In November, TTUHSC President Dr. Tedd L. Mitchell recognized faculty members Drs. Krystal Edwards and Eric MacLaughlin for their exceptional efforts in the clinic and the classroom at the 2012 Faculty Awards Convocation.

Edwards, an associate professor for the Department of Pharmacy Practice in Dallas, received a 2012 Outstanding Clinician Award. Recipients of the award demonstrate clinical acumen, professionalism and ethics; compassion for their patients; extraordinary communication skills; and excellent mentoring skills as evidenced through patient satisfaction surveys, department chair evaluations and student/resident evaluations.

“I was very surprised about the award and I felt very humbled and honored,” Edwards said. “It’s very special to me because I take great pride in providing the best care I can for my patients and this award was an affirmation of my dedication to them. I also try to teach my students and residents how to be the best clinical practitioners they can be. Receiving this award was an acknowledgement that I set a good example for the students and residents I teach.”

Edwards attributes her success to the golden rule: one should treat others as they wish to be treated. She also credits staff, clinic co-workers and faculty colleagues for providing a support system.

“I try to provide the best care to my patients I can and treat them as I would want my family members to be treated,” Edwards said. “Students and residents have also helped to mold me as well. They help keep me excited about patient care and remind me why I do what I do.”

MacLaughlin, a professor who also works for the Department of Pharmacy Practice, was a recipient of a President’s Excellence in Teaching Award for his sustained excellence in the classroom and his strong commitment to teaching, as demonstrated in student and peer evaluations and innovations or originality in teaching.

“I feel that in large part, this award also belongs to them,” MacLaughlin said. “Without them I likely would not have been recognized. I would like to personally thank the students who have honored me in the past with teaching recognitions and I would also like to thank Dr. Cynthia Raehl for her support over the years and for nominating me for this prestigious award.”

MacLaughlin also credited his wife Anitra and their two daughters for his classroom success.

“My family has always been very supportive; they have tolerated my working on some late nights, very early mornings and weekends.”

Edwards, MacLaughlin receive President’s Award
Evans named Dean’s Student Leadership honoree

For as long as Abilene P4 Anne Marie Evans can remember, she has enjoyed volunteering her time to help others. This willingness to step up when others can’t — or won’t — has afforded Evans many opportunities to assume positions of leadership and it’s a trait that many of Evans’ professors and classmates admire. It’s also a primary reason for her selection as the latest Dean’s Student Leadership Award recipient.

Since her arrival at the Abilene campus in 2009, Evans has been a class and student organization leader. She is currently serving as vice president/treasurer for her class and for the Abilene Student Council. She is also the membership vice president for the American Pharmacists Association (APhA) student organization and a member of the Student National Pharmacists Association and Phi Lambda Sigma. In past years she has served as secretary for her class and for the Abilene Student Senate.

“Part of what I love about being a leader is how I always learn a little more about myself and others along the way,” Evans said. “Leadership roles have taught me how to work with a variety of different people and personality types. Being in a leadership role also gives me the opportunity to help others, which I have learned is one of the most gratifying things I can do as a person.”

Evans said her willingness to assume responsibility is born from the inspiration and motivation provided by her parents, Mark and Teresa Evans, who stressed to their daughters the importance of a believe-in-yourself attitude.

“Whether it be in a sport, in pharmacy school or being involved within organizations, my parents have instilled in my sister and me the idea that we can do anything we put our minds to,” Evans said. “They have taught me the importance of being a role model to others and just being involved. To encourage or inspire others doesn’t mean you have to be in a leadership role, it just means you need to be a role model others can follow. I believe my parents have played the biggest role in my life in this aspect.”

Assistant Professor Dr. Stephen Wise nominated Evans for the Dean’s Leadership Award because of her positive outlook and eagerness to help others.

“As a P4, Anne Marie has worked hard to become both an accomplished student and a leader to her younger peers because she is willing to do the work that others would not,” Wise said. “When APhA needed a local membership vice president, there were no campus volunteers at all. Even knowing that it would not be an easy job, and along with her other responsibilities as the Student Council secretary and with her rotations, Anne Marie still took the position because she cares that much about the organization and wants to see it succeed. She is willing to take any comments and critiques I may have and put them to good use.”

Wise recalls an incident where Evans stepped in to encourage a fellow student organization leader in Abilene who was feeling overwhelmed by responsibility.

“The student, a P2, was beginning to get burned out and was unsure if she could stay with the organization, and that was before the school year had even started,” Wise said. “Anne Marie consoled the student, worked with her and reminded her that she did not need to do it all alone because there were other students within the organization who could help.”

