PHARMACY ALUMNI: MAKING A DIFFERENCE

PHARMACY RESEARCH INNOVATIONS DINNER 2012
REGISTRATIONS NOW OPEN

NEW PHARMACOEPIDEMIOLGY AND PHARMACEUTICAL POLICY RESEARCH TEAM

RESEARCH THEME: CANCER
Dear Alumni,

2011 was a massive success for SUPA. We held a number of social and educational events for all our members. We ended the year on a high with the gala ball at the prestigious Sydney Town Hall, where more than 300 people attended, including sponsors, staff and students. This year, we are working with the Pharmacy and Law alumni associations, to establish a charity cup rugby union game between the two faculties to help raise money for charity through some healthy interfaculty rivalry and to kick start the new year. We hope to make this an annual game with large crowds of students, sponsors and alumni coming together and mingling for a fun night out and raising money for a good cause. We had a smaller version of this last year where pharmacy first XV pulled off an 18-16 come from behind victory.

AKSHAY SIDANA
President
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FiAT miST giVEAWAy

Fiat Mist is proud to give away five copies of Peter Coady’s (BPharm 1963) autobiography Take as Directed. The book tells the story of Peter’s life, growing up in his father’s pharmacy, and the decisions that led him to follow in his father’s footsteps. It also describes how pharmacy has changed and his own personal struggle with cancer.

The first five lucky Fiat Mist readers that contact our Alumni Relations Officer at pharmacy.alumni@sydney.edu.au and like our Facebook page will receive a free copy.
Happy New Year and welcome to the first edition of Fiat Mist for 2012. This year has already commenced at a rapid pace with many exciting activities taking place.

The new cohort of Bachelor of Pharmacy students have enrolled and have commenced the first classes of the semester. A strong demand for the Master of Pharmacy and Graduate Certificate in Pharmacy Practice have seen a record number of enrolments in January. Compared to 2011, double the number of students have enrolled in the Graduate Certificate in Pharmacy Practice. While a renewed interest in the Master of Pharmacy has seen strong demand for places.

The Faculty’s research expertise has been strengthened with the appointment of a new research team in the area of pharmacoepidemiology and pharmaceutical policy lead by Associate Professor Sallie Pearson. Associate Professor Pearson is a health service researcher specialising in clinician behaviour change, pharmacoepidemiology and pharmaceutical policy evaluation. She has conducted this research in Australia, the United States and the developing world. The research undertaken by Sallie and her team will complement the research currently being undertaken in the themes across the Faculty. Read more about her work on page 10.

We had an overwhelming response to our 2011 advertisements for three new academic positions with over 100 applicants. We will welcome these three new academics in 2012 and I look forward to strengthening our team with their expertise.

Lastly, I would like to encourage you to attend our Pharmacy Research Innovations Dinner 2012: Cancer being held in May (see page 8 for more details). This will be an exciting evening that will help raise money for Faculty of Pharmacy research into innovative cancer treatment that will help save the lives of many Australians.

Events and activities for our alumni and friends continue into 2012 and I look forward as always to seeing you back on campus and hearing your updates as well as any feedback you might have about our initiatives and activities.

PROFESSOR IQBAL RAMZAN
(MSc 1977, PhD 1981)
Dean, Faculty of Pharmacy

Dear Alumni,

Happy New Year! Welcome to the new format Fiat Mist. Each edition will focus on a particular area of research being carried out at the Faculty. This edition highlights our work in the field of cancer, I hope you find it interesting and informative.

The Alumni Facebook page is up and running and I invite you to join other Alumni by “liking” our page! The “Pharmacy Alumni Association – The University of Sydney” page will provide updates on upcoming events, reunions and latest alumni news, and will be a great way of staying in touch.

A survey of alumni has indicated that reunions are an important part of the Pharmacy Alumni Association, and there are several reunions scheduled for 2012 for the graduation classes of 1952, 1962, 1972 and 1992. Contact Maritza (pharmacy.alumni@sydney.edu.au) at the alumni office, if you are able to be involved in the planning and notification of these reunions – alumni help is always welcome!

