

Barry and Judy Silverman
College of Pharmacy
NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

NSU
Florida

SHARKS NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2024



Dean's Message

As I welcome Spring, our Class of 2025 students begin their first advanced pharmacy practice experiences (APPEs), bringing their knowledge and skills gained from the didactic curriculum into the final experiential learning environment. As one class begins, another class sees the end of its academic journey. The Class of 2024 students concluded their APPEs and are preparing for commencement ceremony in May and their journey towards professional licensure and practice. We celebrate each class year as they strive to achieve their vision and individual goals.

I was pleased to celebrate with Walgreens Co. at NSU's annual Celebration of Excellence in February where they were acknowledged for their commitment and service to the Barry and Judy Silverman College of Pharmacy



Michelle A. Clark
Dean

(Silverman College of Pharmacy). Walgreens was inducted into NSU's Shark Circle – donors who have given \$1M or more to supporting the University's mission to educate and serve.

NSU's Silverman College of Pharmacy is continually seeking opportunities to support our students through scholarship, internship, and employment opportunities. We welcome alumni, community members and health care organizations to join our efforts and contribute to our scholarship funds and engage with our students who have much to offer. For more information on how you can contribute to our college and student success, contact us at copdean@nova.edu or copalumni@nova.edu. I look forward to hearing from you.

I invite you to visit, like, and follow us on social media to see all our activities and accomplishments as they occur throughout the semester. Go SharksRx.



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Fins Up!

Michelle A. Clark, Ph.D.

College Accomplishments

Medical Mission Brings Care to Patients in Jamaica



In late December, a team of faculty and students from the Silverman College of Pharmacy joined forces with other health professions students on a medical mission to support underserved patients in Jamaica. Traveling on behalf of the college was **Robert McGory, Pharm.D.**, associate dean, professional program, **Elizabeth Shepherd, Pharm.D.**, assistant dean, strategic partnerships and program development, and students **Ashley Rivera Roman ('24)**, **Giselle Annette Jimenez Osorio ('24)** and **Nicole Diaz Padin ('24)**. Our student participants were outstanding in many ways. They displayed tremendous work ethics and maintained a positive attitude in remote conditions.

The seven-day medical mission brought together disciplines of medicine, dentistry, physical therapy, and pharmacy from NSU. Also joining the group were occupational therapy students and faculty from Seton Hill University in Greensburg, Pennsylvania. Participants were divided into two teams and spent four (long!) days traveling to the locations of Bethel Church, Dean Pen, Zion Hill, and Flint River. Each team cared for an average of 50 patients a day and the pharmacy team filled a minimum of 60 prescriptions each day. According to Dr. McGory, "The days were long, but they were so rewarding, you almost didn't notice!" Two full days were needed

to sort, pack, and organize the medications. That left time for one fun cultural experience in Jamaica. On the final day of the trip, the *pharmily* was able to do some local shopping and visit Dunn's River Falls in Ocho Rios, one of the island's national treasures.

The Silverman College of Pharmacy has participated in three medical missions within the last two years. Through these experiences, a formulary of medication has been developed which provides optimal support to the prescribers, leading to patient interactions that are efficient, and complete. Future mission trips will hopefully involve an electronic database to track drug inventory and document prescriptions, as well as replacing handwritten prescription labels with computer generated labels.

Making an Impact on Pharmacy Practice and the Value of the Pharmacist



Students and faculty members of the Legislative Task Force (LTF) spent the past year planning for January's visit to Tallahassee to attend the APhA Florida Pharmacists Legislative Days and Health Fair. In preparation for the event, everyone gained knowledge about bills and policies related to pharmacy and received training on how to effectively communicate with state senators and representatives. The annual event brings together pharmacist and pharmacy student colleagues across the state to meet face-to-face with state senators and representatives to ensure the pharmacy profession remains relevant, pharmacy jobs are protected, patients remain safe, and that pharmacist's value is exhibited to other health care professionals and the public.

