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If you would like to continue supporting our school and our mission, we welcome you to:

Give Now



A Message from the Dean

Brookie Best, PharmD, MAS



Greetings to all of our alumni, students, staff, faculty and friends. I hope everyone had a great summer! I am very excited and honored to serve as the third Dean of SSPPS. Our founding and former deans, Drs. Palmer Taylor and James McKerrow, deserve our gratitude and appreciation for their vision and inspiration leading our school through the first 20 years. I look forward to building upon our school's foundation of excellence and innovation, and growing and strengthening our professional connections and relationships.

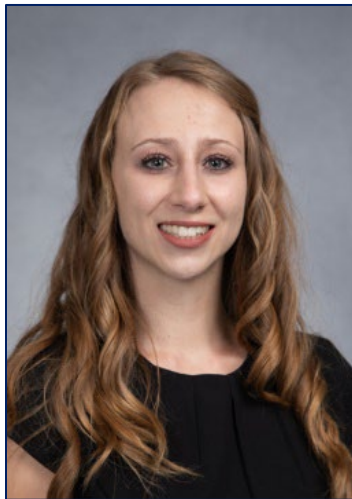
SSPPS continues to have excellent passing rates on both the national pharmacist board licensure exam (the NAPLEX) and the California licensing exam (the CPJE). We also, once again, had fantastic Residency and Fellowship match rates in 2022. In fact, a newly published [article](#) that used objective data to rank pharmacy schools nationally calculated our school to be ranked either #14 or #17 in the country overall (depending on the weighting of factors), and the **6th best pharmacy school in the country based on educational quality objective measures!** Kudos to our graduates and everyone who contributes to the success of our program year after year!

Our students, staff, faculty and alumni have been keeping busy this summer - representing our school at national meetings; advancing into new leadership positions; gaining well-deserved recognition and awards for their contributions to science, health and our profession; supporting one another through life's challenges; and celebrating our successes. I am proud to share their latest updates in this newsletter.

In Memoriam



It is with a heavy heart that we report the passing of our SSPPS alum, Dr. Fauzia Khan. As a graduate from the Class of 2011, Fauzia will be remembered as a bright student leader who always possessed a positive attitude and an infectious smile. She will be missed.



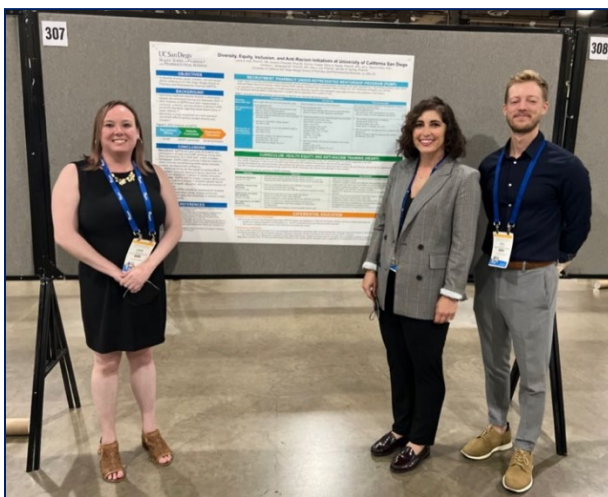
In July, the SSPPS family lost a treasured second-year student pharmacist, Mary Belaya. We are deeply saddened by Mary's passing and our hearts go out to her family, friends, and colleagues. Our school is truly one big family. We come together in times of joy and celebration, and we also come together in times of loss. Mary was a truly wonderful human filled with much love and joy. SSPPS will be hosting a celebration of life for Mary this fall. More details on this event to be released soon.

SSPPS Faculty Share Knowledge and Experience at AACP Pharmacy Education 2022

by Christina Mnatzaganian, PharmD, BCACP, APh
Associate Clinical Professor

After two years of virtual meetings, the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACCP) held its annual meeting in person July 23rd-27th in Dallas. SSPPS was represented by several faculty and associate deans. Five SSPPS faculty traveled to attend the AACCP meeting, which included networking, continuing education sessions, and disseminating scholarly work.

