

# Gamecock Pharmacist



**LEADERS,  
LEARNERS,  
NETWORKERS**

Service and research  
boost health outcomes  
and impact lives.



DEAN STEPHEN J. CUTLER

## DEAR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS,

Serving as the dean of the USC College of Pharmacy is quite a humbling experience. This opportunity allows me to witness many innovations and research projects being developed every day that contribute to real-world applications and the future of patient care.

Our research initiatives are the hallmark of this university and college. Through our research, we contribute to the improvement of human health by developing a better understanding of current disease states, developing new drugs with targeted therapeutics, and finding ways to repurpose existing drugs.

It is the strength of these research efforts that also provides rich experiential learning opportunities for our students in the Pharm.D. and Ph.D. programs, as they benefit from direct access to our research centers and facilities, hands-on learning experiences and valuable mentor relationships. This creates a tremendous environment for our students. By collaborating with experienced researchers, students can further develop their critical thinking skills, their creativity and their innovation, which are the core foundations of research. Whether through drug discovery or application of drug knowledge into actual practice, students move into their professional roles armed with new knowledge that significantly impacts patients' lives and the practice of pharmacy.

In addition to our research offerings, I invite you to learn more in this issue of Gamecock Pharmacist about our professional development opportunities for students, our Greenville campus and our early assurance program. These are just a few examples that set the USC College of Pharmacy apart from other programs.

For all that you, as our alumni, do to help us enrich our students' lives and further our profession, I am deeply grateful. It is through your devotion that we can continually improve our offerings to students and to attract top faculty and researchers. Thank you for your tremendous support and I look forward to seeing you in the near future.

*Forever to thee,*

**Stephen J. Cutler**  
Dean, College of Pharmacy



### SPRING 2023

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**Managing Editor** / Margaret Gregory  
**Writers** / Margaret Gregory, Malory Spicer  
**Copy Editor** / Kathy Keenan  
**Photography** / Jason Ayer, Malory Spicer, Kim Truett

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**College of Pharmacy**  
University of South Carolina  
715 Sumter Street  
Columbia, SC 29208

Phone: 803-777-4151



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### ON THE COVER

Our 2022-2023 College of Pharmacy student organization leaders.

### Communications and Marketing

The University of South Carolina is an equal opportunity institution. 23-13275 3/23

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# Teamwork helps achieve high standards for patient treatment

By **Scott Sutton**, *Chair, Clinical Pharmacy and Outcomes Sciences Department*

The Department of Clinical Pharmacy and Outcomes Sciences consists of team members that specialize in teaching, practice, service and research with a focus on the development of health care leaders. The comprehensive departmental teamwork led to another productive year with record high achievements in teaching, practice, service, research and recognition.

The department represents two fields – clinical pharmacy and outcomes sciences – both of which embody the strong relationship between pharmacy and patient care. While outcomes scientists focus on making existing drugs more effective, our clinical pharmacists apply the science to patient care. When the handoff is performed seamlessly, we make a significant impact on students, health care clinicians and the people who rely on medicine as part of essential treatment and health care needs.

During the past academic year, team members taught more than 4,000 hours of didactic instruction, participated in the equivalent of 94 months of clinical practice and patient care, precepted 176 pharmacy students and 50 residents, published 104 peer-reviewed manuscripts, had 4,579 journal citations, published 16 textbook chapters, and submitted 56 research grants.

Select highlights from local, regional, national and international recognitions include:

- Preceptors of the Year
- Mentors of the Year
- Teachers of the Year
- Outstanding Guest Lecturer
- Emerging Researcher
- Outstanding Student Chapter of a Professional Organization
- Excellence in Service, Teaching & Scholarship
- Distinguished Practitioner and Fellow
- Innovative Practice Recognition
- Research Institute Scholar

While I hope this information documents a concerted effort to set and achieve high standards, it does not come close to demonstrating the true value of our department, which lies in the individuals, colleagues, friends and the family that comprise Clinical Pharmacy and Outcomes Sciences.

# GROWING ACCESS TO RURAL HEALTH CARE

When it comes to accessing health care in rural areas, pharmacists continue to be a growing resource, and the College of Pharmacy provides training to address the need with programs such as Paired 4 Reach.

The Pharmacy Advancement in Rural Experiential Development for a Rural Health Education and Career Enhancement grew from the Paired with PEEP program, which launched in 2018. The Palmetto Experiential Education Partnership was funded through a grant to pharmacy faculty members **Whitney Maxwell**, Jennifer Baker, Betsy Blake and Patti Fabel from the South Carolina Center for Rural and Primary Healthcare.

Paired with PEEP was part of an initiative to encourage pharmacy students to work in rural areas after graduation and to build a pipeline for improved future health care. The program was extended in 2022 with

an additional grant and is now called Paired 4 Reach.

“We are implementing a rural health curricular track within the College of Pharmacy to be a lasting piece of the program,” says Maxwell, associate director of experiential education. “We want to develop pharmacists who are innovating pharmacy practice and bringing new services to rural areas.”

**Drew Junker**, Class of 2024, recognized parallels between urban and rural areas related to health care issues while growing up in Baltimore, Maryland.

“In any underserved area, people may not have access to healthy food or have the time to exercise because they are working long hours to pay their bills. These are some factors that we have to consider as pharmacists when making care recommendations,” she says.

**Caleb Wahdan**, Class of 2025, says he better understands the significance of being an advocate for his patients.

“There are so many people who do not have the resources to live more healthy lives,” he says. “As a pharmacist, I will have to think differently about how I can support my patients because I may be the only person available to care for them.”

After graduation, **Sarah Beth Sears**, ’22, took the skills she learned in the program to her postgraduate year one residency at Self Regional Healthcare in Greenwood, South Carolina. Having grown up in a small town, Sears knew that she wanted to return to help her community.

