FACULTY

Robert J. Straka, PharmD
Department Head; Professor

Angela K. Birnbaum, PhD
Professor; Director of Graduate Studies

Jeffrey Bishop, PharmD, MS
Associate Professor

Richard C. Brundage, PhD, PharmD
Professor

Scott A. Chapman, PharmD
Professor

James C. Cloyd, PharmD
Professor; Weaver Endowed Chair; Director, Center for Orphan Drug Research

Lisa Coles, PhD
Assistant Professor

Jeannine M. Conway, PharmD
Associate Professor; Associate Dean for Professional Education

Elizabeth Hirsch, PharmD
Associate Professor

R. Stephanie Huang, PhD
Professor

Pamala A. Jacobson, PharmD
Professor; Director, Institute of Personalized Medicine

L’Aurelle A. Johnson, PhD
Assistant Professor; Associate Director of Graduate Studies

Reena Kartha, PhD
Assistant Professor

Michael Kotlyar, PharmD
Associate Professor

Ilo E. Leppik, MD
Professor

Ling Li, PhD
Professor; VFW Endowed Chair

Susan E. Marino, PhD
Associate Professor; Director, Center for Clinical and Cognitive Neuropharmacology

Melanie R. Nicol, PhD, PharmD
Associate Professor

Leo Sioris, PharmD
Professor

Debra J. Skaar, PharmD
Professor

Lynda Welage, PharmD
Professor; Dean, College of Pharmacy

Beshay Zordoky, MSc, PhD
Associate Professor

STAFF

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Eileen Omizo-Whittenberg
Graphic Designer - CoP Communications

Becky Palapala
Program/Project Specialist

Susan Williford
Graduate Program Coordinator
Dear Friends,

This fall begins our academic calendar with a reset of our teaching, research, and service responsibilities under more amenable conditions than recent cycles. In-person instruction continues with a focus on re-establishing quality instruction and experiences for professional and graduate students. Precautionary measures have enabled a safe and gradual return to engaged instruction and expanded options for the conduct of translational research. We now look to shift our focus to continually improving our connection-driven culture to leverage our efficiencies, collaborations, and overall capabilities to accomplish our goals. It is important to share our successes and highlight exciting news and developments as of late.

As you will read in this newsletter, our department continues to succeed in advancing its research agenda. Our graduate program remains robust with the admission of 5 graduate students to our existing cohort totaling 25 PhD. and MSc. students altogether. Our graduates successfully place in critical scientific and research positions nationwide after graduation, and ECP is recognized nationally for cultivating a tradition of excellence in clinical and experimental pharmacology. You will also read about ECP’s expanding engagement in pharmacogenomics access, research, and education at the local and national levels, including the 2022 Pharmacogenomics conference, made possible by the leadership of Pam Jacobson and the sustained hard work of ECP administrative staff.

We continue to cherish the successes of our faculty in their accomplishments publishing over 79 peer reviewed manuscripts, 15 book chapters receiving over 38 new grants totaling over $3M. Promotion of two of our faculty to the rank of professor—Dr. Huang (with tenure) and Chapman (term)—speak highly of the success and scientific accomplishments of our faculty. Our faculty’s accomplishments can only be possible through the continued support of outstanding laboratory staff and scientists, as well as dedicated graduate students and post-doc trainees. Our department is especially grateful for the administrative support afforded us by competent people including Zack McGough, Becky Palapala, Katherine Goffin, Susan Williford and Lori Endsley.

Since our spring newsletter, retirements and departures of faculty from ECP have continued with the retirements of Drs. Dick Brundage (Jan 2023), Mark Kirstein (Spring 2022), and the departure of Dr. Mahmoud Al-Kofahi. We wish them the very best and acknowledge their outstanding contributions to the department, the college, and their disciplines.

As you review the contents of this newsletter, I invite you to collaborate with us in building and sustaining our hard-earned reputation as one of the most recognized departments of clinical pharmacology in the country.

I bid you all a safe, healthy, and productive season as we share our stories within this newsletter.

Sincerely,

Robert Straka, PharmD
Professor and Department Head
CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL 2021-2022 ECP GRADUATES!

