College of Pharmacy Annual Report for FY2018

URI College of Pharmacy

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THE UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND
COLLEGE OF
PHARMACY
ANNUAL REPORT 2018
WHO WE ARE

Mission
Create the future of health through pharmacy.

Vision
Excellence through leadership

Organizational values
We value: service to the local, national and global community; integrity and ethical behavior; innovation and collaboration in research; professional practice and education; personal growth through lifelong learning; diversity and respect for all individuals; cultural competence.
DEAN’S MESSAGE

As educators in a medical field, I’ve always felt that we in the College of Pharmacy serve more than the students who roam our halls. We are also dedicated to the world outside the University through our research and know that the work we produce in our labs at Avedisian Hall should have a lasting impact throughout the health system.

Looking back over the past year, it’s clear the College has made great strides in accomplishing both those goals — educating the next generation of pharmacists and pharmaceutical scientists, and making major contributions to the overall health of our society. The pages of this report detail just some of those accomplishments.

Perhaps nothing better exemplifies our commitment to innovation than the college being ranked 11th in the nation in federal research funding. We have made a concerted effort to invest in our research, a commitment that is continuing into the new academic year. Our professors are working on, innovative treatments to fight cancer, battle the devastating effects of alcohol use disorder, expand HIV treatment and prevention methods, and find ways to use natural, holistic methods to treat a host of ailments.

The successes highlighted in the following pages are just a few of the ways our faculty members are working to impact the community. That same dedication is evident in the classroom, inspiring students to collaborate on projects and pursue their own innovations. Our students have received research awards of their own, been honored nationally for their service in the community, completed health services missions in foreign lands and lobbied state officials on important pharmaceutical issues. Our recent graduates have achieved impressive board pass rates, secured residency positions at a clip well above the national average, and nearly unanimously found employment immediately upon graduation.

The past few years have seen the College enhance its status as a leader in the pharmaceutical, biomedical and health industries, momentum that will continue in coming years. We hope you are as excited as we are to look back on the achievements of the past year and look forward to the major accomplishments to come.

–Dean E. Paul Larrat
Pharm. D. by the numbers

INCOMING CLASS OF 2024

- **775**
  - UNDERGRADUATE Pharmacy students enrolled for Fall 2018
- **4.10**
  - Average GPA of incoming class
- **1312**
  - Average SAT score of incoming class
- **15 States**
  - Students are from

B.S.P.S. by the numbers

INCOMING CLASS OF 2022

- **1173**
  - Average SAT score of incoming class
- **3.30**
  - Average GPA of incoming class
- **6 States and 2 Foreign Countries**
  - Students are from:

Pharm. D.

CLASS OF 2018

- **96.7%**
  - Rate of immediate employment among 2018 graduates
- **94%**
  - NAPLEX first-time pass rate
Residency Placements

The URI College of Pharmacy consistently ranks among the top pharmacy schools in the country for post-graduate residency matches. The Class of 2018 has achieved an overall success rate of 80 percent, outpacing the national average of 65 percent, according to the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists.

URI students have been placed in the following locations:

Baystate Medical Center, Springfield, MA
Boston Medical Center, Boston, MA
Cambridge Health Alliance, Cambridge, MA
Cape Regional Medical Center, Cape May Court House, NJ
CVS Health, Lincoln, RI
Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center-Lebanon, Lebanon, PA
Eastern Maine Medical Center, Bangor, ME
Henry Ford Hospital, Detroit, MI
Holyoke Health Center Pharmacy, Holyoke, MA
Indian Health Service, Albuquerque Indian Health Center, Albuquerque, NM
Kaiser Permanente-San Diego, San Diego, CA
Kent County Memorial Hospital, Warwick, RI
Loma Linda University Health, Loma Linda, CA
Maine Medical Center, Portland, ME
Mercer University College of Pharmacy, Atlanta, GA
Rhode Island Hospital, Providence, RI
South County Health, Wakefield, RI
UMass Memorial Medical Center, Worcester, MA
UMass Medical School—Clinical Pharmacy Services, Shrewsbury, MA
UNC/D-Rex Pharmacy, Jonesville, NC
University Hospitals Portage Medical Center, Ravenna, OH
University of Rhode Island PGY1 Community, Kingston, RI
University of Rochester Medical Center, Rochester, NY
University of Vermont Medical Center, Burlington, VT
US Medical Affairs, Merck & Co, Inc., Kenilworth, NJ
Veterans Affairs Connecticut Healthcare System, West Haven, CT
Veterans Affairs Maine Healthcare System, Augusta, ME
Veterans Affairs Nebraska-W. Iowa Health Care System-Grand Island, NE
Veterans Affairs New Jersey Health Care System, East Orange, NJ
VA Tennessee Valley Healthcare System, Nashville, TN
Veterans Affairs Medical Center-Washington, Washington, D.C.
Veterans Health Care System of the Ozarks, Fayetteville, AR
Western New England University/CoP—Big Y, Springfield, MA
Wolfson Children’s Hospital/Baptist Health, Jacksonville, FL