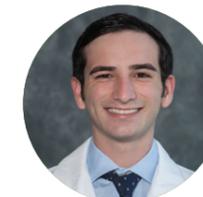
“The program helped me learn how to develop a plan that could improve patient care, and I was able to implement it,” she says. “I was able to experience firsthand the limitations in rural health care and work to find what we can do to improve our patients’ lives.”



Whitney Maxwell



Drew Junker



Caleb Wahdan



Sarah Beth Sears

# TRANSFORMING HEALTH CARE

## The impact of COP research on human health

For an institution of higher learning, research is an integral part of discovering new information and for providing experiential learning opportunities for students.

Within the College of Pharmacy, the departments of Clinical Pharmacy and Outcomes Sciences and Drug Discovery and Biomedical Sciences are discovering not only new drugs, but new uses and improved methods for existing drugs, and in some cases, combining efforts to meet these goals.

“It is part of our mission and vision to advance health care,” says **Michael Wyatt**, chair of Drug Discovery and Biomedical Sciences. “By conducting research, we can improve current treatments and find new treatments. Our purpose is to improve human health.”

Among the College of Pharmacy’s many contributions was the development of the saliva test for COVID-19.

“That had an immediate impact,” says **Scott Sutton**, chair of Clinical Pharmacy and Outcomes Sciences. “It was innovative and developed by the college. Indirectly, we are always searching to discover something that is new – an enzyme, a protein, a target – which can take years to have an impact.”

The two departments have collaborated on the educational mission of the college for

many years but had not always done so regarding research. The first collaboration between the departments resulted in a \$2.1 million R01 grant from the National Institutes of Health in 2021 for a drug discovery and artificial intelligence study.

“Everyone in our respective departments has such a different skill set, and now we are working as one team with one goal,” says Sutton.

In addition to conducting research, as teachers, each faculty member’s responsibility is also to disseminate new information.

“Besides the instruction and lecturing, our primary mission is to serve the broader community by sharing knowledge.” Wyatt adds. “One way to do that is to train our current practitioners not to just be competent for today’s standards, but to also train them to be better providers and teach new advances that will change the standard of care going forward. It is a form of experiential learning.”

Such research opportunities for students are a differentiator for USC’s College of Pharmacy versus peer institutions and take learning far beyond the classroom.

“Rather than being told the answer to a question, it now becomes the student’s

job to find the answer,” says Sutton. “Research requires a different mindset, a different set of skills, and we offer students the chance to develop their capabilities.”

A strong research program also benefits the college by attracting high-level researchers to faculty positions.

“Without funding from competitive sources, some research would not get done,” Sutton says. “As researchers join our faculty, financial support for equipment and supplies, along with grant funding, helps to advance what we are able to offer our students as both graduates and professionals.”

What does all this mean for our state and our nation, even our world?

“Research impacts lives. Whether we are finding new ways to treat cancer with combination therapies, finding advancements to prevent Alzheimer’s, or breaking the connection between drugs of abuse and HIV, we are drawing a line to human health,” says Wyatt. “There is always more to be learned.”

“

By conducting research, we can improve current treatments and find new treatments. Our purpose is to improve human health. **MICHAEL WYATT**



Olivia Rothschild, a member of the undergraduate research team.



Marcella Babatunde researches DNA repair.



## RESEARCH IS A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

In **Doug Pittman’s** lab, it is normal to find undergraduate, Pharm.D. and Ph.D. students working alongside each other.

“It all really began through a persistent engineering student who camped outside my door, requesting to work in my lab,” says Pittman, director of Pharmacy Graduate Studies. “It grew from there as pharmacy students and undergrads were seeking research opportunities, and we combined that with Dr. Wyatt’s graduate students.”

Pittman, who often helps provide lab tours for students considering the Gamecock Pharmacy Assurance program, encourages students to give more consideration to pursuing research.

“One of our second-year pharmacy students, Marcella Babatunde, recently won a Magellan award from the university and had not considered research as an area that she was interested in until she toured the lab,” he notes.

Research allows students to experience what does not work and learn from those failures.

“When an experiment fails and they ask, ‘What now?’ I can turn it back to them to ask, ‘What do you think is next?’ That develops their critical thinking skills,” he says. “By offering research opportunities for students who are at varying levels in their studies, who will be working in diverse areas of health care, they learn how to work together as a team.”



Michael Wyatt



Scott Sutton



Doug Pittman

# Researchers hit the ropes in grant-writing boot camp

## Sharing ideas and feedback grows the confidence of junior faculty members

As with any profession, discoveries through research will only advance if new researchers continue the work that is currently being done, and **Lorne Hofseth**, associate dean of research for the College of Pharmacy, is doing his part to train the next group of pharmaceutical science investigators.

“The gold standard for any researcher is to be awarded an R01 grant from the National Institutes of Health,” Hofseth says. “The purpose of our R21 Boot Camp is to facilitate ideas to discovery through generating funding for our faculty. The grant mechanisms can be intimidating, so the R21 boot camp helps our faculty overcome this intimidation with the goal of generating funding to carry out their research activities.”

The R01 grant program provides support for health-related research and development based on the mission of the NIH. The R21 grant is intended to encourage exploratory/developmental research by providing support for the early and conceptual stages of project development.

Hofseth’s boot camp, which recently wrapped up its initial class, will take place every other year. It brings together professional track faculty, who have expertise in clinical activities and understanding of clinical practice and translational sciences, with tenured track faculty, who have expertise in drugs, the targets of those drugs and the mechanism of those drugs.

“It makes sense to foster collaborative efforts between these groups such that the teams created are uniquely suited to answer important questions,” he says.

Chao Cai, ’13, who earned a Ph.D. in biostatistics from the USC College of Pharmacy, and Minou Khazan are assistant professors in the Clinical Pharmacy and Outcomes Sciences department. They teamed up for a study focused on predicting cardiac events in critical care patients who are receiving certain medications.