This year members of the LTF, in collaboration with their Floridian pharmacist colleagues, were able to successfully protect pharmacists by opposing a bill that would have allowed technician remote dispensing of medications. In practice this means that a pharmacist would no longer be physically within a pharmacy but would have to supervise technicians filling and dispensing medications at a ratio of 1:24 by remotely overseeing 4 pharmacies at a time. The ratio considers the current pharmacist to technician ratio of 1:6. If passed, this potentially could have led to an increase in medication errors and pose a risk to patient safety. The bill died during the legislative session. On a positive note, members of the LTF were able to advocate for another bill that did pass into law: HB159, which allows pharmacists to screen patients for HIV under a collaborative practice agreement, and order and dispense HIV PEP.

LTF faculty advisors **Genevieve Hale, Pharm.D.** ('13) and **Melissa Santibañez, Pharm.D.** ('15) would like to acknowledge the incredible efforts of the LTF, a group that works so hard to ensure positive change continues within the pharmacy profession.

2024 American Heart Association Heart Walk



Silverman College of Pharmacy students, faculty and staff participated in the Heart Walk on March 10, 2024. The group of 51 participants was organized and coordinated by **Narasimman Gurusamy, Ph.D.**, assistant professor, pharmaceutical sciences. Our team raised \$632 lifesaving funds. They are proud to come together, honor survivors of heart disease, and raise funds to support research. Some of the participants jogged, others walked briskly, and everyone went at a pace that felt good to them, got their heart pumping a little extra and enjoyed time together!

Walgreens Induction to Shark Circle



Each year NSU hosts the Celebration of Excellence, a prestigious event that serves multiple purposes, including celebrating NSU's achievements, honoring those who have excelled in community service, and inducting new members into the Shark Circle, an elite group of donors who support the NSU's mission toward recognition as a preeminent university.

At this year's event, Dean Clark and members of the college's Community Leadership Council (CLC), were there to celebrate the induction of Walgreens into the distinguished Shark Circle group. Walgreens' support of NSU dates to 1994. In addition to supporting NSU's athletics program and the Alvin Sherman Library, it primarily supports scholarships for students in the Barry and Judy Silverman College of Pharmacy. They have established six unique endowed scholarships to support students who have expressed a strong interest in seeking employment after graduation in a community setting.

Georgia Lehoczky, Regional Healthcare Director, accepted the award on behalf of Walgreens. We thank Walgreens for their partnership and continued financial support which helps our college grow and support outstanding pharmacy students.

Class of 2025 Celebrates at Pinning and Awards Ceremony



Fort Lauderdale/Davie Campus



Palm Beach Campus



San Juan, PR Campus

Students from the Class of 2025, across all campuses, celebrated at their respective Pinning and Awards ceremonies. This milestone event celebrates the students' transition to the final year of their Pharm.D. education. Each campus had its own ceremony with alumni keynote speakers to offer inspirational remarks to the students, encouraging their growth and development while on APPEs and into their professional lives after graduation. In San Juan, **Irma Estrada, Pharm.D. ('03)** shared her professional trajectory, emphasizing the power of perseverance, determination, and passion. In Palm Beach, **Acacia Strahan, Pharm.D. ('06)**, told the audience about a meaningful patient care experience, and how the simple act of listening and being genuinely empathetic, can make all the difference. At the Fort Lauderdale/Davie campus **Damian Sinclair, Pharm.D. ('06)** provided a history of pinning ceremonies and their significance, as well as advice to the class of 2025. Dean Clark was present at all three events to offer her own positive and reassuring words to the students. We would like to extend a big thank you to Walgreens for their sponsorship of the event at all three campuses, and a special thank you to Coopharma and Drogueria Betances for their support in San Juan.

Faculty Achievements

Pharmaceutical Sciences Faculty Advances Drug Delivery Research



Yadollah Omid, Pharm.D., Ph.D., professor in the department of pharmaceutical sciences, has been with the Silverman College of Pharmacy for close to 4 years now. He is a well-known researcher within the areas of nanotechnology, biomedical engineering, and drug delivery. Having him as a part of the college team brings our name to some very elite research circles. Dr. Omid is ranked #3 in Florida for his number of papers over 10 years on drug delivery systems. His most recent publications can be found in the *Journal of Microencapsulation*, *Journal of Research in Pharmacy*, and the *International Journal of Biological Macromolecules*. Dr. Omid leads the department of pharmaceutical sciences with his number of publications. In addition to conducting research, Dr. Omid teaches both Pharm.D. and Ph.D. students in pharmaceutical calculations, pharmaceuticals, and advanced topics in pharmaceutical sciences, respectively.

