ALUMNUS HONOURED FOR INNOVATION

University of Sydney Faculty of Pharmacy alumnus Gerard Stevens has won a prestigious national innovation award for the company he founded. Webstercare has been named Australia’s sixth-most innovative company for 2013 in the annual Business Review Weekly’s 50 Most Innovative Companies survey.

Gerard, who is the founder and managing director of Webstercare, has led change in medication management for more than 30 years. His innovations are used within the pharmacy, aged care, community and health sectors.

Webster-pak® systems are used by most Australian community pharmacies to help customers remember to take their medication. Webstercare has also developed integrated packing and electronic medication management systems to support residential aged-care facilities with safe and effective medication management.

BRW highlighted Webstercare’s MedsPro® System that uses the virtual pill count™ software as the point of innovation that impressed the judges. “Success can lead to its own problems,” says BRW. “The huge uptake of Webster-paks – a sealed blister pack of medications prepared by a pharmacist according to a patient’s regime – is putting increasing pressure on busy dispensaries that create the packs.”

Virtual pill count software uses barcode scanning to identify patients, check the picking and packing of medications, and automate ordering and restocking.

Gerard says he is delighted and proud that Webstercare has been recognised by Australia’s leading national business magazine as being at the cutting edge.

“Innovation is at the heart of everything we do at Webstercare,” he says. “From the initial development of the Webster-pak systems through to more recent software innovations, Webstercare is driven by a culture of solving problems that people have when managing their medication.

“Pharmacists are also a crucial part of the process, playing a strong role in providing feedback which in turn is used in the innovation process.”

Gerard received an Award for Excellence in Pharmacy Practice in 2003 from the University of Sydney and the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (NSW branch). He also received the Pharmacy Alumni Award for Achievement in 2012 from the Faculty of Pharmacy.
Welcome to the first edition of FIAT Mist for 2014. First semester commenced this year with a full cohort of Bachelor of Pharmacy and Master of Pharmacy students. In the second week of March, I attended the University of Sydney Parents’ Information Evening. At this event parents of first-year students could visit the campus, meet our staff and find out how they can successfully guide their sons or daughters through their first year of university. It was a great opportunity for me to meet with parents face to face, speak to them about our programs and answer any questions they had about pharmacy and the faculty.

On Friday 14 March, we celebrated the faculty’s 2013 graduates at our two ceremonies held in the Great Hall. We had more than 300 graduates from the Bachelor of Pharmacy and Master of Pharmacy; 10 each from the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and Master of Philosophy (Pharmacy) and 30 Bachelor of Pharmacy (Hons) graduates, including two University medals. Congratulations also go to Emeritus Professor Lloyd Sansom AO, who was awarded an honorary degree of Doctor of Science. Emeritus Professor Sansom has had a distinguished academic career and has made a long and lasting contribution to:

– the profession of pharmacy
– pharmaceutical sciences
– medicines regulation
– medicines policy
– access to medicines and consumer health
both nationally and internationally.

As you will see in this edition, the last few months have been very successful for the faculty, with multiple awards and grants awarded to staff members, including several National Health and Medical Research Council grants and an Annual Best Paper Award. The latter is a fantastic achievement – the first time that Australian researchers have won the award since it was established in 2010.

We are also very excited to have opened the redesigned dispensing lab in time for the beginning of Semester One. Updating our facilities to a state-of-the-art teaching lab reaffirms the faculty as a world-leading teaching institute.

It allows us to train our bright young pharmacy graduates in a teaching space that keeps them up to date with new technologies and methodologies.

We continue to recognise and honour our present and past alumni. On page 4 you can read more about how Webstercare, the company of our foundation council member, Mr Gerard Stevens AM, was named Australia’s sixth most innovative company for 2013 in the annual BRW 50 Most Innovative Companies survey. In November, we hosted a celebration of Emeritus Professor Tom Watson’s academic life which was attended by family, friends, colleagues, faculty staff members and alumni.

Lastly, I would like to introduce you to our new Associate Director of Development, Carrie Burhop Keller. Carrie has 14 years of international fundraising and development experience. She is originally from the US and has worked for two large national medical research non-profit organisations. She came to Australia on secondment more than six years ago to assist one of these non-profits to establish their philanthropic program. Some of you may have met Carrie already or she may be in touch soon about our foundation activities. You can find out more about her on page 5.

