UPDATE FROM DR. ABBRUSCATO

The Graduate Program in Pharmaceutical Sciences welcomes two new graduate students this spring (Profiles on Page 2). Shanal DeSilva will begin work in Dr. Abbruscato’s lab, and Shikha Shikha will begin work in Dr. Cucullo’s lab. We wish them a warm welcome as they join our graduate program! Last fall we had impressive representation at the 2011 American Association of Pharmaceutical Sciences Meeting with 12 GPPS students presenting their research as first author. This meeting in Washington, DC also included a “2011 ANNUAL AAPS ALUMNI & FRIENDS RECEP-TION”, organized by Dr. Smith. Please look forward to some wonderful scientific exchange opportunities in our own backyard with GSBS STUDENT RESEARCH WEEK on March 20-22 in Lubbock, 2nd ANNUAL GPPS HOMECOMING SEMINAR on April 6th and SOP RESEARCH DAYS on June 12-13, 2012. These are great opportunities for new and old graduate students to showcase their work and exchange ideas with fellow students, post-docs and faculty. Best of luck in your research!

MEET THE GEEKS

The School of Pharmacy was the venue on December 8th for “Meet the Geeks”, hosted by the American Heart Association. Graduate students and postdoctoral research associates as well as faculty represented TTUHSC in this kickoff charity event for the local “Go Red for Women” fundraising event, which is to be held February 1, 2012, in Amarillo. A catered dinner was provided for Geeks and Guests followed by a tour of the School of Pharmacy Museum. Amarillo Mayor Paul Harpole addressed the attendees during the tour. Multiple posters were on display to present research being done on behalf of heart disease. See page 6 for more pictures.

Second Annual Alumni Homecoming Presentation

Mark your calendars for Friday, April 6th, for a special visit from Haritha Mandula, our second alumni to showcase what she has been doing since her graduation from the GPPS in Fall 2005. She is employed as a Senior Staff Fellow with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in Rockville, MD. Watch your email for further details.

GPPS OFFICE - Suite 217 - 806-356-4015; Fax 356-4021
Dr. Tom Abbruscato, Associate Dean for GSBS,
Graduate Program Advisor, Associate Professor, Pharmaceutical Sciences, x 320
Teresa Carlisle, Graduate Program Coordinator, x287
Shari Morris, Graduate Student Advisor, x227
Agonist is published every fall and spring semester by the Graduate Program of Pharmaceutical Sciences (GPPS). For updates and new information, email Shari at shari.morris@ttuhsc.edu.
Spring 2012, Issue 9

FALL 2011 GRADUATES

Shashi Kudugunti
Lab of Dr. Majid Moridani
Dissertation Presented
September 26, 2011
“Caffeic Acid Phenethyl Ester as an Anti-melanoma Agent: A Selective Tyrosinase and GST Dual Targeted Approach”

Professional Information:
Research Associate
Repligen Corporation
Waltham, MA
SKudugunti@repligen.com

Ramakrishna Samala
Lab of Dr. Quentin Smith
Dissertation Presented
October 17, 2011
“Vinorelbine Distribution to Brain Metastases of Breast Cancer and Factors Limiting In Vivo Efficacy”

Professional Information:
Postdoctoral Fellow
Lab of Quentin Smith, Ph.D.
TTUHSC School of Pharmacy
Amarillo, TX
ramakrishna.samala@ttuhsc.edu

SNEHAL PADHYE - Lab of Dr. Ming-Hai Wang
Friday, March 2, 2011 - 1:00 - 2:00 pm
AMA SOP 107/ABI 1130/LUB HSC 1C111

Prabodh Kandala - Lab of Dr. Sanjay Srivastava
Friday, March 9, 2011 - 1:00 - 2:00 pm
AMA SOP 100/AB 2601/LUB HSC ACB 260D

Sivaramakrishna Koganti
Lab of Dr. Thomas Thekkumkara
Monday, March 26, 2011 - 1:00 - 2:00 pm
AMA SOP 107/ABI 2601/LUB HSC 1C111

NEW STUDENTS FOR SPRING 2012

Shikh Shikha, B.Pharm.
Lab: Dr. Luca Cucullo
Birla Institute of Technology
Mesra, Ranchi, India

Shanal DeSilva, B.S. in Chemistry/Biotechnology
Lab: Dr. Thomas Abbruscato
West Texas A&M University
Canyon, Texas