Joshua Mentzer (MS) April 2021
“Using Machine Learning in High Throughput Drug Screening of In-Vitro Drug Response Data to predict In-Vivo Clinical Response for Metastatic Castration-Resistant Prostate Cancer”

Ya-Feng (Jay) Wen (PhD) March 2022
“Toward Individualized Medicine in Understudied Populations using Personal Genome and Microbiome”

David Margraf (PhD) May 2021
“Quantitative Methods for Evidence Building in Clinical Pharmacology and Pharmaceutical Outcomes Research”

Takuto Takahashi (PhD) August 2022
“Individualized Drug Use in Hematopoietic Cell Transplantation: Application of Pharmacometric and Pharmacogenomic Study”

Angela Jeong (PhD) June 2021
“Protein prenylation in the pathogenesis of Alzheimer’s disease and its therapeutic potential”

Siddhee Sahasrabudhe (PhD) August 2022
“Application of Clinical Pharmacology in Rare Diseases and Non-suicidal Self-injury”

Shen Cheng (PhD) December 2021
“Understanding the Impact of Pharmacogenetic Differences in Drug-Drug Interactions (DDIs): A Model-Based Approach to Predict Differences in Drug Exposure”

Abdelrahman Saqr (MS) August 2022
“Precision Medicine Approaches to Immunosuppression Using Pharmacogenomics and the Microbiome”

Sarah Kim (PhD) December 2021
“Improving Delivery of Therapeutics to Targeted Tissues in Lysosomal Diseases”

#UMNProud!
COMINGS AND GOINGS

Mahmoud Al-Kofahi

Contributed by Robert Straka

Dr. Al-Kofahi joined the University of Minnesota in January 2018 as an assistant professor after completing his post-doctoral fellowship under the advisorship of Dr. Richard Brundage. Mahmoud has admirably served in all the areas of research, teaching and service since his faculty appointment, particularly as a committed mentor and educator to numerous trainees. Dr. Al-Kofahi’s strengths lie in the deployment of pharmacometrics tools to advance our understanding of medication use in humans. He has displayed a particular talent for forming collaborations both within the College of Pharmacy and beyond, and he has helped facilitate interdisciplinary projects with Medicine (endocrinology), the UMN Gene Therapy Center, Boston Children’s Cancer and Blood Disorders Center, and the Minnesota Supercomputing Institute. Recently, he has been productive in publishing in his field of expertise with more publications on the way.

Mahmoud is a skilled educator with a passion for teaching in the graduate program. He has made important contributions in both our professional and graduate programs and has been instrumental in attracting fellowship support from the pharmaceutical industry. As a recognized up-and-coming leader in pharmacometrics, Mahmoud has been an active and engaged advisor to a number of graduate students, several of whom he intends to continue supporting as a committee member.

We are grateful for Dr. Al-Kofahi’s contributions to our department’s strength and stellar reputation as a training center for clinical pharmacologists with a focus on pharmacometrics, and we will miss his contributions going forward.

Richard Brundage

Contributed by Angela Birnbaum

Richard Brundage, PharmD, PhD, will retire on January 4, 2023. Dr. Brundage began his career as a pharmacist, graduating from our own BS and PharmD programs. He continued his training as a post-doctoral fellow in Neuropharmacology and Pharmacokinetics and as a fellow in Clinical Pharmacokinetics, both at St. Paul Ramsey Medical Center. He finished his formal training with a PhD in Pharmaceutics in the College of Pharmacy at the University of Minnesota. His journey into an academic career began as an assistant professor at the College of Pharmacy at the Medical University of South Carolina. Our college was fortunate to hire him as a research associate in 1996 and then as an associate professor in 2002.

Dick has paved the path for pharmacometrics in the College of Pharmacy. He was instrumental in the genesis and shaping of the Experimental and Clinical Pharmacology graduate program where he was its first director of graduate studies. He was also involved in shaping policy at the University level through various committee efforts. Among students, he is known for his passion for teaching and is a Distinguished University Teaching Professor. He also received an Outstanding Advisor Award exemplifying his attention to trainees.
His collaborations have benefitted many faculty and students within and outside of the College of Pharmacy with his research results being disseminated in over 130 publications and 170 abstracts. He has an international reputation in the field of pharmacometrics and is a fellow of both the American College of Pharmacology and the International Society of Pharmacometrics, designations that are shared by few individuals. Retirement is not necessarily an end, but it can be a period of transition. In that regard, Dick will not only be Professor Emeritus in the college, he will also begin working as a Science Advisor and Principal Scientist for the Metrum Research Group, joining several alumni in the Minneapolis area.

