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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

James H. McKerrow, PhD, MD



We are cautiously optimistic that the latest COVID-19 surge is behind us and a return to normal activities can begin. In the midst of all the challenges that the COVID restrictions have placed on us, we have continued to shine. We are very proud of EDI Program Manager, Dominic Cooper, who was awarded the Inclusive Excellence Award for Health Sciences. Please join me in congratulating him. You can read more about Dominic's achievements, along with many other awards our faculty and students have achieved, in this newsletter.

We are pleased to welcome new faculty, Dr. Jamie Kneebusch, to our school and count ourselves fortunate to have her expertise on board.

I will conclude by again acknowledging our incredible faculty, staff, and students who have all admirably navigated through the pandemic, rising to the many challenges with which they were faced. . Thank you, thank you, thank you.

SSPPS Peer Support Program: The Importance of the Venting Exercise

by Chelsea Oey, P3 Student, Peer Support Leader

On Wednesday, February 2nd, 2022, the Peer Support Program leaders hosted a *Venting Exercise* for the P1 Class. The activity itself seemed very straightforward: students had the opportunity to vent about anything with a partner while the partner validated feelings and experiences. Through this activity, the P1 class learned and practiced something more complex and important than simply venting: responding to emotional conversations in a healthy and appropriate manner. This event gave the participants some very valuable skills to carry forward in their careers as pharmacists as well as in their personal lives.

This activity was originally created as part of the Pain and Palliative Care elective by our very own Dr. Rabia Atayee, in collaboration with her UC San Diego Health colleagues on the Palliative Care Team, Kathryn Thornberry and Karolina Soriano. The exercise we taught was modified to be simpler and more casual than in the Pain and Palliative Care elective. Communication skills are essential in all that we do -- from sharing difficult clinical information to comforting a friend.

Personally, I have used these empathic communication venting skills both at my job and in my personal life. The activity teaches us how to become better active listeners when a lot of the time, at least for me, we are inclined to problem-solve everything, rather than listen. Not everything is meant to be or can be solved, and we must know when it is appropriate to take a step back and simply listen, acknowledge, and validate. For me, the Venting Exercise is one of the most helpful exercises I have learned at Skaggs. It is a simple but effective way to enhance your empathy, compassion, and soft skills.

I highly encourage anyone who is interested in learning about the Venting Exercise to reach out to the Peer Support Program, because we are available and happy to teach it to you on a one-on-one basis. This year, the Peer Support Leaders (PSLs) are a mix of 2nd- and 3rd-year student pharmacists: Jessica Gutierrez, Chelsea Oey, Michael Ley, Sydney Fuertes, Kenneth Ta, Allamar Moore, Tram N. Hoang, Mary Belaya, Charity Henrich, and Leeza Huor. You can find a PDF describing each of us in CANVAS under the Office of Student Affairs. If you are a P1 in need of support or would simply like to be matched with a PSL, please complete this short Qualtrics form [HERE!](#)

Special thank you to Dr. Atayee for teaching us this Venting Exercise, to our Peer Support Leaders for teaching it to the P1s, and to our faculty advisors: Dr. Shapiro and Dr. Morello. For this pilot year, the Peer Support Program is targeted towards the P1s to give them informal, positive support. We are here to listen. If any P1 wants someone to talk with, simply reach out to us using the Qualtrics [form](#). Our goal is to support our peers through active listening, prioritizing student confidentiality, and supporting overall well-being and increasing connections. Please email Jessica Gutierrez at jeg090@health.ucsd.edu to get in touch or for more information.

Monica Sliwa: Confessions

by Christine Cartlidge, Administrative Coordinator



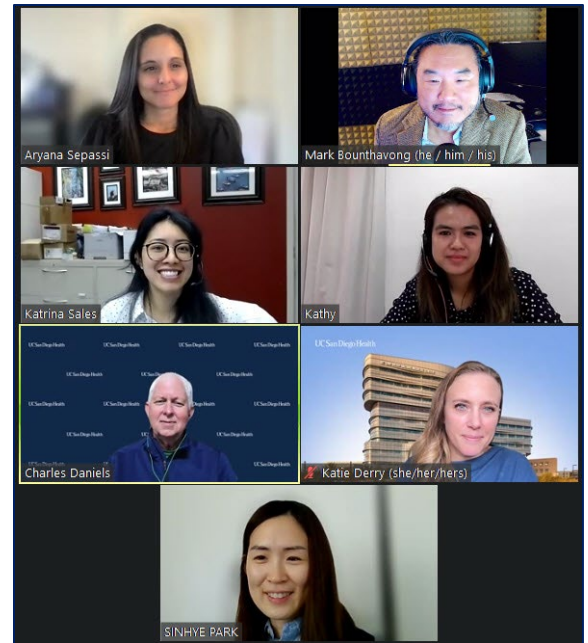
Congratulations to Monica Sliwa (Class of 2022) for her recent [feature in BuzzMusic](#), an online music magazine and platform for independent artists. The feature highlights Monica's incredible accomplishment of writing and releasing her first single "[Confessions](#)" while completing her APPE rotations and determining her post-graduation career plans. She describes how she fell in love with the sound of guitars as a refugee in Syria, how she taught herself to play after emigrating to the US, and the importance of students finding hobbies and activities to help them cope with stress and stay motivated.

