



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY  
HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER  
School of Pharmacy™

*Amarillo • Lubbock • Dallas/Fort Worth • Abilene*

# *From the* DEAN'S DESK



*February-March 2008*

## Students on a Mission...to El Paso

Twenty SOP students from the Christian Pharmacist Fellowship International student organization joined a contingent of TTUHSC medical, nursing and allied health students who traveled to El Paso in February to take part in the annual Christian Medical and Dental Association/Nurses Christian Fellowship Medical Mission Trip.

The SOP students helped set up six clinics where patients could come for consultations, treatment and over-the-counter medications. Students from The University of Texas at El Paso served as translators for Spanish speaking patients.

In past years, the mission has included clinic sites located across the border in Juarez, but CPFI president Travis Garrett (P2-Amarillo) said last minute security issues kept all of the clinics in El Paso or in adjacent communities this year.

Travis said the clinics treated a combined total of roughly 300 patients who had a wide variety of illnesses and medical conditions. He said the SOP students primarily dispensed OTC medications and “played an important role in making sure that the patient understood the medication they were taking and the possible benefits and risks.”



*SOP students and faculty who recently traveled to El Paso for CPFI's annual mission trip.*

He said the trip also benefits pharmacy students because they get the chance to work in real world settings and interact with other students from other medical fields.

“It’s a good way to help us understand more about the job that each does and gain respect and the experience that comes from working with each other,” Travis said. “For me personally, I know both years I have gone have been amazing experiences. I was able to use the knowledge and experience I have to make a difference in people’s lives, people who could really benefit from the care we were able to provide them, even if it was over-the-counter products. You could see how grateful the people were, even if all they needed were some vitamins, to be able to be seen by a physician and to have

someone to explain their medications to them. That was more than enough to make the weekend filled with a lot of driving and not a lot of sleep more than worth it.”

The other SOP students who participated included Amarillo P1s Sarah Carman, Phillip Gall, Shanna James, Greg Mitchon, Amanda Saunders and Tammy Smith; Abilene P1s Meeghan Abraham, Jennifer Dunkle, Elizabeth Le,



*Dr. Shawna King (left) and P1 Shanna James discuss medications with patients in El Paso.*

Heath Patterson and Maggi St. Germain; Amarillo P2s Mona Downs, Josh Hawver, Roy Nguyen, Rebeka Primera, Crystal Rendon, Sarah Smith, Jessica Stapleton, Sarah Villarreal and Tim Weigle; and Dallas/Fort Worth P4 Lee Jaquez.

SOP assistant professors Dr. Shawna King and Dr. Niambi Horton accompanied the students and helped them conduct the clinics.

## NIH Program to Include Dallas/Ft. Worth SOP Resident



*Dr. Amy Bain*

Amy Bain, Pharm.D., a second-year pharmacotherapy specialty resident at the TTUHSC-SOP campus in

Dallas/Fort Worth, is one of 12 researchers recently selected to participate in the National Institutes of Health Clinical Scholars Program at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center.

The NIH Clinical Scholars Program is administered by the Department of Clinical Sciences at UTSW Medical Center and requires a 75 percent time commitment by the clinician. It is designed to help the NIH cultivate independent clinical researchers who are capable of becoming the next generation of leaders in patient-oriented research. The three-year program involves rigorous coursework and requires the scholar to serve as an apprentice to ongoing research projects while simultaneously conducting his/her own independent

research project. Those who successfully complete the program will earn a Master's degree in clinical sciences.

Dr. Bain is the second TTUHSC-SOP researcher to be chosen for the program. Ron Hall, Pharm.D., an assistant professor at the SOP campus in Dallas/Ft. Worth, was one of the first researchers selected for the program when it started in 2006.

"I am truly grateful for the opportunity to pursue advanced training through the NIH Clinical Scholars Program and for the ongoing support of TTUHSC," Dr. Bain said. "Participation in the program will offer me a unique opportunity to gain experience and mentorship from some of our nation's leaders in clinical research. I anticipate that my experiences will not only aid me in developing and attaining my own research goals, but I hope that I can use my experiences to give back to TTUHSC-SOP as well."