Faculty were proud to share their work during podium sessions. **Drs. Christina Mnatzaganian and Kelly Lee** presented the session, “Promoting wellbeing during Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experiences (APPE): Strategies for building a successful wellness series,” where they described SSPPS’s innovative APPE wellness program piloted in the 2020-2021 academic year. They discussed best practices, challenges encountered and steps forward. **Dr. Alex Luli** also presented a session on “Unleashing the power of student pharmacists at a student-run free clinic” where he described the operations of our UC San Diego Student Run Free Clinic in the context of meeting pharmacy educational needs as well as best practices for utilizing student pharmacists in patient care services and operations.

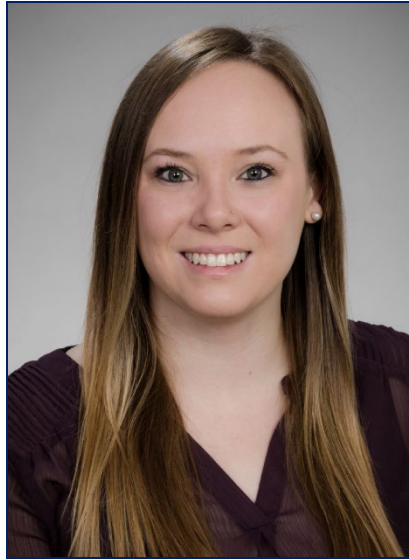


Faculty were also involved in several poster presentations. **Dr. Laura Hart** presented findings on a research poster, “Enhancing pharmacy student perceived knowledge, confidence, and attitudes in providing care to the LGBTQIA+ community” and school poster, “Diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism initiatives at University of California San Diego.” **Dr. Kelly Lee** co-presented “Perceptions and practices for evaluating faculty workload by pharmacy education administration” and “Evaluation of an APPE well-being promotion

(WelPro) program.”

Drs. Renu Singh and Kelly Lee served as the SSPPS Dean Delegates. **Dr. Joe Ma** served as the Faculty Delegate.

Appointment of Faculty Directors and Division Heads



The Office of Student Affairs is delighted that Dr. Laura Hart, PharmD, MS, BCPS, BCGP has joined our team as the Faculty Director for Student Affairs as of June 1st. Dr. Hart's experience is in excellent alignment for the position as she is passionate about supporting and mentoring students to help them reach their greatest potential. In her four years at SSPPS, she has had numerous opportunities serving our students in the classroom, as a faculty mentor, advising student organizations, precepting students' community outreach events, volunteering for student-led events, and so much more. Her three-year involvement on the Academic Oversight Committee has helped her gain meaningful insight on the academic and progression issues students' face. Dr. Hart is excited about increasing connections and involvement with our alumni community, as well as enhancing efforts related to equity, diversity, and inclusion at SSPPS. Welcome, Dr. Hart!

-Candis Morello, Associate Dean for Student Affairs



I am very pleased to announce that Christina Mnatzaganian was appointed as Director for Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experience (APPE) in the Office of Experiential Education (OEE), effective August 1, 2022. Dr. Mnatzaganian replaces Dr. Felix Yam, who resigned from his SSPPS faculty position at the end of July.

Dr. Mnatzaganian precepts APPE students in her Family Medicine clinic at UC San Diego Health. She has received several Excellence in Teaching awards from our students and the SSPPS Awards Committee in addition to receiving the prestigious UC San Diego Barbara and Paul Saltman Campus Distinguished Teaching Award. She was founding Residency Program Director for the SSPPS Community PGY1 Residency Training Program where she established new residency sites and preceptors and monitored quality of the training sites and program. She has also provided several preceptor development presentations to preceptors and residents. In 2020, Dr. Mnatzaganian led the creation of a very successful P4 Wellness Series which has now been incorporated into the P4 curriculum as a mandatory program.