I would also like to take this opportunity to ask you to save the date for our next fundraising event, ‘Under the Scope: dinner for diabetes research’. It will be held on Friday 15 August in MacLaurin Hall. The event is an opportunity for alumni, friends and our industry colleagues to network with each other, reconnect with the faculty and the University and hear about our strategic vision and direction. We will also be raising money for important diabetes research (see pages 4 to 6 for more details).

As you can see, many positive things have been happening in the faculty and I am grateful to our vibrant alumni community for our various successes. I wish you all the best for the coming winter months, and look forward to seeing you at future alumni and other University events.

Professor Iqbal Ramzan
Dean, Faculty of Pharmacy
MESSAGE FROM OUR ALUMNI PRESIDENT

At the last Annual General Meeting of the Pharmacy Alumni Association in February, I was honoured to be elected to the position of President, which had been superbly filled by Lachlan Rose since December 2010.

We acknowledge the continued involvement of our Pharmacy Alumni Association Patron Ross Brown AM (Mat Med ’52). Other committee members include Jocelyn Bussing, Michael Gould, Lisa Kouladjian, Binh Luu, Dr Rebekah Moles, Katharina Nicholson, Ashley Cao Nguyen and Daniel Rifkin.

Our aim continues to be encouraging our alumni community to maintain contact with the faculty and with each other through reunions and relevant events. Most importantly, we want to foster and promote lifelong friendships which support alumni, the faculty and the University.

Our focus for this year is to provide events which celebrate and support the diversity in pharmacy, and promote our special event in August to support diabetes discoveries: ‘Under the scope: dinner for diabetes research’.

Lastly, we would like to welcome our newest alumni – those who graduated on 14 March. The committee and I look forward to seeing you at future events.

Lillian Chen
BPharm ’90; BHA ’93
President, Pharmacy Alumni Association

For the latest alumni news, visit:
sydney.edu.au/pharmacy/about/alumni/

Join our Facebook group: www.facebook.com/pages/Pharmacy-Alumni-Association-The-University-of-Sydney/238252396190027

ASSOCIATION BREAKS RECORDS AT EVENTS

The 2013–14 Sydney University Pharmacy Association (SUPA) committee had a highly successful first six months at the helm, registering record attendances at both educational and social events. Our biannual harbour cruise was sold out, as was our annual gala ball, and our hospital pharmacy information night was so crowded that dozens of students had to sit on the floor or stand in the aisles of the pharmacy lecture theatre just to listen in.

On the competitive front, our sporting teams didn’t have the greatest six months. Last year even our beloved rugby union team managed a lone draw and a host of defeats. Things may be on the up before long, however, as several first-year students with suitable builds for rugby were scouted and recruited at the annual first-year barbecue. In other interfaculty sport, SUPA emerged victorious in, of all things, the mixed doubles badminton gala day!

In more formal competition, at the National Australian Pharmacy Student Association (NAPSA) congress, SUPA’s professional development officer, Giorgio Additini, was runner up in the Pharmacy Student of the Year wildcard round. Also at the NAPSA congress, the delegates from SUPA donated more money to the breast cancer foundation than any other branch, with donations totalling $1052.

As the second half of our term commences, the calendar is full to the brim. A highlight will be a week of events to celebrate SUPA’s 94th birthday, which will include classics such as the harbour cruise and the second annual SUPA Convention (last year called the SUPA expo). At the end of this semester, my committee’s term is over and William Shen becomes president. Without a doubt, it will be another highly productive 12 months for SUPA.

Ethan Smith
President, 2013–14
NEW STAFF MEMBER TO DRIVE FACULTY PHILANTHROPY

We would like to welcome Carrie Burhop Keller as the Faculty of Pharmacy, Associate Director of Development. Carrie has 14 years of international fundraising and development experience. Carrie is originally from the US and has worked for two large national medical research not-for-profit organisations. She came to Australia on secondment more than six years ago to assist one of these non-profits to establish their philanthropic program.

Carrie says the Faculty of Pharmacy’s diversity of students and research themes swayed her to take on the role of Associate Director of Development.

“When I walked through the Pharmacy corridors, I knew I was stepping into a building steeped with history and was honoured to be here,” she says.

“I saw students excited to learn and a passion to use their knowledge and skills to heal and improve health for the greater community. I was also amazed to discover how pharmacy is on the edge of drug discovery and development. We have very talented students and researchers who are improving drug development and management.”

