Midwestern University’s Chicago College of Pharmacy (CCP) offers students various opportunities to learn about and participate in research. These include coursework, as well as working on research projects with faculty members.

“Students keep us excited as faculty members. They bring their own creativity to projects and continually challenge our ideas,” says Marc Scheetz, Pharm.D., Associate Professor of Pharmacy Practice, who has received funding for research projects through the NIH and other organizations. “Students are directly able to see the fruits of their labor in medical literature that can guide patient care. Many former student research colleagues of mine are already pushing the envelope as highly functioning clinicians or junior scientific investigators.”

In addition to coursework that focuses on research, students may opt to do an independent study course mentored by a faculty member. In most cases, students network with faculty to find research areas that are of interest to them. In recruiting student assistance, faculty will provide a brief description of their project or research, as well as the method of evaluation and expected outcome from student involvement. Research may also be led by the student, with faculty assistance.

For independent study, students may receive elective credit of one to two hours per quarter. Or, students may choose to participate through the Federal Work Study Program where up to $3,000 per year may be earned to offset their student loans. For student-led research, they may apply for the CCP Student Research Award, which supports students’ participation in meaningful research experiences. The results from such projects are presented in poster form at the Kenneth A. Suarez Research Day each spring, where awards are presented for the best posters.

The efforts of faculty to instill intellectual curiosity and research skills have resulted in a significant increase in the number of students presenting posters at national meetings. During the past year, CCP students have presented 27 different posters.
CCP Professor Receives Prestigious Biotechnology Award

The American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP) recently recognized a pharmacy educator from Midwestern University for his contributions to contemporary teaching and scholarship in biotechnology. Anil Gulati, M.D., Ph.D., Associate Dean, received the Paul R. Dawson Biotechnology Award during the Science Plenary at the AACP Annual Meeting, in Grapevine, Texas in July.

"I’m so pleased to receive this award," Dr. Gulati said. "A lot of credit goes to my students who have contributed to my success and are now holding senior positions and making significant contributions in biotechnology."

Throughout his 35-year career, Dr. Gulati has made a lasting impact on student pharmacists, graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, medical fellows, and colleagues. "The Paul R. Dawson Biotechnology Award honoring Anil Gulati, M.D., is a testament to the excellent research, teaching, and mentoring he consistently provides to the students in the Chicago College of Pharmacy. The University takes great pride in his accomplishments as he represents our mission of excellence in healthcare," said Kathleen H. Goeppinger, Ph.D., President and Chief Executive Officer of Midwestern University.

As Professor and Associate Dean of Research at Midwestern University’s Chicago College of Pharmacy, Dr. Gulati developed a popular elective course called Development of Newly Approved Drug Therapies. In this course, Dr. Gulati takes his students on a journey through the discovery, development, and approval process of biotechnology products. He also teaches a required first-year course, Biopharmaceutics and Pharmacokinetics, in which students learn about the factors that influence the absorption, distribution, bioavailability and pharmacokinetic variability of biotechnology products.

On the Midwestern University campus, he was also recently awarded the 2014 Littlejohn Award in recognition of service and commitment to the University as this year’s outstanding faculty member. 

Target’s Student Competition for Scholarship Awards

The CCP Student Scholarship Committee recently hosted its second annual Target Pharmacy Case Study Competition, which was open to PS-II and PS-III classes. Students organized themselves into teams of four students each. A total of ten teams participated in this competition that challenged students to deliberate, contemplate, and develop a program and formal presentation that addressed a given pharmacy business scenario.

According to Target Corporation, the competition is designed to evaluate students’ abilities to develop a program that can help enhance the company’s reputation as a leader for guest health and wellness. Members of the winning team were each awarded a $1,000 scholarship and later recognized at the Annual CCP Awards Gala in April.

The winning team (self-named “The Red Team”) included Ayesha Abrar, PS-3; Nabiha Mahmood, PS-3; Mohammad Pothiawala, PS-3; and Alexandra Shubat, PS-3.

