and on weekends.

The Chief U.S. Probation Officer for the State of Oklahoma reached out to Rinaldi to express his appreciation for organizing and managing the clinics in which his staff received their vaccinations. "As I speak with my colleagues around the country, it is not lost on me how fortunate we are to have your kind of leadership at such a critical time." To honor Rinaldi's commitment to the vaccine projects, the federal court system honored him with a retired flag that was flown over the courts during the year and with a note of gratitude signed by Chief Justice DeGiusti.

Most recently, Rinaldi has been instrumental in the conversion of the old medical examiner's building into useable space to update the nuclear pharmacy operations to serve the community and patients of the state of Oklahoma.

"Without a doubt, this campus cannot have enough employees like him on campus," said JoLaine Draugalis.



# What a Long Trip It's Been (with apologies to the Grateful Dead)\*

*The Grateful Dead was an American rock band known for fusing elements of rock, blues, jazz, folk, country, bluegrass, rock and roll, gospel and reggae.*

I'm a 1992 graduate of the OU College of Pharmacy, and immediately after graduation I went to work in hospital pharmacy. After a few years, I looked for a new job and was offered a position at Children's Hospital in Oklahoma City. During my interview, the director offhandedly mentioned that the poison center was looking for a couple of people. I declined the position at Children's and begged, pleaded, and cajoled until Lee McGoodwin, the center's director at the time, hired me.

I was one of the first two people hired for the poison center's night shift. The center was pursuing national accreditation and one of the requirements meant 24-hour service provided by poison specialists. Prior to accreditation, our phone lines were transferred to Children's Hospital for coverage by their night shift pharmacists. I spent the next 10 years sleeping during the day and then dealing with some of the most unlikely of medical situations at night. Toxicology is a fascinating field, and for me, the hook was set early.

Lee showed me how to think about patient care, especially care of the poisoned patient, as a holistic process. I learned to see the big picture. Despite what we might think as toxicologists, it's not always a poison. I've done my best to pass that torch of knowledge to our staff. McGoodwin was the first in Oklahoma to achieve recognition as a Diplomate of the American Board of Applied Toxicology; I followed in her footsteps in 2006. Since then, three additional staff members started their journey as clinical toxicologists at our center, and two more are developing the

advanced skills and experience necessary to sit for the grueling two-day exam to receive DABAT recognition. These numbers are amazing, considering there are only 138 of us in the world.

The biggest change I've seen at the poison center is in the capability of our staff. They exert a tremendous amount of effort continually developing and honing their skills and applying them toward the provision of superior patient care. Almost all aspects of health care – from pharmacy, physician assistant, nurse practitioner and paramedic students as well as medical residents and fellows – rotate through the center to learn our capabilities and receive toxicology training. Everyone in the center contributes to educating tomorrow's health care professionals. Additionally, Oklahoma has established a strong leadership presence at the national level, and we have a long list of highly capable pharmacists waiting for an opportunity to join our team.

As I turn over the reins, I envision continued growth of the center through the development of a hospital toxicology service, a pharmacy fellowship, and eventually a medical toxicology fellowship. I'm confident our dedicated team will continue to produce national leaders and influence the direction of how our field responds to looming issues such as alternative means of communication with the public and the rise of artificial intelligence. The Oklahoma Center for Poison and Drug Information is in good hands.

I've been asked what I plan on doing in my spare time once I retire. I don't plan on having any spare time! Things I plan to do, off the top of my head, include seeing how many hobbies one person can pursue without going bankrupt. I want to make things with my hands – primarily woodworking/guitar building and metal work. I want to learn glassblowing. Travel will be important and we're kicking it off by walking the Camino de Santiago through Portugal and Spain. I want to see the great museums of the world. Gardening. Seeing every movie and listening to every song I possibly can. Getting good on the guitar again. Volunteerism. The occasional afternoon nap. The possibilities are endless, and many will be explored.

It's been a long and interesting journey.

