

Agonist

Official Newsletter for the
Graduate Program in Pharmaceutical Sciences
Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center
Amarillo, Texas



**Fall 2016
Issue 18**

UPDATE FROM DR. AHSAN



This summer and fall, we welcomed six new students, with Fatema Tuz Zahra joining us in the summer, and Andrew Baez, Carl (Joey) Greene, Daniela Rolph, Ahmed Morsy and Guanyu Tao in the fall. They are all very promising students with great potential. We also had to bid farewell to those who recently finished the program and received their doctoral degrees — Kito Barrow and Alejandra Fernandez this spring, and Jahidur Rashid this summer. In May, we celebrated graduation for Vindhya Edpuganti, who finished in the summer of 2015, Sukesh Voruganti and Neel Fofaria, who finished in the fall of 2015, and Alejandra Fernandez, who finished in the spring of 2016. In spring and summer of this year, our students gave 17 presentations at national meetings such as the American Heart Association, the Society of Toxicology, the American Association of Cancer Research, and the American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists. Impressively, two of our graduate students were invited to give podium presentations; these two students and several others received travel awards and scholarships for attending scientific meetings and presenting their research. Twelve students presented at Student Research Week in Lubbock, and 31 presented at School of Pharmacy Research Days in Amarillo, where two gave podium presentations and four received best poster awards. Impressively, 22 of our students published 13 manuscripts, wherein seven of our students were first author! I commend our students, who continue to hold the research standard high! This year, we hosted Kunal Taskar (Senior Investigator, GlaxoSmithKline, United Kingdom) as our Homecoming Alumni Speaker 2016. At a lunch meeting with our current students, Dr. Taskar spoke about his experience as a student in our program. Later, he gave a seminar titled, "Introduction to Membrane Transporters and Clinical Relevance of Transporter Mediated Drug-Drug Interactions." His talk was a new perspective to pharmaceutical research in an industrial setting. In the spring, Nihar Kinarivala and Shikha both received Dean's Scholars awards. This award from GSBS recognizes outstanding Ph.D. and MD/Ph.D. students who have shown exceptional academic ability and potential for research excellence, as evidenced by their GPA, GRE, and meeting abstracts, presentations and publications. Overall, these past two semesters were a brilliantly successful time.

GPSS OFFICE - TTUHSC School of Pharmacy Bldg, Ste 217; FAX 356-4021

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Agonist is published every fall and spring semester by the Graduate Program of Pharmaceutical Sciences (GPSS). For updates and new information, e-mail Susan at susan.king@ttuhsc.edu.

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**Spring 2016
Graduates**



Kito Barrow, Ph.D.
Lab of Dr. Junxuan Lu

Dissertation Presented
February 3, 2016

“Prostate cancer intervention
by methylseleninic acid:
strengthening a case for
human translation”

**Summer 2016
Graduates**



**Md. Jahidur Rashid,
Ph.D.**
Lab of Dr. Fakhru Ahsan

Dissertation Presented
May 31, 2016

“PLGA-based inhalable
particles of sildenafil and
rosiglitazone for combination
therapy in pulmonary arterial
hypertension ”

**Alejandra Fernandez,
Ph.D.**

Lab of Dr. James Stoll

Dissertation Presented
March 23, 2016

“Diet and exercise as
potential anticonvulsant
therapies in mouse seizure
models ”



Summer/Fall 2016 Dissertations

Debasish Basak, Lab of Dr. Kalkunte Srivenugopal
Friday, July 15, 2016 at 1:30pm
AMASOP 335 / LUBHSC 2C101

Tanvirul Hye, Lab of Dr. Xinli Liu
Friday, August 5, 2016 at 1:00pm
AMAPAC 1110 / LUBHSC 2C101

Alok Ranjan, Lab of Dr. Sanjay Srivastava
Wednesday, December 7, 2016 at 3:00pm
AMAPAC 1110 / LUBHSC 1C111 / DALSW 514

CONVOCAATION MAY 14, 2016



[l-r] Alejandra Fernandez, Neel Fofaria,
Sukesh Voruganti, Vindhya Edpuganti



[l-r] Vindhya Edpuganti, James Stoll, Alejandra Fernandez,
Neel Fofaria, Sanjay Srivastava, Fakhru Ahsan, Sukesh Voruganti



Vindhya Edpuganti was
hooded by Fakhru Ahsan



Alejandra Fernandez was
hooded by James Stoll



Neel Fofaria was hooded
by Sanjay Srivastava



Sukesh Voruganti was hooded
by Fakhru Ahsan

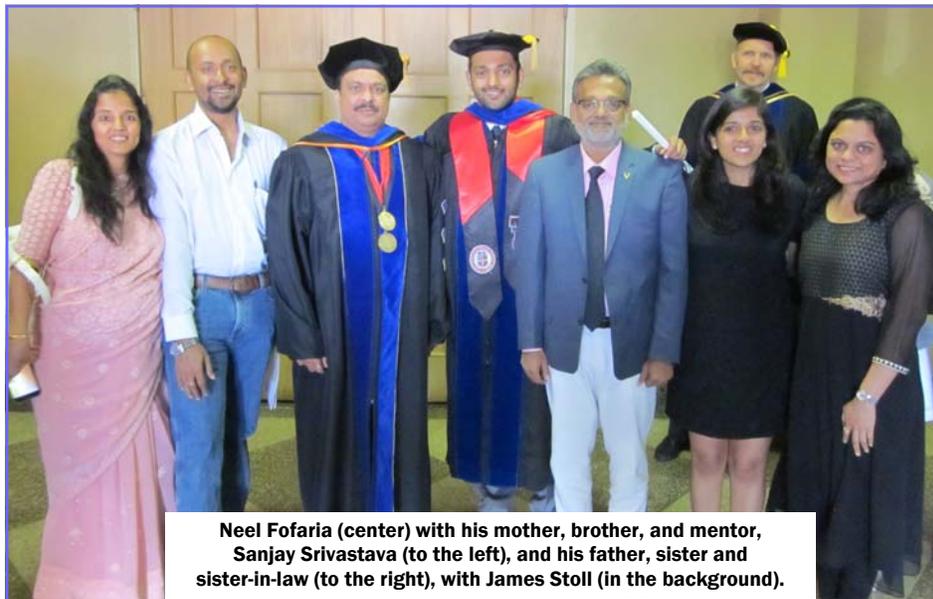
CONVOCATION MAY 14, 2016 (cont'd)



Vindhya Edpuganti (right) with her husband



Alejandra Fernandez (center) with her father and mother



Neel Fofaria (center) with his mother, brother, and mentor, Sanjay Srivastava (to the left), and his father, sister and sister-in-law (to the right), with James Stoll (in the background).



