ECP Responds to COVID-19
Faculty Promotions
Faculty

Robert J. Straka, PharmD
Department Head; Professor

Mahmoud Al-Kofahi, DDS, PhD
Assistant 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
Associate 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

Esam El-Fakahany, PhD
Professor

Elizabeth Hirsch, PharmD
Associate Professor

R. Stephanie Huang, PhD
Associate 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

Mark N. Kirstein, PharmD
Associate 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

William S. Oetting, PhD
Professor

John C. Rotschafer, PharmD
Professor

Shellina Scheiner, PharmD
Assistant Professor

Leo Sioris, PharmD
Professor

Debra J. Skaar, PharmD
Professor

Lynda Welage, PharmD
Professor; Dean, College of Pharmacy

Beshay Zordoky, MSc, PhD
Assistant Professor

Staff

Lindsay Bork Nichols
Administrative Manager

Lori Endsley
Administrative Associate

Katherine Goffin
Administrative Associate

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Susan Williford
Graduate Program Administrator

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Dear Friends,

Since our last newsletter, much has transpired that has touched our lives both professionally and personally. Challenges to advancing our educational, research and outreach missions persist in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our local and global community was thrust into the spotlight by the killing of George Floyd. Still, ECP’s faculty, staff and students continue to demonstrate their commitment to addressing the health and social crises that followed.

Our College of Pharmacy has crafted a statement of “Living our Values.” It articulates our goal behaviors of advocating for social justice as well as the importance of “shared responsibility and accountability for creating a healthy and caring organization dedicated to serving others through education, research, practice and service.” While each of us continues to navigate our personal lives, as well as those of our family members, friends and colleagues, our College’s commitment to our values continues.

Our ECP department remained committed to complete our obligations during the spring and summer sessions to the best of our ability. As we rise to evolving challenges this fall, we recognize that teaching looks different, our research programs will have to adapt and although graduate students may have missed out on pre-arranged summer internships, our students, staff and faculty will continue to navigate the new work-from-home conditions.

We all are engaged in the healthcare discovery, education and service sector, and we owe it to members of our society to seek the truth, report the facts and effect positive change in society. Civil discourse is an expectation, as are strong voices to dispel untruths as we know them, especially as they relate to our domains of expertise.

I am very proud of our faculty, students and staff who have made direct and indirect contributions to new knowledge and reinforcement of science related to COVID-19 by challenging, speaking up, and sharing facts through talks, publications and other platforms. This edition of our newsletter features some select examples of papers written and people engaged in discovery and actions related to COVID-19, as well as our enduring commitment to continue the institution’s mission of higher learning and discovery.

I wish all alumni, donors and friends of the department a safe, healthy and productive fall and invite you to review the stories within our newsletter.

Sincerely,

Robert Straka, PharmD
Professor and Department Head
ECP Faculty Promotions

Congratulations to talented ECP faculty Elizabeth Hirsch, Melanie Nicol, and Debra Skaar on these well-deserved professional accomplishments!

Elizabeth Hirsch was promoted from assistant professor on the tenure-track to associate professor with tenure. Betsy’s translational research focuses on improving how antibiotics are used in patients who have infections caused by multidrug-resistant (MDR) bacteria. She has received five grants in her short time here at the University and has obtained significant funding throughout her career including her past appointment at Northeastern University. Betsy has also been recognized as a national expert in infectious diseases—a testament to the high quality of her work. Her commitment to professional education is evident through her direct teaching activities and mentoring. Her contributions to our service mission include serving on the college’s Student Affairs Committee and on the Graduate Program Admissions Committee in the Department of Experimental and Clinical Pharmacology. Nationally, she is active in SIDP, ACCP, IDSA, and CLSI. She was recently elected as a Fellow in the American College of Clinical Pharmacy.