Faculty Receives Prestigious Recognition as a Fellow



Melissa Santibañez, Pharm.D. ('15), assistant professor was recently inducted as a Fellow of the American College of Critical Care Medicine at the Society of Critical Care Congress in Phoenix, AZ. Those who earn this prestigious designation are recognized for their significant contributions to program development, scholarship, and leadership in the collaborative care of critically ill patients across all professions of critical care medicine. Santibañez thanked the preceptors, mentors, and colleagues for their support, instruction, and mentorship in reaching this milestone. She also recognized Memorial Regional Hospital for providing the environment where she practices pharmacy and cares for patients.

Faculty Appointed to Editorial Board of Journal

Silvia E. Rabionet, Ed.D., chair, department of sociobehavioral and administrative pharmacy and professor, was recently appointed to the editorial board of *Pedagogy in Health Promotion*, the signature journal of the Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE). This journal advances pedagogy through contributions in areas such as



curriculum and course/program design, assessment, and administration relevant to teaching and learning. The content of the journal is especially relevant to instructors or trainers who provide continuing professional education, in the broad arena of health promotion and disease prevention. The board of trustees for SOPHE confirmed her appointment in March 2024.

Grant Funding Supports Research on Autism Spectrum Disorder



Richard Deth, Ph.D., professor, department of pharmaceutical sciences was recently awarded a grant for \$174,000 from the BRAIN foundation. The grant, "*NLRP3 inflammasome activity in autism spectrum disorder: Relationship to oxidative stress status and inhibition by Cobinamide*" builds on Deth's prior work that shows Vitamin B12 levels in the brain are significantly decreased in the elderly and are much lower in individuals with autism or schizophrenia, as compared to the Vitamin B12 levels in their peers at similar ages. His recent research in this area indicates that the underlying mechanism may be due to inhibition of a cytokine-producing inflammation pathway and may result in significant clinical benefits in autism, though the relationship of this pathway to the well-documented deficit in antioxidant in autism remains unclear. In the research sponsored by this grant, Dr.

Deth and his collaborators will evaluate postmortem brain samples to establish whether activation of a crucial inflammation pathway, known as the NLRP3 inflammasome, is greater in autism spectrum disorder (ASD) subjects versus neurotypical control subjects. NLRP3 activity is known to be increased by oxidative stress, which is common in ASD, so they will also compare the level of inflammasome activation with the status of antioxidant metabolites levels. Taken together these studies will help to illuminate the role of neuroinflammation in autism but will also provide preliminary evaluation of potential new treatments for ASD.

Student Successes

Longitudinal Project Cultivates Innovation



In February the Silverman College of Pharmacy held its 9th annual Pharmacy Innovation Exhibition, an event that we fondly refer to as PharmaCon. The experience is held at each of our three campuses, under the coordination and leadership of laboratory director and clinical assistant professor, **Jaime Riskin, Pharm.D. ('03)**. **Miriam Metzner, Pharm.D.**, clinical assistant professor and **Blanca Ortiz, Pharm.D. ('03)**, assistant dean and assistant professor, supported by **Lourdes Laboy**, academic program coordinator II managed the event in Palm Beach and San Juan respectively. The event is the culmination of a two-year longitudinal project in which students have worked to develop a product or service aimed at redefining patient care. The energy of the evening is always electric as the students reveal their highly anticipated innovations aimed at transforming the future of pharmacy. Students showcase their posters before providing platform presentations to fellow students, faculty, administrators, and the many esteemed guests who attend. Invitees include local business owners and entrepreneurs, lawyers, pioneering pharmacists, and highly rated preceptors. The diverse group of guest judges provides immediate real-world feedback. Student groups vie for "Best Poster" and "Best Presentation" awards. Opportunities such as this push our

students to their innovative limits and provide an outlet for them to be creative. This is what we mean when we say “Dream. Dare. Discover.”