We are certain Monica will continue to impress and make her SSPPS family proud, both in music and in her future career plans. Well done, Monica!

2022 UC San Diego AMCP P&T Competition

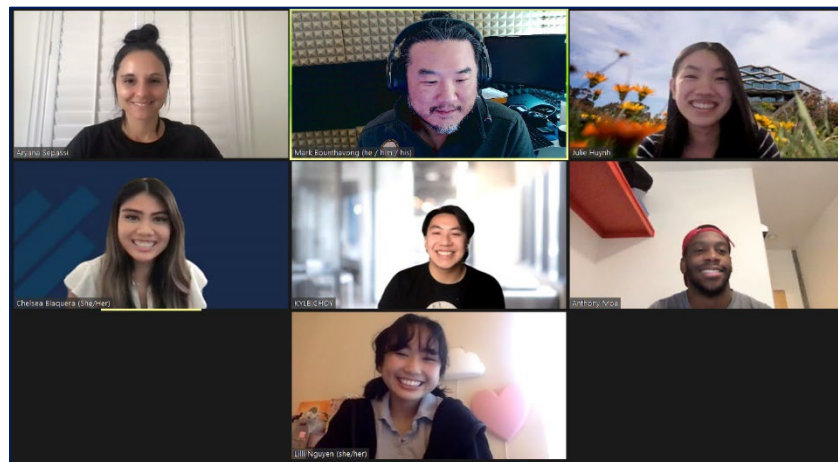
The Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy (AMCP) student chapter at UC San Diego (UCSD) proudly organized the 8th annual Local Pharmacy and Therapeutics (P&T) Competition on January 8th, 2022. Coordinated by UCSD-AMCP president, Chelsea Blaquera, and P&T Chair, Sinhye Park, the virtual competition showcased Skaggs School of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences (SSPPS) students' determination and ability to conduct comprehensive literature reviews, make evidence-based decisions, and deliver insightful presentations to improve patient healthcare, population health, and drug affordability.

We would like to acknowledge the contribution of the following pharmacists who took the time out of their busy schedules to serve as our judges for this year's competition: Drs. Charles Daniels, Kathy Nguyen, Katie Derry, and Katrina Sales.



The eight students who participated in the competition dedicated a great amount of time and effort into preparing their monographs and presentation for the investigational drug ponesimod (Ponvory™), a novel agent to treat adults with relapsing forms of multiple sclerosis (MS). Therefore, we would like to congratulate the local winners: Kyle Choy, Julie Huynh, Anthony Mba, and Lilliana Nguyen. The SSPPS students will represent UC San Diego at the national AMCP P&T competition.

A BIG thank you again to all the judges, student organizers, and competing teams for making this event successful!



Student Journal Articles

Dro Keshishi (P3)

[Common osteoporosis drug associated with increased rates of depression and anxiety](#)
Scientific Reports

Alumni Highlight: Dr. Omeed Valipour



When I entered pharmacy school back in 2013, I thought about going to law school after eventually earning my PharmD. However, by the time I became a P3, I was not sure if I wanted to go through three more years of academics, but even more so, I wasn't sure if I could handle all the reading and writing that law school demands. It was not until I met a patent lawyer on one of my rotations during P4 year that I decided to go full speed ahead with law school. They helped me see how my PharmD would uniquely position me as a lawyer and the type of niche career I could potentially develop for myself. I signed up for the LSAT almost the next day and spent a couple of weeks studying while on my CVICU rotation in order to get my score back in time to start law school immediately post-graduation (I do not recommend doing this).

Fast forward three years: I graduated from the University of Chicago Law School, and I am now working as a capital markets associate at a global law firm, Latham & Watkins LLP, advising companies on a range of public and private equity offerings with a focus on life sciences. When I initially started law school, I envisioned myself becoming a patent lawyer working on pharmaceutical patents. I figured my science background would best serve me in that role. However, I quickly realized during my summer internship that not only did I despise case research, which is a common task for patent lawyers, but my deep knowledge of pathophysiology and pharmacology would be much more useful as a capital markets attorney working on life sciences deals. When I am working on a deal for a biotech or medtech company, I can use my pharmacy school knowledge almost daily. My favorite type of deal to work on is initial public offerings for biotech companies because I can use my background to take a deep dive into the company's therapies, including the preclinical and clinical data, the science behind those therapies and the diseases they treat or intend to treat, which is immensely helpful when crafting legal disclosure about the company's business.