Neel (center) with his brother and sister-in-law



Neel (center) with his mother and father

NEW STUDENTS for SUMMER and FALL 2016



Summer/Fall 2016

(back, l-r) Andrew Baez, Carl (Joey) Greene, Daniela Rolph, Ahmed Morsy
(front, l-r) Fatema Tuz Zahra, Guanyu Tao

Summer 2016

Fatema Tuz Zahra, B.Pharm., M.Pharm.
University of Dhaka, Bangladesh
Lab: Dr. Constantinos Mikelis

Ahmed Morsy, B.S.
German University in Cairo, Egypt
Lab: Dr. Paul Trippier

Fall 2016

Andrew Baez II, B.S.
Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas
Lab: Dr. Ruiwen Zhang

Daniela Rolph, B.S.
The University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona
Lab: Dr. Hiranmoy Das

Carl (Joey) Greene, B.S.
West Texas A&M University, Canyon, Texas
Lab: Dr. Hiranmoy Das

Guanyu Tao, B.S.
South China Normal University, China
Lab: Dr. Ruiwen Zhang



**TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER™**

School of Pharmacy

Graduate Program in Pharmaceutical Sciences

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GRADUATE STUDENT SEMINAR PROGRAM - SPRING 2016

01/20/2016 — **Shikha** — “Tobacco Smoke and Hyperglycemia Pathophysiology of BBB Damage and Antioxidant Response Pathways”

02/03/2016 — **Kito Barrow**, *Doctoral Dissertation Defense* — “Prostate cancer intervention by methylseleninic acid: strengthening a case for human translation”

02/10/2016 — **Faleh Alqahtani** — “Microdialysis Technique for Measuring for Measuring [¹³C] Sucrose and Metabolites”

02/10/2016 — **Shyanne Page** — “Modeling the ischemic blood-brain barrier in a dish using human induced pluripotent stem cells”

02/19/2016 — **Guest Speaker, Wei Li, Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor, Department of Chemical Engineering, TTU Lubbock — “Biodegradable Nano-Films for Capture and Non-Invasive Release of Circulating Tumor Cells”

02/24/2016 — **Amer Alali** — “PLGA-PEG Nanoparticles Encapsulating Novel Microtubule Inhibitor BPR0L075”

02/24/2016 — **Md. Jahidur Rashid** — “Inhaled Particles of Sildenafil: Pharmacokinetics and Anti-PAH Efficacy”

03/02/2016 — **Guest Speaker, Jungkyu (Jay) Kim, Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor, Department of Mechanical Engineering; Adjunct Professor, School of Medicine, TTU Lubbock

03/09/2016 — **Md. Anwar Hossain** — “PqsR Inhibitors: A Peace Offering”

03/09/2016 — **Laxmi Iyer** — “Tannic Acid: An Inhibitor for Angiotensin Type 1 Receptor in Vascular Smooth Muscle Cells”

03/16/2016 — **Faculty Speaker, Fakhru Ahsan, Ph.D.**, Professor, Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, SOP; and Graduate Program Advisor, GPPS, TTUHSC Amarillo — “Hierarchy, Clarity, Brevity, and Urbanity in Scientific Writings and Presentations”

03/23/2016 — **Alejandra Fernandez**, *Doctoral Dissertation Defense* — “Diet and exercise as

potential anticonvulsant therapies in mouse seizure models”

03/30/2016 — **Ali Sifat** — “Effects of Nicotine on Brain Glucose Utilization: Investigation of E-Cigarette Use”

03/30/2016 — **Ismail Walbi** — “DNA nanoparticle formulation using chitosan and sodium triphosphate ionic gelation method: synthesis and characterization”

04/06/2016 — **Guest Speaker, Fengtian Xue, Ph.D., F.A.H.A.**, Assistant Professor, Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, School of Pharmacy, University of Maryland, Baltimore, MD — “Small Molecule Inhibitors of the BCL6 BTB Domain for Diffuse Large B-Cell Lymphoma (DLBCL)”

04/13/2016 — **Sreedhar Reddy Suthe** — “Cysteine Bridging for Stable and Homogeneous Antibody Drug Conjugates(ADC): Synthesis of Bisalkylating Linker”

04/13/2016 — **A.G.M. Mostofa** — “MGMT, a Human DNA Repair Protein and Anticancer Drug Resistance Determinant Interacts with PCNA and Functions as an S-Phase Checkpoint”

04/20/2016 — **Guest Speaker, Insan Kim, Ph.D.**, Professor, Korea Institute of Science and Technology, Seoul, South Korea — “Introduction to Membrane Transporters and Clinical Relevance of Transporter Mediated Drug-Drug Interactions”

04/22/2016 — **Alumni Speaker, Kunal Taskar, Ph.D.**, S Investigator, GlaxoSmithKline, Mechanism & Extrapolation Technologies, DMPK, UK; RD Platform Technology & Science — “Introduction to Membrane Transporters and Clinical Relevance of Transporter Mediated Drug-Drug Interactions”

05/04/2016 — **Md. Yousuf Ali** — “Cytokine Stimulation of NOS Activity is not Straightforward”

05/04/2016 — **Maria (Heidi) Villalba** — “An Investigation on the Role of Myo-Inositol in Ischemic Stroke Injury”