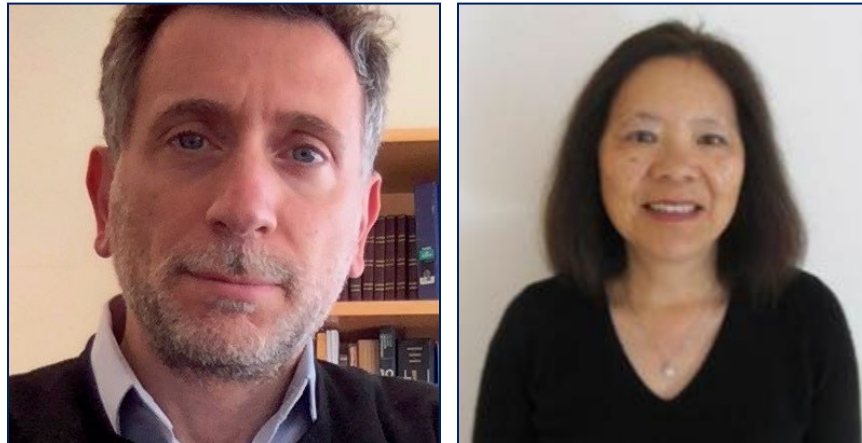
The OEE faculty and staff are delighted to welcome Dr. Mnatzaganian to her new position within our office.

-Renu Singh, Associate Dean for Experiential Education



I am thrilled to announce that Dr. Anthony O'Donoghue has been appointed and accepted the position of Faculty Director for Admissions and Outreach, effective September 1, 2022. Dr. O'Donoghue has been a faculty at SSPPS for seven years and on the Admissions Committee for four years. He served in the role of Admissions Committee Co-Chair prior to his director appointment. The Admissions team and I are excited to work with Dr. O'Donoghue in his new role!

-Rabia Atayee, Associate Dean of Admissions and Outreach



We would like to congratulate Drs. Carlo Ballatore and Vivian Hook on their appointments as Division Heads for Pharmaceutical Chemistry and Pharmaceutical Sciences, respectively.

Faculty Awards



Congratulations to Dr. Katharina Brandl who received the 2022 UC San Diego School of Medicine Dean's Award for Excellence in Teaching. Well done!



Dr. Fleur Ferguson is a recent recipient of the [PhRMA Foundation's 2022 Research Starter Grants](#) for her project, "A Generalizable Approach for Improved Pharmacokinetics in Neuro-Oncology." Congratulations, Dr. Ferguson!



Congratulations to Dr. Inma Hernandez for being selected as the [2022 National Academic of Medicine \(NAM\) Fellow in Pharmacy!](#) Well done!

Congratulations to Dr. Sarah Lorentz for being recognized for her achievements and contributions as a [San Diego Immunization Coalition \(SDIC\)](#) Steering Committee member for 2022. Thank you for all you do!



Faculty Highlights

Rabia Atayee, PharmD, BSPC, APh

[“Care That Enhances Quality of Life”](#)

AACP Academic Pharmacy Now

Pieter Dorrestein, PhD

[“You Are What You Eat,’ and Now Researchers Know Exactly What You’re Eating”](#)

UC San Diego News Center

[“What Techniques Are Used in Foodomics?”](#)

Labmate Online

Inma Hernandez, PharmD, PhD

[“Mark Cuban’s pharmacy startup is actually making drugs less expensive. It’s still working on solving the real problem”](#)

CNBC

[“Disparities in United States COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution”](#)

UC San Diego News Center

[“Vaccine Rollout Was Weaker In Greater Black Populations And Rural Areas, Study Finds”](#)

Forbes

[“Study: 88.9% of US Population Lives Within 5 Miles of a Community Pharmacy”](#)

Pharmacy Times

Bradley Moore, PhD

[“Unlocking Our Ocean’s Potential to Cure Disease”](#)