“We needed more funding to use electronic health records and to have access to more information in order

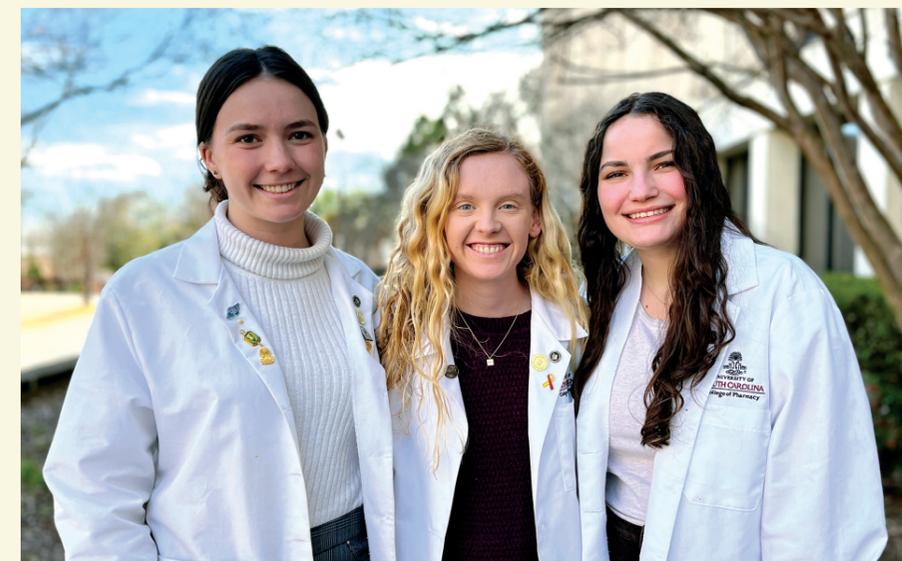
to create a risk assessment tool,” says Khazan. “We wanted to learn how to submit an R21 grant application, and the boot camp gave us the opportunity to learn about all the requirements step by step.”

Francisco Leon, assistant professor in Drug Discovery and Biomedical Sciences, also wanted to grow his experience in the NIH grant submission process.

“By sharing our ideas with others and receiving their feedback, it helps to grow the confidence of junior faculty members like me,” he says.

Federal grants, particularly those from the NIH, provide critical support for academic research programs like those at the College of Pharmacy.

“Through our boot camp, we can inspire research and maximize the potential of our faculty’s scientific expertise,” Hofseth adds. “The end goal in receiving a grant is to support the research that will ultimately lead to new discoveries.” ❁



◀ (left to right)  
Caylee McConnell,  
Sydney Nicholls,  
Kristina Benbow.

# RECRUITING PHARMACY’S FUTURE

## Early acceptance program provides a unique path to USC Pharm.D.

The Gamecock Pharmacy Assurance program, launched in 2019, provides exceptional high school students with provisional early acceptance to the Doctor of Pharmacy program. Students receive exposure to the profession and engagement with the College of Pharmacy from their very first days at the university.

**Kristina Benbow**, Class of 2024, applied to USC unsure of which major she wanted to pursue. Due to her academic distinction in high school, she received an invitation to apply to the GPA program which helped her choose pharmacy as her career path.

“The GPA program helped me incorporate the mindset of thinking like a pharmacist,” says Benbow. “I have learned what it means to network, how to schedule and the importance of deadlines. The GPA program pushed me out of my comfort zone and helped me take small steps to become a better leader.”

**Sydney Nicholls**, Class of 2024, viewed pharmacy as an opportunity to combine her interest in chemistry with a desire to work in health care. The program taught Nicholls about the versatility of the profession.

“Pharmacy is so much more than counting pills; it provides a great opportunity to work in a variety of health care areas,” she says, “and the GPA program was part of the reason I was able to figure that out.”

**Caylee McConnell**, Class of 2024, built bonds as a GPA student that made her more comfortable when she began pharmacy school.

“Knowing the faculty and staff before beginning pharmacy classes and knowing they are invested in preparing you for your future is wonderful,” she says. “We are their priority, and they work hard to make sure we’re doing well.”



**Kristi Kinslow**, director of pre-professional studies and recruitment, reminds alumni that they are uniquely positioned to encourage the best and brightest students to consider pharmacy and the GPA program. “I always look forward to working with our alumni to recruit future Gamecock pharmacists and welcome the opportunity to connect with them,” she says.

► *Do you know an outstanding high school student considering a career in health care? Encourage them to consider the USC College of Pharmacy GPA program. Learn more about the GPA program and ways that you can help shape the future of the pharmacy profession by contacting Kristi Kinslow, director of pre-professional studies and recruitment, kinslowk@cop.sc.edu, 803-777-6635.*

# Expanding the pharmacy footprint

Greenville campus offers another learning opportunity for USC students



Jennifer Clements



Thuy Kieu



Tenia Slade



Emily Herring

When the opportunity arose to join the USC College of Pharmacy's Greenville campus, **Jennifer Clements** saw it as a way to combine her passion for education and track record for practice and research.

"I have always been part of student advising and mentoring," says Clements, who was hired in 2022 as director of pharmacy education. "With an existing relationship with Prisma Health and their residency program, it brings about an opportunity to work more collaboratively in building an interprofessional relationship to connect our students and make our program stronger."

The campus, launched in 2011, provides training for up to 20 third-year students. When they enter the College of Pharmacy, these students agree to conduct their third-year studies in Greenville. Clements notes that the smaller class size allows the students and staff to build comradery along with a team-based atmosphere.

"The personalized advising and mentorship that we can offer provides

an excellent learning environment," she says, "and because of what Prisma Health has invested in the program with the simulation lab and clinical skills, these students will be well prepared to go into clinical practice."

Julie M. Sease, senior associate dean, says that in order for the college and its students to take full advantage of the opportunities available at the Greenville location, a faculty member dedicated to advancing pharmacy education at the site was required. She says Clements is a perfect fit to help the campus move forward.