Pharm.D. Students Participate in “RxImpact Day” on Capitol Hill



Katherine Rizo ('25) was among pharmacy students from all 50 states who were invited to attend “RxImpact Day on Capitol Hill” an event sponsored by the National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS). The event's purpose is to advocate for the pharmacy profession as it related to Pharmacy Benefits Manager reform, as well as helping to secure seniors’ access to Pharmacist services (HR1770/S2477). While in Washington D.C., Rizo had the privilege of attending meetings with U.S. Senators Marco Rubio, and Rick Scott, and U.S. Representative Kat Cammack. According to Rizo “The meetings provided a deeper understanding of the Senators’ perspectives on current bills and their potential trajectory in the near future.”

During the event, she was interviewed about what motivated her to attend and advocate for the profession of pharmacy. She was able to give insights about the Doctor of Pharmacy degree, emphasizing the rigorous four-year comprehensive education, which leads to graduates who have a diverse skill set beyond medication dispensing. Rizo is Chair of the Silverman College of Pharmacy’s Legislative Task Force (LTF). In this role she is responsible for training and mentoring students on current legislative issues and is passionate about equipping students with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively engage with legislators and champion legislative priorities.

Students Embrace Local Community to Impact Overall Health



Our students embrace opportunities to apply the knowledge and skills from the classroom to real-world situations. Recently they had the occasion to do just that, as well as complete a co-curricular requirement. In a thriving partnership with the Diabetes Coalition of Palm Beach County, students visited the Peter Blum Family YMCA of Boca Raton to measure height, weight, blood pressure, and perform HBA1c screenings using a device that provides rapid results. Students rotated through the various stations and conducted screenings on more than 40 people.

Events such as this one have a positive impact on the overall health of the community. According to **Bonnie “Lizzie” Evans** ('27) "This experience was incredibly rewarding and opened my eyes to a pharmacist's role in public service. It was not only a great experience to work one-on-one with patients, but also to see the community come together for a good cause. This event highlighted the importance of regular health and wellness checks, whether or not you are knowingly at risk for diabetes."

Celebrating the Arts in San Juan



In February, students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends from the San Juan campus gathered to celebrate the annual and beloved event, *PharmArts*. This event has been celebrated in Puerto Rico since 2018. *PharmArts* is organized by SGA officers, in conjunction with college administration. The main premise of the event is to have a community celebration of many different art forms at an eclectic talent show.

This year the celebration took place within the facilities of the Colegio de Farmaceuticos de Puerto Rico. The show included several musical performances, acting, photography, and the display of pieces of art. Notable performances included Haylisse Fernandez ('24) and Gustavo Deliz ('25) with a duet of "Recuerdame" and the artistic band performance comprised of Enrique Nieves, Ph.D., clinical assistant professor, Daniel Alvarado ('26), Zoar Ocasio ('26), Solanch Alicea ('26), Arles Cintron ('26), and Marjorie Lopez Nieves, Pharm.D. ('23), instructor, with their Spanish interpretation of "Clavelito". Other highlights from the night included special guest, Christopher Lynch, Pharm.D. ('97), assistant professor who performed stand-up comedy. The laughs kept coming as Jose Pomales Lopez, M.B.A., student services specialist, continued with another stand-up comedy routine. We look forward to many more years of celebration at *PharmArts* and displaying the incredible talents of the students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends from the San Juan campus.

Ph.D. Student Spotlight

Yousef Alharbi is in his 3rd year at the Silverman College of Pharmacy, pursuing a Ph.D. in molecular medicine and pharmacogenomics. His research interests have evolved during his studies, though he always had an interest in cancer disparities. He began to study gene expression patterns in breast cancer and the role of the environment, and his research has evolved from there. This subject matter interests him because of its enormous impact. In the United States breast cancer ranks as the second most common cause of cancer related deaths among women. Alharabi met faculty member, **Jean J. Latimer, Ph.D.**, during his pharmacogenomics class when she was teaching about breast cancer and how the disease is different for different women. She presented how pharmacogenomics can lead to the practice of precision medicine, where



patients receive individualized treatment plans based on genetics and personal history. It was then he knew he wanted to study under her. His future career goals are to make a substantial contribution to the area of breast cancer research in the United States and abroad. For more information about Alharbi visit [NSU Student Reserach Spotlight](#).