While many college students seek organization membership as a way to strengthen their CVs or create networking opportunities, Evans sees such involvement as a way to reach out to the community.

“Student organizations can be a bridge to connect with the community through health fairs, fund raising events and community events such as the March of Dimes or Habitat for Humanity,” Evans said. “In Abilene, it’s a way for us as students to give back to the local community which helped put the School of Pharmacy in Abilene on the map.”

Evans said the knowledge she has gained in the classroom is integral to her career goals, but she also believes serving as a student leader has honed her interpersonal skills and will help her excel as a pharmacist.

“I believe it’s equally important to be able to effectively interact with people, whether it be a customer or a co-worker,” Evans said. “I decided to pursue a career in pharmacy because I wanted to be able to help people and have a face-to-face connection with them. I believe that my student organization volunteer experiences will help me get off to a great start in my career and enable me to advance as future opportunities arise.”

Evans said she was surprised and honored to be recognized with the Dean’s Student Leadership Award.

“There are some very worthy candidates who could have received this award and I am very humbled to have been selected,” Evans said. “I would like to thank Dr. Wise for his nomination and for everything he has done to help me grow and learn within pharmacy school. I also want to thank my parents; without them I wouldn’t have made it to where I am today.”
Srivenugopal garners grant from CPRIT

The Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT) recently awarded Dr. Kalkunte Srivenugopal, an associate professor in the Department of Biomedical Sciences in Amarillo, a three-year $777,268 research grant. The funds were awarded to support new scientific research projects and recruits to help fight cancer in Texas.

CPRIT was established in 2007 when Texas voters approved a constitutional amendment authorizing the state to issue $3 billion in bonds to fund ground breaking cancer research and prevention programs and services in the state. CPRIT was created to expedite innovation and commercialization in the area of cancer research and to enhance access to evidence-based prevention programs and services throughout the state.

Srivenugopal is one of two TTUHSC researchers to receive funding in the latest CPRIT grant cycle. Dr. Min Kang, an associate professor in the TTUHSC School of Medicine's Department of Cell Biology and Biochemistry in Lubbock, received $821,051 for her research.

“This is wonderful news for TTUHSC since these grants are so competitive,” TTUHSC Executive Vice President for Research Dr. Doug Stocco said. “Drs. Kang and Srivenugopal deserve all of the credit in the world by demonstrating their research programs are functioning at a statewide and nationally competitive level.”

Srivenugopal’s grant, co-funded and co-sponsored by the Carson Leslie Brain Tumor Foundation of Dallas, is for his research project titled, Rational Redox-Driven Non-Toxic Therapeutic Strategies for Pediatric Brain Cancers.

Srivenugopal said brain tumors rank second in frequency and cause of death among pediatric cancer patients and are amongst the most challenging to treat. The goal of his research is to design novel and non-invasive therapeutic strategies to make a strong impact on the management of pediatric brain cancers.

“We have been working for over two decades focusing on inhibiting a DNA repair pathway to improve chemotherapy and extend the survival and quality of life for these young people,” Srivenugopal said. “We are grateful to this grant because it will provide us funds to perform preclinical and some clinical studies using a new DNA repair inhibitor known as nitroaspirin. It will also allow us to design non-invasive nasal administration of cancer drugs directly to the brain. The latter procedure is expected to considerably reduce the bone marrow toxicity, which limits adequate chemotherapy, when the drugs are administered by injections.”

Srivenugopal said CPRIT funding is crucial for Texas researchers because funding from the National Cancer Institute at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) has dwindled significantly in the last several years.

“It has become difficult to obtain grants even for meritorious and bench-to-bedside ready projects,” Srivenugopal said. “As a Texas cancer researcher, I am pleased and proud to receive funding from CPRIT. Although competition is fierce for CPRIT funds — the success rate was 11.6 percent in the current cycle, roughly equivalent to that of NIH — I am very happy about the outstanding job the CPRIT has been doing against the battle against cancer in furthering important discoveries both at the basic science and clinical levels.”

Drs. Fakhrul Ahsan and Ruiwen Zhang, faculty researchers for the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences at the pharmacy school campus in Amarillo, and Dr. George Bobustuc, a neuro-oncologist from the M.D. Anderson Cancer Institute in Orlando, Fla., will serve as collaborators for Srivenugopal’s project.

Lockman earns 2012 Chancellor’s Award for teaching

On Dec. 7, Dr. Paul Lockman was one of 15 Texas Tech University System (TTUS) faculty to receive a 2012 TTUS Chancellor’s Council Distinguished Teaching and Research Award, the most prestigious honor awarded to TTUS faculty members.