"She brings with her years of experience in both pharmacy practice and pharmacy education. Dr. Clements provides an individualized mentor-advisor relationship for our students in Greenville that just could not exist without a faculty member being physically located there," Sease says. "She provides small group laboratory and other learning opportunities for our students in Greenville and ensures their educational

experience and overall well-being are taken care of."

The program shares classroom and laboratory space within the USC School of Medicine-Greenville at Prisma Health-Upstate. Because many lectures are held virtually with students on the Columbia campus, students learn to balance distance-learning with hands-on learning and mentoring, within a modern facility.

After earning a Pharm.D. from Campbell University in 2006, Clements completed a primary care pharmacy practice residency at the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center in Charleston, South Carolina. She then began her academic career, holding full-time faculty appointments with Shenandoah University before transitioning to the Presbyterian College School of Pharmacy, where she served as professor and director of postgraduate education.

She developed pharmacy practice sites in a Veterans Administration Medical Center and rural-health family medicine



**The personalized advising and mentorship that we can offer provides an excellent learning environment** **JENNIFER CLEMENTS**

clinic with a focus on chronic disease management, specifically diabetes and obesity. She also oversaw inpatient diabetes management at Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System in South Carolina.

**Tenia Slade, Thuy Kieu and Emily Herring**, Class of 2024, chose to complete their third-year studies at the Greenville campus.

Being a native of Greenville and the opportunities to make connections in another part of the state influenced Slade's decision.

"The proximity to Prisma Health and other local pharmacies puts you at an advantage when it comes time to complete your fourth-year rotations and apply for jobs after graduation," she says.

Kieu, also from Greenville, was unaware of the Greenville campus until she interviewed for a spot in the College of Pharmacy.

"I liked the aspect of being able to be closer to home for my studies," she says, "and I have had the chance to get to know my classmates better. I think it will help me in my career path after graduation."

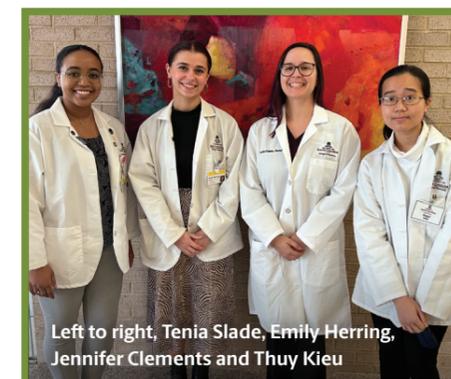
Emily Herring serves as president of the student cohort for the Greenville campus. Initially, she was unsure about committing to attend the upstate location for her third year, but she says it turned out to be a great decision.

Clements is focused on growing opportunities for students.

"I want to see us more integrated with the campus through research, service, interprofessional opportunities and working with clinical pharmacy specialists in the hospital and with residents who do postgraduate training," she says. "I see myself as an advocate to improve the Greenville experience in providing a distinctive program for our students to take advantage of in their professional education."



Jennifer Clements lecturing a class



Left to right, Tenia Slade, Emily Herring, Jennifer Clements and Thuy Kieu



Mary Douglass Smith



Gabrielle Pierce Cranford

# ALUMNAE NAMED AMONG TOP 50 PHARMACY INFLUENCERS

Two alumnae from the USC College of Pharmacy have been named among the top influencers in pharmacy for 2022 by Pharmacy Podcast Network. PPN launched the award in 2021 to recognize those who have made a mark on the pharmacy industry through innovation, momentum and distinction.

**Mary Douglass Smith**, '08, and **Gabrielle Pierce Cranford**, '20, were selected based on votes by their peers in the pharmacy profession.

Smith, who ranked among the top 10 influencers is director of experiential education at the Presbyterian College School of Pharmacy. She also serves as the 2nd Congressional District board member for the South Carolina Board of Pharmacy.

"I think sometimes we tend to silo ourselves into one sector, and I have the advantage of intentionally spreading myself to other areas such as academia,

joining others on research projects and being involved in state and national professional organizations," she says.

Smith is also active on social media, which she feels has helped raise her visibility in the pharmacy profession, and she wants to be a source of information for pharmacists.

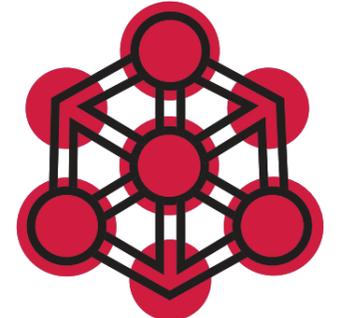
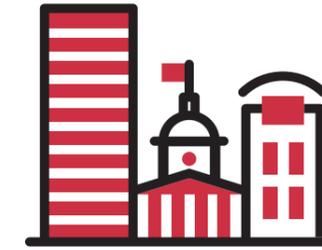
"I interact with a great number of people on Twitter," she says. "Even before I joined the Board of Pharmacy, I attended meetings and would post notes in hopes that it would help those who could not attend feel they were still keyed in and informed about what was being discussed.

"Making direct meaningful connections with others in the same field gives you the support you need to improve your own career."

Cranford completed an executive fellowship in Association Leadership and Management with the

American Society of Health-System Pharmacists from 2021-2022. She then accepted a position with ASHP as a director of member relations and is staff liaison to the Section of Specialty Pharmacy Practitioners. She was surprised to be included as a pharmacy influencer.

"I am so early in my career, but I aspire to have as much impact as everyone who is on the list," she says. "We may have niche areas as practitioners, but we make the strongest impact when we come together as a whole for the cause. People who make an influence are those who use their voices to say what needs to be said."



## Ph.D. alum finds his calling in industry



As the son of an independent pharmacy owner, **Robert Mauch** (1994, Pharm.D., Ph.D., pharmaceutical sciences), had a

strong sense that pharmacy would be his career calling.