I look forward to catching up at the next alumni event.

LACHLAN ROSE
(BPharm (Hons) 2003)
President,
Pharmacy Alumni Association
Genevieve’s work as a senior pharmacist involves clinical expertise and leadership in the provision of oncology pharmacy services.

“This is a busy and challenging role. A great deal of cancer treatment involves the use of chemotherapy and many supportive treatments of cancer patients also involve the use of medications. I oversee a team of pharmacists and technicians for the coordination and supply of chemotherapy for all patients treated within the unit,” said Genevieve.

Her work also includes medication chart review, counseling, discharge planning and providing education and drug information to junior medical and nursing staff, patients and parents. Genevieve also oversees a pharmacy based research program focused on drug clinical trials, medication safety projects, pharmacokinetic studies and quality use of medicine reviews.

A PASSION FOR ONCOLOGY PHARMACY

After graduating from the University of Sydney, Genevieve worked at a large tertiary public teaching hospital in Sydney. She rotated through various medical specialties where she developed a passion for oncology pharmacy. Today, Genevieve has more than 20 years experience in the area and has developed the pharmacy service at the Sydney Children’s Hospital from a single oncology pharmacist position to a comprehensive oncology pharmacy program.

“My Bachelor of Pharmacy degree provided me with the solid foundations to practise as a hospital pharmacist. The structure of the curriculum enhanced my pharmacological knowledge and provided a valuable podium for ongoing enquiry and research. The skills and experience I gained through my undergraduate education helped prepare me for my future career endeavours as an oncology specialist pharmacist.”

Genevieve believes that oncology pharmacists are an invaluable member of the cancer care team and perform the important role of being experts on all chemotherapy medications and symptom control and management of side effects. This is especially true in childhood cancer, where treatment protocols are complex involving multiple medications and schedules with dose adjustments according to patient age, height and weight.
**THE REWARDS**

Over the past 40 years the survival rate for children with cancer has risen from 30% to 80%. A cornerstone of this success has been the use of carefully controlled clinical research trials conducted on a multi-institutional basis.

“It is rewarding to make a difference to the lives of patients and to know that through your work more patients will benefit from improved medication safety. Working in the area of cancer medicine for children can be challenging and confronting. However on a daily basis, through my patient interactions, I am reassured that my job as a paediatric oncology pharmacist can make a difference,” said Genevieve.

Genevieve is also a proud mentor and trainer of numerous pharmacists over the years, some of whom hold senior oncology pharmacy positions in Australia and throughout the world.

“I am honoured to have the privilege to work with such talented pharmacists. I would encourage young pharmacy graduates to consider the area of cancer medicine as a rich environment within the healthcare landscape where their skills, expertise and enthusiasm will make a difference to patients.”

Christa Nath (PhD 2002) Pharmacokineticist at the Children’s Hospital at Westmead.

Christa Nath completed a PhD in 2002 from the Faculty of Pharmacy at the University of Sydney after finishing a science degree at the University of New England. In her first job as a research assistant in the Faculty of Pharmacy, Christa gained experience in high performance liquid chromatography, which helped her secure her current position at the Children’s Hospital at Westmead.

During her 20 years at the Children’s Hospital, Christa has developed a real passion for pharmacokinetic and pharmacodynamic research and has the satisfaction of knowing she is contributing to something bigger.

“Hospital pharmacists have an important role in advising clinicians on the correct drug dosage for cancer patients to ensure successful treatment,” says Christa.

**THE CORRECT DOSE**

In her role, she performs pharmacokinetic and pharmacodynamic research on agents used in oncology treatment and in blood and marrow transplantation including busulphan, melphalan and fludarabine.

“Overexposure to these drugs can lead to severe toxicity and treatment-related mortality, yet underexposure can lead to relapse of disease,” says Christa.

Christa’s research is about optimising the dosage of these very toxic agents. The aim is to provide patients with a sufficient dose to achieve efficacy with acceptable toxicity.

