

## PHARMACY SCHOOL APPOINTS NEW DEAN



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Grace Kuo, Pharm.D., MPH, Ph.D., has been named the dean of Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center Jerry H. Hodge School of Pharmacy, effective May 16, 2022.

Kuo brings experiences from her current positions as Professor of Pharmacy Practice and Public Health at Oregon State University, affiliated with Oregon Health & Science University; Professor Emerita in Clinical Pharmacy, Family Medicine, and Public Health and Founding Member of the Halicioğlu Data Science Institute at the University of California (UC) San Diego. Kuo's academic leadership roles include associate dean for Academic Clinical Affairs and associate dean for Strategic Planning and Program Development at the University of California San Diego, and dean of the College of Pharmacy at Oregon State University.

Kuo received her Bachelor of Science from the University of California at Los Angeles in 1985 and a Bachelor of Science in pharmacy from the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Allied Health Sciences in 1988. She received her Doctor of Pharmacy from Oregon State University College of Pharmacy in 1998. She also holds a master's and Doctor of Philosophy in public health from the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston School of Public Health.

Kuo's clinical and translational research background focuses on medication safety, pharmacist-physician collaboration, and education research. She has developed educational programming in many areas, including pharmacogenomics, and has been a key collaborator in building research infrastructure, including basic science laboratories and core laboratory facilities.

She has authored more than 100 publications and abstracts and has served in professional memberships that include the American Pharmaceutical Association, American College of Clinical Pharmacy, American Society of Health-System Pharmacists, Academy of Health, American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy and American Public Health Association.

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# KUO APPOINTED DEAN

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“As a recipient of many accolades and awards, Dr. Kuo is recognized nationally for her scholarly work and contributions to national organizations,” TTUHSC Provost and Chief Academic Officer Darrin D’Agostino, D.O., said. “She is known for her commitment to service and generously giving her time to committees, advisory groups and task forces in efforts to better the university and pharmacy profession.”

Kuo becomes the third dean for the school following founding dean Arthur Nelson, Ph.D., R.Ph., and Quentin Smith, Ph.D., who led the school for the past 10 years. Under Smith’s leadership the school expanded to a four year program in Dallas with newly renovated, state-of-the-art facilities, established a new department focusing on Immunotherapy and Biotechnology, expanded graduate programs in Biotechnology and Pharmaceutical Sciences, conducted a complete revision of the Pharm.D. curriculum, advanced graduate residency placement to levels 2-3 times that of 2008-2011, doubled the level of NIH grant funding, and in 2020 achieved full accreditation of the School from ACPE with an eight year cycle. After a short leave, Smith will continue his work as a University Distinguished and Grover E. Murray Professor. He expresses sincere gratitude for the opportunity to serve as dean and the privilege to guiding and promoting the growth and success of colleagues and students for the past 25 years.