My tip to current PharmD candidates is to network as much as possible. Whether you want to pursue becoming a retail or clinical pharmacist, pursue a career in industry or pursue a joint degree of some kind, it is important to reach out to those who have already successfully accomplished just that. This will not only help you grow your educational and professional networks, but it can also lead to friendships, mentorships and professional relationships that may also help serve you in your future career. More importantly, hearing firsthand how that person navigated their career path can be enormously helpful for you as you progress through pharmacy school and start applying for residencies, fellowships, graduate schools, or jobs. On the other side of the spectrum, if you are still unsure of what type of career you envision having after pharmacy school, networking can also help you figure out what career path may or may not be right for you.

Email: omeed.valipour@lw.com

Bio: <https://www.lw.com/people/omeed-valipour>

A Quick Check-In with Dr. Tran Nguyen



I graduated from UC San Diego in 2019 and went on to complete PGY-1 and PGY-2 in Pediatrics at the UC San Francisco Medical Center. After residency graduation, I took a full-time position as a Cardiovascular Intensive Care Unit Clinical Pharmacist Specialist at Phoenix Children's Hospital.

Any words of wisdom to a soon-to-be new graduate?

Always be kind to yourself! You cannot learn and know everything overnight.

What makes you love working in the field of pharmacy?

I love that I always learn something new every day in pediatrics and see how resilient pediatric patients are!

How have you been successful after pharmacy school?

The clinical foundation I received from UC San Diego was a great building block for my residency experience. Because teaching is the best way to learn a topic, during residency, I actively participated in teaching and precepting. Those experiences really challenged me to strengthen my clinical understanding of different disease states and mechanisms of actions of medications. I want to encourage our current students to take part in teaching in different settings such as our free clinics, electives, etc.

Inaugural SSPPS Distinguished Alumnus of the Year Award



2020 Distinguished Alumnus of the Year

Dr. Joseph Ennesser, Class of 2006

Dr. Ennesser is currently Chief Operating Officer at Crossover Health. As a student, Joe was known to be inquisitive and insightful. He has had a unique leadership trajectory within community pharmacies starting at Target, then CVS, and now at Crossover Health. He has positively impacted thousands of patients through his leadership achievements in the community; and his impact on the profession of pharmacy has been wide-ranging.

2021 Distinguished Alumnus of the Year

Dr. Timothy Bassell, Class of 2011



Dr. Bassell is currently a Staff Pharmacist practicing in the Emergency Department at UC San Diego Health. As a student, Tim was always going above and beyond. His passion for teaching and service to SSPPS has been unparalleled. He has contributed to our teaching program in all four years of the curriculum and influenced countless students and alumni. He has been awarded the Volunteer Teaching Award three times, in 2014, 2017, and 2020.

Both recipients will be recognized at the 2022 Alumni Reunion on Saturday, June 25, 2022.

Alumni Journal Articles

Tigran Makunts, PharmD

[Common osteoporosis drug associated with increased rates of depression and anxiety](#)
Scientific Reports

[Postmarketing safety surveillance data reveals protective effects of botulinum toxin injections against incident anxiety](#)
Scientific Reports

Lina Meng, PharmD, BCIDP, BCCCP

[Effect of rapid methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* nasal polymerase chain reaction screening on vancomycin use in the intensive care unit](#)
American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy

Mary Moss Chandran, PharmD

[Entrustable professional activities for pharmacy students: A primer for solid organ transplant preceptors](#)
American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy

Alumni Featured in the News

Lannie Duong, PharmD

[Pharmacists struggle to keep up with a spike in demand for their services](#)
PSB NewsHour

Tigran Makunts, PharmD

Botox Injections May Reduce Anxiety
[UC San Diego Health Newsroom](#), [The Hill](#), [The London Free Press](#), [Tech Explorist](#), [Channel 93.3](#), [Psychology Today](#), [ABC Cleveland](#), [SciTechDaily](#), [International Business Times](#)

Saif Namiq, PharmD

[Former Iraqi Refugee Turned San Diego Pharmacist Gives Back to His Community](#)
NBC San Diego

Welcome Dr. Jamie Kneebusch

by Linda Awdishu, PharmD, Division Head for Clinical Pharmacy



Welcome to Dr. Jamie Kneebusch, our newest PharmD faculty member. Dr. Kneebusch received her Doctor of Pharmacy degree from SSPPS in 2016. She completed a PGY1 Acute Care Residency and PGY2 Psychiatric Pharmacy residency at the Veterans Affairs San Diego Health Care System and is board certified in Pharmacotherapy and Psychiatry. She has practiced as a Psychiatric Clinical Pharmacist at the Riverside University Health System and more recently, she is a Population Health Clinical Pharmacist, specializing in Behavioral Health at Banner Health. Dr. Kneebusch will be serving as our faculty specialized in substance use disorder. We are excited about the teaching, research and clinical practice she will expand at SSPPS in this specialty.