Dr. Bain said she is also hopeful the Clinical Scholars program will allow her to develop better treat-

ment options for patients through her research.

"In my opinion, clinical research—in many ways—is yet another level of patient care. My ultimate goal is to develop a research program aimed at improving the clinical use of drugs in order to contribute to patient care on a larger scale. While I have current research interests in the area of antiretroviral toxicities and drug interactions, I anticipate that through the mentorship and guidance provided by the NIH Clinical Scholars Program I will be able to further refine my research program in order to better compete for NIH funding."

Dr. Bain is presently completing a Pharmacotherapy Specialty Residency at TTUHSC-SOP and the Veterans Affairs North Texas Health System. She is also a clinical instructor for the SOP and serves as a preceptor for third- and fourth-year pharmacy students. Her current research interests include infectious diseases and HIV pharmacotherapy.

## Paulson to Carry GSBS Seal



*Dr. Jennifer Paulson*

In August 2007, Jennifer Paulson earned her doctoral degree from the TTUHSC Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences. At the

GSBA convocation on May 16, she will be recognized as the GSBS Outstanding Graduate Student for 2008. She will also carry the GSBS seal during the May 17 TTUHSC commencement ceremonies.

Jennifer is the third GSBS student from the SOP's Graduate Program in Pharmaceutical Sci-

ences to earn this privilege during the last four years. Dr. Prasad Chimalakonda was the 2005 honoree and Dr. Alamdar Husain received the award in 2006.

Jennifer worked with Dr. Thomas Abbruscato (Associate Professor, Dept. of Pharmaceutical Sciences – Amarillo) and defended her dissertation, "Nicotine's effects on brain edema and ion movement during stroke," on June 21, 2007. In August she enrolled in the TTUHSC-SOP Pharm.D. program and expects to graduate with a Pharm.D./Ph.D. in 2010.



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## **Abilene SOP Professor Honored by Alma Mater**

Dr. Molly Graham (Assistant Professor, Dept. of Pharmacy Practice – Abilene) recently received the 2008 Outstanding Young Alumna Award from the University of Houston College of Pharmacy.

Dr. Graham, who also maintains a practice site at Texas Tech Physicians of Abilene, received her Pharm.D. from UHCOP in May 2005 and holds a B.S. in biomedical science from Texas A&M University. After receiving her Pharm.D., she completed a pharmacy practice residency in Tennessee and an ambulatory care residency in primary care in North Carolina.

Dr. Graham has earned diplomat status in Mental Health

and Diabetes Care from the National Institute for Pharmacist Care Outcomes. While completing her pharmacy education at UHCOP, she placed third in the 2004 Texas Pharmacy Association's Innovative



*SOP assistant professor Dr. Molly Graham (center) receives the UHCOP Outstanding Young Alumna Award from UH President & UH System Chancellor Renu Khator (left) and COP Dean Sunny E. Ohia.*

Pharmacy Project and earned the 2005 U.S. Public Health Service Excellence in Public Health Pharmacy Practice Award. She also made the Dean's List three times and was initiated into Phi Lamda Sigma Upsilon Chapter at UH.

"As a student and at the start of what will no doubt be a career of distinction in academic pharmacy, Dr. Graham has consistently demonstrated an intense passion for the profession," UHCOP Dean Sunny E. Ohia, Ph.D. said. "The college is extremely proud to see Dr. Graham share her knowledge and dedication to the profession with future generations of pharmacists."

## **In Case You Missed It...**

Here are some items you may have missed regarding SOP people:



*Dr. Eric MacLaughlin*

- Dr. Eric MacLaughlin (Associate Professor, Dept. of Pharmacy Practice – Amarillo) is the lead author of a new therapeutic

position statement released by the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists. *The ASHP Therapeutic Position Statement on the Prevention and Treatment of Osteoporosis in Adults* appears in the Feb. 15, 2008, issue of the American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy and highlights the large role pharmacists can have in improving public health through screening for osteoporosis and managing the drug therapy for patients with the disease.