YouTube: Scripps Oceanography

Zoran Radić, PhD

[“Nanome Webinar: VR to Aid Antidote Design, structure-based design to treat organophosphate poisoning”](#)

YouTube: Nanome

SSPPS CAPSLead Students Represent UC San Diego and Win Advocacy Award at Kappa Psi 60th Grand Council Convention

by Julia Albanez, Class of 2024



The professional pharmaceutical fraternity Kappa Psi hosted its 60th Grand Council Convention at the Arizona Grand Resort and Spa in Phoenix, Arizona July 17th-22nd. Eight brothers from the UC San Diego collegiate chapter and three brothers from the San Diego graduate chapter attended the convention. For five days, more than 500 pharmacists and student pharmacists came together to represent their collegiate and graduate chapters to

discuss fraternity business, network among colleagues, and make new connections.

During the convention, student pharmacists had the opportunity to present their research at the student poster presentation session. Dan Surdilla (Class of 2024) and I presented our California Pharmacy Student Leadership (CAPSLead) project on “Perceptions of Pharmacists’ Qualifications Among the Public Population in California.” We were both honored to represent UC San Diego SSPPS and the CAPSLead program to Kappa Psi brothers from around the country.

At the convention’s closing banquet, Dan and I were awarded the top advocacy project poster for the poster presentation session. We both were very grateful for the recognition of our work to understand how the public perceives pharmacists and what we can do to further educate the public on our education and training to better serve our patients.



Annual Alumni Reunion

by Jenna Bastear, Director of Student Affairs



On Saturday, June 25th, SSPPS celebrated our 5-, 10-, and 15-year reunions for the Classes of 2007, 2012, and 2017, respectively! This was the first in-person alumni reunion in three years. It was such a treat to see our incredible alumni come back together. We know our alumni are making an impact out in our local communities, across the country, and even around the world. Sometimes it takes a reunion to have an opportunity to catch up.



In addition to the brunch and dinner receptions, we also awarded our two Distinguished Alumni of the Year awards. Dr. Joe Ennesser was awarded the inaugural 2020 Alumni of the Year award and Dr. Tim Bassell was awarded the 2021 Alumni of the Year Award. If you are interested in nominating an SSPPS alumnus for the 2022 Alumni of the Year award, please let the Office of Student Affairs know as we hope to see many applications this year. Our alumni are changing the world, and we want to acknowledge your incredible achievements. If you would like to see all of the photos taken at the event, please [see this link](#). We look forward to celebrating the classes of 2008, 2013 and 2018 next summer.

Alumni Highlights: Michelle Lai, Class of 2020



What have you been doing since graduation?

After graduating from SSPPS in 2020, I completed a PGY1 in Acute Care and PGY2 in Critical Care Pharmacy at UC San Diego Health and stayed on as a staff pharmacist at UC San Diego Hillcrest Medical Center.

Any words of wisdom to a new graduate?

Study with your classmates for boards. You've established study groups over the last four years so make good use of them. Try to go on a well-deserved vacation if you can. It's okay not to know exactly what you want to do. The beauty of pharmacy is that you can always change paths if you want to. Many pharmacists have pivoted in their careers, and you can, too.

What makes you love what you do?

I learn something new every day and I'm

surrounded by people who are excited to teach and learn.

How did the pandemic change your work (if at all)?

My day-to-day work hasn't really been affected by the pandemic, but many presentations and conferences have been changed to virtual. I miss the in-person interactions and discussions.

How have you been successful after pharmacy school?

Residency was challenging in that I had to learn a lot of new skills in a short amount of time. I tend to try to figure out everything on my own, but you can get stuck that way. It did take me a year to learn this but asking for help proactively helped me to accomplish my tasks.