"Because of the familiarity I had with pharmacy and the broad spectrum of things that you could do with it – be a pharmacist, work in industry, own a business – I was attracted to it because of the flexibility," Mauch says.

Mauch, who earned his Doctor of Pharmacy from Mercer University, credits the reputation of the pharmaceutical sciences program in choosing USC to pursue his Ph.D. in Pharmacy Administration. He also had friends who were in the program, and he says Gene Reeder, professor emeritus and director of Outcomes Research for the USC College of Pharmacy, was a significant reason for his decision to attend South Carolina.

After graduation, Mauch headed to Tampa, Florida, to start his own company, Xcenda, that would launch his career in the pharmaceutical industry.

Xcenda is a strategic consulting firm, applying expertise in health economics and outcomes research, reimbursement, health policy, market research and market access strategy to introduce new pharmaceutical products to the market. The company was acquired in 2007 by AmerisourceBergen Corp. The pharmaceutical sourcing and distribution services company helps both health care providers and pharmaceutical and biotech manufacturers improve patient access to products and care. After holding several roles within the company, Mauch now serves as executive vice president and chief operating officer for AmerisourceBergen.

Mauch believes it was the relationships he developed at the College of Pharmacy and the motivation provided by the faculty that had a defining impact on his career.

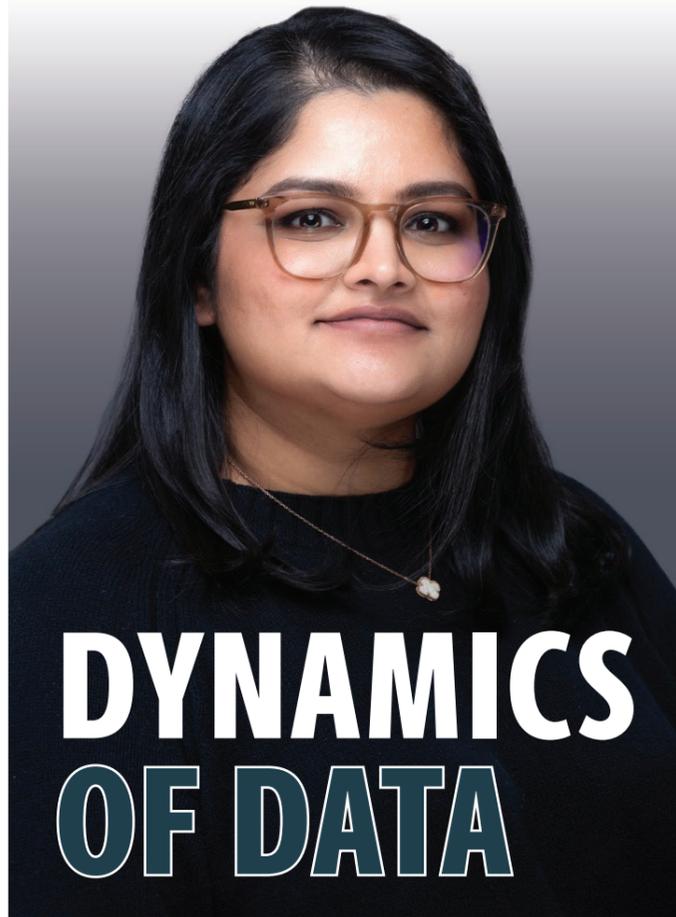
"It still influences me today," Mauch says. "There was an atmosphere of

respect, inclusiveness and professional comradery that the faculty had with the students, which is rare. The entire team worked together in a way that you felt comfortable but also felt pushed.

"We were taught to do things in a methodical, rigorous way that has real meaning to people and to health care," he says. "I could start a business with no experience because I had skills and training, and that all goes back to the team I worked with and Gene's thought leadership."

Mauch encourages students to consider what they can create with a graduate degree and with a Ph.D. in particular.

"There is still a mostly unmet need to better support understanding around the total economic value of a therapy versus the face value cost of a drug," he adds. "In this, there is a tremendous opportunity to make an impact on people's lives by doing good research and influencing thoughtful and data-driven health policy. USC is uniquely positioned to do that and to motivate people in their careers."



**Alumna uses data to drive drug development**

When **Sindoor Patel**, '21, was a middle school student, her great-grandfather was diagnosed with throat cancer.

"I accompanied him to his treatments a few times," she recalls, "and I became fascinated with the medicines."

Fortunately, those medicines worked for Patel's great-grandfather, and the experience ignited a passion in her to pursue a path in oncological pharmacy. Patel is now a clinical operations oncology post-doctoral fellow at Boehringer Ingelheim, focused on the strategic and operational aspects of clinical trials.

While a student at the College of Pharmacy, Patel got her first taste of industry while working as an intern at Nephron Pharmaceuticals Corporation.

"I had the chance to look at investigational drug applications, using data from companies that had already done research and translate that information for use in generic therapies," she says. "That made me want to be a part of clinical studies in determining if a particular therapy would work for a patient."

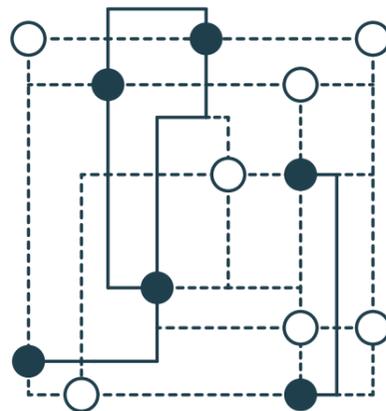
Taking part in leadership roles at the College of Pharmacy helped prepare Patel for her fellowship. She was a student ambassador for the college, served as vice president for the college's chapter for the American Pharmacy Association, and served as a mentor for first-year pharmacy students. She also took part in many community service activities, including vaccination clinics and serving as a mental health educator.

Patel always felt that the faculty and staff were supportive of her goals.

"My advisors made sure I was aware of opportunities that would help me," she says. "Knowing that they listened to what my interests were and that they encouraged me to pursue those interests was significant."