Her daily work involves monitoring busulphan area-under-the-concentration versus time curve (AUC) for dose adjustments. Christa receives samples from both paediatric and adult institutions in NSW, Victoria and Tasmania. The samples need to be analysed as soon as she receives them and the results need to be reported on the same day in order to allow for dose adjustments. She also monitors PEG asparaginase activity in children with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia.

Christa is also involved in more than 10 research projects including:

- Busulphan pharmacokinetics: an investigation to determine the optimum exposure in children and adults; and
- Pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics of melphalan in myeloma patients undergoing an autograft, which was funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council. High exposure to melphalan was found to be associated with worse toxicity but improved overall survival. A new project examining targeted melphalan is now being planned.

Christa has received several funds and grants from different organisations, has written for almost 30 scientific publications and has presented at more than 30 conferences in Australia and around the world.

*Source: Children’s Cancer Institute Australia*
The university is already ranked in the top one percent of research universities in the world, but it wants to be even higher. To be internationally competitive, we need to attract and nurture top scholars and students from across the country and globe.

To achieve this prominence on the world stage requires funding beyond the minimal operating costs provided by the public purse. Did you know that 60% of the University’s income is reliant on private funds? This comes from fees, sponsorship and commercial arrangements, and donations.

As alumni, many of us share this vision and purpose of the university. Some of you have already given something back to the Faculty and the pharmacy profession which gave you the start to your career and, we hope, your professional and personal satisfaction.

We are now calling on alumni to reflect on your professional achievements and consider how you can help take the University’s research culture to a new level of innovation.

The Dean’s vision and priorities are to support world-class research, teaching and learning. In 2012 his focus is to support two research themes - cancer and respiratory diseases - major diseases which afflict our communities and many of our families.

As you may be aware, the Faculty, Alumni Association and Foundation Councillors have joined forces to unite and host the inaugural fundraising event – Pharmacy Research Innovations Dinner 2012: Cancer. We ask that you reward their efforts (many hours of volunteering!) by attending and participating.

We anticipate a stimulating and rewarding evening – where you will have the opportunity to listen to our guest speaker, Professor Fiona Wood AM, and our Dean, Professor Iqbal Ramzan, one of our own leading researchers in cancer, Professor Michael Murray.

You can assist the faculty, research and teaching staff and their students, by contributing financially to support existing and establish new PhD scholarships or research projects. You may wish to make a gift now, at the event or via a bequest.

Should you wish to learn more about any of the world-class research projects or how to make a gift or bequest, please do not hesitate to contact, Rebecca Palser, Development Manager, Faculty of Pharmacy.
A TRIBUTE TO JOHN VINCENT SIDGREAVES

BY REBECCA PALSER

The University of Sydney has bid farewell to John Sidgreaves - a distinguished alumnus, volunteer and donor. John sadly passed away on 16 December 2011 and leaves behind his loving wife, Patricia and two children, Timothy and Anthony Sidgreaves.

John graduated from the Pharmacy Materia Medica in the late 1950’s. One of his sons, Timothy Sidgreaves also graduated from the Bachelor of Pharmacy in 1991 and today owns the Blooms banner group pharmacy at Cronulla. His other son Anthony Sidgreaves owns and manages a hotel in Lismore.

John was the founder of Blooms The Chemist, and held the position of Managing Director of Blooms Management Services, retiring in June 2009. John remained active in his role as Chairman of Directors for Blooms The Chemist until retiring in June 2011.

HIS STORY

John began his career working in various pharmacies in Sydney and on the NSW Central Coast. In the early 1960’s he purchased his first pharmacy in Burraneer Bay and began a lifetime commitment to pharmacy.

In the early 1970’s he founded Health and Beauty Aids and Chemmart. It was in 1979 that he resigned to take the role of NSW Pharmacy Guild President where he remained until 1984.

Timothy Sidgreaves said: “John had a brilliant mathematical mind and a passion for passing knowledge on to young people. He loved being a mentor and always encouraged young people to buy their own pharmacies as he believed pharmacy was a great profession.”