URI Success Rate: 80%  National Average: 65%
RESEARCH

Dynamic Faculty, Students fuel Scientific Breakthroughs
College Ranked 11th nationally in Federal Research Funding

The University of Rhode Island College of Pharmacy is now ranked 11th in the nation in total federal research grant funding after securing nearly $12 million in federal funds in fiscal 2017, the latest year for which numbers are available. That ranking — of 138 pharmacy colleges nationwide — is a record for URI.

URI is now the number 1 ranked pharmacy college in the Northeast in terms of federal research funding, primarily from the National Institutes of Health, and number 2 on the East Coast. Only the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill ranked higher on the list.

The College had consistently ranked in the 20s for the preceding five-year period prior to 2017. A dynamic faculty focused on scientific breakthroughs, along with a concerted effort to increase grant funding and research partnerships, contributed to the move up the ranks, according to Dean E. Paul Larrat.

“Many of our faculty members are in the middle, the primes, of their research careers and they’re really hitting their stride,” Larrat said, noting he expects the College will maintain the momentum going forward. “These successful, seasoned researchers are also mentoring our younger professors, whose new research funding isn’t even reflected in the 2017 rank. That’s what makes this sustainable.”

A committee of researchers, led by Professors Navindra Seeram, Kerry LaPlante, Bongsup Cho and Angela Slitt meet regularly to strategize research efforts and target grant funding. LaPlante recently held a grant funding workshop, teaching researchers in the Colleges of Pharmacy, Nursing and Health Sciences as well as the R.I. Idea Network of Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE) program tips on writing grant applications. Slitt is chairwoman on the URI Council for Research Grants Program, serving as a university-wide advocate for grant funding.

The funding fuels critical research in such areas as drug development, cancer treatment and prevention, health outcomes, neurological health and the use of natural ingredients like maple in maintaining health, among a host of other important subjects. The benefit to the community of such scientific breakthroughs is obvious, but the grant funding also helps the College continually improve its educational offerings.

“We harp on our students to make a difference, and they see our faculty members doing just that,” Larrat said. “Being able to take salient discoveries from the research labs and bring that work into the classrooms is of benefit to our students; it makes us better teachers, and it makes our students better scientists and health providers. The access to work in those labs is incredibly valuable to our students. And it is translated into helping the patients we all serve.”
Drug Study Produces ‘Promising Therapy’ for Alcohol Use Disorder

Alcohol use disorder is among the leading causes of preventable death in the United States, killing more than 88,000 people a year, according to the Centers for Disease Control, more than HIV/AIDS, gun violence and car crashes combined. Despite this, the current medications available to treat alcohol use disorder are not highly effective.

A URI College of Pharmacy Professor is focusing on changing that. Fatemah Akhlaghi, PharmD, PhD, is part of a team working to develop a novel medication to treat the disorder. Funded by a $1.65 million grant from the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences, a branch of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Akhlaghi’s team at URI is testing the safety and efficacy of a drug originally developed by Pfizer to treat obesity and diabetes.

The drug focuses on ghrelin, a peptide with 28-amino acids that stimulates appetite and food intake. Known as “the hunger hormone,” ghrelin levels and feelings of hunger increase in tandem. In those suffering from alcohol use disorder, higher concentrations of ghrelin are associated with higher alcohol craving and consumption. The researchers believe an oral medication that blocks ghrelin may help stave off the cravings for alcohol. The initial study has shown positive results in lab rats and in 12 patients who volunteered for a study at NIH. The result of this study was published in May 2018 in Molecular Psychiatry.

“We cannot say this is a cure; we can say it is a promising therapy.”

The researchers are now working on a larger placebo-controlled clinical trial which will further test the medication on patients with alcohol use disorder. Researchers will study the effects of the medication on patients’ alcohol cue responses using functional magnetic resonance imaging to determine whether the drug has adequate efficacy for treating disorder.
Stopping Cancer Before it Starts

A person unknowingly exposed to a carcinogen may live for decades before a cancer diagnosis is made, giving tumors time to grow and the disease time to develop.

But what if people knew what toxins they’ve been exposed to in their lifetimes long before a cancer has begun to form? They could be screened for the cancers those carcinogens cause and have a much better chance of tackling the disease before it turns incurable.

URI College of Pharmacy Assistant Professor Deyu Li is trying to give people exactly that chance, leading a study to identify the mutational spectra of environmental toxins. Funded by the $2.1 Million ONES (Outstanding New Environmental Scientist) Award from National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, the five-year study examines the mutational spectra of human carcinogens.