Carrie says the best part of her job is working with individuals to create unique opportunities that are both meaningful to them and align with the faculty’s needs and mission.

She welcomes any alumni or family to contact her for an update on the faculty or is happy to have a conversation on how you would like to make a difference in the future of the Faculty of Pharmacy. You can contact Carrie on 02 9351 7828 or by email at carrie.keller@sydney.edu.au.

HONOURING AN INSPIRATIONAL ACADEMIC

The Faculty of Pharmacy recently celebrated the extraordinary academic life of Emeritus Professor Tom Watson. Hosted by the faculty’s Dean, Professor Iqbal Ramzan, the event was attended by family, friends, colleagues, faculty staff members and alumni. Speakers included Professor Ramzan, Professor Watson’s colleagues Richard Thomas and Professor Peter Stewart, as well as his son, Peter Watson.

The late Emeritus Professor Tom Watson was one of our outstanding academic readers who had a profound impact on a generation of pharmacists, and the patients they serve, through his visionary leadership. Sadly, he passed away in October 2012.

Professor Watson made his mark on the University of Sydney as one of the first recipients of the Doctor of Philosophy degree in the area of Pharmacy in 1956. He readily took up a role in the then Department of Pharmacy as a lecturer, before becoming head of the department in 1967.

Professor Watson remained at the helm for many years, steering the department’s transition into the modern day and guiding the careers of others as a mentor and friend. Professor Watson also gave generously to the University. He was inspired by the potential of our people and his donations were a vote of confidence in the work they were undertaking. Throughout his time at the University, he showed an unwavering commitment to making a difference.

In celebration of the life, passions and commitment of Professor Watson, the Faculty of Pharmacy has established the Tom Watson Memorial Scholarship Fund.
PHARMACY STARS SHINE AT CONFERENCE

The Faculty of Pharmacy was the big winner at the 2013 Australasian Pharmaceutical Science Association Conference, recently held at the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand. Our people collected two major awards.

Professor Andrew McLachlan, who is Professor of Pharmacy (Aged Care) in the faculty, was awarded the prestigious 2013 Australasian Pharmaceutical Science Association (APSA) Medal. The medal is APSA’s highest award and recognises an individual who has made a significant and lasting contribution to the pharmaceutical sciences and pharmacy practice.

Pharmacy PhD candidate Arcelio Benetoli won the prize for Outstanding Poster Presentation in Pharmacy Practice for his paper, ‘Social Media and Pharmacy’.

Congratulations to Professor McLachlan and Arcelio. For more information on these two bright stars, please visit sydney.edu.au/pharmacy

RECOGNISING OUR AWARD AND GRANT WINNERS

The faculty warmly congratulates the following award and grant winners:

Annual Best Paper Award
The Faculty of Pharmacy’s Dr Stephen Carter, Dr Rebekah Moles and Associate Professor Timothy Chen have been awarded the Annual Best Paper Award (2013) for the publication Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy.

Their award-winning paper is entitled ‘Consumers’ willingness to use a medication management service: the effect of medication-related worry and the social influence of the general practitioner’.

This is a fantastic achievement, the first time that Australian researchers have won the award since it was established in 2010.

The paper examined the relationship between consumers’ thoughts and feelings about their medicines, their perceptions of how pharmacists could help them, and their willingness to use the Home Medicines Review (www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/provider/pbs/fourth-agreement/hmr.jsp).

The results showed that consumers who were more worried about their medicines were more likely to value the pharmacists’ skills, and more willing to use the service. The paper also showed that consumers needed to believe that their general practitioner (GP) would approve of their participation.

These findings have important implications for the design and delivery of pharmacist-provided services.
MORE GRANT SUCCESS

We would like to congratulate Dr Thomas Balle, Professor Kim Chan, Professor Mary Collins, Associate Professor Sallie Pearson, Dr Tony Zhou, Dr Ramin Rohanizadeh and Dr Nathan Absalom for their success in the NHMRC project grants for 2014. These grants are a prestigious recognition of their research and an excellent outcome for the faculty.

Dr Balle – named as Chief Investigator A (CIA), along with Professor Collins as Chief Investigator B (CIB) and Associate Professor Malcolm McLeod as Chief Investigator C (CIC) – were awarded a project grant, valued at $592,228, for their project titled ‘New positive allosteric modulators of nicotinic acetylcholine receptors for treatment of cognitive impairment in ADHD’.