Alumni

Alumni Happenings

Alisha Babu, Pharm.D. ('19) has started a new position as Medical Writer at WebMD.

Sandy Belcher, Pharm.D. ('23) started a new position as Resident Pharmacist at Health First Health Plans Inc.

Stacey Brandt Maravent, Pharm, D. ('02) started a new position as Coordinator, 340b at Broward Health.

Rajaun Ellis, Pharm.D. ('21) has started a new position as Senior Manager, U.S. Medical Affairs HIV Strategy at Gilead Sciences.

Akilah Fuller, Pharm.D. ('21) has started a new position as an Application Analyst II – Clinical Pharmacy at Medical University of South Carolina.

Sherin George, Pharm.D. ('16) was promoted to the position of Pharmacy Manager at Walmart.

Isabel Houlzet, Pharm.D. ('14) has started a new position as Oncology Clinical Pharmacy Manager at Mount Sinai Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Anil Jacob, Pharm.D. ('13) was promoted to the role of Senior Medical Science Liaison- Type 1 Diabetes Immunology at Sanofi.

Barry Mar, Pharm.D. ('09) started a new position as a Pharmacist at University Pharmacy of Coral Gables.

Jason McDaniel, Pharm.D. ('20) started a new position as an Investigational Pharmacist within the Clinical Pharmacology Research Unit of AbbVie.

Samina Mian, Pharm.D. ('23) started a new position as Clinical Pharmacist at HCA Florida Kendall Hospital.

Anna Murphy, Pharm.D. ('09) started a new position as Pharmacy, Formulary Administration at CVS Health.

Andrea Murzello, Pharm.D. ('16) accepted a position as Assistant Dean for Practice and Professional Affairs at Larkin University.

Katherine Nguyen, Pharm.D. ('12) has started a new position as Medical Capabilities Director at Tarsus Pharmaceuticals.

Ryan Nowicki, Pharm.D. ('09) started a new position as Director, Outpatient Pharmacy at AdventHealth.

Kunal Patel, Pharm.D. ('19) has started a new position as Clinical Pharmacist at Kindred Hospitals.

Merlin Paul, Pharm.D. ('19) started a new position as Clinical Pharmacist at Duke Childrens Hospital & Health Center.

Brittany Petrosky, Pharm.D. ('15) started a new position as Clinical Pharmacy Specialist in Emergency Medicine at Aultman Health Foundation.

SharksRx Alumni Legacy Fund



LEVELS OF GIVING

\$1,500 - GOLD LEAF

\$750 - SILVER LEAF

\$300 - BRONZE LEAF

The SharksRx Alumni Society created the legacy fund to support the College through the knowledge, skills, and financial resources needed to invest in the future of pharmacy education. The Society's goal is to grow student scholarship opportunities. You can help meet this goal by supporting the SharksRx Alumni Legacy Fund. Your contributions help the next generation of pharmacists in perpetuity. For more information on the Legacy Tree contact [Carla Luque, Pharm.D.](#), assistant dean, student services. To purchase an engraved leaf with your inscription [click here](#).

Upcoming Continuing Pharmacy Education

The NSU's Barry and Judy Silverman College of Pharmacy provides a variety of training programs and workshops. Currently, the following programs are being offered:

 [Contemporary Pharmacy Issues](#)

[Contemporary Pharmacy Issues](#)

May 4-5, 2024

 [Initial Consultant Pharmacist Licensure Course](#)

[Initial Consultant Pharmacist Licensure Course](#)

June 8-9, 2024

The Barry and Judy Silverman College of Pharmacy Alumni events, the training/workshops, and Continuing Education courses are listed on the [Silverman College of Pharmacy website](#).

The NSU Alumni Association (NSUAA) hosts a variety of programs and events to keep you involved and active throughout the year. Please check the [NSUAA website](#).

Share Your Story

Email your updates and stories to copalumni@nova.edu.
Please include one or two high resolution photos when possible.

Join our social media groups and keep updated on what's happening in and around the Silverman College of Pharmacy.



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