Student Recruitment Event in Lubbock

Graduate Students Prabodh Kandala and Kaushik Shah, Dr. Sanjay Srivastava and Teresa Carlisle represented the Graduate Program in Pharmaceutical Sciences at the Annual Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (GSBS) TTU Student Recruitment Event and Dinner on January 17th in Lubbock. The GSBS uses this time to extend an invitation to TTU science majors who are juniors and seniors with a 3.25 or higher GPA. The goal is to promote GSBS at TTUHSC and highlight the research labs and what is offered to potential students. Kandala presented a poster entitled “Regulation of macroautophagy in ovarian cancer cells in vitro and in vivo by controlling Glucose regulatory protein 78 and AMPK” and Shah presented “Function of Sodium Dependent Glucose Transporter (SGLT1) at the Blood Brain Barrier in the Diabetes”. Dr. Srivastava gave a talk entitled “Research Opportunities in the Graduate Program in Pharmaceutical Sciences at School of Pharmacy, TTUHSC, Amarillo”. After the afternoon poster presentations and tours of the Lubbock GSBS labs, attendees enjoyed the recruitment dinner.

8/31/2011 - Sivaramakrishna Koganti - “Functional Role for 2-Methoxyestradiol in Angiotensin Type 1 Receptor Down-regulation”

9/7/2011 - Kaushik Shah - “Function of sodium dependent glucose co-transporter (SGLT1) at the blood-brain barrier (BBB): Diabetes”

9/14/2011 - Manoj Banjara - “Induction of Lipocalin-2 Expression by Damaged Cells”


10/5/2011 - Alejandra Fernandez - “Modulating Epilepsy through Manipulation of Metabolic Pathways”


10/19/2011 - Brijeshkumar Patel - “Feasibility of Inhaled Montelukast as an Alternative to Oral Form of the Drug in the Treatment of Asthma”

10/19/2011 - Snehal Padhye - “Combined Inhibition of RON and c-Kit Chemosensitizes Pancreatic Cancer Stem Cells to Gemcitabine”

11/2/2011 - Raghavender Chivukula - “HLA-G Molecule: A Potential Target for Cancer Immunotherapy”

11/9/2011 - Parul Gupta - “HER2 Expression Sensitizes Breast Cancer Cells to Apoptosis In Vitro and In Vivo”


12/7/2011 - Pooja Naik - “The Effect of Tobacco Smoke on the Blood Brain Barrier”


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CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- Mohammad S. Absar, Suna Choi, Kamrun Nahar, Fakhruh Ahsan, Young Min Kwon. “Serum Albumin-Protamine Conjugate: a Novel Carrier for Delivery of Therapeutic Macromolecules”


- Nilesh Gupta and Fakhruh Ahsan. “Shape Engineered Erythrocytes as Micro-Reservoirs of Fasudil, a Novel Rho-kinase Inhibitor”


- Prabodh K. Kandala and Sanjay K. Srivastava. “Diindolylmethane induces macroautophagy by regulating ER stress and AMPK”

- Shashi Kudugunti, Rajiv Balyan, Majid Moridani. “In-vitro and In-vivo Investigation of Luteolin as an Anti-Melanoma Agent”

- Kamrun Nahar and Fakhruh Ahsan. “Magnetic Liposomes for Targeting to Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension”

- Snehal Padhye and Ming-Hai Wang. “Combined Inhibition of RON and c-Kit Signaling Chemosensitises Pancreatic Cancer Stem Cells to Gemcitabine”

- Brijeshkumar Patel and Fakhruh Ahsan. “PLA and PLGA Microparticulate Systems for Pulmonary Delivery of Montelukast, a Cysteinyl-leukotrine Receptor Antagonist”

- Ramakrishna Samala, Kunal S Taskar, Helen R Thorshiem, Quentin R Smith. “Limited Vinorelbine Distribution to Brain Metastases of Breast Cancer and Critical Roles of Blood-Brain Barrier P-Glycoprotein and MRP7 Active Efflux Transport”

- Hussaini Syed Sha Qhattal, Xini Li. “Optimization of Hyaluronan-Conjugated Liposomes for Enhanced CD44 Receptor Mediated Endocytosis and Cytotoxicity”

AAPS Friends & Alumni Reunion on Page 4
Dr. Smith invited Dr. Thorne (Asst Professor, Univ of Wisconsin School of Pharmacy) and Dr. Ronaldson (Asst Professor of Medical Pharmacology, Univ of Arizona) to speak about serving as a new faculty member in a biomedical university.