In an AACP news release, Dr. MacLaughlin said the statement is important because it shows how

osteoporosis remains significantly under-diagnosed and under-treated in adults despite the wide availability of treatments. "Osteoporosis-related fractures can be devastating for both patients and caregivers. I'm hoping there will be improvements in care for patients with the disease and those at risk for it."



*Dr. Quentin Smith*

- Dr. Quentin Smith (Chair and Professor, Dept. of Pharmaceutical Sciences – Amarillo), will co-chair a mini-symposium entitled

"New Targets for the Therapy of Metastasis" at the 2008 American Association for Cancer Research Annual Meeting April 12-16 in San Diego. The objective of the mini-symposium is to provide participants with an overview of developments in the timely and significant areas of cancer research.

## **Phonathon Scholarship Winners Announced**

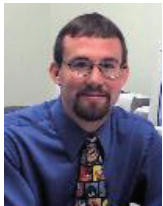
Please join me in congratulating the SOP's 2008 Phonathon/Thankathon Scholarship recipients. The Student Senate established the scholarship in 1989 to raise funds for the Health Sciences Center Student Endowed Scholarship Fund. It is open to all HSC students and 78 scholarships ranging from \$500 - \$1,500 were awarded this year.

Recipients from the SOP included Adam Beam (P3), Sara Braboy (P2), Madelyne Gearley (P2), Catherine Cobb (P3), Nancy Dunseth (P4), Whitney Fisk (P4) and Aby Rajagiriyl (P2) from the Amarillo campus; Jenna Hensley (P3), Brian Lake (P3) and Lisa Pena (P4) from the Lubbock campus; Dallas/Fort Worth P3 Michele Pickrell and Abilene P1 Elizabeth White.



## **Lubbock SOP Professor to Lead New THECB Grant**

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board recently awarded a \$342,000 grant to TTUHSC-SOP and the West Texas Area Health Education Center to develop a health careers web site geared toward meeting the informational needs of minority and underserved students.



*Dr. Craig Cox*

Dr. Craig Cox (Associate Professor, Dept. Of Pharmacy Practice – Lubbock) is the principal investigator for the grant. He will be working with

Shannon Kirkland, Assistant Director of the West Texas AHEC Program at TTUHSC.

The grant is part of the Minority Health Research and Education Grant Program. The project will be a collaborative effort between the Texas Tech University College of Mass Communications, Lubbock Independent School District, AHEC of the Plains, East Texas AHEC, West Texas AHEC and TTUHSC - SOP.

“This will be a great opportunity to expand a website that was developed by the Texas Area Health Education Centers to help stimulate student and family interest in health careers,” Dr. Cox explained. “We are hoping through this process that a greater understanding of healthcare fields will be achieved, allowing individuals to make more informed decisions about their career paths.”

Dr. Cox said the web site, known as Texas HOT Jobs, will address the needs of three different and diverse audiences: parents and families, career seekers and educators.

Texas HOT Jobs includes a book and an online resource. It

was developed more than ten years ago by the Texas Area Health Education Centers and is the only comprehensive health career resource of its kind in Texas.

“We believe that this expansion will create a tremendous resource for young career seekers,” Ms. Kirkland said. “It is really important for young career seekers to identify with a role model in the health profession of their choice. Access to role models is often difficult for students who live in rural or underserved urban communities.”

The web site expansion is expected to be complete in August 2009. Ms. Kirkland said health care professionals are encouraged to visit [www.texas-hot-jobs.org/rolemodels.asp](http://www.texas-hot-jobs.org/rolemodels.asp) and complete an online role model questionnaire about their own educational and professional experiences.

For more information about Texas HOT Jobs or the role model questionnaire, contact Ms. Kirkland at (806) 743-1338 or Shannon.Kirkland@ttuhsc.edu.

## **GSAA Helping to Bring Locks of Love to SOP**

If you would like to donate your hair to a good cause, start growing it now.

The Graduate Student Association of Amarillo and the TTUHSC Regional Senate in Amarillo are sponsoring a “Locks of Love” event from 3-7 p.m. May 1 in the SOP Student Lounge.