**Mark Kirstein**

Contributed by Pamala Jacobson

Mark Kirstein, PharmD, retired in the summer of 2022 after nearly 20 years in the Department of Experimental and Clinical Pharmacology and the Masonic Cancer Center. Mark is a devoted cancer researcher and spent his academic career studying the clinical pharmacology of anticancer agents to ensure effective and safe cancer treatments. Mark graduated with a PharmD from the University of Tennessee and then completed a research fellowship in the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences at St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee before joining the University of Minnesota. Dr. Kirstein quickly rose to leadership positions within the Masonic Cancer Center, including roles as the Director of the Clinical Pharmacology Shared Resource and chair of the Clinical Protocol Review Committee. His talents in clinical pharmacology have been critical in improving the design and interpretation of cancer clinical trials at the University of Minnesota. The College of Pharmacy is fortunate to be the recipient of many of his outstanding contributions.

Dr. Kirstein is a passionate teacher and made highly formative and career shaping contributions in the education of many PharmD and graduate students. Kindness and thoughtfulness are a hallmark of his personality where he is the first to help, considers how decisions today affect tomorrow, finds the bright side of any situation and brings out the best in everyone. He has an incredible skill in truly listening to every perspective before developing an opinion or taking action. Colleagues find him a joy to work with as he is always on top of issues, trustworthy and on point. We wish him happiness and success in his new ventures and thank him for being a mentor and friend. His presence will be deeply missed, though we are fortunate that he will transition to the role of Associate Professor Emeritus in the department.
**CODR CORNER**

**Rare: Stories of Dis-ease:**

The University’s Center for Orphan Drug Research (CODR) and Theatre Arts and Dance Department—in collaboration with rare disease community members—have produced a play that examines the challenges of those living with rare disorders. Over 7,000 diseases are considered rare, affecting one in ten Americans and their families who face delays in diagnosis and few available effective treatments. The show creators adapted the Greek tragedy, Philoctetes, to tell the story of the challenges faced by people diagnosed with a rare disease.

Philoctetes was a warrior noted in the Iliad, who was on his way to the Trojan War when a serpent bit him. The cries of pain from his wound were so great and the smell so noxious that he was abandoned on an island by his countrymen to live his life in isolation. The themes of abandonment and isolation resonate strongly with people who have a rare disease, and with their families and loved ones.

Kevin Kling, best known for his popular commentaries on National Public Radio’s *All Things Considered* and his storytelling stage shows like *Tales from the Charred Underbelly of the Yule Log*, is the author of the play. Kling shared, “This production has truly been a passion project for all of us and has been woven from the accounts of so many courageous individuals who have lived the experience of rare disease and who have personally shared their stories with us.”

Luverne Seifert, Head of BA Theater Performance at the University of Minnesota directed, along with dramaturg and University of Minnesota theater professor, Sonja Kufinec. The play had eight performances in cities across Minnesota, Wisconsin, and North Dakota from October 8-23, 2022. This project was made possible thanks to the generosity of many sponsors and donors. A film of a live performance and a documentary showcasing the making of the play will be made available shortly.

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**Rare Disease Day 2023**

Thursday, March 2, 2023
McNamara Alumni Center
Theme: Health Equity

This will be a hybrid event. Watch for details via email in the coming months.
EVENTS

PGx Conference

The 4th University of Minnesota Biennial Pharmacogenomics Conference, Pharmacogenomics and the Path to Higher-Value Healthcare, was held September 21-23, 2022. The College of Pharmacy has been hosting this specialized conference since 2016, drawing in pharmacists, physicians, nurses, health system administrators and students interested in clinical pharmacogenomics (PGx).

This year’s conference saw both repeat attendees and a large number of first-time participants—from rural and urban areas across the country and internationally—reflecting a growing interest in the field of PGx. Having first moved to an online platform in 2020, the conference kept again to a live, virtual-only format for 2022 due to lingering concerns about COVID. That pivot, along with the support of sponsors Geneticure, Illumina, Invitae, OneOme, Thermo Fisher Scientific and the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP), allowed the conference to keep registration fees low and advance equitable access to expert-led educational opportunities in pharmacogenomics. The full conference was worth 19 CE credits.