Passionate about education and the pharmacy profession, John and Blooms The Chemist have been long term, major philanthropic supporters of the Faculty of Pharmacy. Acutely aware of the Faculty’s research and infrastructure needs – John and the business generously supported the largest fundraising campaign ever undertaken by the Faculty – which secured over $1,000,000 in donations to the Faculty’s building establishment fund in 2008. They committed $590,000 over five years to support our student education projects including an innovative, business skills program. These gifts enabled the expansion and advancement of the teaching and research facilities within the Faculty.

John said at the time that: “Blooms is very proud of its links with the Faculty of Pharmacy and wants to support the academic excellence achieved by its graduates by ensuring they are equipped with the business knowledge to enable them to run their own pharmacies successfully.”

Blooms Business Skills Program, remains one of the Faculty’s most popular and prestigious extra-curricular programs to this day.

To mark his retirement in 2009, Blooms The Chemist donated funds to the Faculty to set up an undergraduate scholarship in John’s name to assist Bachelor of Pharmacy students. Until his illness, John also served on the Council of the Faculty of Pharmacy Foundation and on the Dean’s Community Pharmacy Reference Group.

John’s passing is a great loss and it is through our love and memories of him that his story will be passed on.
You are invited to join us for the inaugural fundraising dinner for the Faculty of Pharmacy. Enjoy an evening of entertainment and networking with friends while helping to raise money for research into innovative cancer treatment that will help to save the lives of many Australians.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: PROFESSOR FIONA WOOD, AM, AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR and pioneering doctor, world renowned for her patented invention of spray-on skin for burn victims. Professor Wood will deliver an inspirational keynote address at this event.

TO BUY TICKETS TO THIS EXCITING EVENT, VISIT: sydney.edu.au/pharmacy
A new class of anti-cancer drugs, which includes sorafenib, has revolutionised the treatment of many cancers. However, almost half of the patients suffer adverse effects from the toxic nature of chemotherapy, seriously undermining their quality of life.

There is evidence that sorafenib may be useful for the treatment of breast cancer, kidney cancer and leukaemia such as acute myeloid leukaemia (AML). AML affects the blood and bone marrow and is the most common cancer in children.

The Faculty of Pharmacy research team have discovered two genes responsible for the disposition and elimination of tyrosine kinase inhibitors, including sorafenib. Pharmacogenomic variations associated with these two genes lead to differences in drug elimination rates controlled by liver metabolising enzymes. Patients with slow elimination rates attain toxic concentrations of sorafenib in their blood, presenting patients with serious side effects in addition to the complications of cancer.

The research team have also developed a novel assay (analysis of drug components) enabling the measurement of sorafenib and its metabolites in patient serum, thus providing physicians with information on differences in drug elimination rates between patients. This is one of the few assays of its type in the world and its use may improve the safety of this important drug.

The outcomes from this research will significantly benefit those diagnosed with various cancers, such as liver cancer and leukaemia, as doctors will be able to specifically optimise treatment for each patient to maximise efficacy and minimise adverse reactions.

**PROJECT LEADER**
Professor of Pharmacogenomics, Michael Murray, is a world leader in pharmaceutics and his area of focus includes the study of adverse drug reactions caused by reactive drug metabolites.

**Contact:**
Professor Michael Murray  
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The Faculty of Pharmacy welcomed a new research team in January 2012 led by Associate Professor Sallie Pearson.

The core goals of the pharmacoepidemiology and pharmaceutical policy research group are to better understand the use and impact of prescribed medicines in routine clinical care and improve quality use of medicines in Australia and beyond. The team is multi-disciplinary with expertise in behavioural science, pharmacy, epidemiology and biostatistics. The team currently undertakes work across three core themes: 1. Using secondary data sources to investigate the use and impact of medicines in real world clinical practice 2. Clinician behaviour change, specifically the use and uptake of electronic decision support to guide prescribing practice and 3. Investigating the direct and indirect costs of cancer care from the perspective of health care payers and patients.