“It’s often a very long time between exposure to a carcinogen and a diagnosis of cancer,” Li said. “By then, it’s often too late for the patients. But we can help them know way earlier than that.

By identifying the damaging patterns to the genome, we could tell people they are at risk. They’ll have a better chance of living longer and living a better life.”

By collaborating with Professor Bongsup Cho’s lab in the same department, Li’s study begins with 4-aminobiphenyl and amino-alpha-carboline. The former is the only known chemical that can cause human bladder cancer and the latter is a carcinogen that is formed in well-done cooked meat, diesel gas exhaust and tobacco smoke. He hopes to identify mutational spectra of the two toxins, with the goal of eventually mapping many other carcinogens. Once the mutational spectra are identified, people who have their genomes sequenced can know to watch for specific cancers as they age.
Pharmacy Professor Wins $2 million Avenir Award

A pharmacy professor’s study that aims to leverage the influence of social networks or communities among people who use drugs for HIV treatment and prevention was selected for the 2018 Avenir award for HIV/AIDS research by the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

Assistant Professor Ashley Buchanan is this year’s awardee and will receive more than $2 million over the next five years to fund her “highly innovative study,” according to NIDA.

Buchanan’s project is designed to advance HIV prevention and treatment research by studying drug users who are part of social networks or communities that may exert biological or social influence on their members. Current methodological approaches to estimate and evaluate how prevention and treatment interventions permeate a risk network or community of drug users are limited. Buchanan’s research will improve the quality of information obtained from network-based studies, helping facilitate interventions by expanding the knowledge base of HIV preventative and treatment best practices and leveraging network-based effects to reduce risk and improve HIV prevention and treatment.

The study will develop novel statistical methodologies to determine the best ways to reach the most at-risk people with treatment and information they need. Intravenous drug users can be supported to engage in less risky behaviors, such as not sharing injection equipment, and to get tested for HIV and seek treatment if needed. Successfully treating and educating one person helps not only that individual live a healthier life, but also others in the social network with whom he or she interacts.

“The goal ultimately is developing methods that can help us better understand how these social connections play a role in the effectiveness of biological and educational interventions,” Buchanan said. “The bottom line is understanding when these effects differ depending on what the individual's role is in the network. How can you design future interventions to better leverage the beneficial spillover?”
Mind Over Matters

Six weeks of yoga and meditation proved a potent prescription for students who participated in a recent College of Pharmacy study.

Conducted by pharmacy student John Hoolahan ’19, Clinical Associate Professor Virginia Lemay and Assistant Professor Ashley Buchanan, the study, titled “Samyama: Stress, Anxiety, Mindfulness: A Yoga and Meditation Assessment,” found students reporting increased mindfulness coupled with decreased stress and anxiety levels after a month-and-a-half of weekly practice. Seventeen students participated. About half of those were pharmacy students.

The students undertook a one-hour vinyasa yoga class, followed by guided meditation. Students completed questionnaires at the beginning and end of the program, assessing their stress, anxiety and mindfulness levels.

Hoolahan, who is also a Reiki master, said the study evolved out of conversations he had with Lemay about integrating his spiritual life with his academic and professional pursuits. “I was coming out of a time when I was very unsure as to what I wanted to be on this Earth for,” Hoolahan said. “This showed me I’m capable of merging these two worlds that I’ve found.”

The popularity of the study — and a spin-off weekly meditation class — have the trio considering what they might do next. Hoolahan would like to do more research and find a larger space to make yoga, meditation and Reiki available to more people.

The need is real, the three agreed.
Student Earns National Award for Work in Public Health

URI College of Pharmacy student Paige Ethier earned national recognition for her commitment to public health and her work with underserved populations from the United States, Public Health Service.

Lt. Jessica Newman presented the P4 student with the Excellence in Public Health Pharmacy Award in Dean E. Paul Larrat’s office April 18. The Annual Excellence in Public Health Service presents the award to increase the public’s awareness of the critical role pharmacists play in promoting healthy communities.

“This year’s awardee is recognized for her extensive work with medically underserved populations, including carrying out educational campaigns for underserved residents of Rhode Island, staffing immunization clinics and health screening for incarcerated inmates and developing educational programs for native American tribes,” Lt. Jessica Newman said. “Pharmacists are trusted health care providers who have the capability to produce a positive impact on our nation’s health.”

Ethier, a South Kingstown, R.I., native, has traveled around the country working with Native American tribes, including the Cocopah and Quechan tribes in Yuma, Arizona, and the Cherokee tribe in Oklahoma. She worked as a pharmaceutical intern, helping run immunization clinics, screening for such conditions as diabetes and hypertension, and spreading public awareness to prevent the conditions. She has also done similar work in prisons around the country, Ethier said she hopes to continue in a career in public health.