Cadillac Ranch,
photo by Yoon Jung Lee,
Graduate Student in Dr. Stoll's lab

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PUBLICATIONS

- ≈**Basak D**, Punganuru SR, Srivenugopal KS. Piperlongumine exerts cytotoxic effects against cancer cells with mutant p53 proteins at least in part by restoring the biological functions of the tumor suppressor. *Int J Oncol*. **2016 Apr**;48(4):1426-36. doi: 10.3892/ijo.2016.3372. Epub 2016 Feb 3.
- ≈Naomi J. Wangler, **Srinidhi Jayaraman**, Rui Zhu, Yehia Mechref, Thomas J. Abbruscato, Ulrich Bickel, Vardan T. Karamyan. Preparation and preliminary characterization of recombinant neurolysin for in vivo studies. *J Biotechnol*. 2016 Sep 20;234:105-15. doi: 10.1016/j.jbiotec.2016.07.007. [Epub 2016 Aug 2]
- ≈**Kaisar MA**, **Prasad S**, **Liles T**, Cucullo L. A decade of e-cigarettes: Limited research & unresolved safety concerns. *Toxicology*. 2016 Jul 28;365:67-75. doi:10.1016/j.tox.2016.07.020. [Epub ahead of print]
- ≈**Kinarivala N**, Suh, JH, Botros, M, Webb, P, Trippier, PC. Pharmacophore elucidation of phosphodiacyl A - Potent and selective peroxisome proliferator-activated receptor β/δ agonists with neuroprotective activity. *Bioorg Med Chem Lett*. 2016 Apr 15;26(8):1889-93. doi: 10.1016/bmcl.2016.03.028. Epub 2016 Mar 9.
- ≈**Kinarivala N**, Trippier PC. Progress in the Development of Small Molecule Therapeutics for the Treatment of Neuronal Ceroid Lipofuscinoses (NCLs). *J Med Chem*. 2016 May 26;59(10):4415-27. doi: 10.1021/acs.jmedchem.5b01020. Epub 2015 Nov 24.
- ≈Punganuru SR, **Madala HR**, Venugopal SN, Samala R, Mikelis C, Srivenugopal KS. Design and synthesis of a C7-aryl piperlongumine derivative with potent antimicrotubule and mutant p53-reactivating properties. *Eur J Med Chem*. 2016 Jan 1;107:233-44. doi: 10.1016/j.ejmech.2015.10.052. Epub 2015 Nov 2.
- ≈Srivenugopal KS, Rawat A, Niture SK, Paranjpe A, Velu C, Venugopal SN, **Madala HR**, **Basak D**, Punganuru SR. Posttranslational Regulation of O (6)-Methylguanine-DNA Methyltransferase (MGMT) and New Opportunities for Treatment of Brain Cancers. *Mini Rev Med Chem*. 2016;16(6):455-64.
- ≈Punganuru SR, **Mostofa AGM**, **Madala HR**, **Basak D**, Srivenugopal KS. Potent anti-proliferative actions of a non-diuretic glucosamine derivative of ethacrynic acid. *Bioorg Med Chem Lett*. **2016 Jun 15**;26(12):2829-33. doi: 10.1016/j.bmcl.2016.04.062. Epub 2016 Apr 22.
- ≈**Prasad S**, Sajja RK, **Kaisar MA**, Cucullo L. Hyperglycemia exacerbates antiretroviral drug combination induced blood-brain barrier endothelial toxicity. *Neurotoxicology*. 2016 Jun 23;56:1-6. doi: 10.1016/j.neuro.2016.06.011. [Epub ahead of print]
- ≈**Ranjan A**, Srivastava SK. Penfluridol suppresses pancreatic tumor growth by autophagy-mediated apoptosis. *Sci Rep*. 2016 May 18;6:26165. [doi: 10.1038/srep26165]
- ≈Qin JJ, Wang W, **Sarkar S**, **Voruganti S**, Agarwal R, Zhang R. Inulanolide A as a new dual inhibitor of NFAT1-MDM2 pathway for breast cancer therapy. *Oncotarget*. 2016 May 31;7(22):32566-32578. doi: 10.18632/oncotarget.8873.
- ≈Qin JJ, **Sarkar S**, **Voruganti S**, Agarwal R, Wang W, Zhang R. Identification of lineariifolianoid A as a novel dual NFAT1 and MDM2 inhibitor for human cancer therapy. *J Biomed Res*. 2016 Jul;30(4):322-33. doi: 10.7555/JBR.30.20160018. Epub 2016 May 25.
- ≈**Kshitij Verma**, Tianzhu Zang, **Nehal Gupta**, Trevor M. Penning, and Paul C. Trippier. Selective AKR1C3 Inhibitors Potentiate Chemotherapeutic Activity in Multiple Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML) Cell Lines. *ACS Med. Chem. Lett*. June 22, 2016. doi:10.1021/acsmedchemlett.6b00163.