-Scott Schaeffer





# Welcome, Class of 2027

## GPA



Prerequisite



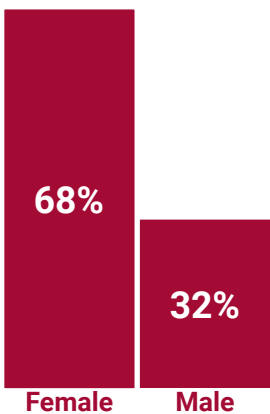
Overall



Science/  
Math



Biology/  
Chemistry



Average Age



Oklahoma Residents: 70%  
Non-Residents: 30%



Class Size



# Business Team Places in Top 10



2023 College of Pharmacy business plan team: Mardi Wisdom, Cody Jenkins, Jackson Osborn, Sevda Abolhassanpourmaleki

The 2023 business plan team from OU College of Pharmacy placed in the top 10 for the Good Neighbor Pharmacy National Community Pharmacists Association Pruitt-Schutte Student Business Plan Competition. The qualifying teams were announced at the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy annual meeting at Aurora, Colorado. The OU team members includes Mardi Wisdom, Cody Jenkins, Jackson Osborn and Sevda Abolhassanpourmaleki. Eric Johnson, Justin Wilson, and Katherine O'Neal served as their team advisors.

Their plan, Energy Rx, involves purchasing a pharmacy in Fort Gibson, Oklahoma, and either modifying or adding services such as point-of-care testing, mental health support, advanced prescription strip packaging, combo-med services, and infusion services. Another aspect of their plan is implementing an Avant Fellowship program. This would allow Energy Rx to provide a directed, highly individualized, postgraduate program designed to prepare a participant to become an independent researcher.



# Getting Acquainted With the Student Affairs Office

From left:  
Jennifer  
Richardson,  
Michael Smith,  
Glenda Jenkins,  
Trisha Wilhelm,  
Morgan Strawn  
McGinley

As a prospective or even a current student, sometimes it's hard to figure out who to contact about certain questions. Here's a summary of each staff member in the Student Affairs Office and how they can support you with your questions and concerns.

## **Jennifer Richardson, M.S., ADC**

Jennifer Richardson is the director of recruitment and admissions for the Doctor of Pharmacy program. She manages all aspects of the recruitment and admissions processes and leads strategic planning for these processes. She additionally manages the COP student ambassador program and serves as a co-advisor to the Pharmacy Student Council. She serves in other capacities university-side, locally, and nationally, including as a COP Diversity, Equity and Inclusion liaison on the OU Inclusion Council, the OUHSC Recruitment Council, the

OUHSC Belonging and Inclusion Committee, the OUHSC Recruitment & Selection Project Team, the Kira Talent Holistic Admissions National Advisory Board and the coordinator of the Douglass High School Prescription 4 Wellbeing program.

**Michael Smith, Ph.D., R.Ph., FAPhA, NBC-HWC**

Michael Smith serves as associate dean for academic and student affairs. He and the Student Affairs team develop, plan, and coordinate strategies and resources to support student academic success. His team places an emphasis on the holistic development of students including professional identity formation, relationship-building capacity, leadership, and service. Smith coordinates the Leadership Degree Option Program, and is an advocate for creating a culture of well-being in the college.

**Glenda Jenkins**

Glenda Jenkins provides administrative support to Student Affairs staff. She processes all financials and maintains grades and enrollment for all student classes. In addition, she processes intern applications, licensure applications and all VA forms for students on the GI Bill. Jenkins is the point of contact for all student organizations in planning events, room reservations, food invoices and travel reimbursements. You can email her at [Glenda-jenkins@ouhsc.edu](mailto:Glenda-jenkins@ouhsc.edu) or call (405) 271-6598, ext. 47278.

**Trish Wilhelm, B.A.**

Trish Wilhelm, is the assistant director of student affairs for the College of Pharmacy. She coordinates student scholarships, class and exam schedules, and monthly rotation and semester grades. In addition, she is the main coordinator for events such as the College of Pharmacy Commencement, and New Student Orientation, which is a week-long event for new incoming students that includes their White Coat Ceremony. Wilhelm is the point of contact for student immunizations, annual background check and drug screenings, and student health insurance questions. She also works closely with the Office of Accessibility and Disability Recourse Center to assist students with approved accommodations and is co-advisor for the Pharmacy Student Council.