As a clinical trial manager, Patel relies on her experiences as a student to propel her forward.

"Getting a clinical trial of my own within one year of my fellowship is something I am extremely proud of, knowing that my training has prepared me for this role."



# A PASSION FOR POLICY

As **CharLeigh Steverson**, Class of 2024, wraps up her third year as a student pharmacist, she has a full resume of service and experience before she enters the pharmacy profession as a practitioner.

The list of roles she has undertaken is lengthy. She has been an inpatient pharmacy intern for Prisma Health Children's Hospital, junior board member for the South Carolina Pharmacy Association and representative for Pharmacy Legislative Week. Steverson has held committee roles with Sigma Alpha Omega, Christian Pharmacists Fellowship International, Phi Lambda Sigma, the National Standing Committee on Policy with the American Pharmacists Association, the Academy of Student Pharmacists and the Alliance for Pharmacy Compounding. She is also president of the Alpha Lambda Chapter of Kappa Epsilon and a student ambassador for the College of Pharmacy.

"As a SCPhA junior board member and serving on the House of Delegates Policy Taskforce and legislative co-chair, I hope to use my passion for policy to further advocate for my profession on the state level," she says.

Steverson also hopes her service will be an example to other students. As part of an

initiative to help increase student interest in policy development, she helped create a student policy challenge through SCPhA. Student teams examine issues within the pharmacy industry and submit resolutions that could be selected for implementation by the association.

During the summer of 2022, she worked as an intern in Washington D.C., for U.S. Congressman and pharmacist Buddy Carter of Georgia. She attended weekly doctor's caucus meetings to discuss ways to improve the nation's public health.

As part of her fourth year, she has policy-focused rotations lined up, including with the policy team for Mutual Drug, which advocates on behalf of the independent pharmacy sector.

"As pharmacists, we play an important role in health care, and it is important to speak



out about our profession," she says.

Through her involvement and service roles with multiple organizations, Steverson has learned the value of not only time management, but more importantly, the ability to work with and communicate with a variety of people.

"I believe this will help me to be a more compassionate pharmacist in interacting with my patients," she adds. "I want to first practice as a pharmacist to help me better advocate for the profession."



# Advancing the profession of pharmacy

## Students excel through professional development opportunities

When students have the opportunity to attend a professional development conference where they network with peers and talk with pharmacy professionals about the industry, it is often an eye-opening experience.

“They become motivated to truly advocate for and change the pharmacy professions based on their networking exchanges with professionals around the country, the research they present to attendees and the legislative processes in which they participate,” says Amy Grant, associate dean for student affairs and diversity in the College of Pharmacy. “Repeatedly, I also see involvement at professional meetings changes students’ career trajectories.”

Developing students who care about their profession is of great interest to alumnus **Ken Couch**, '69, who saw his

career advance from a community pharmacy to leading a multibillion-dollar pharmaceutical distribution company as its president.

“I ended up being a pharmacist’s pharmacist – developing pharmaceutical software and computer software for community pharmacists,” he says. “Then I moved on to distribution. One way to know about all the many things a pharmacist can do is to talk with pharmacists from different settings.”

Couch credits Robert Beamer, distinguished professor emeritus for the college who passed away in December 2022, with having a profound impact on him, as they visited area high schools, hoping to convince students to pursue a career in pharmacy.

“I want to share the depth of the profession with students, to have

them understand the wonderful opportunities and have a broader view of what the profession is about,” he says. “You cannot get that sitting at a desk as a P1. You can study a book all day long, but that will not teach you about interacting with your patients. Attending meetings, you have a chance to meet those who can change your perspective and help develop a career path for what you should truly be doing.”

**Hirali Patel**, '22, joined Carolina Pharmacy as a clinical pharmacist after graduation. She saw options open up for her after attending the college’s annual career expo.

“I originally did not see myself in a community pharmacy setting,” Patel says. “I was residency bound until Carolina Pharmacy visited our school, and I saw how they work with patients and implement their goals.”



“Networking and leadership opportunities have helped build my skills and to be better prepared for the real world,” she adds. “Having a career mentor was extremely valuable for me, and as alumni, it is important for us to do what alumni did for us as students, in providing insight into the pharmacy profession.”

**Jessica Shue**, '21, is now a post-doctoral fellow with Novartis and is helping to develop students on a pathway of which she was unaware as a student.

“Taking on different leadership roles as a student helped me to develop key skills that were directly transferrable to my fellowship and set me with a good foundation,” she says. “The skills I learned – interacting with professors, working with my peers and learning to communicate with them – have had a tremendous impact.”

As a student pharmacist, **Jacob Jordan King**, Class of 2024, and president of the College of Pharmacy Student Government Association, quickly realized the value of being involved in student organizations.

“The college does an excellent job of providing opportunities to grow into the profession, but you also should step beyond what the university offers and develop yourself,” he says. “Be a mentor, be a role model, and learn by doing. At the end of the day, no matter how much you know, if you cannot interact with others and be part of a team, you will not be much good to your patient or help to improve the profession.”

Funding is crucial for students to attend professional development opportunities outside of the college. Without such support, many students would not have access to these experiences.

“Our hope is to increase the number of students who attend activities outside of the curriculum,” Grant says. “Every good leader will tell you that something sparked their momentum, and the more resources we can designate toward student professional development, the more leaders we will send out into our phenomenal profession.”

Couch hopes other alumni will share their experiences with students and young professionals.

“Help to broaden students’ views of the profession, instill in them the vision to see what the profession can be in the future, and share your knowledge,” he says. “Mentoring students helps fortify the profession and is necessary for the profession to replenish itself with high quality practitioners. I felt it was important to give back, to be involved – it all relates to advancing the profession of pharmacy.”