Medi Park, photo by Yoon Jung Lee,
Graduate Student in Dr. Stoll's lab

*“When you arise in the morning,
think of what a precious privilege
it is to be alive - to breathe,
to think, to enjoy, to love.”*

~~~~~  
**Marcus Aurelius**  
(AD 121-180)

**CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS**

**American Heart Association, International Stroke Conference  
February 17-19, 2016 \* Los Angeles, CA**

\***Shyanne Page**, Alli Munsell, Abraham Al-Ahmad. "Modeling the ischemic blood-brain barrier in a dish using human induced pluripotent stem cells"



**Alzheimer's  
Drug Discovery  
Foundation**

**Alzheimer's Drug Discovery Foundation,  
10th Annual Drug Discovery for Neurodegeneration Conference  
March 6-8, 2016 \* Miami, FL**

\***Nihar Kinarivala**, Joelle Makoukji, Fadi Saadeh, Rose-Mary Boustany and Paul C. Trippier. "Design, synthesis, and structure-activity relationships of flupirtine derivatives for the treatment of neuronal ceroid lipofuscinosis".

\***Ronak Patel**, Shyanne Page and Abraham Al-Ahmad. "The Neurovascular Unit in a Dish: Development of a Patient Specific *in vitro* Model using Stem Cells"

**Society of Toxicology, 55th Annual Meeting and ToxExpo  
March 13-17, 2016 \* New Orleans, LA**

\***Hanumantha Rao Madala**, Surendra R Punganuru, Constantinos Mikelis, Kalkunte Srivenugopal. "Design of a Rofecoxib-combretastatin Hybrid Drug That Exerts Potent and Improved Antimicrotubule and Anti-Angiogenesis Properties Retaining Cox-2 Inhibition."

\***Alok Ranjan** and Sanjay Srivastava. "Penfluridol suppresses glioblastoma tumor growth by inhibiting sonic hedgehog signaling."

\***Shikha Prasad**, Ravi Sajja and Luca Cucullo. "Metformin prevents Cigarette Smoke-induced Nrf2 downregulation and BBB Endothelial toxicity: A new therapeutic use of an old drug?"

\***Kshitij Verma**, Tianzhu Zang, Trevor M. Penning, and Paul C. Trippier. "Synthesis of Potent and Selective AKR1C3 Inhibitors for Acute Myeloid Leukemia Therapy"



**AACR** American Association  
for Cancer Research

**American Association of Cancer Research  
April 16-20, 2016 \* New Orleans, LA**

\***Alok Ranjan** and Sanjay Srivastava. "Penfluridol suppresses glioblastoma tumor growth by inhibiting sonic hedgehog signaling"

\***Hanumantha Rao Madala**, Surendra Reddy Punganuru, and Kalkunte Srivenugopal. "Potent functional inactivation of the MGMT DNA repair protein by dithiocarbamate compounds increases the efficacy of temozolomide in human glioblastoma cells."

**Center of Excellence for Translational  
Neuroscience and Therapeutics (CTNT),  
First Annual Meeting,  
April 21, 2016 \* TTUHSC Lubbock, TX**

\***Alejandra Fernandez**, YoonJung Lee, James Stoll. "A 35% Triheptanoin Diet Reduces Spontaneous Electrographic Seizures in Pilocarpine-Induced Epileptic Mice".



**TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY  
HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER.**



**Center of Excellence for  
Translational Neuroscience and Therapeutics (CTNT)**

1<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting  
Thursday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016 • Room: ACB150

\***Nihar Kinarivala**, Fadi Saadeh, Joelle Makoukji, Rose-Mary Boustany, and Paul C. Trippier. "Investigation of Flupirtine Structure Activity Relationship for the Treatment of Batten Disease."

\***Ronak Patel**, Shyanne Page, Abraham Al-Ahmad. "The Neurovascular Unit in a Dish : Development of an *in vitro* Patient Specific Model Based on Induced Pluripotent Cells"

\***Taylor Liles**, Ravi K. Sajja, Shikha Prasad, Piexin Jiang, Luca Cucullo. "Vorinostat Induces P-glycoprotein and BCRP Drug Efflux Activity at the Blood-Brain Barrier: Implications for Limited Use in Combination Chemotherapy"

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**CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS (cont'd)**

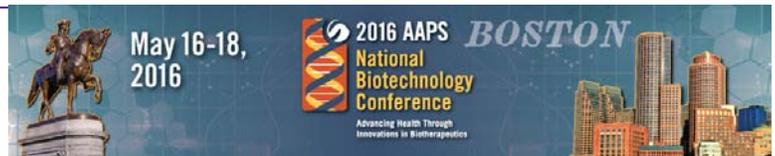


**American Association of Immunologists,  
Immunology 2016  
May 13-17, 2016 \* Seattle, WA**

**\*Jee Hyun Park**, Li Yang, Faleh Alqahtani and Ulrich Bickel. "Development of a Novel Preclinical Model Based on HLA-A2 Transgenic Mice to Evaluate T-Cell Receptor Mimic Monoclonal Antibodies as Therapeutic Agents against Brain Metastases of Human Breast Cancer"

**\*Jee Hyun Park**, Oriana E. Hawkins, Navin K. Chintala, Jon A. Weidanz and Ulrich Bickel. "Internalization of T-Cell Receptor Mimic Antibody RL6A by Brain Derived Endothelial Cells Analyzed by Flow Cytometry"

**American Association  
of Pharmaceutical Scientists,  
National Biotechnology Conference  
May 16-18, 2016 \* Boston, MA**



**\*Kshitij Verma**, Tianzhu Zang, Trevor M. Penning, and Paul C. Trippiera. "Development of novel therapeutics for Castration Resistant Prostate Cancer (CRPC) and Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML): Design and Evaluation of selective AKR1C3 inhibitors" — **Podium Presentation**



**CYTO 2016, 31st Congress of the International  
Society for Advancement of Cytometry  
June 11-15, 2016 \* Seattle, WA**

**\*Jee Hyun Park**, Oriana E. Hawkins, Navin K. Chintala, Jon A. Weidanz and Ulrich Bickel. "Flow Cytometry Analysis of T-Cell Receptor Mimic Antibody (TCRm) RL6A Internalization by Brain Derived Endothelial Cells" — **Podium Presentation**

**North American Vascular Biology Organization,  
Vasculata 2016  