Debra Skaar was promoted from associate professor to professor. Deb has demonstrated her excellence as a practitioner and educator. She has played a unique role in experiential education at Fairview, coordinating, teaching, mentoring and overseeing the ~48 APPE students on acute care rotations per year. Deb has been a course director for the seminar in critical care course, module director for fluids and electrolytes, and has taught across disciplines including medicine, nursing and dentistry. Deb’s research is collaborative and her service to the college has included participation in the assessment, admissions and curricular revision committees, and she has co-chaired students’ committee for ACPE self-study, as well as serving in professional organizations.

Melanie Nicol was promoted from assistant professor on the tenure-track to associate professor with tenure. Melanie’s translational research focuses on investigating the optimization of infectious disease therapies by targeting effective drug concentrations at the site of infection. Notably, she has focused on HIV/AIDS spanning both laboratory and clinical research. She has made robust contributions to our college’s teaching mission, her innovation in the development of the interprofessional HIV course, and to an international clinical and research rotation in Uganda. Melanie’s service contributions include serving as an editorial board member for the Journal of Clinical Pharmacology, as a manuscript, grant and abstract reviewer and has served on several committees within three professional organizations (ASCPT, SIDP, and ACCP). She actively contributes her service within the University of Minnesota and the College of Pharmacy.
As COVID-19 spread across the globe, the University of Minnesota, like institutions world-wide, was faced with the monumental task of responding to the humanitarian, economic, and paradigm crises the virus represents. As a community, the U of M had to maintain its commitments to students and employees, provide its students and employees with safe options for navigating the virus in their own lives, act intentionally to help safeguard the external communities within and alongside which it operates, and, ultimately, bring to bear its substantial material and human resources in the global fight against the disease.

ECP faculty and students were no exception to the effort. Even as the University community dispersed to their home offices and entered into extended reduced operations that turned campus into a veritable ghost town, the ECP community continued its commitment to the mission of the department and expanded its efforts to include the battle against COVID-19.

**Research**

ECP faculty, students, and trainees were early and active researchers in the areas of COVID-19 prophylaxis, treatment, and pharmacogenomics, and their work is ongoing. As early as April, Melanie Nicol collaborated with ECP graduate student Fan Wang on a narrative review of then-limited studies examining hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine as treatments for COVID-19. The review, published by Oxford’s *Open Forum Infectious Diseases* in April, was chosen as Editor’s Choice manuscript. By June, Melanie Nicol’s work in collaboration with the U of M medical school studying hydroxychloroquine as a post-exposure prophylaxis for COVID-19 was published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, and ECP members Mahmoud Al-Kofahi, Mutaz Jaber, and Pamala Jacobson subsequently joined her as authors on a paper evaluating dosing regimens for that study.

Dr. Nicol was involved in two other clinical studies evaluating hydroxychloroquine in COVID-19. The first, which studied hydroxychloroquine as an early treatment for non-hospitalized patients, was published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* in July. The other, examining pre-exposure prophylaxis in healthcare workers, is currently under review.

Drs. Nicol and Jacobson, along with ECP graduate student and pediatric oncology/hematology fellow Takuto Takahashi, also collaborated on a literature review to examine how individual genetics may impact the efficacy and efficiency of certain drugs used to treat COVID-19. “Pharmacogenomics of COVID-19 therapies” reviewed publications related to several treatment candidates for COVID-19, including hydroxychloroquine, remdesivir, tocilizumab and corticosteroids. The review concluded that there are several genetic markers contributing to metabolism of drugs and pre-existing conditions that hold promise for future research in the treatment of the disease.

**Teaching**

ECP Associate Professor Scott Chapman played a large role in helping the College of Pharmacy shift to alternative teaching formats when COVID-19 made classes, rotations, and all in-person on-campus contact impossible for students, many of whom are required to engage with each other through in-class active learning activities and with others in clinical settings as part of their rotation credit hours required for graduation.

The required Acute Patient Care classroom course includes several team-based learning activities that require students to meet in small group teams (20 teams total) throughout the class period duration to discuss applied exercise clinical cases and provide support for one another by working on these cases as a team during class sessions. Students are also assigned a team-based literature review assignment that requires students to meet as groups. Dr. Chapman helped students to pivot quickly to an all-digital team meeting format. One student per team was designated as a Zoom host who administered meetings for the team, scheduling meetings, creating protocols, and tracking documents for team check-ins with course instructors and facilitators during the sessions.