► *If you are interested in furthering the professional development of students as a mentor, by sharing your experiences, or supporting student travel to professional conference meetings, contact Sarah Sipes, associate director of development and alumni engagement, at [sosipes@cop.sc.edu](mailto:sosipes@cop.sc.edu) or 803-576-8324.*



Ken Couch



Hirali Patel



Jessica Shue



Jacob Jordan King

COLLEGE OF PHARMACY

# NEWS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## FACULTY & STAFF



**Dean Stephen J. Cutler** has been recognized with the 2023 SCbio Life Sciences Industry's Pinnacle Award as Individual Contributor of the Year



**Kevin Lu** received a research grant from the Alzheimer's Association to investigate if hypertension medications can help reduce the risk of dementia



**Chase Francis** received the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology travel award



**Tessa Hastings** has been named as a Breakthrough Star by the USC Office of the Vice President for Research



**Nikki Mellen** and **Kristi Kinslow** were nominated by University 101 students for the M. Stuart Hunter Outstanding Teaching in University 101 award. The honor recognizes a University 101 instructor who demonstrates exemplary teaching and achievement of course outcomes and has made a positive impact on student lives



## ALUMNI



**Kennedy Freeman**, '22, has committed early to a PGY2 Pediatric Residency at Children's Health, Children's Medical Center, Dallas, Texas



**Alexis Caronis**, '21, has started a new position as associate director of Drug Safety with Leaderboard Branding



**Gabrielle Cranford**, '20, completed the Executive Fellowship in Association Leadership and Management with ASHP and is now director of member relations, Specialty Pharmacy Section



**Bri Murray**, '16, has begun a new clinical pharmacy position in diabetes management at Chase Brexton Health Care in Baltimore, Maryland



**Sean Tran**, '09, has been appointed as PGY1 residency program director for Lexington Medical Center, West Columbia, South Carolina



**George "Ed" Vess**, '80, was named the 2022 SCPhA Pharmacist of the Year



**Flynn Warren**, '64, received the Larry L. Braden Meritorious Service Award at the Georgia Pharmacy Association Summer Convention

- **Layne Ailstock**, '22, has been named pharmacist in charge with Walgreens, Beech Island, South Carolina
- **Emily Crouse**, '22, is a consulting pharmacist with Tarrytown Expocare in Lexington, South Carolina
- **Danielle Lown**, '22, is a pharmacist with Hawthorne Pharmacy & Medical Equipment in Columbia, South Carolina
- **Katie Block**, '20, is a clinical specialty pharmacist with Baylor Scott and White Health in Dallas, Texas
- **Caroline Sanders**, '20, was promoted to clinical formulary pharmacist lead for Medicaid with Humana
- **Nicolle Dambly**, '18, is a clinical assistant professor at the Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy at Rutgers University and ambulatory psychiatric pharmacist at Monmouth Medical Center
- **Joseph Stokes**, '18, has been named district support pharmacist with CVS
- **Reina Shimozono**, '17, is a clinical information pharmacist at UNC Health in Raleigh, North Carolina
- **Amanda Capino**, '14, was inducted into the inaugural class of the Academy for Excellence in Education at the University of Mississippi Medical Center and will serve as the secretary/treasurer
- **Jenna Cox**, '12, has been named Southeastern Residency Conference Chair for 2022-2023
- **Crystal Watts**, '09, is an independent pharmacist with Berkeley Home Pharmacy in Moncks Corner, South Carolina
- **Jennifer Bair**, '99, has been named vice president of Pharmacy Services and chief pharmacy officer for Prisma Health
- **Alyson Shirer**, '94, is the population health pharmacist at Fairfield Medical Associates, Winnsboro, South Carolina
- **Donna Avant**, '85, received the 2022 Telehealth Trailblazer Award at the 10th annual SC Telehealth Summit

COLLEGE OF PHARMACY

# NEWS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

CONTINUED

## STUDENTS



**B. Celia Cui**, Ph.D. candidate, won the 2022 Three Minute Thesis competition hosted by the USC Graduate School.



**Sarah Davis** and **Xiaomo "Shawn" Xiong**, Ph.D. candidates, were named 2023 Breakthrough Graduate Scholars by the USC Office of the Vice President for Research



**Kaitlyn Paxton**, Class of 2025, accepted a Medical Affairs Fellowship with United Therapeutics Corporation



**CharLeigh Steverson**, Class of 2024, received a student scholarship from SCPHA to attend the 2023 SE Women of Pharmacy Leadership Conference



**Alexandra Coleman**, Class of 2025, was named one of 15 finalists in the SC Innovates Student Pitch Competition for her project entitled "Beyond Pills"



**Marcella Babatunde**, Class of 2025, received the Magellan Award from the USC Office of Undergraduate Research

# OUR STUDENTS ARE SCORING BIG!

The College of Pharmacy NAPLEX\* and MPJE\*\* scores are the highest among all programs in South Carolina for 2022 and surpass the state and national averages

\* North American Pharmacist Licensure Examination  
 \*\* Multistate Pharmacy Jurisprudence Examination

## NAPLEX



## MPJE



of our student pharmacists were recognized on the university's honors lists for Fall 2022.

► Do you have news to share with your fellow alumni? Send us your updates at [bit.ly/usccop-alumni](https://bit.ly/usccop-alumni).



EBONE' TRAPP



WILL PITTS



BLAKE WANNARAT



EMILY RUDISELL



CHASE PARKS



CAROLINE ASBILL



KAREN THAO



JONATHAN HUI

'23

“As I look back and reflect on my past three years of pharmacy school, I am more than grateful to have been chosen to matriculate through this program. Thanks to the College of Pharmacy, I have learned so much academically and professionally that I have been able to apply to my fourth-year rotations as well as my career in the years to come.”

'23

“Throughout my five years at Carolina, the College of Pharmacy has always been here to support me. From freshman year, when my high school credits transferred after the add-drop date, to planning out-of-state rotations, the college has always had the answers and resources I needed. I am grateful for the passion, expertise and energy displayed by our faculty and preceptors who have challenged me to find my passion within the field of pharmacy, allowing me to excel in my last year of APPE rotations. The exposure provided by the faculty and staff has widened my view of pharmacy, shaping me into the pharmacist I will become.”