August 15-17, 2016 \* Philadelphia, PA**



**\*Md. Sanaullah Sajib**, Jee Hyun Park, Mohd Nazmul-Hasan-Apu, Richard Wagner, Hena Tewari, Sanjay K. Srivastava, Paul Tullar, Ulrich Bickel, Constantinos M. Mikelis. "Endothelial RhoA Signaling Pathway: Role in Cancer Metastasis"



**Amarillo Botanical Gardens,  
photo by Yoon Jung Lee**

*"Wisdom is  
the art of  
knowing  
what to  
overlook."*

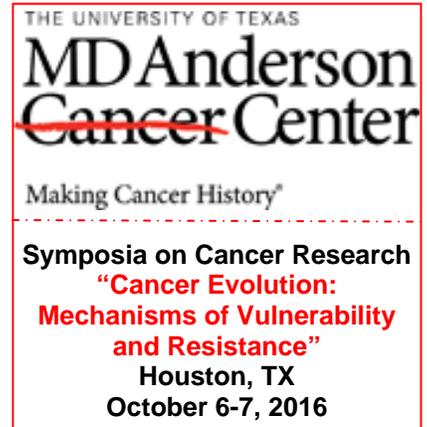
~  
**William James,  
psychologist**

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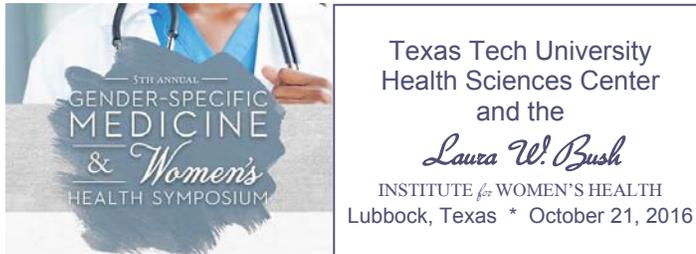
FALL 2016 CONFERENCES



**BMES 2016**  
 Annual Meeting  
 October 5-8, 2016  
 Minneapolis Convention Center  
 Minneapolis, Minnesota  
 www.bmes.org



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS  
**MD Anderson  
 Cancer Center**  
 Making Cancer History®  
 Symposia on Cancer Research  
**“Cancer Evolution:  
 Mechanisms of Vulnerability  
 and Resistance”**  
 Houston, TX  
 October 6-7, 2016



Texas Tech University  
 Health Sciences Center  
 and the  
*Laura W. Bush*  
 INSTITUTE for WOMEN'S HEALTH  
 Lubbock, Texas \* October 21, 2016



Baylor University  
 Waco, Texas  
 October 21-22, 2016

**Lone Star Regional Chapter**  
 of the Society of Toxicology



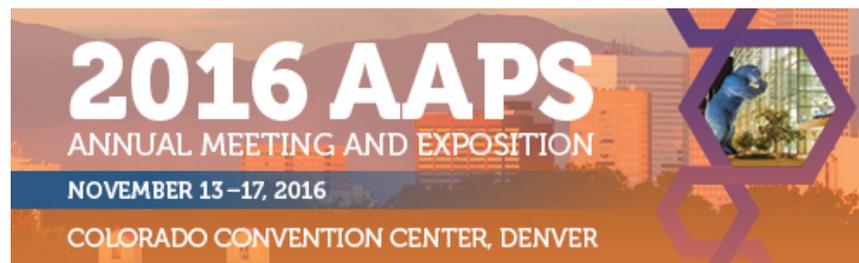
**American College of Toxicology**  
**37th Annual Meeting**  
 November 6-9, 2016  
 Baltimore, Maryland  
 Baltimore Marriott



American Heart Association  
 Scientific Sessions 2016  
 New Orleans, LA, USA  
 12 - 16 NOV., 2016



**SOCIETY for  
 NEUROSCIENCE**  
 Neuroscience 2016  
**SAN DIEGO  
 NOVEMBER 12-16**



**2016 AAPS**  
 ANNUAL MEETING AND EXPOSITION  
 NOVEMBER 13-17, 2016  
 COLORADO CONVENTION CENTER, DENVER



**AES ANNUAL MEETING**  
 DECEMBER 2 - 6, 2016 | HOUSTON TEXAS  
 70th Annual Meeting  
 George R. Brown Convention Center  
 6th Biennial North American  
 Regional Epilepsy Congress

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# A g o n i s t

**The 28th Annual Student Research Week**, hosted by the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (GSBS) in Lubbock, was held March 8-11, 2016. The theme this year was “Molecular Basis of Life + Disease”, and twelve (12) poster entries from junior and senior basic science researchers were presented by our GPPS students. Keynote Speakers included: Mario Capecchi, Ph.D., who was awarded the 2007 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, and Susan Amara, Ph.D., Scientific Director at the National Institute of Mental Health and National Institutes of Health.

### **GPPS PRESENTERS:**

Md. Sanaullah Sajib, **Md. Ashraf-Uz-Zaman**, Constantinos Mikelis, Nadezhda German. "Evaluation of the Fungal Metabolite Gliotoxin as an Anti-Cancer Agent." [Presented by Ashraf-Uz-Zaman]

**Debasish Basak** and Kalkunte Srivenugopal. "Redox-mediated inactivation of MGMT DNA repair sensitizes human gliomas to alkylating agents in vitro and in vivo".

**Anwar Hossain**, Narshimha Sattenapally, Stephanie DeLeon, Kendra Rambaugh, Hardin I Parikh, Nadezhda German. "Prevention of bacterial virulence by synthetic quorum sensing inhibitors"

**Laxmi Iyer**, Benard Ogola and Thomas Thekkumkara. "Hyperglycemia Induced Cell Injury in Renal Proximal Tubule Cells".

**Srinidhi Jayaraman**, Rui Zhu, Naomi J. Wangler, Yehia Mechref, Thomas J. Abbruscato, David A. Ostrov, Vardan T. Karamyan. Allosteric Potentiation of Peptidase Neurolysin by Small Molecules."

**Nihar Kinarivala**, Fadi Saadeh, Joelle Makoukji, Rose-Mary Boustany, and Paul C. Trippier. "Investigation of Flupirtine Structure Activity Relationship for the Treatment of Batten Disease."

**Hanumantha Rao Madala**, Surendra R Punganuru, Constantinos Mikelis, Kalkunte Srivenugopal. "Design of a Rofecoxib-combretastatin Hybrid Drug That Exerts Potent and Improved Antimicrotubule and Anti-angiogenesis Properties Retaining Cox-2 Inhibition".

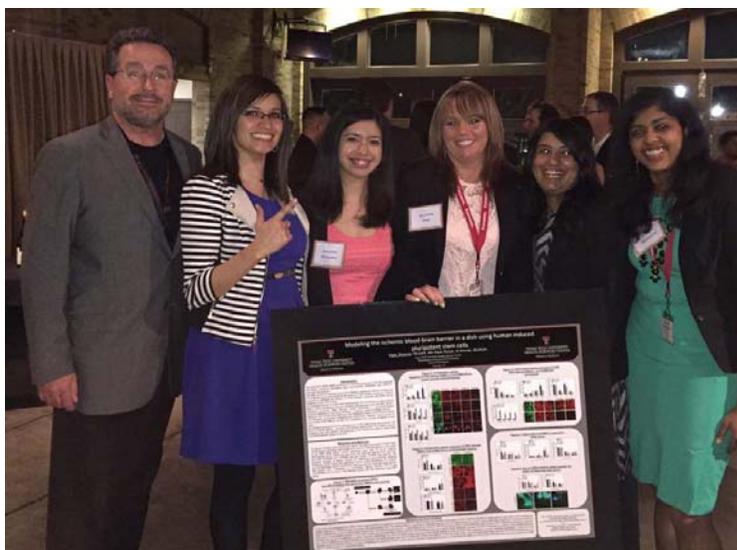
**A.G.M. Mostofa** and Kalkunte S. Srivenugopal. "MGMT, a Human DNA Repair Protein and Anticancer Drug Resistance Determinant Interacts With PCNA and Functions as a S-phase Checkpoint".

**Page, Shyanne**; Munsell, Alli; Al-Ahmad, Abraham. "Modeling the ischemic blood-brain barrier in a dish using human induced pluripotent stem cells".

**Ronak Patel**, Shyanne Page, Dr. Abraham Al-Ahmad. "The Neurovascular Unit in a Dish: Development of a Patient Specific in vitro Model using Stem Cells".

**Ali Sifat**, Kaushik Shah, Thomas J. Abbruscato. "Validation of an acute brain slice model to study the effects of nicotine on brain glucose utilization: Potential impact of e-cigarette use".

**Heidi Villalba**, Kaushik Shah, Thomas J. Abbruscato. "Optimizing Behavioral Test to Assess the Neuro-Protective and Restorative Effects of Myo-Inositol in Focal Ischemia".



**Dr. Quentin Smith, Dean of the TTUHSC School of Pharmacy in Amarillo (left), with GPPS graduate students attending SRW (l-r) Heidi Villalba, Alejandra Fernandez, Shyanne Page, Laxmi Iyer and Srinidhi Jayaraman.