For its 4th iteration, the biennial conference featured 30 speakers esteemed in the field of PGx, including experts from St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, Intermountain Healthcare Pharmacy Services, Cleveland Clinic, Mayo Clinic, GTMRx Institute, University of Minnesota, University of Montana, UNC Eshelman, University of Florida, University of Pittsburgh, Yale New Haven Health, and others. The 2022 keynote speaker was Peter H. O’Donnell, MD, from the University of Chicago (“Demonstrating the Economic Value of Pharmacogenomics in Clinical Care: Moving Beyond Drug-Gene Associations”).

The conference also grew to three days for 2022, driven by the introduction of a full-day PGx Clinical Case Workshop. In this novel learning session, nine seasoned clinicians guided conference participants through the application of PGx to specific patient cases from their own practice.

On Days 2 and 3, experts explored topics such as successfully incorporating PGx into medication therapy management practices, delivering PGx care to patients through telehealth, potential liability implications and the regulatory issues around PGx testing and interpretation, and implementing PGx in rural and underserved populations. New and updated PGx clinical guidelines for medications were presented, as were the novel strategies for educating health professionals in PGx that the College of Pharmacy has recently created (PGx ECHO, PGx Accelerator, and the PGx Clinical Workforce Training Program).
A total of 372 participants registered for Pharmacogenomics and the Path to Higher-Value Healthcare. 115 different organizations were represented, including 30 schools and universities. 247 attendees were from Minnesota, 5 international, and 106 from other US locations. Registrants are able to access the conference content for one year.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND WORKFORCE EDUCATION

PGx ECHO

The University of Minnesota College of Pharmacy is proud to host the nation’s first Project ECHO (Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes) program focused on pharmacogenomics-informed clinical care. PGx ECHO is a collaborative effort of the hub site at the University of Minnesota and six spoke sites: Children’s Minnesota, Ferris State University, M Health Fairview, Manchester University, North Dakota State University, Sanford Health, and South Dakota State University. PGx ECHO aims to address the lack of PGx education and support for implementation across rural and underserved areas in the Midwest; a further goal is to assist other regions of the U.S. in creating their own PGx ECHOs.

ECP Faculty members Pamala Jacobson and Jeffrey Bishop are hub facilitators/mentors for the program.

PGx ECHO holds monthly, hour-long Zoom sessions comprising an educational mini-lecture or paper, case presentations and discussions. The design of the sessions facilitates a community of learning and continued engagement with the goals of

• Disseminating PGx knowledge by providing consultation on participants PGx patient cases and recommendations for improving medication outcomes

• Supporting participants in building practice-relevant skills and applying PGx knowledge

• Build a PGx community of practice and collaboratively model practice for PGx guided care delivery

• Promoting health equity by expanding patient access to PGx-guided medication management.

Current PGx ECHO programming is free and open to licensed healthcare professionals involved in direct patient care with a priority for those in rural and underserved areas.

PGx Clinical Workforce Training Program

ECP faculty member Pamala Jacobson is the co-director for the College of Pharmacy’s Pharmacogenomics Clinical Workforce Training Program, along with Jacob Brown (Department of Pharmacy Practice and Pharmaceutical Sciences).

To fully and equitably realize the benefits of PGx, all of Minnesota’s current pharmacists need access to top-quality PGx training. The University of Minnesota College of Pharmacy has created the PGx Clinical Workforce Training Program to help answer that need. This program is supported by a workforce education grant from the Minnesota Department of Health’s Office of Rural Health and Primary Care. The program’s second cohort of trainees will begin in January 2023.

As a profession, pharmacy is at the beginning stages of readying its current workforce for PGx-guided healthcare. PGx is not yet used clinically in most healthcare organizations, especially in rural areas and those primarily caring for underserved groups. However, taking on the challenge of advanced training while working full-time can be costly and—for pharmacists not in the metro or SE regions of the state—can mean traveling great distances to reach educational opportunities.

The PGx Clinical Workforce Training Program consists of three parts, which take about nine months to complete:

• A 16-week, self-paced online didactic course in PGx

• An 8-hour case-based training workshop at the University of Minnesota

• A 2-day national PGx conference at the University of Minnesota

The program is a non-credit professional educational opportunity for pharmacists already in the Minnesota workforce. Accepted trainees are reimbursed for their time and compensated for travel costs, conference registration, and CE fees. Upon completion, trainees will receive a certificate of participation from the University of Minnesota.
IGNITE Network

The Implementation of Genomics in Practice Genomic Demonstration Projects (IGNITE GDP) began as a NIH-funded network dedicated to supporting the implementation of genomics in healthcare. Starting in 2013, NIH selected six genomic medicine research sites for 4 years of funding. These research sites were tasked with finding ways to incorporate genomic information into electronic medical records and develop clinical decision support for providers across diverse healthcare settings. To that end, the IGNITE Network also disseminates the methods and best practices its members develop in order to advance the implementation of genomics in healthcare. As the network has evolved, an updated structure has been implemented to include several affiliate sites and corresponding affiliate members, including ECP faculty Jeffery Bishop and Pamala Jacobson.