The competition was judged by three CCP Scholarship Committee members, as well as three Target associates. The preliminary round included all 10 teams, then the top three competed in the final round where the winning team was selected. Finalist teams also included "Targeters of Greater Outcomes": Veeral Vyas, PS-3; Joshua Artlip, PS-3; Thomas Dorn, PS-3; and Loreto LoBosco, PS-3; as well as "Apothecary Avengers": Alina Sirotinsky, PS-3; Anna Bieniek, PS-3; Caroline Ruhlig, PS-3; and Nick Root, PS-3.

The winning "Red Team," pictured front row (from left), Ayesha Abrar and Alexandra Shubat; back row (from left), Target Corporation award presenter David Pokrywiecki, Pharm.D. (CCP Alumnus Class of 2011), Mohammad Pothiawala, and Nabiha Mahmood.

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A Student’s Perspective: Second-Year Balance

By Jan Di Kum, PS-II Student

Prior to starting my second year of pharmacy school, I had heard several upperclassmen describe the second-year workload in dire tones. I recall one student recounting her sleepless nights to memorize the mechanisms of drugs affecting the cholinergic system. Others described the struggles of maintaining focus during critical lectures.

I’ll let you in on a little secret: pharmacy school is not as intimidating as you may fear.

Sure, there are days when I want to cry my heart out, call my mommy, and beg her to buy me a ticket back home to California pronto. On other days, I want to collapse and hibernate into a 35-hour nap undisturbed. Do not be discouraged; I promise that most days are certainly manageable.

A glimpse of my typical day runs like this: early morning lectures and labs followed by an hour lunch break spent wisely between a quick power nap, a last-minute study session, or a small bite to eat with friends. Afternoons are filled with more lectures and workshops, and the remainder of the night is spent with my nose buried in notes. On crazier days, I have early exams, followed by my usual school routine in addition to quizzes, course assignments, research projects, rotations, and student organization or council meetings.

Second year is undeniably challenging with courses like pharmacotherapeutics, pharmacology, and medicinal chemistry. But it’s exciting because we are taught the core of pharmacy and what our future profession entails. In that sense, second year is easier because the material is interesting and effortless to retain. For example, we learned why a certain medication that helps adults quit smoking can cause strange, vivid dreams. We also learned why the fetus of a pregnant female taking thalidomide may be born with a birth defect called phocomelia, otherwise known as the flipper-like limb syndrome.

By second year, a handful of us are still unsure of which prospective fields to consider. As a first-year student, I was certain that I wanted to complete a two-year residency upon graduation to specialize in infectious diseases. As I delve deeper into the various roles of pharmacy within the healthcare field, I am learning to broaden my path. I’m now possibly considering a future in academia and industry pharmacy. Fortunately, Midwestern University offers a multitude of elective courses and campus organizations, so that I can network with students who have similar interests and gain exposure to various professional careers. For now, I am keeping my options open until I start my hospital rotations next quarter.

In closing, I want to share a few valuable ideals that I learned during my journey in pharmacy school. First, naps are precious and absolutely necessary. Second, excelling academically in school is contingent upon the mastery of prioritization and time management skills. Third, get involved to strengthen your passion in the profession! This year, I assumed several leadership and research roles to develop useful skills from public speaking, to fundraising, to networking. It is definitely a challenge balancing my leadership positions, academic, and social life, but that’s what makes my experiences here memorable! Not only am I forming invaluable networking connections, but I’m also making lifelong friends along the way.

Adjusting to the demands of graduate school is tough, but you always have classmates to help you enjoy the highs and get through the lows.

CCP Preceptor wins CVS Preceptor of the Year Award

Manu Sandhu, Pharm.D., a pharmacist for CVS Health and preceptor for CCP students, was awarded one of nine annual CVS Preceptor of the Year Awards at the recent CVS Deans’ Seminar.

Each Pharmacy Supervisor nominates one preceptor from his/her district which typically has approximately 20 stores. From there, the district nominees are pooled to select the regional nominee, and then pooled again to select the area winner. In Dr. Sandhu’s case, she became the area winner from among roughly 700 CVS stores. There are nine such area winners from across the country.