Lockman, associate professor for the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences in Amarillo and associate dean for outcomes assessment and simulation, was one of six TTUHSC faculty to receive a 2012 award.

Seven recipients from Texas Tech and two from Angelo State were also recognized.

“Our professors and researchers are world-renowned experts in their fields, and their unrivaled dedication exemplifies the wealth of talent present throughout the system,” Hance said. “These individuals’ outstanding accomplishments continue to drive our institutions forward, and I am pleased to recognize such deserving faculty members.”
Students organize first Abilene Fall Festival

The School of Pharmacy in Abilene took on a spooky — and sweet — atmosphere on Halloween when the campus student organizations sponsored their First Annual Halloween Fall Festival.

The Abilene Student Council organized the event and set up an activity table alongside those from Kappa Psi, Phi Delta Chi, the American Pharmacists Association and the National Community Pharmacists Association. Each student organization developed games for children, manned a bouncy castle and handed out candy and other goodies.

“We wanted to do something for our community, especially the area surrounding our school,” P3 Danielle Rodgers said. “We wanted to provide a safe and fun place for kids to go on Halloween night that wouldn’t cost them anything.”

Rodgers said the student organizations were appreciative of the help they received from pharmacy school staff and faculty. She estimated that as many as 100 children and adult trick-or-treaters dropped by the event.

“It was very rewarding to see how volunteers from the school and organizations stepped up to make this event fun by dressing up in costumes, creating games for the kids and helping them play,” Rodgers said. “I loved seeing the smiles on the children’s faces as they won candy from doing the different activities that were set up. They were all able to get candy — a necessity for Halloween — and have fun while doing it.”

Rodgers said the organizations are already making plans to bring the event back next year.

“Getting the word out in the community was challenging, but we’re looking forward to starting to spread the word earlier next year,” she said.

Abilene Regional Dean Debra Notturno-Strong said she was proud of the effort and creativity the students put into the festival.

“The neighborhood around us is not always the safest, so to be able to provide a safe and fun means for children to trick-or-treat was well worth the time and effort,” Notturno-Strong said.

Abilene campus helps community bring Thanksgiving meals to veterans

Thanks to the efforts of the Abilene community, including students, faculty and staff from the School of Pharmacy, Big Country veterans in need were able to enjoy a Thanksgiving meal with all the trimmings.

Pharmacy school volunteers partnered with the We Care Team from Dyess Air Force Base and the Abilene Chamber of Commerce’s Military Affairs Committee for the event. By the time the last bites were taken, school volunteers had spent more than 40 hours assisting in meal preparation and helped serve roughly 1,500 veterans and their families.

They also raised more than $1,000 for the effort and supported a donation to the Meals on Wheels Kitchen as a gift of thanks for allowing the use of the organization’s facilities to bake desserts.

“Oh on the day before Thanksgiving, students hauled desserts from the Make-a-Wish kitchen and provided assistance with set up and food prep for Thursday’s meal,” Abilene Regional Dean Debra Notturno-Strong said. “Students and staff also spent Thanksgiving morning cooking for the 11 a.m. meal and then helped deliver meals to home bound Veterans throughout the community.”
Czech Republic gives P2 a unique insight into pharmacy

Many pharmacy students spend the summer between their first and second years of school traveling, working in hometown pharmacies or recharging their mental batteries. Amarillo P2 Olga Shvarts found a way to do it all.

In July, Shvarts traveled to the Czech Republic where she worked as a pharmacy intern. Her roommate for the month long program was from Spain and she worked with other students from Portugal, Serbia, Poland, Russia and Slovenia.

“I made a lot of friends, especially with people from other countries that participated in the program and I also remain in contact with Czech students that lived in the dormitory where I stayed,” Shvarts said. “Everyone was friendly and nice and made it a truly rewarding experience. The people at the pharmacy where I worked were really helpful and seemed genuinely excited to work with me.”

Shvarts decided to participate in the program at her own expense because she has always been interested in experiencing pharmacy practice in another country. The opportunity to visit Europe for the first time and compare a foreign health care system to that currently in place in the U.S. was also very motivating.

“This was my first pharmacy-related trip abroad and it turned out even better than I anticipated,” Shvarts said. “Growing up in the former Soviet Union, I noticed how valuable the pharmacy was to the community. When I immigrated to the United States, I saw the pharmacist’s role elevated to that of an essential health care provider and I feel it is necessary to integrate the various global approaches to the practice of pharmacy.”