**

## Fifteenth Annual **School of Pharmacy** Research Days June 1-2, 2016

This year, faculty members, graduate students, post-docs and residents converged at the Amarillo Civic Center Heritage Room in Amarillo, TX to showcase their research during the Fifteenth Annual School of Pharmacy Research Days held on Wednesday and Thursday, June 1st and 2nd. The Keynote Speaker on Wednesday was Marcie A Glicksman, Ph.D., Vice President of Biology for Orig3n, Inc. On Thursday, the Keynote Speaker was Joseph Saseen, Pharm.D., Professor and Department Vice Chair at the University of Colorado School of Pharmacy. Other speakers were: Carlos Alvarez, Pharm.D., Associate Professor for the Department of Pharmacy Practice on the School of Pharmacy's Dallas/Fort Worth campus; Constantinos Mikelis, Ph.D., Assistant Professor for the Department of Biomedical Science on the Amarillo campus; and Dr. Devin Lowe, Ph.D., an Assistant Professor for the Department of Immunotherapeutics and Biotechnology on the Abilene campus. Speakers for concurrent sessions were: Marta Collier, Director of Development, Grant Development at TTUHSC in Lubbock; Lisa McDonald, Director for the Kinetic Accelerator Innovated by TTUHSC; and Charles Seifert, Pharm.D., Regional Dean for the School of Pharmacy's Lubbock campus.

Podium presentations were given Wednesday afternoon and Thursday morning by selected individuals, and the annual dinner and social were held Thursday evening at the Amarillo Country Club. Posters were judged Thursday afternoon, and awards were presented Friday afternoon to complete the event, with 28 entries from residents, and 41 from students and graduate students. Six of our GPPS graduate students gained recognition and were awarded during the final ceremony. The Laura W. Bush Institute for Women's Health, hosted by TTUHSC, and P. Michael Conn, Ph.D., TTUHSC senior vice president for research, helped sponsor the event, which is a wonderful opportunity for researchers from all four campuses of the School of Pharmacy to come together and talk about their research, building toward future collaborations and friendships.

### Podium Presentations:

- **Srinidhi Jayaraman**, Rui Zhu, Naomi J. Wangler, Yehia Mechref, Thomas J. Abbruscato, David A. Ostrov, Vardan T. Karamyan. "Allosteric Potentiation of Endopeptidase Neurolysin".
- **Nihar Kinarivala**, Paul C. Trippier. "Investigation of Flupirtine Structure-Activity Relationship for the treatment of Batten Disease".

### Outstanding Poster Presentation Awards:

#### —> **Junior Graduate Student Category:**

- **YoonJung Lee**, Alejandra Fernandez, James Stoll. "Reduced Frequency of Spontaneous Electrographic Seizures in Pilocarpine-Induced Epileptic Mice Using a Triheptanoin Diet".
- **Anwar Hossain**, Narsimha Sattenapally, Stephanie DeLeon, Kendra Rambaugh, Hardik I Parikh, Nadezhda German. "Prevention of Bacterial Virulence by Synthetic Quorum Sensing Inhibitors".

#### —> **Senior Graduate Student Category:**

- **A.G.M. Mostofa**, K.S. Srivenugopal. "MGMT, a Human DNA Repair Protein and Anticancer Drug Resistance Determinant Interacts with PCNA and Functions as a S-phase Checkpoint".
- **Alok Ranjan** and Sanjay K. Srivastava. "Glioblastoma Tumor Growth Suppression by Penfluridol through Akt Mediated Inhibition of Sonic Hedgehog Signaling".

### Graduate Student Presenters:

- **Amer Saad Alali**, Tanvirul Hye, Ismail Walbi, Xinli Liu. "Polymeric Nanoparticles Encapsulating Novel Microtubule Inhibitor BPR0L075."
- **Faleh Alqahtani**, Ekram Ahmed Chowdhury, Reza Mehvar, Ulrich Bickel. "Microdialysis Technique for Measuring [<sup>13</sup>C] Sucrose and Metabolites in Brain Extracellular Fluid".

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## (SOP Research Days, cont'd from page 11)

- Md Sanaullah Sajib, **Md Ashraf-Uz-Zaman**, Constantinos Mikelis, Nadezhda German. "Evaluation of the Fungal Metabolite Gliotoxin as an Anti-Cancer Agent". [Presented by Ashraf-Uz-Zaman]
- Debasish Basak**, Kalkunte S Srivenugopal. "Redox-Mediated Inactivation of MGMT DNA Repair Sensitizes Human Gliomas to Alkylating Agents In Vitro and In Vivo".
- Sujit Biswas**, Tanvirul Hye, Xinli Liu. "Quantitative UPLC Analysis of Anticancer Agents Lapatinib and Capecitabine".
- Ekram Ahmed Chowdhury**, Mohammad K. Miah, Reza Mehvar, Ulrich Bickel. "Validation of LC-MS/MS Method for the Quantification of [<sup>13</sup>C<sub>12</sub>] Sucrose for Application in the Measurement of Blood Brain Barrier Permeability in Different Biological Matrices".
- Nehal Gupta**, Parul Gupta and Sanjay K. Srivastava. "Penfluridol Reduces Paclitaxel Resistance in Breast Cancer by Inhibiting HER2/β-Catenin Signaling".
- Tanvirul Hye**, Xinli Liu. "Engineered Biocompatible Peptide Increases Brain Delivery of PEGylated Nanoemulsion Via Transient and Reversible Opening of BBB".
- Laxmi Iyer**, Benard Ogola, Yong Zhang, and Thomas Thekkumkara. "Down-Regulation of Angiotensin Type 1 Receptor by Tannic Acid in Rat Aortic Vascular Smooth Muscle Cells: An Insight into the 'French Paradigm'".
- Taylor Liles**, Ravi K. Sajja, Shikha Prasad, Peixin Jiang, Luca Cucullo. "Vorinostat Induces Blood-Brain Barrier P-glycoprotein and BCRP Activity: Implications for its Limited use in Combination Chemotherapy".
- Hanumantha Rao Madala**, Surendra R. Punganuru and Kalkunte S. Srivenugopal. "Development of Stable and Brain-Penetrating Disulfiram Nanoparticles to Improve its Efficacy Against Malignant Gliomas".
- Benard Ogola**, Yong Zhang and Thomas Thekkumkara. "2-Methoxyestradiol Down-regulates Angiotensin Type 1 Receptor Through GPR30 Dependent Phosphoinositide 3-Kinase Pathway".