Jeffery Bishop is a contributing member to the Clinical Pharmacogenetics Implementation Consortium (CPIC) as the senior author/chair of the current antidepressant pharmacogenomics implementation guideline that is in development, and an author and guideline committee member on previous implementation guidelines for selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, tricyclic antidepressants, and atomoxetine. As an affiliate member of the IGNITE network, he recently led an antidepressant implementation project “Multi-site evaluation of institutional processes and implementation determinants for pharmacogenetic testing to guide antidepressant therapy” that will inform guidelines for PGx implementation in the use of antidepressants.

UMN/ASHP PGx Accelerator Program

The Pharmacogenomics (PGx) Accelerator™ program is a partnership between the American Society of Health System Pharmacists (ASHP) and the University of Minnesota College of Pharmacy (CoP). The collaborative program, developed under the leadership of Todd Sorenson (Department of Pharmaceutical Care and Health Systems), supports clinical leaders, frontline practitioners, and additional team members that are assuming responsibility for pharmacogenomic program implementation in their institutions, as well as those seeking to enhance their baseline clinical skills in pharmacogenomics.

Three institutions, including Texas A&M Irma Lerma Rangel School of Pharmacy, Froedtert Health, and Wentworth-Douglass Hospital, have joined the first cohort as part of their commitment to advancing patient care through pharmacogenomics.

The PGx Accelerator aims to improve the health of millions across the U.S. by personalizing medication therapies based on an individual's pharmacogenomic profile. The program supports clinicians in implementing and growing pharmacogenomic services at their institutions and offers a wide range of learning experiences, including webinars and events with subject matter experts, access to multiple resources and activity streams, and individualized support from an implementation coach.
My current title is Senior Director, Clinical Pharmacology and DMPK at Horizon Therapeutics. After graduating from ECP, UMN, I started my first job as a clinical pharmacologist in Vertex Pharmaceuticals and stayed there for 7 years. In 2015, I received a job offer from Astellas and started as Associate Director in Clinical Pharmacology. I was promoted to Director in 2018.

The primary role in my position is to ensure the clinical pharmacology related deliverables are robust and on time; that includes the strategy planning, the design and conduct of clinical pharmacology trials, interpretation of the data analysis, and presenting clinical pharmacology in internal teams and various regulatory interactions, hence supporting the global drug development.

I loved the time spent in the TA office, particularly in my first year in the ECP program. Thinking back at that windowless, fluorescent light filled room with a bamboo plant that was always somewhere between alive and dead —It’s not the space that I miss, but the other students in the program. We helped each other stay on top of meetings, TAing, and training opportunities.

There are many fond memories from my journey in ECP. I cannot find the fondest as there are so many: the dinner at Pam’s house, the boat tour on the lake... many of them are still vivid in my memory.

For current students: Enjoy this precious time in ECP. The people in UMN are probably the nicest people you will know and they will give you a solid foundation for your future career.

For future students: If you are lucky enough to get an offer from ECP, you don’t need to think too much and should just come. You won’t regret it.
**GRANTS**

**Angela K Birnbaum** and **Silvia M. Illamola** (Multi-PIs) received a new NIH R21 grant titled: “Pharmacokinetic/Pharmacodynamic model in pregnant women with depression to guide sertraline dosing”, 08/18/2022 - 07/31/2024, with total funding of $412,365.

**Lisa Coles** was awarded an NIH, RO1 grant titled “Translation Platform for Epilepsy Therapy and Biomarker Discovery”. Lisa will serve as a co-I with Aristea Galanopoulou (Albert Einstein Medical School) as the PI. The University of Minnesota portion of the grant is ~$1.1M over 5 years.

**R. Stephanie Huang** will serve as a mentor for a newly awarded St. Baldrick’s Foundation Scholar award to Dr. Tianzhong Yang (Assistant Professor in Biostats) on a two-year project in the total amount $219,936.