“I absolutely love precepting!” comments Dr. Sandhu. “I get great joy from being able to teach and mentor students in various areas of pharmacy. I find that I often learn as much from them as I hope they take away from me.”

“This award recognizes her clinical skills, business skills, and how she lives the values of CVS,” said Nancy Fjortoft, Ph.D., Dean and Professor of CCP. “CVS employs thousands of pharmacists nationwide, so this is truly an honor.”

Kaitlyn Perry, PS-IV student, was quoted in the award presentation, which took place at CVS corporate headquarters in Woonsocket, RI. “Dr. Sandhu is caring and compassionate towards everyone she comes in contact with and incorporates learning into every experience. Her focus sets the standards high for current preceptors and pharmacists, and gives interns a goal to strive towards in the future,” Ms. Perry said.
CCP Students are Taking Advantage of Research Opportunities
Cont’d from page 1
from student-led research at national pharmacy conferences throughout the U.S.

“Learning about the scientific research process has helped me to better consider the larger picture of the patient in the clinical pharmacy arena. I have found it easier to look into all aspects that could potentially contribute to patient outcomes, so that my work-up process is much more efficient,” comments Scott Snyder, Pharm.D., a recent graduate from CCP.

Effectively integrating students into their research teams allows faculty to be more productive scholars in addition to teaching the next generation of scholars. For example, Anil Gulati, M.D., Ph.D., Professor and Associate Dean for Research, who was recognized this summer at the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy with the Paul R. Dawson Award in Biotechnology for his outstanding accomplishments in research and education, has successfully incorporated postdoctoral fellows, residents, and students into multiple research projects over the years.

“We encourage our faculty and students to pursue research opportunities to further the profession of pharmacy,” says Nancy Fjortoft, Ph.D., Professor and Dean of the Chicago College of Pharmacy. “It’s a tremendous learning opportunity for our students.”

CCP Student Meets Acting U.S. Surgeon General
While on rotation over the summer at the Acoma-Canoncito-Laguna Service Unit in Acoma, New Mexico, CCP PS-IV student Serena Auyeung (pictured far left) had the unexpected experience of having dinner with acting U.S. Surgeon General, Rear Admiral Boris D. Lushniak, M.D., M.P.H. “He was in Albuquerque for a conference,” she explained. “He wanted to have dinner with the Indian Health Service staff and my preceptor was invited. She invited me, along with two other students from Maryland and Florida. Admiral Lushniak was an amazing man who was also very eloquent and inspirational.”

CCP Professor Receives Prestigious Biotechnology Award
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“Dr. Gulati sets high standards for his students, and then coaches and guides them to achieving those standards,” said Nancy Fjortoft, Ph.D., Dean of the Chicago College of Pharmacy. “This truly exemplifies a great teacher.”

Dr. Gulati is a nationally and internationally recognized expert in endothelin, which is a protein that constricts blood vessels and raises blood pressure. He has founded three pharmaceutical/biotechnology companies. Some of his discoveries related to endothelin are undergoing clinical trials to translate into novel therapies in the areas of cancer treatment, neuroprotection, pain management and resuscitation from hemorrhagic shock. In 2007, Dr. Gulati received the International Ranbaxy Research Award and was a Fulbright Scholar in 2008-09.

The author of more than 285 peer-reviewed publications and recipient of 32 patents and inventions, Dr. Gulati says he is humbled to receive the Dawson award. He added, “It is a marvelous feeling to be listed among all those accomplished scientists and educators who have previously received the award.”

Calendar
PharmCAS online application, fees, and transcripts due - January 5, 2015
Dual Acceptance Program applications due - February 15, 2015
Fees, PCAT scores, and Letters of Recommendation due to MWU Office of Admissions - March 1, 2015

Contact Us
For any questions relating to your application and/or admission, please call the Midwestern University Office of Admissions at 800/458-6253 or admisIL@midwestern.edu.