The last active learning session topic was changed mid-semester to a focused session on COVID-19. Session moderators, including ECP faculty members Scott Chapman and Elizabeth Hirsch and ECP graduate student David Margraf, as well as Duluth faculty Heather Blue, led content and stimulated discussion related to different aspects of COVID-19.

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COVID-19 on topics including information and misinformation in the literature and media, hospitals’ response and personal protective equipment, anti-infective treatments against COVID-19, and drug supply chain and drug shortages in the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Experiential Education changes for the class of 2020**

In addition to his work on instruction and curriculum delivery, Dr. Chapman assisted the experiential education team in the replacement of students who were short clinical rotation hours specifically related to acute patient care and institutional rotations, as well as the redesign of the structure and course content for fourth-year pharmacy students for their last rotation block so students would still be able to complete the required number of credits in order to meet curriculum requirements.

An important part of this work was the creation of a new clinical rotation: Interprofessional Discharge Support at the MHealth Systems Operations Center.

The removal of students from clinical rotations on March 11 led to a detailed review of each student’s clinical rotations and an assessment of students who had and had not met minimum hours required by accreditation for graduation. For those students in need of additional hours, an opportunity was presented to the College of Pharmacy for pharmacy students to work with medical students who were similarly displaced from clinical rotations and who were to begin fulfilling these hours by providing remote discharge summary draft notes for providers at the hospital. Dr. Chapman created a clinical rotation in which students provided a review and draft of medication orders for patients who were to be discharged from the hospital. These efforts were subsequently submitted to the provider at the hospital for review and finalization. Students who were short hours were able to complete their requirement and graduate on time as a result of this new opportunity. Additional activities on which these students worked with medical students included topic and journal club article discussions related to COVID-19 therapies and the review of patients who were COVID-19 positive to provide initial screening for criteria for remdesivir administration.

**Industry and Healthcare Systems**

In addition to assisting with the College of Pharmacy’s Acute Care active learning section on COVID-19 in the spring, ECP PhD candidate David Margraf has been working with staff at the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy (CIDRAP), where he is part of the Resilient Drug Supply Project (RDSP), an effort to map and monitor America’s drug supply chains to predict, and potentially avert, critical drug shortages. As early as March, RDSP compiled and released a list of 156 drugs used in acute care that were at risk of shortage due to COVID-19 or already in some degree of shortage prior to the pandemic and whose supply would only be stretched thinner by an influx of acute care patients. Among these drugs was hydroxychloroquine, an anti-malarial drug that is used for long-term management of several chronic diseases and that was an early focus of research and speculative procurement for the treatment of COVID-19. The drug, which subsequently has not been shown to be meaningfully effective against the virus, is available only from manufacturing plants in India, where the government banned exports of it and several other drugs with promise in treating the disease, leaving the United States limited to the supply of the drug that was already in the country.

Mr. Margraf was interviewed by the *Washington Post* and Michigan Radio for his perspective on impending shortages of various drugs, including some common over-the-counter heartburn treatments, early in the pandemic.

The ability to predict and potentially preempt shortages allows researchers and clinicians to focus their efforts on pursuing treatments that are both effective and available. The examination of instabilities or vulnerabilities in the chain may help policymakers and government agencies prevent future shortages.

The Resilient Drug Supply Project is funded by a gift from the Walton Family Foundation.
Dear ECP members, alumni, and friends,

Spring 2020 was a highly unusual semester for everyone. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, we found ourselves in a uniquely challenging situation, requiring enormous flexibility and fast-paced change. As the University went into reduced operations, students were not allowed to return to campus after spring break. Classes that have never been delivered online were suddenly morphed into an online format. There were many questions during this time; for example, will my timeline to graduate be delayed? Will there be a graduation ceremony? Similarly, when research labs were closed due to concerns about containing virus transmission, there was much anxiety on the part of those students who had to stop working on experiments that were vital for them to maintain their progression toward a degree. On the positive side, however, students now had more time for analyses, literature searches, and the writing of papers.