**Morgan (Strawn) McGinley, M.A.**

Morgan (Strawn) McGinley is the recruitment and admissions coordinator in the Student Affairs Office. She plans and attends different recruiting events on campus and across Oklahoma. Her focus is to discuss the admissions process with prospective students, answer questions, and ensure that incoming applicants are as prepared as possible. You can email her at [morgan-strawn@ouhsc.edu](mailto:morgan-strawn@ouhsc.edu) or call (405) 271-6598, ext. 47295. She is located in Rm. 111 at the Oklahoma City campus.

# Recognizing Alumni Award Recipients for 2023



On June 15, the OU College of Pharmacy Alumni Association hosted an annual reception highlighting award winners for the past year. These recipients were nominated by their peers and approved through the alumni association council. A short bio on each award recipient follows:

## **Lee Munoz, D.Ph.** **Ralph D. Biefang Outstanding Practitioner Award**

Lee Munoz is the owner of Hospital Discount Pharmacy in Edmond, Oklahoma. She graduated from OU College of Pharmacy in 1997, and has remained an involved alumna. Notable on her list of involvement is being an integral member of the OU College of Pharmacy Alumni Affairs Board for nearly 20 years. During her time on the board, she has served as president for two terms and is in preparation to serve a third term. One of the founders of the annual Adrenaline Run 5K/10K, Munoz has been the race director nine out of the past 11 years. This is the sole fundraising effort by the OU Pharmacy Alumni Association and raises funds for scholarships, alumni networking events and support for the students and college as a whole.

She has served as the Oklahoma Pharmacists Association District 5 president and has been an active participant on various legislative committees. Additionally, she has spent the past few years studying functional medicine and is pursuing certification through the Institute of Functional Medicine.



## **Russell B. Melchert, Ph.D.** **Distinguished Alumni Award**

Russ Melchert currently serves as dean of the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Pharmacy. He completed a Bachelor of Science degree in pharmacy and a doctoral degree in pharmaceutical sciences from the University of Oklahoma College of Pharmacy and maintains active pharmacy licensure. Following graduate school, he joined the Division of Pharmacology & Toxicology at the University of Texas College of Pharmacy as an NIEHS post-doctoral trainee. He received his first faculty appointment in 1995 at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences College of Pharmacy and worked his way through the ranks to full professor. From 2004-2010, he served as chair of the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences at UAMS.



Melchert joined the University of Missouri-Kansas City as dean and professor of pharmacology and pharmaceutical sciences in 2010 and served as interim dean of the School of Dentistry in 2020-2021. Notable contributions include serving as chair of the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy's Council of Deans from 2019-2020 and as its president from 2022-2023. He remains active teaching in pharmacy, dental and graduate curricula and has published scholarly works, including papers and book chapters in pharmacology, toxicology, pharmaceutical sciences and pharmacy education. Additionally, his research has been funded by the Department of Defense and National Institutes of Health.

**Bled Tanoë, Pharm.D.  
Outstanding Young Alumni Award**

Within a few months of arriving in the United States, Bled Tanoë felt a strong desire to be a community pharmacist. She graduated from OU College of Pharmacy in 2016 and is currently a hospital inpatient pharmacist. It was

with this determination and passion that she continues to create a culture where patients, pharmacists, technicians and students are the priority. When she felt that the oath she took to protect this community was threatened, she saw an opportunity to use her voice and make the issues known. She started a campaign, #PizzalsNotWorking, to shine light on the working conditions in retail pharmacies and the attempts of employers to address issues through food and gift cards. This campaign addressed the mental, physical and social impact these conditions had on many health care employees and, ultimately, patient safety.



Since starting the hashtag Pizza-Is-Not-Working, her message has resonated with pharmacy professionals all over the country. The campaign has made appearances on *Pharmacy Times*, *Pharmacy Today*, *APhA*, *Chicago Business*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Business Insider*, *New York Times*, *Bloomberg*, local news stations, numerous podcasts and more. Her dedication has resulted in many award nominations in the pharmacy community. Today, many have joined her to further this cause. When asked what her goals are for this campaign, she humbly states: "This is not my campaign. This is not my cause. This is not my victory. This concerns all of us. Therefore, we all, as a profession, should be asking what our goals and hopes are for the future and how we can gather our resources to make a change."