Pharmacy Professor Brett Feret nominated Ethier for the award to recognize the work she has already completed toward that goal.

“I know she is committed to public health,” Feret said. “Looking at all she’s done this year and all the work she’s done in the public health sphere, it just made sense to nominate her.”

“Pharmacists are trusted health care providers who have the capability to produce a positive impact on our nation’s health.”
College Confers 165 Degrees

Dean E. Paul Larrat urged graduates to always “act to maintain that trust” patients need to have for their pharmacists as they embark on their careers after 165 of them received their degrees Sunday, May 20.

“There’s a psychological component to all medications,” Larrat told the group in his commencement address. “Why is this? There’s that psychological effect because patients trust that that medication is going to work; they trust their prescriber; they trust the person that dispenses and supplies them with pharmaceutical information. In short, they trust the system from which that medication comes. They trust you; each and every one of you. So my challenge to you today as you leave is to always act to maintain that trust. Always act in a professional manner. Always be trustworthy. Indeed, it’s really the health of the patients that will benefit from that trust.”

Earlier, graduate Paige Lovellette led her now former classmates in one final “Rhody, Rhody, Rhody” chant while delivering the student commencement address. Lovellette reflected on her years at the university with an eye to the future, noting that while graduation is an end, “commencement is a beginning.” She urged her fellow graduates to “dare to be different” and embrace all opportunities that will come their way.

“The University of Rhode Island has given you an incredible instrument, and it is important to take what you have learned these past six years and continue to grow and blossom,” Lovellette said. “We are at a time in our country when anyone, from any place, at any age can make a difference. There will be times when opportunities present themselves. Do not be afraid to take them. Every opportunity brings us a chance to make that difference. Create those opportunities and vow to be a difference maker.”
Leadership, Service and Care

Reflecting on his college career, Joseph Nardolillo remembers being shy and not very involved at the start of his freshman year. But his time within the College of Pharmacy has taught him to take advantage of every opportunity, on campus and beyond.

Nardolillo’s impressive work has taken him to pharmacies and medical centers throughout Rhode Island, and to underserved communities around the world. His time at URI has given him the opportunity to volunteer his services in Jamaica, Ghana and Guatemala, an experience he said has shaped him as a pharmacist and a person.

On his first mission trip to Kingston, Jamaica, Nardolillo said he was basically operating as a “pharmacist out of a suitcase. It was a unique experience because pharmacists often aren’t brought along and are many times undervalued on these types of trips,” he said. “The pharmacist has a way bigger role than just handing out a prescription. You have to make sure that they’re dosing correctly; you have to make sure that it’s not going to harm a patient.”

Giving back has been a huge part of Nardolillo’s URI experience, and it’s one he’ll be continuing after graduation when he begins his residency at Indian Health Services in New Mexico. His inspiration to apply for such a prestigious program comes from the quality of education he’s received in the College of Pharmacy.

Nardolillo said he feels prepared because of the strong patient care emphasis the College instills in students. His countless hours spent learning material in a classroom, and teaching it as a graduate student, were essential to his career, but being taught how to apply that knowledge in situations like in Jamaica has been central to his education.

In New Mexico, where Nardolillo will fully manage his patients and have one-on-one interactions, the skills he’s gained from opportunities he’s had here will come into play every day.

“It’s not just a classroom thing,” Nardolillo said. “It’s not just getting a lecture and learning material. It’s how are you going to use that material in the real world? What skills do you also need to build here to then be able to put to use out there? You can have all the information in the world, but if you can’t talk to a patient, if you can’t talk to a doctor, if you can’t be connectable and want somebody to listen to you and want somebody to engage with you, that knowledge is going to waste.”
Students, Faculty Members Promote Pharmacy at Statehouse

Dozens of URI Pharmacy students joined several faculty members and Dean E. Paul Larrat at the 14th annual Face of Pharmacy Day at the Rhode Island Statehouse in April.

Created by the Rhode Island Pharmacist’s Association, the Face of Pharmacy Day gives pharmacists and pharmacy teachers and students the chance to promote their profession to state leaders and advocate legislators for or against pharmaceutical issues, according to URI Pharmacy Professor Anita Jacobson.

“It’s a chance for legislators to see pharmacists outside the pharmacy,” Jacobson said. “It lets them see what we do, like blood pressure and BMI — the non-traditional roles pharmacists fill beyond the traditional pharmacy setting.”

Student-led Business Wins Innovation Voucher

A small business led by URI College of Pharmacy graduate students is among the latest recipients of a $50,000 Innovation Voucher fund awarded by the Rhode Island Commerce Corp. to promote research and innovation.