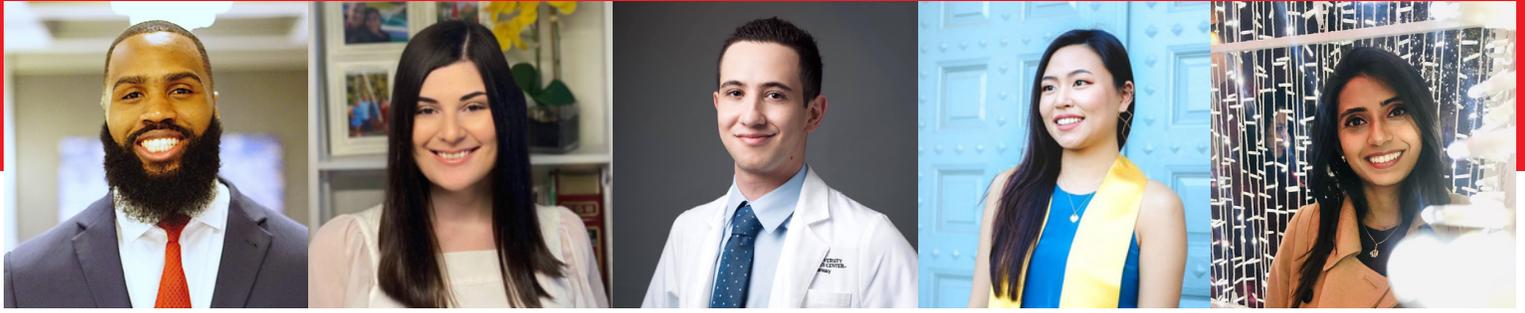
## MATCH DAY YIELDS POSITIVE RESULTS



TTUHSC Jerry H. School of Pharmacy had 32 fourth-year students match with residency programs for the 2022 year, ranking it in the top third of schools in the country for placing PGY1 residents as reported by ASHP. This ranking also makes it one of the top three schools in Texas, that together account for over two thirds of the placement from schools in the state, for PGY1 resident placement.

For PGY2 residencies, TTUHSC SOP ranked 28th in the nation for placement of graduates in residencies, placing it in the top 20 percentile of schools for PGY2 placement. The top 20 percentile, which included only three Texas schools, accounted for over fifty percent of the total PGY2 placements.

# TTUHSC SOP FELLOWSHIP ACCEPTANCES



Four Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center Jerry H. Hodge School of Pharmacy fourth-year students and one alumna were accepted into Fellowships.

- **Ike Emesih** - Eli Lilly's Visiting Scientist Fellowship- Global Pricing, Reimbursement and Access: New Product Planning
- **Lottie Galvan** - Medical Information Fellowship with Sunovion in partnership with Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (MCPHS)
- **Laith Ghonim** - Medical and Scientific Affairs Fellowship with Abbott Diabetes Care in partnership with Keck Graduate Institute
- **Suzy Lin** - RevHealth Marketing Fellowship Program
- **Sajida Gowani** - Global Trial Manager Fellowship with Rutgers Institute for Pharmaceutical Industry/Novartis in Global Drug Development

## THANK YOU, STUDENT LEADERS



On behalf to TTUHSCSOP, thank you to all of our students who have served in leadership roles this academic year. Your time and efforts are appreciated.

**Campus Honor Council, SOP Standing Committees, Student Ambassadors, President's Select, TTUHSC, Abilene and Amarillo Student Government Associations, CLASS PRESIDENTS:** Abilene; Samantha Garrett (P4), Taeryn Woods (P3), Cheyanna Petty (P2), Katie Thomas - (P1), Amarillo; Audrey Yang (P4), Karli Ammons (P3), Joshua San-Juan (P2), Brayden Key (P1) Dallas; Laith Ghonim (P4), Ashlie Christian (P3), Mohid Shahab (P2), John Huynh (P1), Lubbock; Alex Stabler (P4), Lakyn Lucio (P3), **VP/TREASURERS** Abilene; Donald Nguyen (P4), Jacee Billings (P3), Lindsay Johnson (P2), Jessica Honey (P1), Amarillo; Modesta Ugochukwu (P4), Emily Conard (P3), Audrey Warner (P2), Kamren Shelton (P1), Dallas; Suzy Lin (P4), Taylor Curtis (P3), Hong Tran (P2), Tina Thai (P1), Lubbock; AJ Herrera (P4), Eric Kennison (P3), **SECRETARIES:** Abilene; Zane Goetz (P4), Maura Shaffer (P3), Faith Windham (P2), Klarisa Sanchez (P1), Amarillo; Giftina Wilson (P4), Avery Queen (P3), Shafoora Ahmed (P2), Jennifer Hale (P1), Dallas; Pooja Shah (P4), Shakiba Shahabi (P3), Vivian Ho (P2), Ronnie McCarty (P1), Lubbock; Emiley Novak (P4), Reena Maheshwari (P3), and **STUDENT COUNCIL EXECUTIVE OFFICERS:** Presidents; Maura Shaffer, Karli Ammons, Ashlie Christian, Alex Stabler, VP/Treasurers; Cheyanna Petty, Modesta Ugochukwu, Mohid Shahab, AJ Herrera, Secretaries; Faith Windham, Avery Queen, Taylor Curtis, Emiley Novak

# CAMPUSES CELEBRATE ACHIEVEMENT



On Friday, May 6, all four TTUHSCSOP campuses participated in the annual Celebration of Achievement. The event, which was held in person, recognized professional organizations, government accomplishments, students, faculty, and staff, and included faculty and staff trivia. Awards recipients are listed below.