Associate Professor Pearson is a health service researcher specialising in clinician behaviour change, pharmacoepidemiology and pharmaceutical policy evaluation. She has conducted this research in Australia, the United States and the developing world. She completed her doctoral training in 1998 at the University of Newcastle, Australia and was the inaugural Postdoctoral Fellow in Pharmaceutical Policy at Harvard Medical School from 2000-2001. She returned to Australia in 2002 where she worked as a consultant to the WHO Collaborating Centre in Pharmaceutical Policy Boston and Medicare Australia for two years. She returned to academic life in 2004 and joined the Adult Cancer Program at the University of New South Wales. Associate Professor Pearson currently holds a Cancer Institute NSW Career Development Fellowship. She has published more than 65 manuscripts in the peer-reviewed literature and attracted more than $8 million in peer-reviewed grant funding (NHMRC, Cancer Australia, Cancer Institute NSW). She is also a member of key national and state committees including the Drug Utilisation Sub-Committee of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee and the NSW Population and Health Services Research Ethics Committee.

Associate Professor Pearson and her colleagues are looking forward to meeting everyone and having an opportunity to discuss their research.

CONTACT:
Associate Professor Sallie Pearson
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T +61 2 9036 7023
ALUMNI NEWS

ALUMNI SUCCESS ABROAD

Dear fellow Alumni,

I received my Graduate Diploma of Science, with High Distinction in 1996, and PhD in 2001, both in pharmaceutics from the Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Sydney. My research advisor was Professor Kenneth F. Brown.

Since 1990, I have been a faculty member in the Faculty of Pharmacy, Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya, Indonesia, moving from Associate Lecturer in 1990 to Senior Lecturer in 2003.

Following the completion of my PhD, my academic career has increased markedly, both in university management and research areas. In the Widya Mandala Catholic University management, I have been appointed as the Vice Dean for Student Affairs of the Faculty of Pharmacy (1991-1994), Secretary of Research Institute (1999-2001), Vice Dean for Academic Affairs of the Faculty of Pharmacy (2000-2004), and Pro-Vice Chancellor for Academic, Student, and Co-operation Affairs (2004-now).

Since 2006, I have been the Vice President of Indonesian Pharmacist Association of East Java Province and I have been a member of the Education Development Committee of the Indonesian Pharmacy Higher Learning Association since 2008. My research interests include pharmacokinetics, biopharmaceutics, and biopharmaceutical analysis.

Overall, I am so grateful to all staff members of the Faculty of Pharmacy, the University of Sydney for giving me such a great opportunity for professional and personal development. I will never forget such a memorable and invaluable moment during my study in Australia (2004-2009).

My vision as an educator and researcher is to contribute the best of my knowledge and skills to others. I am proud to dedicate my career to the education and research sectors, and will always strive to perform my best for the highest achievement.

Kuncoro Foe, PhD 2001

ALUMNI AWARDS

2012 ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Do you know of someone who should be recognised with a Pharmacy Alumni Award for Achievement?

The Pharmacy Alumni Association is calling for nominations for its two Alumni Awards for pharmacy graduates. The two awards are the Pharmacy Alumni Award for Achievement, and the Pharmacy Young Alumni Award for Achievement.

Both awards cover community, international, voluntary and professional achievements by the nominee within or outside of the professional area. Only pharmacy alumni (i.e. graduates of the University) may be nominated for these awards. All nominations and supporting statements are confidential. The information provided will not be communicated to the nominee, unless the nominator so chooses.

Closing date for Faculty Award nominations is 27 April 2012.

Nomination forms are available to download from the Pharmacy Alumni website or by contacting pharmacy.alumni@sydney.edu.au

Completed forms can be emailed or posted to:

The Alumni Relations Officer
Faculty of Pharmacy
Pharmacy and Bank Building A15
The University of Sydney NSW 2006

These Faculty awards mirror the Alumni Awards given at University level and recognise the achievement and contribution of Pharmacy Alumni to the community.

