



From The Dean's Desk

June 2005 - Issue 32

SOP Student Receives TPA Scholarship



Allison Walker

Allison Walker (Class of 2005 Summer Graduate) recently got some good news from the Texas Pharmacy Association. The TPA Academy of Consultant Pharmacists named her recipient of the Robert Clayton Memorial Scholarship.

TPA has more than 3,000 members practicing in community pharmacies, hospitals, long-term care facilities, manufacturing and distribution, education and various government agencies. Their mission is to promote the profession of pharmacy; to encourage and enable pharmacists to build and maintain innovative pharmacy practices that meet the healthcare needs of their patients, and improve patient outcomes and public health; and to work to integrate pharmacists as vital members of the healthcare team.

NIH Appoints Dr. Leff to Pediatric Group



Dr. Richard Leff

The National Institutes of Health recently appointed Dr. Richard Leff (Regional Dean – Dallas/Fort Worth) to the Scientific, Technical, and Regulatory Working Group for its Pediatric Formulation Initiative. This is an important task for Dr. Leff, who hopes the initiative will complement the work of the SOP's Pediatric Pharmacology Research and Development Center, which includes Dr. Trey Putnam (Assistant Professor, Dept. of Pharmacy Practice – Dallas/Fort Worth), Dr. Reza Mehvar (Professor, Dept. of Pharmaceutical Sciences – Amarillo) and Sarah Swenson (Research Associate – Dallas/Fort Worth) of the SOP. The PPRDC is located at Children's Medical Center in Dallas.

SOP Faculty Member Gets Award, Grant



Dr. Michael Veronin

Kudos are in order for Dr. Michael Veronin (Assistant Professor, Dept. of Pharmacy Practice – Amarillo). Dr. Veronin was recently awarded the Frances Larson Memorial Award for excellence in medical writing by the American Medical Writers Association. The AMWA is a national organization founded in 1940 for writers, editors, and other professionals in medicine and science. It has regional chapters across the United States and Canada and members in 26 countries.

Dr. Veronin, who works in the Division of Practice Management, also recently received a two-year \$124,000 grant from the American Heart Association for his research entitled, *Quality Assessment of Statins Obtained from the Internet*. Dr. Celestin Youan (Assistant Professor, Dept. of Pharmaceutical Sciences – Amarillo) and Dr. Roland Patry (Professor and Chair, Clinical Practice and Management – Amarillo) are co-investigators for the project.

Please join me in congratulating Mike on his accomplishments!

Schedule Set for Fourth Annual Research Days

The time for Research Days, one of my favorite annual programs, is drawing near. This will be the fourth year we have held the event, which is designed to give our faculty, postdoctoral fellows and students an opportunity to exchange research ideas and interests and stimulate interdisciplinary collaborations between departments and schools. The event will take place July 28-29 at the main campus in Amarillo.

The schedule for July 28:

- **10:00 - 11:30 a.m.** Optional IRIS training by Angelia HearE, IRIS Operations Manager: for those investigators who conduct research with human subjects (Room 4720, School of Medicine)
- **11:30 - 12:30** Lunch, Provided by the Office of Research (Student Lounge, First Floor)
- **12:30 - 12:45** Welcome by Thomas Thekkumkara, Ph.D., Associate Dean for Research (Harrington Lecture Center)
- **12:45 - 1:00** Introduction to Research Days by Arthur Nelson, R.Ph., Ph.D., SOP Dean (Harrington Lecture Center)
- **1:00 - 2:00** Keynote Presentation by Milton Packer, M.D., Professor, Southwestern Medical School, Dallas; Gayle & Paul Stoffel Distinguished Chair in Cardiology; Director, Center for Biostatistics and Clinical Science (Harrington Lecture Center)
- **2:15- 4:45** Group 1 Poster Presentations (Second Floor)
- **5:00 - 6:00** Social Hour at Desperado's BBQ and Steaks
- **6:15 - 7:30** Dinner at Desperado's BBQ and Steaks

The schedule for July 29:

- **8:00 - 9:00 a.m.** Breakfast, provided by the Office of Research (Student Lounge, First Floor)
- **9:00 - 11:30** Podium Presentations, Room 107 (First Floor)
- **9:00 - 9:30** Presentation by Margaret Weis, Ph.D., "Long chain fatty acyl CoA synthetases as therapeutic targets in brain and heart"
- **9:30 - 10:00** Presentation by Michael Veronin, R.Ph., Ph.D., "'URL 404 File Not Found': Internet Reference Disappearance"
- **10:00 - 10:10** Brief break
- **10:10 -10:40** Presentation by Kalkunte Srivenugopal, Ph.D., "Discovery of MGMT as a New Player in the CDT1-Geminin Axis that Prevents Rereplication of Human Chromosomal DNA"
- **10:40 - 11:10** Presentation by Anthony Busti, Pharm.D., BCPS, "A prospective evaluation of the effect of atazanavir on the QTc-interval and QTc-dispersion in HIV-positive patients"
- **11:10 - 11:30** Amarillo Biomedical Research Internships Presentation (Room 107)
- **11:30 - 12:30** Lunch, provided by the Office of Research (Student Lounge, First Floor). Attendees are encouraged to take their lunch plates to the Harrington Lecture Center for the WHRI intern presentation
- **11:30 - 12:30** Presentations by WHRI interns (Harrington Lecture Center)
- **12:30 - 3:00** Group 2 Poster Presentations (Second Floor)
- **3:30 - 4:30** Closing Ceremony - Recognition of Research Advisory Committee and Research Days Judges and Awards Announcements by Thomas Thekkumkara, Ph.D., Associate Dean for Research and Arthur Nelson, R.Ph., Ph.D., Dean of the School of Pharmacy (Room 107)