Professor Chan – named as CIA, along with Dr Zhou as CIB, Professor Jian Li as CIC, and Associate Professor Andreas Fouras as Chief Investigator D (CID) – were awarded a project grant, valued at $496,515, for their project titled ‘Novel inhalation formulation of colistin and combination therapy against Gram-negative ‘superbugs’.’

Professor Collins – named as CIA, along with Professor Iain McGregor as CIB, Associate Professor Glenn Hunt as CIC, and Dr Nathan Absalom as CID – were awarded a project grant, valued at $590,558, for their project titled ‘α4-containing GABA-A receptors as targets for α-hydroxybutyric acid (GHB)’.

Professor Collins was also recently named as a recipient of a 2014 NHMRC Equipment Grant to fund the purchase of a KOPF dual small animal Stereotaxic Instrument.

Associate Professor Pearson – named as CID, along with Associate Professor Lyndal Trevena as CIA, Professor Jon Emery as CIB, Professor Jack Dowie as CIC, Professor Peter Rothwell as Chief Investigator E (CIE), Professor Michael Pignone as Chief Investigator F (CIF), Professor Ian O’Leary as Chief Investigator G (CIG), Professor Geoffrey Toffler as Chief Investigator H (CIH) and Ms Elizabeth Barnes as Chief Investigator I (CII) – were awarded a project grant, valued at $424,115, for their project titled ‘Should I take low-dose aspirin? The ‘Optimise’ decision aid study.’

Dr Ramin Rohanizadeh is a chief investigator on a successful NHMRC development grant, valued at $401,708, for their project ‘New technologies to treat chronic sinus infection’. Co-investigators include P M Young, D Traini, G King, D Baily and C Whitchurch.

ALUMNI SHOWCASED IN FACULTY BUILDING

Have you visited us in the faculty lately? If so, you might have noticed a change in our hallways. We have recently put some wonderful photos of our alumni on display. These include original class photos from the 1920s through to recent alumni reunions. They are proudly hanging on the walls near our administration office on the ground floor of the pharmacy building. You are welcome to drop by soon and check them out.

RESEARCH SEMINARS OFFER NEW INSIGHTS

The faculty proudly presents a weekly series of seminars that profile academics from both Australia and overseas and their groundbreaking research. Topics range from advances in drug delivery to pharmacology and patient care. Held every Friday on campus during semester, you can view the details about each session on our website (sydney.edu.au/pharmacy). These talks are open to all alumni and friends and there is no need to register.

POSTGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS BOOSTED

The faculty is committed to delivering a rich, vibrant research program and offers several postgraduate research scholarships to encourage promising research students to connect with our prolific academic ranks. We have recently announced two new postgraduate scholarships that will commence in Semester Two, 2014:

– the James Millner PhD Scholarship in Pharmacy
– a Personalised Medicine in the Treatment of Cancer PhD Scholarship.

For more information, please visit: sydney.edu.au/pharmacy/current-students/scholarships
PHARMACY ACADEMICS IGNITE INTEREST IN INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY

A medical technology start-up company led by academics from the Faculty of Pharmacy has opened for business after being selected for a lucrative business development program.

The company, De Motu Cordis, which is Latin for 'The Heart Circulates', was one of only four chosen nationally and the only one from the University of Sydney to benefit from the Ignition Labs accelerator program, an initiative of Australian Technology Park (ATP) Innovations.

With funding from the University of Sydney, the University of New South Wales, the University of Technology Sydney and the Australian National University, ATP Innovations provides promising tech start-ups with tailored programs and a wealth of resources to help them succeed. Profits made are contributed toward assisting more start-up companies.

De Motu Cordis was founded by Professor Hak-Kim Chan, Associate Dean of Research at the faculty, and Professor John Fraser, Director of the Intensive Care Unit at St Andrew’s War Memorial Hospital in Brisbane.

Dr Patricia Tang, a researcher from the Faculty of Pharmacy, is also a key member of the young company.

The company was conceived after research conducted within the faculty led to the development of an advanced drug delivery system for critical care patients.

The primary objective for De Motu Cordis is to develop and commercialise the technology, which has the potential to save lives and significantly reduce the long-term health costs of Australian patients following cardiac arrest.