**Ling Li** has received several new grants since April: She is a co-investigator on a new NIH/NIA grant R01AG074858 entitled “Estimation and inference in directed acyclic graphical models for biological networks” (PI: X. Shen), Co-PI on a grant funded by the Minnesota Office of Higher Education, entitled “Combined Effects of TBI and COVID-19 on Developing Alzheimer’s Disease” (PI: W. Low; Co-PI: M. Cheeran), PI and Contact PI, along with Maxim Cheeran (MPI; Vet Med) and Walt Low (MPI; Medical School), on a new NIH/NIA multi-year grant RF1AG077772 entitled “Acute and Long-Term Impact of SARS-CoV-2 Infection and its Interaction with APOE on Cognitive Function and Neuropathology in Aging and Alzheimer’s Disease,” and finally, co-investigator on a new NIH/NIA grant R01AG078154 entitled “Detecting synergistic effects of pharmacological and non-pharmacological interventions for AD/ADRD” (PIs: R. Zhang & H. Xu).
RECOGNITION

Angela Birnbaum was awarded the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP) Graduate Education Special Interest Group Achievement Award, 2022.

Betsy Hirsch was elected as an IDSA Fellow by The Infectious Diseases Society of America Board of Directors. Fellowship in the Society is a recognition of and honor conferred upon those who have achieved professional excellence in the field of infectious diseases.

Pamala Jacobson was selected as one of two Outstanding CTSI Mentors of the Year for 2022. Awardees were recognized at the September 15, 2022 CTSI Translational Science Symposium and Poster session.

R. Stephanie Huang was selected to be a Steering Committee Member for the Molecular Pharmacology & Therapeutics (MPaT) Graduate Program.

Reena Kartha was invited to serve as facilitator for the National Organization for Rare Disorder’s Lunch & Learn Discussion Group, Teaching Undergraduate Students About Rare Diseases. This will take place as part of their annual Breakthrough Summit in Washington DC on October 17.

Robert Straka was selected as one of two Outstanding CTSI Mentors of the Year for 2022. Awardees were recognized at the September 15, 2022 CTSI Translational Science Symposium and Poster session.

MEDIA

Ling Li was invited by ECP graduate student Rui Zhong, who is a member of the Aging Studies Interdisciplinary Group (ASIG) at the U, to be a guest on the “Voices of Aging” podcast, hosted by a medical student Madeleine Howard. The podcast was part of the celebration of the Careers in Aging week from the Gerontological Society of America (GSA). The podcast was released on April 22, 2022. Additionally, Dr. Li’s research on Alzheimer’s was highlighted in the May-June Issue of Minnesota Medicine Magazine focusing on Dementia.
Ibrahim Abdelgawad and Fan Wang are selected as recipients of the 2022-2023 Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship.

Jessica Barry’s ACCP abstract submission “Development and evaluation of a physiologically-based pharmacokinetic model to predict lacosamide concentration changes during pregnancy” is a 2022 ACCP Student Abstract Award Winner and is selected to be presented as a podium presentation at the 2022 Annual Meeting of the American College of Clinical Pharmacology in Bethesda, MD.

Sam Bigabwa, an undergraduate CBS student, was awarded a CBS Dean’s Research Program (DRP) position in the Li lab for Fall 2022 to conduct research in the lab.

Morgan Bixby was awarded the Trainee Abstract Award for IDWeek 2022, which took place in Washington DC in October.

Jessica Boccio, an undergraduate student in the Bachelor of Science, Genetics, Cell Biology and Development program, was awarded a fall UROP grant for the mentored research project in the Hirsch lab entitled “Expression of Fosfomycin-Resistant Linked Genes in Klebsiella pneumoniae Inner Colony and Parent Isolates”.

Mohamed Dabour, 1st year ECP PhD student in the Zordoky lab, was selected as a 2022 CTSI A-PReP Summer Scholar. Mr. Dabour also received the Council of Graduate Students (COGS) Conference Grant to attend and present at the 2022 Basic Cardiovascular Sciences (BCVS) in Chicago.

Ellora Daley, an undergraduate CBS student, was awarded a CBS Dean’s Research Program (DRP) position in the Hirsch lab for Fall 2022. Student salary provided through the CBS Dean’s Office will support Ellora’s time spent in active research in the lab.

Yingbo Huang, a 3rd year ECP PhD student in R. Stephanie Huang’s lab, received full funding of the COGS conferences travel award for the spring cycle, 2022.