In addition to observing the basic structure of the Czech pharmacy practice and health care system, Shvarts said the program exposed her to an array of cultures, customs and beliefs. She believes health care providers will better able to improve the U.S. system if they have firsthand knowledge about how health care is applied in other countries.

“For a pharmacist, cultural competency and understanding is a must,” Shvarts said. “I think this internship opportunity directly prepared me, at least in part, for those challenges in the future. It was a real learning experience. Going somewhere new, not being able to speak the language and not knowing anyone — it’s really scary, but it teaches you to be independent. I wouldn’t trade this experience for anything, but initially it was quite intimidating. However, this sort of isolation forced me to truly immerse myself into Czech culture.”

Shvarts said the internship gave her an opportunity to apply some of the knowledge and skill she learned in her first year as a pharmacy student. She was amazed at how much she had retained, especially in the laboratory.

“I was surprised at how universal these concepts were, even on the other side of the globe,” Shvarts said. “My only previous pharmacy experience was in a community setting in Austin while working in undergrad, so this was a great way to get a completely fresh perspective on pharmacy practice. Often times, it is necessary to see what works and what doesn’t, and then use that as a model to shape our pharmacy practice based on their personal encounters and experiences.”

Although she paid for most of the internship herself, Shvarts said she would not have been able to participate without the support she received from pharmacy school faculty and staff. It was an experience she would recommend to any student seeking a health care related career.

“I would especially like to thank Dr. Cynthia Raehl, Mark Hendricks and Summer Balcer for all their support. I also strongly encourage everyone to seek practice opportunities in other countries, both in pharmacy and beyond. You won’t regret it.”
From the Dean’s Desk

Preceptors of the Year
TTUHSC School of Pharmacy
2011-2012

Abilene

(Above) Abilene Adjunct Preceptor of the Year Ted Basye, R.Ph., from The Medicine Place in Sweetwater and P4 Muriel Garza. (Right). Abilene Faculty Preceptor of the Year Dr. Jessica Weis.

(Above) Amarillo Adjunct Preceptor of the Year Tamara Springer, R.Ph., from the Thomas E. Creek VA Hospital and School of Pharmacy Dean Dr. Quentin Smith. (Left) Amarillo Faculty Preceptor of the Year Dr. Jill Frost with Smith and Amarillo Regional Dean Dr. Thomas Thekkumkara.

Amarillo

Dallas/Fort Worth

(Let, from left) School of Pharmacy Dean Dr. Quentin Smith; Lubbock Adjunct Preceptor of the Year Dr. Nathan Buerkle; and Lubbock Regional Dean Dr. Chuck Seifert. (Below, from left) Smith; P4s Dustin Smith and Veronica Iniguez; Lubbock Faculty Preceptor of the Year Dr. Rebecca Sleeper; P4 Matthew Ries; and Seifert.

(Lower) Dallas/Fort Worth Regional Dean Dr. Richard Leff; Experiential Programs Coordinator Kathy McLewis; Adjunct Preceptor of the year Tiffany Ngo; and Pharmacy School Dean Dr. Quentin Smith. (Left) Faculty Preceptor of the Year Dr. Steven Pass and his wife, Dr. Amy Pass

Lubbock
In October, Texas Pharmacy Museum Curator Susan Denney and nine School of Pharmacy students participated in the Fannin History Festival in Amarillo. The annual event at Fannin Middle School provides a wonderful opportunity for the museum and students to inform school age children, their families and the general public about present and past aspects of the pharmacy profession through hands-on demonstrations.

Denney estimated that more than 1,500 people attended this year’s 16th annual event. The pharmacy students’ exhibit demonstrated pill rolling using soft chocolate candy and a hand-operated pill machine. They also used a mortar and pestle to grind candy tablets and provide a sugar coating for the pills.

Visitors watched the students demonstrate the different processes and then tried their hand with the devices. The students also fielded questions about pharmacy school and the profession in general.

The students who participated in the event included P4 Crystal Campbell and P2s Shalin Abraham, Robin Blasingame, Aliza Jaffry, Simone Lackey, Alan Nguyen, Titus Rajan, Kylie Schott and Birna Yusuf.

In case you missed it...

• The Texas Pharmacy Foundation (TPF) recently awarded Megan Sneller (P3 - Amarillo) its General Texas Pharmacy Association Scholarship. In addition, Matthew Ries (P4 - Lubbock) received the TPF Royce Cook, Sr. Scholarship. Both scholarships recognize academic achievement, need and the potential to become leaders for Texas pharmacy, as demonstrated by involvement in pharmacy school and community activities.