## **OUTSTANDING CLINICIAN**

Abilene - Shantel Thomas (P4)  
Amarillo - Ross Singletary (P4)  
Dallas - Minitha Jacob (P3)  
Lubbock - Alex Stabler (P4)

## **OUTSTANDING PATIENT ADVOCATE**

Abilene - McKaela Ritchey (P3)  
Amarillo - Ashley Ghazizadeh (P4)  
Dallas - Mattie Moylan (P4)  
Lubbock - Savannah Ellis (P3)

## **Outstanding Service**

Abilene - Maura Shaffer (P3)  
Amarillo - Emily Conard (P3)  
Dallas - Daisy Doan (P2)  
Lubbock - Eric Kennison (P3)

## **STUDENT ROLE MODEL**

Abilene - Faith Windham (P2)  
Amarillo - Joe Brown (P4)  
Dallas - Afsana Musharof (P1)  
Lubbock - Lakyn Lucio (P3)

## **P1 GO GETTER**

Abilene - Katie Thomas  
Amarillo - Colby Coiner  
Dallas - Alan Linh Nguyen

## **P2 Rising Clinician**

Abilene - Elaina Spriggs  
Amarillo - Bryan Acuna  
Dallas - Parker Leinheiser

## **PROFESSORS OF THE YEAR**

P1 - Sami Nazzal  
P2 - Maciej Markiewski  
P3 - Christopher Selby

## **TEACHING TEAMS OF THE YEAR**

P1 - Pharmacy Foundations and Compounding  
P2 - Cardiovascular Pharmacotherapy  
P3 - Oncology Phamacotherapy

## **STAFF MENTOR**

Abilene - Missy Caton  
Amarillo - Lisa Bentley  
Dallas - Amanda Hines  
Lubbock - Gabby Robledo

**Excellence in Staff Services** Cat Cox - Amarillo and Bhaumik Patel - Abilene

# 2022 GRADUATION SPEAKER ANNOUNCED



Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center Jerry H. Hodge School of Pharmacy is excited to have Latresa Billings, PharmD, as our 2022 Commencement speaker. Dr. Billings, President of the Texas Society of Health Systems Pharmacists (TSHP) and an alumna of TTUHSC's Graduate Residency Program in Dallas, will share her message with our graduates at the May 21 ceremony at Hodgetown Ballpark in Amarillo.

# STUDENT PLACES SECOND IN HACKATHON COMPETITION

Nkechi Amadi, P3 and MPH candidate on the Amarillo campus, recently competed in the American Pharmacists Association's DigitalHealth Rx Hackathon. Approximately 65 teams were tasked with creating, coding and pitching a minimum viable product, in just 48 hours, that improved mental health support for health profession students. Nkechi and her team, required to have at least one computer science and one health professional student, earned a 2nd place finish and a grand cash prize for their MedMood prototype, which Nkechi designed.



# ABILENE CAMPUS HOSTS WTPA RETREAT



In March, the West Texas Pharmacy Association (WTPA) hosted their 101st annual Spring Retreat on the TTUHSC Jerry H. Hodge School of Pharmacy's Abilene campus. WTPA, one of the oldest pharmacy associations in Texas, was created to promote pharmacy in Texas and continues to focus on their foundational pillars of continuing education, scholarship, and fellowship.

During the three-day retreat, 29 scholarships were given, 21 of them to TTUHSCSOP students, and Dr. Lynn Crismon, PharmD, received the Heritage Award for outstanding contributions to pharmacy. The award, given to TTUHSC Jerry H. Hodge School of Pharmacy Dean Quentin Smith in 2020, is given to those who have made a meaningful contribution to advance the practice of pharmacy in West Texas, have been active WTPA participants and are held in high esteem by the WTPA Board of Directors and members.



# FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS



**Devin Lowe, Ph.D.** - promoted to Associate Professor with Tenure effective September 1, 2022. Lowe is currently an Assistant Professor in the Immunotherapeutics and Biotechnology Department on the Abilene campus. Lowe has been with TTUHSCSOP since 2015 and his lab is focused on studying tumor angiogenesis during (immuno)therapeutic interventions.



**Ashley Higbea, Pharm.D., BCPS** - promoted to Associate Professor effective September 1, 2022. Higbea is currently an Assistant Professor in the Pharmacy Practice Department on the Dallas campus. Higbea has been with TTUHSCSOP since 2015 and her practice site is at the UT Southwestern Family Medicine Clinic at Texas Health Dallas where she provides medication management, collaborative care, and precepts pharmacy students and residents.

## PROFESSOR RECEIVES DISTINGUISHED RESEARCH AWARD



TTUHSC Jerry H. Hodge School of Pharmacy Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences' Hiranmoy Das, Ph.D., received the Distinguished Research Award at the 2022 Chancellor's Council Distinguished Teaching and Research Awards. The award recognizes research excellence and is among the most prestigious research awards granted to faculty throughout the Texas Tech University System.

For more than a decade, Das's work — funded by multiple NIH grants — has investigated how Kruppel-like Factor 2, a gene that codes protein into a specific human chromosome, influences the development of bone and musculoskeletal diseases.

Das recently received tenure appointment and is a founding member of three start-up companies commercializing his university-based research — the most recent being RegenKera LLC in 2017. The collaborative work on a successful clinical trial led to a new treatment for dry eye disease. Das holds five patents.

Das is a member of the National Academy of Inventors, USA, and a Fellow of the American Heart Association. He also serves as a member of the editorial board for several peer-reviewed journals and on the grant review panels of various state, national and international funding agencies.

# TTUHSC SOP WELCOMES NEW RESEARCHER

Lance McMahon, Ph.D., became the senior vice president of the Office of Research and Innovation at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) in August of last year. In addition to this role, McMahon holds a faculty appointment as a professor in the Jerry H. Hodge School of Pharmacy's Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, where he recently received a tenure appointment. In this role, McMahon is focused on overseeing research with fellow former University of Florida team member, Jenny Wilkerson, PhD, and the rest of the TTUHSC Pharmaceutical Sciences research team.



McMahon previously served as professor and chair of the Department of Pharmacodynamics at the University of Florida College of Pharmacy and had a consistent record of successful research funding during his career. During his leadership as chair, the departmental faculty tripled in number and their external research funding quadrupled. Research success in the department was unanimous for several years, with all 11 of the tenured/tenure-track pharmacodynamics faculty members serving as principal investigators on at least one National Institutes of Health R-type grant during that time period.

Prior to his role at the University of Florida, McMahon was a tenured associate professor of pharmacology at the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio. He obtained a Ph.D. in behavioral neuroscience from Texas A&M University and was a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston.

McMahon's record demonstrates commitment to building strategic research partnerships. Along with faculty colleagues, he created a multidisciplinary academic drug discovery and development platform focused on central nervous system (CNS) acting natural products and synthetic derivatives. McMahon provides active leadership and support for several research centers and institutes. He currently serves on the executive board of the McKnight Brain Institute and is scientific advisor for the Center for Addiction Research and Education at the University of Florida.

The Center for Integrative Cardiovascular and Metabolic Diseases is housed within his home department, and his departmental colleagues play key roles in several institutes and centers including the Center for Natural Products Drug Discovery and Development, Cancer Center, Genetics Institute and Center for Pharmacometrics and Systems Pharmacology. In addition to past and current faculty appointments in medicine and pharmacy, he has taught pharmacology and neuroscience to Ph.D., medical, pharmacy, dental, physician assistant and physical therapy students. He was funded by the NIH since 2003 as primary investigator of six R01 grants, one R21, and two U grants for a total of \$21M in funding.