Alyssa Lantz, ECP graduate student in Melanie Nicol’s lab, has been accepted into the CTSI Translational Research and Career Training (TRACT) program for pre- and post-doctoral scholars (NIH TL1). The one-year funded training program integrates a mentored research experience, an individualized curriculum, and professional development activities that focus on team-based research and effective collaboration and communication with the larger community. Additionally, Ms. Lantz’s lab abstract “TFVdp in cervical tissue in pre- and post-menopausal women on TAF and TDF” was accepted as an oral abstract presentation at the International Workshop on Clinical Pharmacology of HIV, Hepatitis and Other Antiviral Drugs. She presented her abstract in September in Barcelona, Spain.

Danielle Maeser, a graduate student in R. Stephanie Huang’s lab, was selected for a Merck Exploratory Science Center internship.

ECP graduate student Moataz Mohamed was accepted in the UMN CTSI Advanced Pathways to Research Training Program (A-PReP) for summer 2022.
Nkechi Okereafor, a Pathways to Research (PReP) student mentored by Beshay Zordoky, won a best poster award at the CTSI Symposium.

Ajibola Opakunle, a 2nd year Pharmacology graduate student, in Dr. R. Stephanie Huang’s lab was selected to receive a NIH Genetic and Genomic T32 training grant.

Siddhee Sahasrabudhe was married on March 16, 2022 to her fiancé Dr. Akshay Dandekar. The wedding ceremony took place in Mumbai (India) in presence of family and friends.

Abdelrahman Saqr, graduate student in Pamala Jacobson’s lab, presented an oral abstract at the American Transplant Congress, Boston, MA on June 7, 2022 entitled “Reduced Enterohepatic Recirculation of Mycophenolate and Lower Blood Concentrations are Associated with the Stool Bacterial Microbiome After Hematopoietic Cell Transplantation”

Mei-chi (Judy) Su, a grad student in R. Stephanie Huang’s lab was selected for a Taketa summer internship.

Boguang Sun has been awarded the Translational Research Development Program (TRDP) at the Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI). He will receive research funds up to $16,000 over one year. Dr. Robert Straka serves as the primary research mentor, and Dr. Rui Zhang serves as the translational mentor.

Rui Zhong, 4th year ECP PhD student in the Li Lab, received the Council of Graduate Students (COGS) Conference Grant to attend and present at the 2022 Alzheimer’s Association International Conference (AAIC) in San Diego, CA.

Lusi Zhang, PharmD, MHI, PhD student in Dr. Jeff Bishop’s lab, received the 2022 ACCP PK/PD/PG PRN M. Kelli Jordan Travel Award to attend and present at the ACCP Annual Meeting in San Francisco, including a platform presentation at the PK/PD/PG PRN Business Meeting.

Weijie Zhang, a grad student in Dr. R. Stephanie Huang’s lab was selected for a Genentech summer internship.
Kevin Agostinucci, postdoc in the Zordoky lab, has been appointed to the Functional Proteomics on Aging (FPATG) T32 Training Grant - Mentors: Drs. Beshay Zordoky and Laura Niedernhofer. Dr. Agostinucci also received Poster Pitch Award from the American Aging Association.

Silvia M. Illamola and Angela K Birnbaum (Multi-PIs) received a new NIH R21 grant titled: “Pharmacokinetic/Pharmacodynamic model in pregnant women with depression to guide sertraline dosing.”

On August 11, 2022, Alyssa Johnson married her longtime partner, Megan Polzer, at the Como Conservatory in St. Paul.

Smita Kshirsagar, PhD, ECP adjunct associate professor and former fellow (2001–2002) in the lab of Jim Cloyd, has taken a position as Senior Principal Scientist, Genentech.

The Center for Orphan Drug Research (CODR), in a unique collaboration with the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance, Sod House Theatre, and members of the rare disease community, successfully produced a run of 8 shows of Rare: Stories of Dis-ease. The collaboration adapts the Greek tragedy, Philoctetes, to help Minnesota, Wisconsin, and North Dakota audiences gain greater awareness and deeper understanding of the medical, economic, psychological, and social challenges facing people with rare diseases. Kevin Kling, best known for his popular commentaries on National Public Radio’s All Things Considered, is the playwright.
ECP SUMMER OUTING
LAKEFRONT PARK, HUDSON, WI
AUGUST 10, 2022