**JoLaine R. Draugalis, Ph.D.  
Special Service Citation**

The OU Alumni Association unanimously agreed to nominate Draugalis for a Special Service Citation Award. This citation is given only on rare occasion to recognize an individual who has made extraordinary contributions of exceptional quality to the College of Pharmacy or to the pharmacy profession and leading to events widely recognized as seminal and of such merit as to warrant special honor and recognition.

For the past 16 years, Draugalis served as dean at the University of Oklahoma College of Pharmacy. Additionally, she has held the positions as the Phil C. and Ferne Ashby Endowed Dean's Chair, Edith Kinney Gaylord Presidential Professor, David Ross Boyd Professor and Regents' Professor. Prior to arriving in Oklahoma in 2007, Draugalis served as professor of Pharmacy Practice and Pharmaceutical Sciences and also as associate dean for Assessment/Evaluation/Curriculum in the College of Pharmacy at the University of Arizona, where she received over \$1 million dollars in extramural funding.

# Celebrating Excellence:

## *A Journey of Impact and Generosity*

In the hallowed halls of OU College of Pharmacy, countless individuals have walked the path of knowledge and dedication, leaving behind imprints that have shaped the future of health care. Among these remarkable trailblazers stands Becky Johnson, an exemplary alumna whose journey embodies the essence of excellence, involvement and philanthropy. We would like to feature the inspiring story of an alumna whose commitment to her alma mater has been a beacon of support and inspiration.

Tell us about yourself:

- My name is Rebecca Johnson, but I am known as Becky (Rangel) in my hometown of Bethany, Oklahoma where I attended elementary through high school.

What inspired you to study pharmacy?

- Sometime during my junior year at Putnam City West High School, my father announced his chosen career for me – a pharmacist. I didn't jump on his bandwagon at that time because I had many other ideas in mind, including being a dancer (a talent that would show up someday soon, I hoped), a rodeo girl, a career

math student or something in customer service at least. Taking my math and science interest to another level, I graduated from Central State University (now the University of Central Oklahoma) with a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry in 1990. While working at Kerr McGee



Technical Center during college and post-graduation as a research technician and as an analytical chemist, two very important Ph.D. supervisors each had a heart-to-heart discussion with me about my career. Just like my father several years before, they encouraged me to

become a pharmacist. The difference was that now I had experienced enough part – and full-time jobs to know what appealed to me and what actually came natural to me – service, science, analytical thinking, social health, teamwork, structured processes and a fun but serious job to do. I began my study of pharmacy at OU College of Pharmacy, joining organizations including Kappa Psi Fraternity, Student National Pharmaceutical Association, American Pharmacists Association and Oklahoma Pharmacists Association. I graduated with a bachelor of science degree in pharmacy in 1993. I was so proud to finally graduate from OU! One of my fondest memories was that my father was so proud that he invited his brother to travel into town and witness my graduation!

What has your career looked like since graduating from the OU College of Pharmacy? Have you continued your education?

- For seven years I worked in community pharmacy. For the next 17 years, I worked in the pharmaceutical industry, co-owning with my husband a sterile injectable Food and

Drug Administration-licensed facility near downtown OKC. As a preceptor and adjunct professor for OU COP, students would pass through our facility for my quick tour, or a month-long stay learning about sterile manufacturing, quality assurance, quality control and, if they were lucky, an FDA inspection.

- We sold our company to our biggest customer and retired in 2017. Along with starting a ranch, technically a brood mare farm, with a few horses and getting a hands-on education on foaling, I decided to continue my education focusing on the “new drug” in town, medical marijuana. In 2022, I graduated from the University of Maryland with a master’s degree in cannabis science and therapeutics. As a member of the initial Food and Safety Board reporting to the Oklahoma Medical Marijuana Authority, I represented the chemist/pharmacist position and shared professional advice on safety, quality, labeling and other considerations. I will graduate next spring, with a Bachelor of Science degree in Spanish from UCO. With that degree and my spot on the Dean’s Honor Roll, I think I’m done! One of my intentions was to speak better Spanish, but I have also developed an appreciation of Spanish and Latin cultures and histories. Recently, I have been volunteering my time at the

Good Shepherd Clinic Pharmacy (now a Crossings Clinic Pharmacy). My volunteer work will help me to communicate better in Spanish and also keep me firmly entrenched in my pharmacy roots.