For more information visit www.sydney.edu.au/alumni/awards/

(L-R) Lachlan Rose (BPharm 2003), Janette Roberts (BPharm 1968) and Iqbal Ramzan (MSc 1977, PhD 1981)

Janette was 2011 recipient of the Pharmacy Alumni Achievement Award
UPCOMING EVENTS

Below is a snapshot of some of the events taking place for alumni in NSW. More information on these events is commonly posted on the University website at www.alumni.sydney.edu.au. Invitations are sent to alumni by email, so please ensure we have the correct email address registered for you. To update your details contact: Maritza Messina, Acting Alumni Relations Officer on (02) 9351 7829 or pharmacy.alumni@sydney.edu.au.

PHARMACY EVENTS

Greatest Challenges Facing Healthcare
Wednesday 18th April, 5:30pm-7:30pm
MacLaurin Hall, The University of Sydney
Register: www.sydney.edu.au/pharmacy

Law and Pharmacy Alumni Charity Rugby Cup
Friday 4th May, 6pm
Sydney University College Oval
Contact: Akshay Sidana, SUPA President
0404 332 626
akshay.sidana@gmail.com

Pharmacy Research Innovations Dinner 2012: Cancer
Friday 18th May, 6:30pm-11pm
MacLaurin Hall, The University of Sydney
Contact:
pharmacy.marketing@sydney.edu.au

CLASS REUNIONS

Class of 1952 - Materia Medica - 60 Years Reunion
Wednesday 26th September, 10:30am
Contact: Bob Dash on bobdash@ozemail.com.au or 02 9449 5153

Class of 1982 - Pharmacy 30 Years Reunion
Friday 22nd June, 6:30pm
Contact: Mary Hasouros on mhasouros@yahoo.com.au

Class of 1992 - Pharmacy 20 Years Reunion
October or November, 6:30pm
Contact: Jennifer Bell on jennibell@hunterlink.net.au

Venue for all: Faculty of Pharmacy, The University of Sydney

Are you part of Class 1962 or 1972?
We are trying to find volunteers to organise Reunions and trackdown classmates. Contact the Alumni Relations Officer (above).

ALUMNI EVENTS

10 Year Alumni Reunion for 2002 graduates
Thursday 29th March, 6.30pm-9pm
The Great Hall, The University of Sydney
Contact: Claire Hannagan,
claire.hannagan@sydney.edu.au

Golden Graduates Luncheon for Alumni 50 years
Monday 16th April, 12pm-3pm
The Great Hall, The University of Sydney
Contact: Claire Hannagan,
claire.hannagan@sydney.edu.au

Sydney Connections Breakfast
Thursday 10th May, 7:15am-8:45am
Speaker: Ms Anna Rose (BA 2005, LLB 2008)
Co-Founder and Chair of the Australian Youth Climate Coalition
The Four Seasons Sydney
199 George Street, Sydney
Contact: alumni.rsvp@sydney.edu.au

FACULTY SEMINARS

Open to All, Fridays 12pm.
Pharmacy Lecture Theatre
Please contact Associate Professor Parisa Aslani if you would like to attend on parisa.aslani@sydney.edu.au

20 April
Associate Professor Alaina Ammit
Faculty of Pharmacy, The University of Sydney
Harnessing the anti-inflammatory power of the MAPK-deactivator MKP-1 in asthma and airway remodelling

27 April
Min Kyong Song
Faculty of Pharmacy, The University of Sydney
Modulation of diabetic retinopathy related pathophysiology by taurine, a PPAR-gamma ligand derived from Lycium barbarum (Goji Berry)

HOST A MEAL: FUN, FARE AND FUTURE ALUMNI

Foster new friendships through our hospitality alumni program. By hosting gatherings for Sydney students at your home or a restaurant, you will create an opportunity for students and alumni to meet and share academic, professional and social experiences. Our alumni have already hosted events for more than 150 international and local students, and we received great feedback from students and hosts alike. Sign up at sydney.edu.au/alumni/hospitality

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