Alcinous Pharmaceuticals, LLC, a pharmaceuticals start-up founded by three URI College of Pharmacy doctoral students, uses computer-aided drug design to build a large library of promising drug molecules that could be used to develop cancer therapies that are highly effective and well tolerated. Alcinous is partnering with Brenton DeBoef, associate professor in the URI Department of Chemistry. The project goal is to prove that molecules designed using computers can be produced in a laboratory.

The Innovation Voucher program promotes research and development partnerships among small businesses and subject matter experts. The incentive program awards up to $50,000 to businesses with fewer than 500 employees and their knowledge partners — often hospitals, colleges or universities. The program issued its first vouchers in January 2016 and has since granted 43 awards.

Nicholas DaSilva, Kenneth Rose and Benjamin Barlock.
Millions in Research Funding for URI Neuroscientist

A $3.3 million grant from the National Institutes of Health will support a University of Rhode Island neuroscientist’s research to identify early-stage biomarkers for a brain disease often found to coexist with Alzheimer’s disease.

The five-year grant was awarded to William Van Nostrand, Hermann Professor of Neuroscience at URI’s College of Pharmacy and George & Anne Ryan Institute for Neuroscience. The funding will help fill a critical research niche in early detection of cerebral amyloid angiopathy, a disease in which amyloid deposits form in small and medium blood vessels in the central nervous system, contributing to dementia and brain hemorrhages. Although the disease is common in the elderly, it often isn’t diagnosed until its late stages, when bleeds can be detected by brain imaging.

“Early and accurate diagnosis of this condition has remained elusive,” Van Nostrand said. “There is a need for biomarkers for early stages of disease prior to the presence of lesions detected by neuroimaging. The purpose of this project is to fill this void by developing and validating robust biological fluid markers for CAA.”

The project, is being conducted in collaboration with Professor Marcel Verbeek at Radboud University Medical Center in Nijmegen, Netherlands, based on previous work by the Verbeek and Van Nostrand labs that identified potential cerebral amyloid angiopathy biomarkers in brain tissue. A biological fluid marker not only could potentially provide an earlier, more accurate diagnosis of the disease, but could also help guide treatment options, particularly in therapies where the disease represents a heightened risk of hemorrhage.

Van Nostrand is noted for being the first researcher to purify and characterize amyloid precursor protein, the progenitor of the amyloid-beta protein that forms hallmark plaques in Alzheimer’s disease. “Our goal is ultimately to identify mechanisms of disease that could be targets for new treatments,” he said.
Deyu Li Announced as Avedisian Endowed Chair

Professor Deyu Li is known around the College as a dedicated, engaging teacher. He is known as a talented researcher making significant breakthroughs in DNA science and cancer treatment. He is now also known as the Paramaz Avedisian Endowed Chair in Medical Organic Chemistry.

Li has been chosen for the position named for 1954 URI graduate Paramaz Avedisian, Dean E. Paul Larrat has announced, part of the $5 million gift Edward Avedisian made to the college in 2017. Li is the perfect person to continue the legacy of his late brother, a dedicated pharmacist and chemist, Edward Avedisian said.

“He’s got a great rapport with students; he’s doing a great job bringing in research grants; and he’s producing impressive results in the lab. A guy like that can draw in the top students,” Avedisian said. “When you’ve got curiosity, creativity and you’re willing to work, huge developments can come out of it.”

Li is the first named to the endowed chair, intended to help build a team of scientists across multiple disciplines to work toward the goal of finding better therapies for disease and better treatments for patients.

“We’re gradually advancing toward the end goal of finding better therapies, but this is not a one-day study. It takes time. The endowed chair will help give us the time and support to get there,” Li said. “It’s always been my goal to study disease, find better drugs and improve treatment. This gives me a lot of confidence and support to pursue this goal I’ve had for a long time.”

Dean Larrat shares that confidence in Li, expecting the Avedisian Chair will help the young professor succeed in his mission.

“Deyu is truly one of the rising stars not just at URI but throughout the entire pharmaceutical development industry,” Larrat said. “He is an engaging teacher who will continue to attract the top students to the College and to his lab. He has already proven himself to be among the most talented researchers in his field. I have no doubt the many breakthroughs Deyu will achieve will impact the medical community for decades to come.”
High Honor for Ryan Institute Director

Paula Grammas, College of Pharmacy professor and executive director of the University of Rhode Island’s George & Anne Ryan Institute for Neuroscience has been elected a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in recognition of her pioneering research into neurodegenerative conditions, including Alzheimer’s disease.

Grammas is part of a prestigious group of scientists, including five Nobel Laureates, selected as 2017 Fellows for “their contributions to science and technology, scientific leadership and extraordinary achievements across disciplines.” She is being recognized “for services to neuroscience, particularly in developing a novel approach to understanding the pathology of Alzheimer’s disease and explaining research to the community,” according to the award letter from Rush D. Holt, chief executive officer.