Nevertheless, although this has been a demanding few months, it compelled us to be more creative in our everyday operations, generating constructive changes, many of which may be worth retaining even after the virus ceases to pose a public health threat. For instance, the need to avoid large gatherings accelerated the use of online platforms such as Zoom, which enabled us to stage our first online graduation ceremony. Furthermore, mandatory online teaching this past spring allowed for the testing of new platforms by faculty, which will likely lead to more online components being incorporated into classes and meetings.

Although we are operating in a very different way from how we did a year ago, we are moving forward. This will undoubtedly be a year that everyone will remember.

Sincerely,

Angela Birnbaum, PhD
Professor
Director of Graduate Studies
Alumni Spotlight: Kinjal Sanghavi

Grad Year: 2016

What is your current position title and the name of your organization? Briefly describe your professional path.

My current position is Associate Director, Clinical Pharmacology and Pharmacometrics, Oncology at Bristol Myers Squibb (BMS). I graduated from ECP in May 2016 and started at BMS in June 2016 as a research investigator. I received two promotions in the past 4 years, to Senior Research Investigator in March 2018 and to my current position of Associate Director in May 2020.

What is your primary role in your current position?

In my current position, I support early to mid-stage oncology drug development programs as a clinical pharmacology lead. The main responsibilities include early characterization of PK, exploring PK-PD/safety/efficacy relationships to support dose decisions for proof of concept and pivotal registration trials. Other responsibilities include responding to various health authority and country-specific IRB questions, working on briefing books for health authority meetings and supporting study protocol writing and annual investigational brochure (IB) updates.

I also support late-stage oncology drug development as a pharmacometrics lead, where we support regulatory filings for drug approvals. The main responsibilities include conducting population pharmacokinetic analysis, exposure-response relationships, and additional study specific simulations as required. These analyses are then summarized in key documents, such as the Summary of Clinical Pharmacology and Clinical Overview that are part of submission packages to health authorities.

In Clinical Pharmacology and Pharmacometrics, we play a key role throughout the drug development process and work in close association with the Clinical lead, Statisticians, Regulatory liaisons and other members of the Clinical Development team.

Have you had any major field or focus changes since beginning your career? How have your interests evolved?

I still have a relatively short career path and haven’t had any major field or focus changes. The knowledge of Pharmacogenomics, Clinical Pharmacology and Pharmacometrics that I learnt at school are very much applicable in my everyday job. As I am gaining more experience in the field, my interests are evolving in pursuing more leadership roles which not only requires technical and scientific expertise, but is also helping me develop my communication, writing, strategic planning and execution skills.
Since graduating from ECP’s grad program, what would you say are your most significant professional accomplishments? What particular achievement are you most proud of?

My most significant professional accomplishment was participating in US-FDA’s pilot program on Model Informed Drug Development (MIDD). BMS presented a novel MIDD approach to be used in one of their clinical trials. I was the lead Pharmacometrician for this program and conducted most of the analyses to support this innovative approach. The work was well received by the Office of Clinical Pharmacology at FDA.

Reflecting on your experiences as an ECP Graduate Student, what are your fondest memories from that time? What advice can you give to current and/or prospective students in ECP?

The entire experience of graduating from ECP will always be one of my fondest memories. I often remember the Friday group lunches at Punch Pizza, White Elephant Gift Exchange Games during Christmas Holiday celebrations, my work-station (my safe haven) where I spent most of my days and many more to pen them all down.

My advice to the students is to focus on learning and take a good breadth of classes during their first two years of graduate program, as they are the foundation of your project work. The other advice is to take as many opportunities as you can to present your work, not only within ECP but even outside the department. This not only helps to develop good communication skills, but also helps anticipate questions and generate novel ideas from an audience outside of your field of expertise. This will be a big part of your everyday job whether in academics or industry.

The entire experience of graduating from ECP will always be one of my fondest memories.
Grants

Angela Birnbaum is on the 2020 Medical Discovery Team of a two-year, $100,000 Addiction Pilot for the project, “Neurobehavioral Impacts of Medical Cannabis Treatment in Chronic Pain Patients.”