A Welcome to Our New Employees

Several new faces have become part of the SOP family, or will join us when the new semester gets underway. New personnel in the Department of Pharmacy Practice include:

Amie Blaszczyk, Pharm.D. (Assistant Professor – Dallas/Fort Worth)

Justin Hooper, Pharm.D. (Assistant Professor – Dallas/Fort Worth)

Jill Polk, Pharm.D. (Assistant Professor – Amarillo)

New faces in the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences in Amarillo include:

Shana Ben-Poorat, Student Assistant

Dr. Karin Borges, Assistant Professor

Michael Hays – Technician III

Marcus Hillert – Visiting Scientist

Dr. Paul Lockman – Assistant Professor

Lynda McGill – Sr. Business Assistant

Dr. U.S. Rao – Associate Professor

Wen Zhou – Post Doctoral Research Assistant

Please join me in welcoming each of these individuals to TTUHSC and the School of Pharmacy. We look forward to their contributions!

GETTING TO KNOW...

Eric MacLaughlin, Pharm.D., BCPS

*Associate Professor
Head of Division of Medicine
Department of Pharmacy Practice – Amarillo*



Dr. Eric MacLaughlin and Anitra enjoy a hike with daughter Mia Grace

Eric was born and raised in Yorkshire, NY, a small town approximately 40 miles south of Buffalo. After graduating from high school, he attended Albany College of Pharmacy where he received his BS in Pharmacy in 1996. He then went on to complete a two-year post-BS Pharm.D. degree from the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston.

During pharmacy school Eric also lived and interned at community sites in Arkansas City, Kansas (a small town south of Wichita) and Newburg, Pennsylvania (a small town southwest of Harrisburg). Additionally, he spent three months in Anchorage, Alaska at the Indian Health Service Medical Center as part of his training for the BS program.

After obtaining his Pharm.D. Eric went to Denver where he completed a Primary Care Specialty Residency from the University of Colorado. While in Colorado he met his wife, Anitra, who is also a Pharm.D. and is originally from the Denver area. After completing his residency, Eric came to TTUHSC where he works with the Department of Community and Family Medicine.

Eric and Anitra have one daughter—Mia Grace—who is nine months old. They enjoy numerous outdoor activities including hiking, mountain biking, snowboarding and rock climbing.

Shawn Morton

*Accountant
Staff, Department of Finance and Administration – Amarillo*



Shawn Morton (right) with Jason and their son Alex

Born in Dimmitt, Texas, Shawn is the oldest of three children and has had the opportunity to live in several panhandle towns while growing up including Lubbock, Shallowater and Friona.

Just before the start of junior high her family moved to Grants Pass, Oregon where she lived for five years prior to coming back to “the great state of Texas.” After graduating from Littlefield High School in 1996, she attended West Texas A&M University and she was involved in several campus organizations, most notably serving as treasurer for the Student Alumni Board.

In 2001 Shawn graduated with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in Accounting. She has been married to Jason Morton, a computer technician for the Amarillo Independent School District, for five and a half years. Together they share each and every day with their son Alex, who will be three in September, and a seven-year old dog named Sparkey. Shawn and her husband enjoy camping, SCUBA diving and spending quality time with family and friends.

Eugene Shek, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences – Amarillo



Dr. Eugene Shek

Eugene grew up in Hong Kong but Texas has become his second home. He moved to Houston in the early 1980s and he and six of his siblings received their Bachelors degrees from the University of Houston (talk about the “Cougar Spirit”). Later, Eugene obtained his Ph.D. in Pharmacology from UH and then continued his postdoctoral training at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson and at the University of Florida in Gainesville.

Eugene says he is “so grateful to my parents, the country and community that have given us such a great opportunity to pursue our dreams here in the States. Without their supports and my parents’ dedication and sacrifice, I certainly would not be where I am now.”

Eugene’s favorite holiday, beside Easter and Christmas, is the Chinese New Year when he can enjoy the traditional Chinese New Year foods that his family prepares and his favorite time is to play with his eight wonderful nieces and nephews. In his spare time Eugene enjoys building radio-control models, sports, reading and participating in living history and reenactment.