- Shyanne Page**, Alli Munsell, Abraham Al-Ahmad. "Modeling the Ischemic Blood-Brain Barrier in a Dish Using Human Induced Pluripotent Stem Cells".
- Jee Hyun Park**, Oriana E. Hawkins, Navin K. Chintala, Jon A. Weidanz and Ulrich Bickel. "Flow Cytometry-Based Internalization Assay of T-Cell Receptor Mimic Antibody (TCRm) RL6A".
- Sharavan Ramachandran**, Neel Fofaria, Sanjay K. Srivastava. "Novel Propanoic Acid Derivative Sensitizes Braf Mutated Melanoma Cells".
- Jahidur Rashid**, Fakhrul Ahsan. "A Highly Sensitive LC-MS/MS Method for Concurrent Determination of Sildenafil and Rosiglitazone in Rat Plasma".
- Mohd Nazmul-Hasan-Apu, **Md Sanaullah Sajib**, Richard Wagner, Hena Tewari, Sameer Saifuddin, Sanjay K. Srivastava, Paul Tullar, Constantinos M. Mikelis. "Role of RhoA Signaling Pathway in bFGF - and Cancer-induced Angiogenesis". [Presented by Sajib]
- Md Sanaullah Sajib**, Jee Hyun Park, Mohd Nazmul Hasan Apu, Richard Wagner, Hena Tewari, Sanjay K. Srivastava, Paul Tullar, Ulrich Bickel, Constantinos M. Mikelis. "Endothelial RhoA Signaling Pathway: Role in Cancer Metastasis".
- Shikha Prasad**, Ravi K. Sajja, Luca Cucullo. "Metformin Activates Nrf2 Pathway and Prevents Cigarette Smoke-induced BBB Endothelial Dysfunction".
- Ali Ehsan Sifat**, Kaushik Shah, Thomas Abbruscato. "Effects of Nicotine on Brain Glucose Utilization: Potential Impact of E-Cigarette Use".
- Sreedhar Reddy Suthe**, Liang Feng, Ming-Hai Wang. "Antibody Drug Conjugates: Opportunities and Challenges".

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(SOP Research Days, cont'd from page 12)

- **Kshitij Verma**, Tianzhu Zang, Trevor M. Penning, Paul C. Trippier. “Development of Novel Therapeutics for Castration Resistant Prostate Cancer (CRPC) and Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML): Synthesis and Evaluation of Selective AKR1C3 Inhibitors”.
- **Kshitij Verma**, Tianzhu Zang, Trevor M. Penning, Paul C. Trippier. “Design, Synthesis and Structure Activity Relationship Optimization of Baccharin Derivatives for AKR1C3 Inhibition”.
- **Heidi Villalba**, Kaushik Shah and Thomas J. Abbruscato. “Behavioral Tests to Assess the Neuro-Protective and Restorative Effects of Myo-Inositol in Animal Stroke Model”.
- **Ismail A Walbi**, Suni Tang, Xinli Liu. “DNA Nanoparticle Formulation using Chitosan and Sodium Triphosphate Ionic Gelation Method: Synthesis and Characterization”.



Dr. Paul Trippier (left) presented Srinidhi Jayaraman with certificate for her Podium Presentation.



A.G.M. Mostofa (center) received award from Dr. Trippier and Dr. Sanjay Srivastava for Outstanding Poster Presentation in the Senior Graduate Student Category.



Anwar Hossain (center) received award from Dr. Trippier and Dr. Srivastava for Outstanding Poster Presentation in the Junior Graduate Student Category.



Nihar Kinarivala (left) received certificate from Dr. Trippier for Podium Presentation.



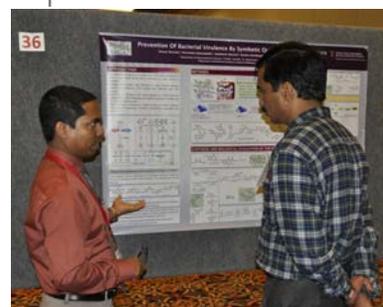
Alok Ranjan (center) received award from Dr. Trippier and Dr. Srivastava for Outstanding Poster Presentation in the Senior Graduate Student Category.



Yoon Jung Lee (center) received award from Dr. Trippier and Dr. Srivastava for Outstanding Poster Presentation in the Junior Graduate Student Category.



Nihar Kinarivala (right) presenting research poster.



Anwar Hossain (left) presenting research poster.

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**SCHOOL OF PHARMACY CELEBRATION OF ACHIEVEMENT**  
**Graduate Student Association at Amarillo**
**April 29, 2016 Award Ceremony**  
**Honors for Students, Faculty & Staff**


Dr. Luca Cucullo (center) was presented the "Graduate Mentor of the Year" award by Jee Hyun Park (left), GSAA President, and Heidi Villalba (right), GSAA Vice-President.



Heidi (left) presented the "Graduate Teaching Team of the Year (Graduate Physiology-Based Pharmacology)" award to (l-r) Drs. Ulrich Bickel, Margaret Weis, Vardan Karamyan, Ramakrishna Samala, Luca Cucullo and Kalkunte Srivenugopal (not shown.)



Jee Hyun 'Jinni' Park (left) was presented the "Outstanding GSAA Student of the Year" award by Heidi.



Nihar Kinarivala (center left) and Mrs. Shikha (center right) were recognized as the TTUHSC GSBS Dean's Scholars for 2016, with plaques presented by Jinni (left) and Heidi (right).



Dr. Margaret Weis received the "Graduate Teacher of the Year (Pharmacology)" award.

## AWARDS & SCHOLARSHIPS

- ❖ **Anwar Hossain:** Outstanding Poster Presentation Award, Junior Graduate Student Category, Fifteenth Annual Research Days, TTUHSC SOP, Amarillo, TX; June 2016.
- ❖ **Nihar Kinarivala:** Dean's Scholars Award, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, February 2016.
- ❖ **Nihar Kinarivala:** Outstanding Young Investigator Scholarship, Alzheimer's Drug Discovery Foundation (ADDF), March 2016.
- ❖ **Yoon Jung Lee:** Outstanding Poster Presentation Award, Junior Graduate Student Category, Fifteenth Annual SOP Research Days, TTUHSC, Amarillo, TX, June 2016.
- ❖ **A.G.M. Mostofa:** Outstanding Poster Presentation Award, Senior Graduate Student Category, Fifteenth Annual SOP Research Days, TTUHSC, Amarillo, TX, June 2016.
- ❖ **Jee Hyun Park:** Best Oral Presentation in Graduate Student Seminar – Fall 2015, Graduate Student Association at Amarillo, TTUHSC SOP, Amarillo, TX, January 2016.