Faculty Journal Articles

Ruben Abagyan, PhD

[Common osteoporosis drug associated with increased rates of depression and anxiety](#)

Scientific Reports

[Postmarketing safety surveillance data reveals protective effects of botulinum toxin injections against incident anxiety](#)

Scientific Reports

[ARN25068, a versatile starting point towards triple GSK-3 \$\beta\$ /FYN/DYRK1A inhibitors to tackle tau-related neurological disorders](#)

European Journal of Medicinal Chemistry

Faculty Featured In The News

Ruben Abagyan, PhD

Botox Injections May Reduce Anxiety

[UC San Diego Health Newsroom](#), [The Hill](#), [The London Free Press](#), [Tech Explorist](#), [Channel 93.3](#), [Psychology Today](#), [ABC Cleveland](#), [SciTechDaily](#), [International Business Times](#)

[Tackling Tau to Treat Alzheimer's](#)

News of UC San Diego Health Sciences

Victor Nizet, MD

[Largest bacterium ever discovered has unexpectedly complex cells](#)

Science

Sally Rafie, PharmD

[Pharmacist's Role Is Key in Counseling Patients](#)

Pharmacy Times

Dominic Cooper: Inclusive Excellence and LEAD Fellow



Congratulations to Dominic Cooper, Project Manager for EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) at SSPPS, for being awarded the [2021 Inclusive Excellence Award](#) in the Health Sciences area of UC San Diego! This annual awards program recognizes faculty, staff, students, departments, and organizations for their leadership in advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion and for their strong commitment to the [Principles of Community](#) at UC San Diego. Mr. Cooper and a few of his fellow recipients were also recently featured in the [UC San Diego News Center](#).

Additionally, Mr. Cooper was selected as a [2021-2022 Leader for Equity Advancement and Diversity \(LEAD\) Fellow](#). LEAD Fellows support and advance UC San Diego's Strategic Plan goal of "cultivating a diverse and inclusive university community that encourages respectful open dialogue, and challenges itself to take bold actions that will ensure learning is accessible and

affordable for all."

We are endlessly proud of Mr. Cooper and are grateful to have him as a part of the SSPPS team. Congratulations!

We Made it Indoors!

by Adrienne Gomez, Simulation Lab Coordinator



Despite this pandemic time, the APhA Immunization Course, held on Saturday, October 9th, 2021, took place in-person inside our HSEC Auditorium. With months of conscientious organization and methodical planning, 72 of our first-year pharmacy students received their immunization training certificate of achievement.

Once yearly, SSPPS offers a 3-day program to obtain and establish the proper training for immunizing. This training program includes hands-on injection technique, clinical evaluation of indications and contraindications of vaccines, and the recognition and treatment of emergency reactions to vaccines.

This interactive, live training provides students with the skills necessary to become primary sources of vaccine advocacy, education and administration. Additionally, the training prepares our future pharmacists with comprehensive knowledge, skills and resources necessary to provide immunization services to patients.

This APhA Immunization Course is led by Dr. Alex Luli with the help of SSPPS staff, Adrienne Gomez and Cristal Magana.

UC San Diego Health: ASHP Certified Center of Excellence in Medication-Use Safety and Pharmacy Practice

UC San Diego Health

ASHP (American Society of Health-System Pharmacists) has named the University of California San Diego Health (UC San Diego Health) as the first organization to be recognized as an ASHP Certified Center of Excellence™ in Medication-Use Safety and Pharmacy Practice. The certification formally recognizes UC San Diego Health's high-performing pharmacy department for its commitment to superior patient care.

CSHP member and Chief Pharmacy Officer for UC San Diego Health and Associate Dean of Professional Practice Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, Charles E. Daniels, BS Pharm, PhD, had this to say about the amazing honor.

"The Center of Excellence recognition is a tribute to the outstanding teamwork that we have at UC San Diego Health. We are honored to be the first to receive this designation from ASHP. We challenge our colleagues in CSHP to review the standard and become the next to be recognized."

Learn more about UC San Diego Health's exceptional work and ASHP's new designation [here!](#)

UC San Diego Biomedical Library

9500 Gilman Dr 0699
La Jolla, California
92093-0699

Penny Coppernoll-Blach, MLS
Biomedical Library Liaison for SSPPS
pblach@ucsd.edu
(858) 534-4431

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