R. Stephanie Huang received a new NIH NCI R01 grant entitled “Genetic mechanisms underlying sexual dimorphism in cancer and response to therapy.” Dr. Huang is a co-PI with Dr. B. Stranger at Northwestern University. This is a five year grant with a budget of approximately $650k per year.

Pamala Jacobson and Ling Li are co-mentors on the NIH/NIGMS training grant entitled “Biostatistics in Genetics and Genomics Training Program” (PI: Wei Pan, UMN Biostatistics).

Reena Kartha received an educational grant from Sanofi-Genzyme to create the Translational Pharmacology Research Fellowship for Lysosomal Storage Diseases. This will be a postdoctoral fellowship position for PharmD/MD/PhD holders.

Michael Kotlyar received a new NIH NIDA R21 grant entitled “Cigarette Smoking as a Risk Factor for Greater Psychiatric Symptom Severity across Serious Mental Illnesses: A Secondary Analysis of Three Nationally-Representative NIH Datasets” (Co-PI Dr. David Bond from the University of Minnesota Department of Psychiatry). Dr. Kotlyar also received a new NIH NIDA R21 grant titled “Feasibility of Using Wearable Technology for Just-in-Time Prediction of Smoking Lapses” (Co-PI Dr. Serguei Pakhomov from the Department of Pharmaceutical Care & Health Systems in the College of Pharmacy).

Ling Li is a co-investigator on the NIH/NIDDK supplemental grant entitled, “Generating Exogenic Hippocampal Neural Cells via Blastocyst Complementation for Transplantation in Alzheimer’s Disease,” with a total funding of $385,000. Dr. Li is also co-investigator on the NIH/NIA supplemental grant entitled, “Macrophage inflammasome activation and the mechanism of lipolysis resistance in aged adipose,” with a total funding of $368,266, and a co-investigator on a new NIH/NIA grant entitled, “Integrating Alzheimer’s disease GWAS with proteomic and metabolomic QTL data,” with a total funding of $1,868,466.

Beshay Zordoky has received a 5-year, $3M NIH/NHLBI grant for his project, “Psychosocial Stress Exacerbates Doxorubicin-induced Cardiovascular Aging.”

Professional Awards and Recognition

Jeffrey Bishop was elected Trustee of the ACCP Foundation.

Richard Brundage was elected president-elect of the American College of Clinical Pharmacology. Dr. Brundage was also the inaugural speaker for the Otago Pharmacometrics Group International Seminar Series. He presented a webinar to the University of Otago and the University of Auckland titled “Pharmacometric Modeling of the Cortisol/17OHP/D4A System in Children with Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia.”

James Cloyd was appointed to the Scientific Advisory Board, Citizens United for Research in Epilepsy (CURE).

Elizabeth Hirsch was elected a Fellow of the American College of Clinical Pharmacy (ACCP; FCCP). Fellows will be officially inducted at a special ceremony during the 2020 ACCP Annual Meeting in October, 2020.

R. Stephanie Huang was selected as a member for the University Graduate School Advisory Board. Dr. Huang was also appointed to the Graduate faculty in the Graduate Program in Pharmacology (GPP), to Training Faculty on NIH T32 CA099936, a Translational and Genomic Pediatric Cancer Epidemiology Training Grant, as an editorial board member for Annals of Translational Medicine, and as an associate editor and editorial board member for the Frontiers in Pharmacology section on Pharmacogenetics and Pharmacogenomics.

ECP Adjunct Professor Richard R. Lalone (UMN PharmD ’80) received the Oscar B. Hunter Career Award in Therapeutics from the American Society of Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics (ASCPT).

MAHMOUD AL-KOFAHI was interviewed by USA Today about his work on hydroxychloroquine as a prophylaxis for COVID-19 for an article entitled, “Can hydroxychloroquine prevent COVID-19? President Donald Trump thinks maybe. There’s no data to support that.”