“We are confident from our research and development that we have an innovative solution that can provide significant health benefits for patients and financial benefits for the Australian healthcare system.”

FAST-TRACKED ACHIEVEMENTS

As recipient of the Ignition Labs program, De Motu Cordis will receive start-up capital, experienced mentors, office and lab spaces inside the ATP Innovations incubators, an intensive business development program, and access to a network of venture and corporate investors.

With these resources at its disposal, the company will be able to achieve in six months what would normally take a business 18 months.

“The businesses selected for this year’s Ignition Labs program represent the creativity, depth and experience of Australia’s medical entrepreneurs,” says Ben Wright, Co-Founder of Ignition Labs and Director of Commercial Development at ATP Innovations.

“The accelerators’ 24 mentors, who are all investors in the program, selected each business on the basis of the founding team’s experience and the health impact of their technologies. We were very impressed with the quality of this year’s applicants and look forward to working closely with the portfolio.”

The success of De Motu Cordis could pave the way for more commercial opportunities for faculty researchers via partnerships in Linkage Grant applications.

“We are very excited to get moving on this project, and would like to thank ATP Innovations for providing this opportunity for us,” says Professor Chan.

NEW STATE-OF-THE-ART LAB REFLECTS THE PAST – AND FUTURE

As mentioned last year in Fiat Mist, the Faculty of Pharmacy’s iconic dispensing lab has been refurbished into a state-of-the-art teaching space. The new-look lab features a revised configuration of benches that comfortably accommodates larger classes. The most important improvement is the new computers fitted to the benches – one for each student – which will allow students to view demonstrations at their station and access software without having to move around the lab.

However, the lab has retained its historic charm with capacious ceiling rafters, a gabled roofline and heritage windows. To pay tribute to the profession’s rich history and traditions, special cabinets displaying traditional bottles and containers from the past adorn the lab.
HOW YOU CAN STAY CONNECTED WITH US

We send invitations and other communications to alumni by email, so please ensure we have your correct email address.

To update your details, please contact our Alumni Relations Manager at pharmacy.alumni@sydney.edu.au

Class reunions
Organising of reunions for 2014 is under way, with final dates and venues to be decided. Please visit our website for more information: sydney.edu.au/pharmacy

2014 Alumni Achievement Awards
Nominations for our 2014 Alumni Achievement Awards are now open. All pharmacy alumni, staff and friends are invited to nominate fellow graduates whose work made a positive impact in their professional field or communities in Australia and/or overseas.

The faculty, in conjunction with the Pharmacy Alumni Association, recognises outstanding alumni efforts in two categories: the Pharmacy Alumni Award for Achievement and the Pharmacy Young Alumni Award for Achievement (for alumni aged 30 and younger).

Please download your nomination form. For more information about the awards and submission guidelines, please visit our website.

Fun, fare and future alumni
We invite you to help support our students by participating in the ‘Fun, fare and future alumni’ program – an initiative aimed to connect current local and international students with our graduates.

By hosting lunches and dinners, you provide an opportunity for students to meet and engage with their peers and alumni families, and enable everyone to share academic, professional and social experiences and foster new friendships.

Our past gatherings have ranged from a day visit to Goulburn to a cocktail party in Woollahra.

We encourage you to assist University of Sydney students by volunteering to host a function in 2014. To volunteer, please contact the Alumni and Events Office on 9036 9504 or visit sydney.edu.au/alumni/hospitality

UNDER THE SCOPE: DINNER FOR DIABETES
SAVE THE DATE

Join us as we step back in time to the 1920s for a special event to support diabetes research – our ‘Under the scope’ dinner.

In between fine dining and toe-tapping music inspired by this golden era of jazz, prosperity and the discovery of insulin, you will hear about the latest diabetes research at the Faculty of Pharmacy.

We will also give you insights into how these discoveries are improving the quality of life for those people living with diabetes.

Friday 15 August 2014, 6.30pm
MacLaurin Hall, The Quadrangle

The ticket price of $180 includes canapés, a three-course meal and wine, beer and soft drinks.

If you would like to attend, you can purchase tickets at sydney.edu.au/pharmacy/under-the-scope

The dress code for this event is cocktail with a twist of the 1920s.

MORE INFORMATION
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FACULTY OF PHARMACY