Grammas is best known for her research into the role that blood vessels and inflammation play in the development of neurodegenerative diseases.

“I am honored to be recognized by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, which has been a force for good in supporting the work of scientists and fostering innovation and collaboration among scientists, engineers and educators around the globe,” Grammas said. “This acknowledgement is particularly meaningful coming from my peers.”

Founded in 1848, the Association is the world’s largest multidisciplinary scientific society. Past Fellows include inventor Thomas Edison, anthropologist Margaret Mead and astronomer Maria Mitchell.

Grammas has received numerous awards for her research. She has been the principal investigator or co-investigator on more than $26 million in research grants from the National Institutes of Health, the Alzheimer’s Association, the American Foundation for AIDS Research, and other agencies. She has published more than 143 peer-reviewed research papers and is the recipient of the Zenith Award from the Alzheimer’s Association, recognizing her as one of the nation’s leading researchers on Alzheimer’s disease.
On the Rhode to Health

The URI Health Institute, part of the Academic Health Collaborative, recently acquired a mobile health unit to help increase the collaborative’s outreach into the community. College of Pharmacy faculty members and students will take part in health outreach initiatives throughout Rhode Island, which are expected to include blood pressure screenings, HIV/AIDS screenings, flu shot clinics and more.

Rhode To Health

Mobile Health Unit brings care to communities.
Pharmaceutical Development Institute

The market for new, better medications is ever-expanding, and the rapid expansion of the industry has created a critical demand for skilled professionals (from equipment operators to advanced technical and quality assurance personnel) and additional infrastructure to support drug development and manufacturing.

URI’s College of Pharmacy is helping fill that void with its state-of-the-art Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) Facility. Located in the basement of Avedisian Hall, the 7,000 square-foot clean room has the purity and sterility of a hospital operating room, necessary for producing medications. A series of fans and an advanced filtration system constantly scrub the environment. The air pressure of each interconnected room and laboratory is higher than the last, ensuring air — and the contaminants it carries — is constantly flowing out.

The facility supports the University’s continuing efforts to strengthen and expand its education, research and development capabilities and allows the limited production of pharmaceutical / biotechnology products.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Making an Impact on-campus and Beyond
The facility’s mission is to:

- **Facilitate the development of new pharmaceutics** by researchers at URI and their academic and industry partners.

- **Engage private partners** to enhance the **economic development** of the Rhode Island pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries.

- **Develop a world-class teaching and training facility** for faculty, students and the biotech/pharmaceutical industry.

The URI GMP Facility fills a critical void in the infrastructure for pharmaceutical development, manufacturing, research and teaching within the State of Rhode Island. Its services include:

- **GMP operations**: Assisting academic, government and industry partners with the manufacture of solid dose forms for veterinary and human use.

- **GMP analytical testing**: Providing pharmaceutical testing services, including turnkey stability studies.

- **Education**: Providing GMP industrial experience in drug manufacturing and analytical testing for students in various related undergraduate, graduate and adult education programs, as well as industry-specific training in collaboration with pharmaceutical and biotechnology firms.

**Seminar By the Sea tackles Trending Health Topics**

With a theme of “advocating for our patients,” the University of Rhode Island College of Pharmacy Office of Continuing Professional Development presented its 33rd annual Seminar by the Sea Northeast Regional Conference in March.

The conference — March 14-16 at Gurney’s Newport Resort and Marina on Goat Island, Newport — brought together pharmacists, clinicians and students from around the region to discuss some of the largest issues affecting health care today. Training sessions during the seminar provided continuing education credits for pharmacists.

A host of pharmaceutical and medical professionals presented on such topics as the ongoing opioid crisis, avoiding pharmaceutical errors, the physiological impacts of marijuana on children and adolescents, and more. Continuing education credits were available in such topics as preceptor training and compounding best practices, and a panel discussion addressed the local response to drug supply challenges. Keynote addresses were delivered by Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.), below, and Jake Nichols, CEO of Strategic Recovery Resources.

The College has scheduled the next Seminar by the Sea for Thursday and Friday, March 14-15, 2019, at Gurney's in Newport. For more information and to register, log onto uri.edu/pharmacy/cpd
Alumnus, CVS Vice President Wins 2018 Campbell Award

The University of Rhode Island College of Pharmacy presented alumnus Tom Davis, above right, with the Dr. Norman A. Campbell Award for Ethics and Excellence in Healthcare, honoring his “profound dedication” to the pharmacy profession and society as a whole.

Davis, a 1991 graduate from URI, is vice president of Pharmacy Professional Services for CVS, where he is responsible for the patient safety, quality assurance, professional practice standards and clinical support for the company’s retail division. He also leads professional practices for Omnicare, CVS Health’s long-term care pharmacy business.