SCOTT CHAPMAN was interviewed for the Minnesota Daily article, “New curriculum contributed to COVID-19 relief efforts.” Dr. Chapman was also interviewed for the Institute for Healthcare Improvement blog article, “Mobilizing Student Innovations During COVID-19.”

ELIZABETH HIRSCH was interviewed for an Insider.com article entitled, “What is Antibiotic Resistance?” (May 7, 2020). Dr. Hirsch was also interviewed for the PolitiFact story, “What is remdesivir? Why experts are hopeful but cautious about its use for COVID-19.”

R. STEPHANIE HUANG became a mentor for the AACP Women Faculty SIG Mentoring Program and joined the PhD thesis committee for 2 additional graduate students from the Bioinformatic and Computational Biology (BICB) program. She also served on the preliminary thesis examination committee for 2 other BICB graduate students.

REENA KARTHA was invited to serve in several panel and speaking capacities for the year. She served on the faculty for the Inborn Errors of Metabolism Drug Development Summit and gave a talk titled, “Industry-Academia Collaborations for Accelerating Therapeutic Innovations in Rare IEM Disorders,” as part of the conference. She also served as leader for a post-conference workshop on “Patient Access, Recruitment & Retention for Rare & Ultra-Rare Metabolic Diseases.” Dr. KARTHA was also invited to be on a panel for the World Orphan Drug Congress USA 2020 for the session, “How to increase patient access to diagnostic programs and treatments in emerging rare disease markets.” Last, she was invited to represent IndoUSrare, an advocacy organization for which she serves as the Director of Research.

RAMAI AH MUTHYALA was a conference moderator for the “Contributions of homeopathic practitioners to research” webinar organized by the Central Council for Research in Homeopathy (Ministry of Ayush Govt. of India).

Congratulations to Center for Orphan Drug Research (CODR) faculty including LISA COLES, JAMES CLOYD, LINDA KRACH, and (ECP Adjunct Professor) ROBERT KRIEL on the FDA’s recent approval designating intravenous baclofen as an orphan product. The designation application was submitted by Allaysis, the company developing IV baclofen, in close collaboration with CODR faculty. The drug formulation previously passed a Phase I study designed by LISA COLES and recent ECP PhD graduate, NATALIE SCHMITZ.

AROUND THE DEPARTMENT

ECP alumnus ALI ALHADAB and his wife, Layla, have welcomed a new baby girl, Aldeem, to join her big sister Reem. Aldeem means “long-lasting quiet shower” to suggest continuous blessing.

ECP administrative staff members LINDSAY BORK NICHOLS and LORI ENDSLEY were selected for the first cohort of the University of Minnesota’s “Leading Change and Project Management Initiative.” The eight-week program is designed to teach and hone project management skills.

LORI ENDSLEY was elected to the Civil Service Senate. Her three-year term began July 1.
IBRAHIM ABDELGAWAD, PhD Student in the lab of BE-SHAY ZORDOKY, has been selected to pursue a summer inter-ship at AbbVie.

CHARUL AVACHAT, a PhD student and advisee of ECP fac-ulty member ANGELA BIRNBAUM, was named outstanding TA for 2019 - 2020.

Undergraduate student ALEXA CARRERA received a CTSI Pathway to Research Program summer scholarship, ment-ored by BESHAY ZORDOKY.

ASMAA FERDJALLAH, a Pediatric Hematology/Oncology fellow in the lab of R. Stephanie Huang, received a $1500 2019-2020 Minnesota Society of Clinical Oncology (MSCO) Fellow Award for her work on “The Role of Long Non-Coding RNA ANRIL in Chemosensitivity in Osteosarcoma and Clinical Outcomes.”

ROBERT GALVIN joined the lab of R. STEPHANIE HUANG as a T32-funded Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Fellow on July 1st, 2020.

YINGBO HUANG, graduate student in the lab of R. STEPH-ANIE HUANG, was awarded a CTSI Advanced Pathways to Research Program (APReP) scholarship.

MUTAZ JABER’S ACCP abstract submission “HydroC-Precision: An Integrated Hydrocortisone Dosing and Biomarker Platform for Treating Children with Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia” was awarded the ACCP/ISoP SIG Student Award at the 2020 Annual Meeting of the American College of Clinical Pharmacology.