Texas Tech University Health Science Center
24th ANNUAL STUDENT RESEARCH WEEK
March 20-22, 2012 * Lubbock, Texas

“CURE DIABETES”

Student Research Week is an annual interdisciplinary forum sponsored by the Graduate Student Association, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences. It is designed to highlight exceptional research performed by students through poster presentation sessions; provide research seminars presented by distinguished biomedical scientists; and recruit regional students into GSBS degree programs.

Keynote speakers will be Dr. Gerald Shulman, Yale University School of Medicine, and Dr. Luis Fernandez, University of Wisconsin School of Medicine.

GPPS students will present posters Wednesday afternoon (21st). Deadline to submit posters is February 12, 2012.

Eleventh Annual School of Pharmacy Research Days
School of Pharmacy, Amarillo, Texas
June 12-13, 2012

Taken by Chris Adkins from the 2nd floor of the Amarillo Research Building.
The 10-week 2012 Amarillo Biomedical Research Internship Program will begin the end of May and run through the beginning of August. Applications will be accepted until Thursday, March 15, 2012. Interested undergrad students are encouraged to apply online, in person to the Graduate Program Office or by email to teresa.carlisle@ttuhsc.edu.

The 43rd Annual Meeting of the American Society for Neurochemistry will be held in Baltimore, Maryland from March 3 to 7, 2012.

The Experimental Biology 2012 conference will take place in San Diego, California from April 21 to 25, 2012.

The 39th Annual Meeting and Exposition of the Controlled Release Society will be held in Québec City, Canada from July 15 to 18, 2012.

PUBLICATIONS

WISE - WOMEN IN SCIENCE ENDEAVORS

Alejandra Fernandez and Naomi Wangler represented the TTUHSC graduate students at the 2011 WiSE event, which was held at the Amarillo Area Center for Advanced Learning on Saturday, November 5th. Mandy Whiteside, SOP P1, helped. They worked with 12 middle school girls at a time, three sessions in all, and demonstrated endothermic and exothermic reactions in which gas was released in both cases. In doing this, they made bath salts, scented and dried them, and let the girls take them home in a plastic baggie. By the end of the day, everybody’s hands were dyed all different colors. The girls were respectful and eager to get their hands dirty but also didn’t mind sitting and learning the chemistry behind the hands-on activities.

“MEET THE GEEKS”

Dr. B Patel, U Gumaste, R Islam, N Gupta

Guest, Q Smith, J Lu, V Karamyan, M Weis

Dr. P Katz and guests

Dr. Weis speaks to guests and geeks.

Mayor Harpole speaks to attendees.

Visiting Scientist and Student

October 31st the Graduate Program faculty and graduate students had the chance to meet the newest highly credentialed faculty candidate, Inma Smahta-Nyu, PhD, MD, PharmD, BVSc, MPH, PCP, etc., and her almost as equally credentialed graduate student, Dee Mented, BM, BS, BPharm, MPharm, MD. At an afternoon reception, guests were encouraged to “vote” which department Dr. Smahta-Nyu would be associated with and which lab Ms. Mented would work in. It was decided that the prestigious doctor would be part of the Biomedical Sciences Department, and her almost as equally prestigious student would be split between the labs of Dr. Ahsan and Dr. Zhang. Unfortunately due to their world-wide popularity, this highly regarded, but overrated duo accepted positions elsewhere.

Dr. Smahta-Nyu and her grad student Dee Mented.

Being an innovative and thrifty grad student, Ms. Mented built her own vivarium.

ALUMNI UPDATES

Kunal Taskar (F10) - New Position
Research Investigator II
Bristol-Myers Squibb Biocon Research Center
Bangalore, India
kunal.taskar@gmail.com

Born to Russell (Su11) and Lauren Snyder
Oliver Ripley Snyder
6 lb 5.5 oz - 18¼ inches
10/8/11
COMMUNITY SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

GPPS students participated in:
* October 15 - Heart Walk & Luncheon ($650 raised!)
* November 5 - WiSE
* December 8 - Fundraising Dinner for American Heart Association

GSAA General Meetings:
Thurs, February 16 - 12 pm
Mon, March 12 - 12 pm
Thurs, April 12 - 12 pm
Thurs, May 17 - 12 pm

CRAZY FUN WITH GSAA

Graduate Program Coordinator, Teresa Carlisle, participated in a C.O.P.E. (Challenging Outdoor Personal Experience) course sponsored by Boy Scouts of America on November 20, 2011. The C.O.P.E. course covers seven basic goals: teamwork, communication, trust, leadership, decision making, problem solving and self-esteem. Teresa will be able to utilize some of the skills covered in the basic goals such as communication, decision making and problem solving in her job.