He published 113 peer-reviewed papers focusing on CNS acting drugs. McMahon is a regular member of a NIH study section. He has served on division executive boards within the American Society of Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics, as programming committee chair for the American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists and as editor for two peer-reviewed journals.

# STUDENTS HAVE FUN WHILE SUPPORTING WORTHY CAUSES



PDC Beta Rho celebrated Pi Day (3/14) by pieing faculty and students as part of a fundraiser benefiting St. Jude. Drs Frost, Bohn, Al- Ahmad, Snyder and Basinger, and students Joe Brown, Minsu Kim, Colby Coiner, Jonathan Ciaccio, Alysha Patel, Vrajesh Kanchanwala and Kyujin Lim were all pied to support the cause. Photo by Audrey Warner.

Our students recently participated in the very first all virtual Field Day, benefiting the American Heart Association. Over four weeks, our teams surpassed their fundraising goal and raised a total of \$2,035.79 in lifesaving donations. After a very close finish, Team Abilene claimed the 2022 TTUHSC Field Day Champion title with 445 points, followed by Team Dallas and Team Lubbock, respectively.

The TTUHSCSOP Student National Pharmaceutical Association (SNPhA) raised just over \$170 for the American Heart Association with their penny wars fundraiser. The P1 and P2 classes had the most points on the Amarillo and Dallas campuses, while the P3 and P4 classes won on the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center at Abilene campus.

## TPPC CONCLUDES SPRING MEDICATION CLEANOUT CYCLE



The Texas Panhandle Poison Center (TPPC), managed by the TTUHSC Jerry H. Hodge School of Pharmacy, wrapped up its Spring Medication Cleanout events with the third and final event taking place in Lubbock on April 30.

The collections yielded a combined 1,622 pounds of medications and sharps in Amarillo, 700 pounds of medication and 90 sharps collected from a total of 226 cars in Abilene, and 1,498 pounds of medication and 143 sharps collected in Lubbock. Similar events will be held in the same locations this coming Fall.

# UPCOMING EVENTS



Commencement ceremonies for the TTUHSC Jerry H. Hodge School of Pharmacy Class of 2022 will be held on **Saturday, May 21 at 10 a.m. at Hodgetown Ballpark** in downtown Amarillo. The main entrance for the park is located at 8th and Buchanan and parking is available on nearby streets, the Amarillo Civic Center or nearby parking garages (for a fee).

The event will be live-streamed on the [TTUHSC YouTube channel](#) and on the [Sod Poodles Facebook page](#).

## MAY 18-20:

- Faculty Retreat - on the Amarillo campus.

## MAY 20:

- P4 Awards Ceremony - 4:30pm in the Amarillo Harrington Auditorium, SOP Main Building.
- Graduation Reception - 6:30pm on the Amarillo campus. Class of 2022 graduates, their families, faculty and staff are welcome.

## June 13-14:

- [Research Days - Lubbock](#)

## June 16:

- Dallas Residency Graduation Dinner

## June TBD:

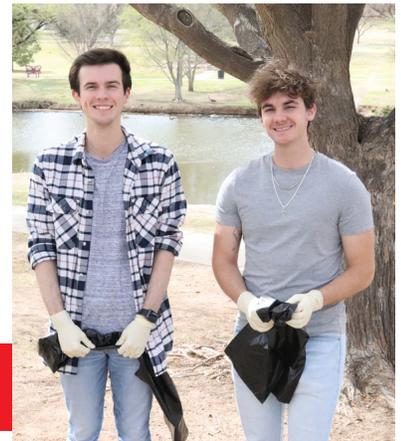
- Distinguished Staff Award Ceremony
- Employee Picnics



# Fun Around Campus



Gray for a Day Simulation in Abilene



Amarillo Student Council MediPark Service Project



Dallas, Abilene, and Amarillo Spring Formals



Have something or someone you'd like to see featured in the SOP Newsletter? Send a photo and a brief description of what you would like to see featured to [amber.bustos@ttuhsc.edu](mailto:amber.bustos@ttuhsc.edu)