How have you stayed connected to OU College of Pharmacy?

- After graduation, I accepted a position on the college’s National Advisory Board. I have been a proud member for years and have literally watched the Leadership Program grow from infancy to the incredible asset that is it today. I have kept in contact with the college through the National Advisory Board, the Alumni Association website and social media and the annual Adrenaline Run on campus. Also, I volunteered to participate in prospective student interviews in the past. It was a relief to be on the “safe” side of the interview table as I empathized that same anxiety and hope so many years before.

Why do you support OU College of Pharmacy?

- After the sale of our company and my semi-retirement, my husband and I decided it was time to give back. It was always my intention to give a donation back to the college in appreciation for the education and guidance that laid the groundwork for my success as a traditional pharmacist and also in the

pharmaceutical industry. I decided to give the gift earlier than planned so that the college could utilize the funds to keep current with their plans for facility improvements. I loved the idea of seeing the changes rather than providing the donation at my death. Making the donation gave me joy and helped to me express my gratitude.

Why do you think it’s important for your fellow alumni to be involved in philanthropic efforts for the OU College of Pharmacy?

- It is definitely important for fellow alumni to be involved in philanthropic efforts for the college. There is no better way to demonstrate to prospective and current students, OU administration as well as the public at large, just how beneficial and life-changing a degree from the OU College of Pharmacy can be to them. Gifts of your time or finances are proof positive to students that their time and financial investment in obtaining the pharmacy degree from OU will be an investment in themselves. I have accomplished the goals I set for myself as a student at OU. I have new goals, which are centered around volunteering and giving back my knowledge and experience in charitable or advisory roles.

Editor’s Note:

If you would like to learn more about how you can give back to the OU College of Pharmacy, please contact Lydia Chapman, director of development, at [lydia-chapman@ouhsc.edu](mailto:lydia-chapman@ouhsc.edu).



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# 12th Annual Adrenaline Run Slated for March 9



*Thank you to all our volunteers at the 11th annual Adrenaline Run!*

*The tradition of an annual run continues with sponsorship from the OU College of Pharmacy Alumni Association. The 12th annual Adrenaline Run 5K/10K on the Oklahoma City campus is slated for March 9, 2024. There will be an awards ceremony following the race. This event is timed by EnMotive and sanctioned by USA Track & Field.*

*This year marked the 11th anniversary of the run. There were 262 registrants; 180 for 5K, 67 for 10K, and 25 virtual runners. We had over 50 volunteers consisting of students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends. There were also 17 businesses that either sponsored or donated for the event.*

*Proceeds from the run will benefit the college through future alumni association activities and expansion of contemporary education, research and service.*

*Not a fan of running or walking? Let us know if you're willing to serve as a race day volunteer to help cheer on the participants. For more information, please email [cassidy-roberts@ouhsc.edu](mailto:cassidy-roberts@ouhsc.edu).*

*We encourage you to follow the Adrenaline Run Facebook event page for further updates.*

## **Alumni Association Officers 2023-2024**

Welcome to our 2023-2024 Alumni Association officers:

- President: Lee Munoz ('97)
- President-Elect: Megan King ('13)
- Secretary/Treasurer: Alex McNeely Walker ('14)

## **Be In The Know**

We want to make sure we have the most up-to-date information to keep YOU informed about the innovative plans we have at OU College of Pharmacy.

If you haven't heard from us in a while, it's probably because we don't have a current email address for you. Please take a few minutes and update your email address with the college by reaching out to Cassidy Roberts, outreach liaison, at [Cassidy-Roberts@ouhsc.edu](mailto:Cassidy-Roberts@ouhsc.edu) or (405) 271-6194. Please also keep in touch through our college website ([pharmacy.ouhsc.edu](http://pharmacy.ouhsc.edu)) and our facebook page ([facebook.com/oupharmacy](https://facebook.com/oupharmacy)).