'24

“Growing up as a big Gamecock fan and having an uncle who is an alumnus from the USC College of Pharmacy, I knew it was the perfect school to call home. I really enjoy being a part of the college because of the family atmosphere within the college, the instant connection made when networking with alumni, and our passionate professors that are truly invested in preparing us to become great future pharmacists.”

'25

“When I became part of the community at the USC College of Pharmacy, I was instantly reassured in my decision to pursue my Pharm.D. and continue my academic career here. Being at the College of Pharmacy has given me unique skills and numerous networking opportunities, along with a growing confidence in my ability to work in health care and excel in my courses.”

'13

“I am proud to support an exemplary institution that is committed to providing a comprehensive education, preparing students to be successful and adaptive professionals, which is more important now than ever with the rapidly changing medical field. The College of Pharmacy is dedicated to encouraging innovation, fostering creativity, and strives to prepare its students for success in all facets of life.”

'16

“I am forever grateful for all that the USC College of Pharmacy provided me as a student, and for the opportunities it has afforded me in my career as a pharmacist. I don't think I can adequately express my appreciation to the faculty who inspired and challenged me and the alumni who shared their collective wisdom and resources with me during my time as a student and beyond. As an alumna, I am pleased to give back to the college that has been so supportive of me and the profession of pharmacy.”

'20

“I believe in giving back and paying it forward. Thinking back to my pharmacy school days, I am reminded of great memories. I want current and future students to receive the same opportunities that I did and even more. However, giving back does not always mean monetary donations. We often forget that giving our time is just as important.”

'21

“I support the USC College of Pharmacy because its dedication to innovative research and education aligns with my values of continuously improving health care for all. The hands-on training and opportunities provided by the college allow students to become the best versions of themselves and excel in the field of pharmacy.”

# Showing our PHARMACY PRIDE



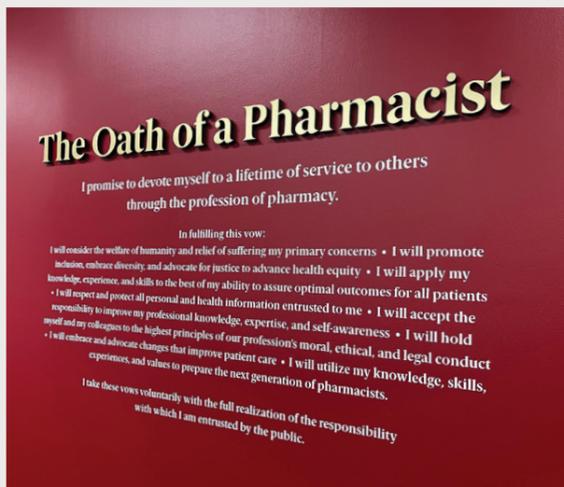
Alumni of the College of Pharmacy have long shared their immense pride of their school, but there were few images in the hallways to demonstrate that pride. That is beginning to change with some recent renovations.

Welcoming window graphics in the hallway of Coker Life Sciences now greet students, faculty, staff and visitors to the College of Pharmacy.



A soothing shade of gray covers the walls of the Dean's Conference Room, now accented with framed messages of the college's mission statement, the iconic tailfeathers of the Gamecock, the Oath of a Pharmacist and "Forever to thee," breathing new life into what was once a rather boring space.

We hope you enjoy this refresh and that you will stop by soon to take a peek.



**GAMECOCK PHARMACY Pop-up Shop**

Open through May 17: [bit.ly/cop-shop](https://bit.ly/cop-shop)

Proceeds support scholarships, student programming and more!

**REFER A PHARMACIST**

Do you know a student who would be a perfect fit for our pharmacy program? Scan the QR code or visit [go.sc.edu/futurepharmd](https://go.sc.edu/futurepharmd) to let us know.

# PHARMACY CELEBRATIONS

## PRISMA HEALTH RESIDENCY PROGRAM 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

The Prisma Health – USC Pharmacy Residency Program marked 50 years of training pharmacists with a celebration held Sep. 30 - Oct. 2.



Alumnus Elliot Turner, '11, invites former Prisma Health - USC pharmacy residents to reflect on their experiences during 'We've All Walked these Halls' panel event.



Current and past leaders of the Prisma Health – USC Pharmacy Residency Program.



The 2022-23 cohort of Prisma Health – USC pharmacy residents.



## WHITE COAT CEREMONY

The Class of 2026 recites the Oath of a Pharmacist at the College of Pharmacy White Coat ceremony, held Aug. 19.

## PHARMACY MONTH

The USC student chapter of the American Pharmacists Association coordinated proclamations for American Pharmacists Month to be issued by city and state governments across the Midlands during the month of October.



## HOMECOMING

Current and former Walker Leadership Scholars, along with program director Kathy Quarles Moore, '86 (pictured fourth from left) joined founder Donna J. Walker, '79, (pictured ninth from left) for Walker's recognition as the 2022 Distinguished Alumni at the Gamecock Gala.



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# We

**BUILD THE FUTURE.**

Megan Tran ('09) and Sean Tran ('09) met as first-year pharmacy students at the College of Pharmacy. Now married and practicing in the field, they believe in supporting the pharmacists of tomorrow. Megan remembers how much her own scholarship helped — not just the financial assistance, but also the support of a mentor and the knowledge that alumni were willing to invest in future generations. Sean, too, loves supporting future pharmacists. “My parents, sister, and multiple extended family members are USC alumni — some of the College of Pharmacy,” he says. “Our hope is that our contributions can translate into time gained, offering support that can be applied to their studies, co-curricular activities or self-care in a way that enhances their learning experience.”

**BEHOLD THE REMARKABLE *We***