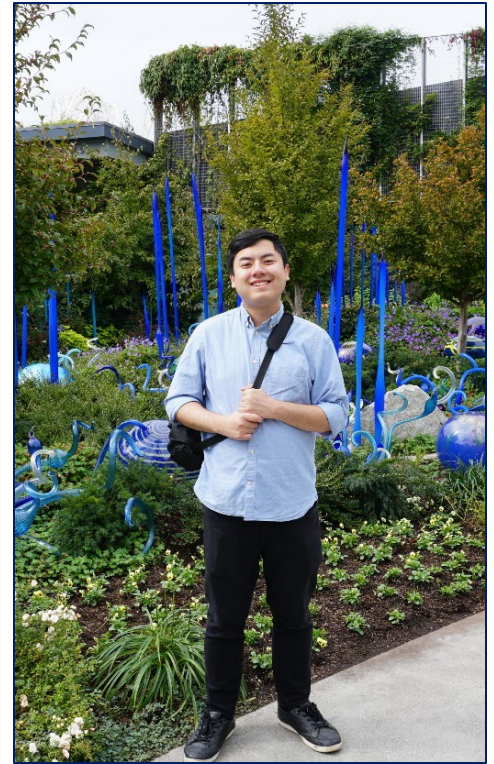
Alumni Highlights: Kevin Nguyen, Class of 2020

What you have been doing since graduation?

After graduation, I completed a PGY1 Acute Care pharmacy residency and then a PGY2 Internal Medicine pharmacy residency here at UC San Diego Health. After completing my two years of residency, I was fortunate to be able to continue at UC San Diego as a Transitions of Care pharmacist. Our Transitions of care team focuses on high-risk patients and patients with HIV and/or cardiovascular diseases. We work to update patients' medication lists prior to hospital admission, round with certain medical service teams, assist with discharge medication reconciliation, perform discharge education, and ensure appropriate follow-up after the patient's hospital stay.

Any words of wisdom to a new graduate?

We have so many opportunities for mentorship at UC San Diego SSPPS through the school's staff, faculty, and our IPPE/APPE preceptors, so I would highly recommend reaching out whenever you can since everyone is more than willing to help. I have received a lot of career advice and mentorship from reaching out to individuals that I have worked with as a pharmacy student, and this has been invaluable as I progressed through residency and as I am starting my first pharmacist career position. As you may have heard many times before, pharmacy is such a small world so you never know what opportunities may come along!



What makes you love what you do?

Fellow healthcare staff are always incredibly appreciative of pharmacy involvement with patient care and any pharmacy medication recommendations. Nurses, physicians, and other healthcare providers frequently reach out to the pharmacy department for complicated medication questions and for assistance with hospital operations, so it is incredibly rewarding to be able to contribute to the healthcare team and ensure appropriate medication management throughout the patient's hospitalization. Additionally, being able to connect with patients during their hospital admission and at the time of discharge is another highlight of the pharmacist's job. Patients always have many medication-related questions during their hospital admission and really love the one-on-one time they get during pharmacist interactions.

How did the pandemic change your work (if at all)?

The pandemic has impacted our overall workflow in the hospital by having the healthcare team minimize patient exposures. Typically in the past, most teams would have bedside rounds that involved going from room to room and discussing the plan more in-depth next to each patient's bed. However, now with the pandemic, we may discuss all patients in detail at a central location before having shorter visits in each room. The pandemic has also pushed us to utilize more technology for remote interactions by having a larger amount of telehealth activities, which some patients prefer rather than in-person visits since this may be more convenient in terms of scheduling and transportation and reduces their risk of in-person exposure.

State of the School Lunch Meeting

SSPPS staff gathered for their annual State of the School meeting at the Faculty Club on Monday, August 1st. Besides enjoying the provided lunch together for the first time in a couple of years, each staff member spent a moment or two talking about their job functions, recent accomplishments, and upcoming professional plans and goals. Additionally, SSPPS-specific results from the most recent UC Staff@Work survey were shared with staff, focusing on the reported strengths and opportunities for improvement.



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