Before his 20 years at CVS, Davis worked for Brooks Pharmacy and as chief of the Compliance and Regulatory Section for the Rhode Island Division of Drug Control. He has also served on the Rhode Island Board of Pharmacy and in 2015 was appointed to the Rhode Island Opioid Overdose Prevention Taskforce, showing the commitment to quality and ethics the Campbell Award recognizes, according to Norm Campbell, professor emeritus at URI for whom the award is named.

“He has been really committed to the law and ethics throughout his career,” Campbell said. “He is absolutely deserving. He has maintained an interest in doing the right thing, which is something that isn’t always easy to do.”

ALUMNI

Bringing URI success into the community
URI Graduate Dedicated to Improving Length, Quality of Life

Whether it’s studying new medications to treat Alzheimer’s disease, helping develop vaccines that aim to prevent the debilitating disease, or educating the next generation of elder care professionals, few have done more to advance the medical care of older adults than Dr. John Stoukides.

As director of Geriatrics at Roger Williams Medical Center, Roger Williams Senior Health Care, and the Rhode Island Mood & Memory Research Institute, Stoukides, a 1985 URI graduate, has dedicated his professional life to improving not only the length, but also the quality of life as we age. For his contributions to the field and health of the community in general, Dean E. Paul Larrat presented Stoukides with a Distinguished Achievement Award in 2017.

In his 20 years practicing geriatric medicine, Stoukides has taken part in clinical research trials that have brought all FDA-approved Alzheimer’s medications to market. He is working to develop vaccines to prevent Alzheimer’s and to slow its progression. He is also a professor at Boston University and Brown University, and is a founding faculty member of the Rhode Island Geriatric Center at URI.

Stoukides continues his groundbreaking research at the University, partnering with the Ryan Institute for Neuroscience to test new Alzheimer’s treatments using vascular activation.

He has also served on the College of Nursing Advisory Council, participated in the creation of the Academic Health Collaborative and continues to generously support the Colleges of Pharmacy and Health Sciences.

Some of the newest alumni, the BS - Pharmaceutical Sciences 2018 graduates, gathered for an end-of-year celebration at the Alumni Center in May.
COMMITTED BY 
PURPOSE

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An honor roll of donors is published online at uri.edu/pharmacy/college-of-pharmacy-honor-roll/

GIVING
Support for College means opportunities for all
Development Director Named

The University of Rhode Island Foundation has announced the appointment of Eric Schonewald as managing director of development for the Academic Health Collaborative. Schonewald will work closely with College of Pharmacy Dean E. Paul Larrat, College of Nursing Dean Barbara Wolfe and College of Health Sciences Dean Gary Liguori.

Schonewald launched his 23-year development career at Yale University School of Medicine, where he ultimately served as director of development for the Department of Internal Medicine. While at Yale, his team led the School of Medicine’s educational component of the Yale Tomorrow capital campaign. Before accepting the position at the URI Foundation, he served as senior director of development for the Bloomberg School of Public Health at Johns Hopkins University.

URI’s Academic Health Collaborative, launched in 2016, serves more than 5,000 students in nine health disciplines. The URI Health Institute serves as a hub for innovation, providing cross-disciplinary opportunities in education, research, entrepreneurship and service. Its work engages external health agencies, including hospital systems, and other universities and colleges in the state.

“As society ages and confronts 21st Century diseases, there is a constant need to innovate and develop new and better medications,” Schonewald said. “The researchers here in the College of Pharmacy continue to meet that burden with ever-more creative and revealing research. But they can’t do it alone. Philanthropic support is absolutely essential to support these talented researchers as they work toward the future of health care.”

For more information about giving to the College of Pharmacy or any disciplines in the Academic Health Collaborative, contact Schonewald at eschonewald@uri.edu or 401.874.9017.
Why I Give: Colleen Moffitt ’88,’94

Colleen Prior Moffitt has held several roles in the pharmaceutical industry, having worked in retail, hospitals, and now in drug development as a medical liaison between physicians and researchers at Alnylam Pharmaceuticals. The education she received in the URI College of Pharmacy was integral to such a diverse career.

“My pharmacy degree prepared me very well for the role I have now, but before, I had many other roles,” said Moffitt, who earned her bachelor’s degree in ’88 and her master’s in ’94. “It gives you the flexibility to practice pharmacy in a lot of different ways — in a hospital, in retail, in a research setting. I think that’s what a pharmacy degree prepares you for.”

The head start URI gave Moffitt has always inspired her and her husband, fellow URI graduate Chuck Moffitt, to give back, in the form of both time and money. Her service to the College began while she was a master’s degree candidate, helping teach pharmacy classes and even filling in when a professor passed away. She continued through the years, serving on the Continuing Education Advisory Committee and maintaining a role on the Dean’s Advisory Committee, which she now chairs. She contributes financially to the College’s Annual Fund.