• In September, Dr. Sanjay K. Srivastava (professor, Department of Biomedical Sciences - Amarillo) traveled to Seoul, South Korea where he was an invited speaker at the 16th International Conference of Oriental Medicine and a Distinguished Speaker at the Kyung Hee University Cancer Preventive Material Development Research Center.

• Five faculty from the Department of Pharmacy Practice’s Ambulatory Care Division recently passed their Ambulatory Care Specialty exams through the Board of Pharmacy Specialties, considered the most recognized provider of specialty credentials in pharmacy practice. The faculty group includes Drs. Lisa Chastain, Megan Stapleton, Tania Thomas, Valerie Vuylsteke and Stephen Wise. Eighty-five percent of the division’s faculty are now board certified in ambulatory care, pharmacotherapy or both.

• Dr. Steven Pass, associate professor for the Department of Pharmacy Practice in Dallas, has been selected as a recipient of a Presidential Citation from the Society for Critical Care Medicine. The citation recognizes the time, energy and resources Pass contributed to the organization during 2012.
Summer intern project earns P2 a rare opportunity

Second-year pharmacy students rarely attend major professional organization conferences and they are almost never invited to make poster presentations at such events. But Amarillo P2 Jason Serna spent the first week of December doing just that at the American Society of Health-Systems Pharmacist (ASHP) Midyear Conference at the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino in Las Vegas.

Serna’s journey started last summer when he accepted an offer to work as a pharmacy intern at Spohn Memorial Hospital, a Trauma II hospital in his hometown of Corpus Christi.

Serna and fellow intern Kimberley Evens from the Texas A&M University School of Pharmacy were assigned the task of improving communications between the floor nursing staff and the pharmacy personnel by helping to provide counseling services to patients who were being discharged from the hospital.

“The project later become more than just improving communication,” Serna said. “Knowing that pharmacy would be unable to provide these services to every patient leaving the hospital, we took the initiative of collecting patient data from the admitting department to determine which patients were at the highest risk for readmission. We then incorporated a work-flow model that the hospital pharmacy still uses today.”

Serna said he feels lucky to have taken part in the internship and to have the opportunity to present his project to ASHP conference attendees.

“Pharmacy is changing and providing a discharge counseling service such as the one we implemented adds value to the field,” Serna said. “I will continue to help move pharmacy forward in any way I can and I hope to show others around the nation that students at the TTUHSC pharmacy school are part of this movement.”
From left: Sarah Willis, Mandy Whiteside, Alejandra Fernandez, Kaytlin Huseman and Pooja Naik all pitched in at the October WISE (Women in Scientific Endeavors) Symposium in Amarillo for middle school girls. This was the fifth year the Amarillo campus has participated in WISE.

P2 Farrah Shaikh won the right to give a flu vaccine to Brittany Patterson, assistant director of experiential and professional continuing education, as part of APhA’s Flu Vaccine Auction fund raiser in October.

Kappa Psi members in Amarillo wore their pink to support Breast Cancer Awareness month in October.

Amarillo pharmacy students volunteered in November at the Guyon Sanders Resource Center’s 2012 Winter Outreach and Health Fair. P2 Jamie Morris prepares to check a patient’s glucose level (above) while P2 Jordan Burdine gives a flu shot.

From left: Abilene P2s Jessica Hunter, Saeed Alzghari, Brittany Speed, Amanda Klar, Djurdja Bukarica and Erica Rawls-Wilson show off their costumes prior to the first annual Halloween Fall Festival.

From left: NCPA members Stephanie Whittaker (P1) and P2s Paul Le and Sara Labus put together packages for the Salvation Army’s Operation Christmas Child project.

At the WISE Symposium in Amarillo, P3s Kaytlin Huseman and Sarah Willis helped participants prepare lozenges while graduate students Pooja Naik and Alejandra Fernandez and P2 Mandy Whiteside demonstrated the science behind making perfumes.

How to submit items for the Dean’s Newsletter

The mission of “From the Dean’s Desk” is to communicate the news, events and achievements from the School of Pharmacy to all four of our campuses and to alumni and other friends of the school who enjoy hearing about your good work.

If you or your department, division, organization or class have something you’d like to include in this newsletter, or if you have a question about the types of items typically included in the newsletter, please contact:

Mark Hendricks
Communications Coordinator
TTUHSC-SOP/Amarillo
806/356-4000 ext. 245
mark.hendricks@ttuhsc.edu