SAMPREETI JENA joined the lab of R. STEPHANIE HUANG as a postdoc on June 1st, 2020.

ASHWIN KARANAM has been appointed as Chair of the International Society of Pharmacometrics’ (ISoP) Student Community for the year 2020.

SARAH KIM was awarded the Loan Repayment Program (LRP) from National Institute of Health (NIH). The NIH LRPs are designed to recruit and retain highly qual-ified health professionals into biomedical or biobehavioral research careers. Sarah has been awarded approximately $70,000 over the next two years through the Pediatric Research Program from the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS). JEANINE JARNES (ECP adjunct faculty), Chester Whitley, and JAMES CLOYD III serve as mentors on this award. SARAH KIM has also been awarded the Translational Research Development Program (TRDP) at the Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI). Her research project, “Optimizing the Dose of Gene Therapy to Improve Clinical Efficacy,” will utilize pharmacometrics to identify the dose of adeno-associated virus (AAV) that elicits a CD8 T-cell response in clinical trials with gene therapy. She will receive research funds up to $16,000 over two years. JEANINE JARNES serves as the primary research mentor, and DR. MAHMOUD AL-KOFAHI serves as the translational mentor.

ALEX LING, a postdoc in the lab of R. STEPHANIE HUANG, was a grant prize winner in the MSI Research Ex-hibition held on April 28, 2020.

SIDDHEE SAHASRABUDHE was offered a position in the NIH-funded Rare Diseases Clinical Research Network (RDCRN) Rare Diseases Scholars Program for the 2020-2021 academic year.

TAKUTO TAKAHASHI received a $1500 Outstanding Hematology/Oncology Fellow and Resident award at the Minnesota Society of Clinical Oncology 2020 Spring Con-ference in Minneapolis, MN for his abstract, “Effects of Genetic Polymorphism on Pharmacokinetics of Cyclophos-phamide in Conditioning Regimen for Adult Hematopoietic Cell Transplant Patients” (Pamala Jacobson, PI).

JAY WEN received a Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship from the University of Minnesota Graduate School for his project, “Applying Genomic Analysis to Reduce Health Disparities in Cardiovascular Diseases.” (Advisor: ROB-ERT J. STRAKA)

LUSI ZHANG, PD4 student, received a 2020 Melendy/ Peters summer research scholarship (advisor: JEFFREY BISHOP).

DINA ZHENG, a rising undergraduate (pre-pharmacy) bio-chemistry student was awarded a summer 2020 Undergrad-uate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) grant for her project entitled, “Comparison of fitness between Pseu-domonas aeruginosa parent/mutant isolate pairs following fosfomycin treatment,” to be conducted in ELIZABETH HIRSCH’S lab.
Normally our fall newsletters include a photo album of our ECP summer social gathering. We are sad to have missed this time together (and so many other annual traditions and comfortable routines), but like most, ECP members have been finding new ways to keep busy by focusing on neglected hobbies, or simply making the best of new flexibility in their schedules and work arrangements. Since we were not able to come together as usual, please enjoy this collection of images ECP members have shared showing how they’ve spent some of their free time since March.

Sunset in northern Wisconsin: Becky Palapala

Small group cookout at Como Park, left to right: Jay (Ya-Feng) Wen, Rui Zhong, Fan Wan, Judy (Mei-Chi) Su, Ibrahim Abdelgawad

Play set construction and enjoyment: Lori Endsley

Socially distancing by kayak: John and Wendy St. Peter

Putting a green thumb to work: Susan Williford
ECP social hour Zoom gathering with a “flighty” guest!

Sharing family traditions: Becky Palapala

Gaining a new appreciation for visitors: Katherine Goffin

Biking, left to right: Jay (Ya-Feng) Wen and Judy (Mei-Chi) Su. Photo: Robert Straka

Enjoying MN state parks: Susan Williford

Making new friends: Fan Wang

Knitting project: Shellina Scheiner