“I’ve always tried to somehow stay involved and help the College,” Moffitt said. “Serving on the Dean’s Advisory Committee gives me the chance to provide the College a window into what’s going on in the business world. It gives the College perspective on what the needs may be in the community, and helps students prepare for those challenges.”

Helping students has been a prime factor in Moffitt’s service and giving. She makes multiple donations each year to the College of Pharmacy Annual Fund, which is the primary source of unrestricted, current-use money for Dean E. Paul Larrat to address the most urgent student or faculty needs at any given time.

“The Annual Fund helps provide opportunities for students they wouldn’t necessarily be able to have on their own,” Moffitt said. “Whether it’s going to a pharmaceutical conference or educational traveling, it gives students experiences they may not have been able to afford on their own. Those experiences are very valuable for students.”

Being able to help the next generation of health-care workers is very rewarding to Moffitt, who would encourage anyone in the community — specifically those who have benefitted directly from the College or the University — to support URI the best they can.

“We all get millions of envelopes every year, it seems, and there are competing interests, so I’ve been more thoughtful about who I give to,” said Moffitt, who lives in nearby Wakefield, R.I. “I want to donate to somewhere I can directly feel the impact, and URI is that. It’s such a positive element in our community, and that’s why I support the University. I would encourage anyone to. It doesn’t have to be a lot; every little bit helps. Just get in the habit.”
Our College of Pharmacy community is indebted to a vast network of alumni, partners and friends who dedicate their time and expertise to support our mission.

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COP Advisors: ‘The People I Go to’

When Dean E. Paul Larrat needs help with a College project, advice on pharmaceutical issues, a sounding board when making decisions, or anything else to help the College succeed, he knows where to turn: the College of Pharmacy Advisory Board.

“They’re the people I go to all the time, for simple things like finding a spot for a student internship, or more complicated things like consulting on technical issues,” Larrat said. “They act as consultants, cheerleaders, ambassadors, advisors for our faculty — they do it all.”

Advisory Board Vice Chairman Richard Krupski ’80 credits the College of Pharmacy with the success he has had over the years. The vice president of Employee Benefits for Hilb Group New England has worked in the health care space his entire career, for such entities as Blue Cross Blue Shield, Care New England and Promark LLC. He wanted to find a way to give back to the College that had given him so much. Helping the College attract top talent to URI, continually bring in research funding and remain “in lockstep” with the pharmaceutical industry beyond the university are just some of the ways the Advisory Board helps with the College’s success, he said.

“Being part of the committee, for me, is part of giving back. While you look back on your experiences, you also want to pay it forward,” Kurpski said. “The advisory board is meant to be a service to the dean. The emphasis is on ‘advisory.’ We’re not going to create the strategic direction of the College, but we are going to provide input, ideas and things the dean can potentially utilize to better enable the College to be successful. It’s a great think tank of ideas. It enables the dean to direct the College and help it with its strategic direction.”

▲ Peter Morgan, senior gardener who was instrumental in the design and maintenance of the Youngken Medicinal Garden outside Avedisian Hall, retired this summer but plans to continue volunteering in the garden.
‘This Garden is a Work of Art’

The Friends of the Garden rededicated the Heber W. Youngken Medicinal Garden in June, recognizing its 61st year and fifth year located outside Avedisian Hall, home of the College of Pharmacy. The ceremony served a dual purpose, also bidding farewell to longtime Senior Gardener Peter Morgan, who retired after more than 30 years with the College. Peter was instrumental in the design and maintenance of the garden, whose bounty produces plants that are not only beautiful, but also hold medicinal properties.
Learning, Teaching in Indonesia

College of Pharmacy Dean E. Paul Larrat joined fellow deans from the Academic Health Collaborative Gary Liguori (Health Sciences) and Barbara Wolfe (Nursing), along with about a dozen students in Indonesia for a J-Term learning and teaching trip.

The group visited Bali, Jakarta and Yogyakarta, touring community health centers, conducting blood pressure screenings and relaying information on stroke and asthma prevention. The students collaborated with Indonesian pharmacy students and recent graduates from Universitas Islam Indonesia to create presentations regarding stroke prevention and education.

“The students were committed to making their time over there valuable,” Larrat said. “They were willing to enmesh themselves in Indonesian culture, which really enhanced their experience. It was a great cultural exchange and a really valuable learning experience for them and us.”

GLOBAL IMPACT

Making a difference beyond our borders
Learning in 3D

The Dr. Ernest Mario 3D Visualization Auditorium takes the College’s use of 3D technology to a new level with a huge IMAX-like projection system, delivering 3D content ranging from the molecular to the anatomical; enhancing understanding and student engagement.
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