Analysis of the SSPPS Student Body; Tony Manoguerra, PharmD, Associate Dean for Student Affairs, SSPPS. Dr. Manoguerra described the make-up of the incoming Class of 2014; the school set another record for number of applications received at over 1600. Women continue to outnumber the men as only 11 of the incoming students out of 62 are male. The majority of students are coming with undergraduate degrees from UC campuses with a few coming from out-of-state locations, such as the University of Minnesota. The age range of this class is 21-34. Dr. Manoguerra also discussed the recently graduated Classes of 2009 and 2010. The school is very proud that 100% of the students in the Class of 2009 passed the board exams on the first attempt. As for the Class of 2010, a little over half of them are continuing on to residencies while the rest have secured jobs in community pharmacies. San Diego continues to be the destination of choice for the vast majority of alumni.

Outstanding Teacher Awards; James Colbert, PharmD, Assistant Dean for Experiential Education, SSPPS. Dr. Colbert presented “Outstanding Teacher Awards” to eight of our fantastic preceptors: Lisa James, RPh, UCSD MC Hillcrest; Beatriz Lewis, PharmD, UCSD Moores Cancer Center; Francis Pham, PharmD, CVS Pharmacy; Gale Romanowski, PharmD, Rady Childrens Hospital San Diego; Todd Shinohara, PharmD, Naval Medical Center San Diego; Kelli Stadalman, PharmD, UCSD MC Thornton; Lillian Udomphonkul, PharmD, UCSD MC Hillcrest; and Christopher Woo, PharmD, Walgreens Pharmacy. The awards were given based on student feedback and overall contributions to our program. Thank you!!

Cultural Competency; Aide Gomez, BA, Instructor, Medical Spanish and Cultural Competency, UC San Diego School of Medicine. Ms. Gomez delivered a fascinating presentation regarding Latino culture and belief systems as it relates to communication and compliance in health care. She discussed the unique opportunities that pharmacists have to advise, educate and refer their Latino patients and also described some cultural expressions that patients use to describe the causes and treatments of their illnesses. Illustrative examples were provided of how religion, the role of each family member (in particular the mother), English fluency and literacy, and socioeconomic factors play into Latino patients’ understanding, acceptance and implementation of their medication therapies. The pharmacist often plays an important and critical role in ensuring proper medical care and treatment of their patients. Being aware of culture-specific beliefs, values, and behaviors enhances and improves competent and complete health care not only for Latino patients, but for patients of all cultures.

Health Literacy; Grace M. Kuo, PharmD, MPH, Associate Professor of Clinical Pharmacy (SSPPS), Associate Adjunct Professor of Family and Preventative Medicine (SOM). Dr. Kuo’s presentation provided intriguing insight into the health literacy of average American patients. Only 12% of Americans demonstrate proficient health literacy. Non-adequate health literacy is more prevalent among older adults, minority populations, immigrants, persons with low socioeconomic status, medically underserved people and persons with limited education. Dr. Kuo provided strategies to help identify patients who might need additional assistance in understanding how to properly adhere to their medication therapies. In addition, several tools, such as the Ask-me-3 campaign and the Rapid Estimate of Adult Literacy in Medicine revised (REALM-R), are available to help improve health literacy. Pharmacists can also employ communication techniques, such as using plain language and a “show me” technique, to ensure patients’ understanding of medication compliance. Both Dr.
Kuo and Ms. Gomez encouraged the use of customized Pill Cards; stickers with icons that represent time of day, dosage amount and other instructions can be utilized to effectively explain and illustrate medication instructions. A heightened awareness, a concerted effort to improve communication and understanding, and attention to the details can all lead to improved health literacy for all patients.

Healthcare Reformed 2010; Jeffery Goad, PharmD, MPH, Associate Professor of Clinical Pharmacy, Titus Family Department of Clinical Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Economics and Policy, University of Southern California, School of Pharmacy. Dr. Goad rounded out the conference with his engaging presentation on the new healthcare reform legislation which aims to increase coverage to 95% of all Americans. Currently, the United States leads the world in healthcare spending which, among other things, necessitated this reform. In very plain and easy-to-understand terms, he outlined the changes taking place each year from 2010 to 2015 and beyond; topics covered included coverage expansion, health insurance reform, Medicare/ Medicaid reform, health IT mandates, and prevention services. Changes we can expect to see in 2010 involve prohibition of lifetime benefit limits, establishment of limited small business tax credits, and Part D rebates for beneficiaries in the gap. Also, children will be able to stay on their parents’ policies until age 26, and there will be no pre-exclusions for children until age 19. A new federal rate review process will be established and rescissions will be prohibited except for fraud. As everyone well knows, this legislation was not free of controversy; Dr. Goad also discussed the major obstacles to passing it: abortion funding, partisanship & politics, and deficit impact. To help with costs, funding opportunities will come in the form of Community Transformation Grants, the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute, and MTM Grants.