- ❖ **Jee Hyun Park:** Phonathon Scholarship, TTUHSC SGA Phonathon Committee, awarded March 2016. (to be applied graduating term).
- ❖ **Jee Hyun Park:** Student Travel Award, International Society for Advancement of Cytometry, CYTO 2016, 31st Congress of ISAC, Seattle, WA; June 2016.
- ❖ **Ronak Patel:** Young Investigator Scholarship, Alzheimer's Drug Discovery Foundation (ADDF), March 2016.
- ❖ **Alok Ranjan:** Best Oral Presentation in Graduate Student Seminar – Fall 2015, Graduate Student Association at Amarillo, TTUHSC SOP, Amarillo, TX, January 2016.
- ❖ **Alok Ranjan:** Graduate Student Best Abstract Award for 2016, Association of Scientists of Indian Origin (ASIO), Society of Toxicology (SOT), New Orleans, LA, March 2016.
- ❖ **Alok Ranjan:** Outstanding Poster Presentation Award, Senior Graduate Student Category, Fifteenth Annual SOP Research Days, TTUHSC, Amarillo, TX, June 2016.
- ❖ **Shikha:** Dean's Scholars Award, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, February 2016.
- ❖ **Shikha:** Graduate Student Travel Support Award (stipend rec'd Feb'16), Society of Toxicology, to attend SOT 55th Annual Meeting and ToxExpo, New Orleans, LA, in March 2016.
- ❖ **Kshitij Verma:** American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists, Biotechnology Graduate Student Research Award & Podium Presentation, Boston, MA, May 2016.

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This year, the ten-week **2016 Amarillo Biomedical Research Internship** Included the TTU Honors College program. Ten ABRI interns and two TTU Honors students were working in various School of Pharmacy labs in Amarillo and Abilene. Significant presentations were given to both groups almost every week by School of Pharmacy faculty and staff. The TTU Honors College program concluded with presentations on Friday, July 1st. The ABRI program concluded a few weeks later on Friday, July 29th, with podium presentations from each of the interns. The interns were presented a certificate after they enjoyed a luncheon with parents, faculty, graduate students and staff.



(standing, l-r) Julian Alvarez, Leighton Hooks, Ahmed Morsy, Elizabeth Innis, Morgan Ryan, Jordan Massingill, John Jackson  
(sitting, l-r) Lisa Langan, Mikaelan Cucciarre-Stuligross, Abbie Biggers, Brooke Boston

Dr. Ahsan (right) presented a certificate to John Jackson.



**ABRI interns:**

- » Julian Alvarez ~ Dr. Ulrich Bickel, Pharmaceutical Sciences
- » Abbie Biggers ~ Dr. Vardan Karamyan, Pharmaceutical Sciences
- » Mikaelan Cucciarre-Stuligross ~ Dr. Abraham Al-Ahmad, Pharmaceutical Sciences
- » Leighton Hooks ~ Dr. Sanjay Srivastava, Biomedical Sciences
- » Elizabeth Innis ~ Dr. Xinli Liu, Pharmaceutical Sciences
- » John Jackson ~ Dr. Luca Cucullo, Pharmaceutical Sciences
- » Lisa Langan ~ Dr. Fakhru Ahsan, Pharmaceutical Sciences
- » Jordan Massingill ~ Dr. Nadezhda German, Pharmaceutical Sciences
- » Ahmed Morsy ~ Dr. Paul Trippier, Pharmaceutical Sciences
- » Rebecca Stark ~ Dr. Irene La-Beck, Immunotherapeutics and Biotechnology

**TTU Honors College interns:**

- » Brooke Boston ~ Dr. Nadezhda German, Pharmaceutical Sciences
- » Morgan Ryan ~ Dr. Xinli Liu, Pharmaceutical Sciences



Abbie Biggers received a certificate from Dr. Ahsan.



Mikaelan Cucciarre-Stuligross working in the lab.

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\*For more detailed information on an alumni OR for any changes/additions, please contact Teresa at [Teresa.Carlisle@ttuhsc.edu](mailto:Teresa.Carlisle@ttuhsc.edu).



Amarillo thundercloud, photo by Shyanne Page

Caprock Canyon Sunset, photo by Shyanne Page,  
Graduate Student in Dr. Al-Ahmad's lab



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**GSAA/AAPS BULLETIN BOARD**

**GSAA Officers for 2016-2017:**  
 President, **Heidi Villalba**;  
 Vice-President, **Shyanne Page**;  
 Treasurer, **Nehal Gupta**;  
 Secretary, **Yoon Jung Lee**;  
 Student Senate Representative,  
**Abdullah Al Shoyaib**;  
 Historian, **Ali Sifat**;  
 International Student Representative,  
**Ahmed Alobaida**

**GSSA Members Participated Sp'16 in:**  
**\*January**  
 Movie Matinee  
 GSAA Journal Club (startup)  
**\*February**  
 Bowling Night  
**\*March**  
 International Night  
 Canned Food Drive  
**\*April**  
 March of Dimes, March for Babies  
 "Team Tatum" Burrito Fundraiser  
 Ski Trip  
**\*May**  
 Graduation Party

**Social & Community Service Events Planned for F'16:**  
**\*September**  
 Back-to-School Picnic at Palo Duro Canyon Habitat for Humanity  
**\*October**  
 Pumpkin Carving  
 American Heart Walk  
**\*November**  
 Zipline/Horseback Riding at Palo Duro Canyon  
 High Plains Food Bank  
**\*December**  
 Botanical Winter Lights [service event TBA]



**2016-2017 Officers of the Amarillo AAPS Chapter**  
 Chair - Alok Ranjan  
 Chair-Elect - Md. Abul Kaisar  
 Vice-Chair - Laxmi Iyer  
 Treas./Sec. - Md. Sanaullah Sajib

***Congratulations!**  
 Dr. Constantinos Mikelis and his wife, Natasha, had a new baby girl in spring 2016!  
 Welcome to Katerina!*



**GSAA Events**



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more... *GSAA Events*

INTERNATIONAL NIGHT



MARCH OF DIMES,  
MARCH FOR BABIES



"TEAM TATUM"  
FUND-RAISER



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