Locks of Love uses donated hair to create high quality hair prosthetics and then provides these hairpieces to financially disadvantaged children under the age of 18 who are afflicted with long-term medical related hair loss.

According to their web site ([Locksoflove.org](http://Locksoflove.org)) most of these children have lost their hair due to a medical condition called alopecia areata, which has no known cause or cure. The hair prostheses help to restore self-esteem and confidence to children who suffer from medical hair loss.

“We chose locks of love because many of the graduate students are involved with cancer research and we wanted to support families, and especially children, who are suffering because of this disease,” GSAA President Kaci Bohn said.

To be used in a wig, donated hair must be ten inches long. However, if you can only provide between six and ten inches, you can still donate; the shorter hair will be sold to help offset the costs for making the wigs.

Area stylists will be cutting the hair and each donor will receive a free haircut from local salons. Snacks and drinks will be provided and there will also be raffle prizes.

“We will be holding contests for the longest donation and the oldest and youngest donors,” Kaci said. “We would love support from all faculty and staff and invite everyone to attend that day.”



## SOP, Myelin Project Sponsor Speaker

In February the SOP's Office of Research and the Myelin Project brought world renowned scientist Paul Watkins, M.D., Ph.D. to the TTUHSC campus in Amarillo.

Dr. Watkins is Director of Lipid Enzymology at the Kennedy Krieger Institute and Professor of Neurology at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. His research focus is X-linked adrenoleukodystrophy (XALD) and other myelin degenerating diseases.

Myelin is the insulation that covers our nerve fibers. Childhood XALD causes myelin destruction in the brain. The bodies of XALD patients are unable to break down

fatty substances called very long-chain fatty acids, which then accumulate in the brain and other organs. The disease was the topic of the 1992 movie "Lorenzo's Oil."



*Dr. Paul Watkins answers questions following his Feb. 5 presentation at the TTUHSC-SOP campus in Amarillo.*

One of Dr. Watkins' primary research goals is to develop an understanding of the biochemical basis for XALD and related genetic diseases. Patients with these diseases are afflicted with mental retardation and other significant health problems.

Dr. Margaret Weis (Associate Professor, Dept. of Pharmaceutical Sciences) serves as President for the Myelin Project, which raises funds for research into childhood XALD and other myelin-related diseases. The organization is now headquartered in Amarillo and has its offices at TTUHSC's Laura W. Bush Institute for Women's Health.

## Getting to Know...

### Melissa Edwards Unit Coordinator Administrative Staff - Abilene

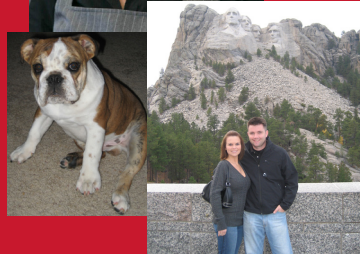
Melissa was born and raised in Mustang, Oklahoma. She says she moved to Abilene because her husband, Capt. Jason Edwards, is stationed at Dyess Air Force Base. Melissa says Capt. Edwards flies in the B1 Bomber and just returned home in February from a six-month deployment to Southeast Asia.

Prior to moving to Texas and going to work for the SOP regional campus in Abilene, Melissa spent seven years in Norman, Oklahoma working for AT&T in revenue management. Melissa and Capt. Edwards are expecting their first child—a daughter they will name Mackenzie—in June.

They also have a nine-month-old English bulldog named Gus.



*Melissa Edwards (top) and posing in front of Mount Rushmore with her husband, Capt. Jason Edwards. Also shown is Gus, the couple's English bulldog.*



Melissa is a member of the 9th Bomb Squadron Spouses Committee, which she says is a great support group for those whose spouses are deployed. The couple's parents still live in Oklahoma and Melissa says she likes to go back as much as she can to visit family and friends.

In her spare time, Melissa enjoys watching Oklahoma Sooners' games, shopping "as much as possible," traveling, scrapbooking and cooking. "Moving to a smaller town has been a transition," Melissa says, "but Abilene has proven to be a great family town and the people are very welcoming to newcomers."