

the CAPSULE



LLUSP Welcomes Its New Dean

DR. KYLE M. SOUSA



LOMA LINDA
UNIVERSITY

School of Pharmacy

LLUSP IS DYNAMIC!

In my “previous life,” I taught high school Language Arts, and each year, we discussed dynamic vs. static characters in literature. Someone or something that is dynamic is changing, progressing, learning, and growing, while someone/something static is essentially “stuck” in the same ways and thoughts and never matures. Clearly, we want to be dynamic characters who learn from experiences and make necessary changes based on what we discover.

When I began serving as LLUSP’s Director of Communications & Alumni Engagement seven years ago, our program was just 15 years old, and we had only around 700 alumni. Since then, I’ve had the privilege of witnessing LLUSP’s dynamic nature first hand! For example, in my early days in this role, I remember students reporting to me that oftentimes, pharmacists outside of Loma Linda had never heard of our program. That is certainly not the case any more! Our small pharmacy school in the Inland Empire which once received very little attention has developed into one that is now recognized across the country!

There are now nearly 1200 incredibly competent and impressive alumni pharmacists throughout the U.S. who are making amazing impacts in their respective fields within pharmacy. Students in our program now frequently receive national



awards and recognition. And, as evidenced by this year’s U.S. News & World Report rankings, LLUSP is moving up among pharmacy schools in California and nationwide!

Just like people, every program goes through growing pains. Understandably, students and alumni felt them in our early, formative years. But LLUSP has learned from experiences and challenges, adjusted accordingly, focused on its strengths, and broadened its network.

LLUSP is no longer in its infancy; we have grown up and have matured into an effective and thriving pharmacy education program. Our faculty, students, and alumni are making a great name for us and building our reputation.

Thank you for growing with us. With your help, we will continue to be a dynamic institution of which you can be very proud!

My Best,

Jen Mathew, MA
Director of Communications & Alumni Engagement

the CAPSULE

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ON THE COVER

LLUSP welcomes new dean.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

OUR FEATURES

- 04 Meet the New Dean
- 14 Joseph Azurin's Red Letter Year
- 20 Impactful Research by Dr. Lisa Hong
- 24 Bringing Healthcare to the Unhoused

OUR SECTIONS

- 4-9 School News
- 10-17 Student Experiences
- 18-23 Faculty & Staff Highlights
- 24-30 Alumni Updates



MEET DR. KYLE SOUSA,

LLU's New
School of
Pharmacy
Dean

*Q & A with Jen
Mathew, Director of
Communications &
Alumni Engagement*



Dr. Sousa, I'd like to give you the opportunity to introduce yourself to our alumni readers...

I have the distinct privilege and pleasure of serving as the sixth Dean at LLUSP, and I am beyond excited and humbled by the opportunity. I am a medical biochemist by training. I completed my PhD training at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, Sweden and fellowships at the University of Michigan Medical School and City of Hope National Cancer Center. I am a bit of a metabolism geek. I have served as a pharmacy educator for over 12 years. I started working at LLU in 2019 and for most of that time, served as the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs.

What has prepared you for the position of dean of our pharmacy school?

I have been grateful (and lucky) to have had a diverse array of experiences that have helped prepare me for the deanship. I have been an administrator in both student affairs and academic affairs, previously helped start a new School of Pharmacy, and have served as Interim Dean at two different programs, including here! As a result, I am well-versed in our accrediting body's expectations, budget management, construction projects, research, curriculum, assessment, admissions, recruitment, and process improvement. I am also an active member in several professional organizations and for the past two years, I have engaged as an Institute for Health Policy and Leadership scholar where much of my interest has been on pharmacy workforce sustainability. I also have a wonderful network of mentors who continue to provide me with advice and a sounding board to test some ideas.

Why do you choose to work at LLU and the School of Pharmacy?

It is the mission, the values, the people, the spirit of service, community, and compassion and the opportunity that drew me here— they define us as a program and institution. I recognized it the second I stepped onto campus when I interviewed five years ago and continue to see it in practice every day among our students, faculty, staff, preceptors, and alumni.

What are our program's strengths and challenges, as you see them?

Our top strength is our mission, our talent (students, faculty, staff, alumni, and preceptors), the training opportunities being affiliated with an academic medical center, and the spirit of service and community that define us. Each of these drive a tremendous amount of purpose and focus for everyone. Our challenges aren't unique – we're navigating declining enrollments, slippage in our board pass rates, student and workforce burnout, and the national debate across the country questioning the value of higher education.

You have served at LLUSP for five years already, so you are very familiar with our program. Now that you are dean, what are your goals and your long-term vision for the school?

My goals include the implementation of our updated curriculum, expanding our research footprint, and fostering deeper connections and engagement with our distinguished alumni who have built and enriched our school's legacy. We also need to bolster our philanthropic efforts to ensure we can continue investing in research, education, people, practice initiatives, and mission work, maintaining the standard of excellence for which LLU programs are known.

I want our program to be the top faith-based pharmacy program in the nation for learning outcomes, research, practice, and service. We must prepare the next generation of compassionate healthcare leaders. We must accomplish this in an environment and culture that is anchored in faith, diversity, inclusivity, and belonging, and I am excited to work together with our school community to make this vision a reality.



RESULTS ARE IN: LLUSP'S HCEP GRANT IS MAKING AN IMPACT!

By Willie Davis, PhD; Jen Mathew, MA

After the US Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) awarded Loma Linda University School of Pharmacy a 5-year, \$3.4M federal grant in June 2022 which established the first Hispanic Center of Excellence in Pharmacy (HCEP), LLUSP quickly began working to improve the healthcare outcomes in local underserved communities by increasing the number of Hispanic pharmacists who can provide culturally competent pharmaceutical care and engage in research activities targeting health disparities affecting these communities.

HCEP supports LLUSP recruitment efforts by focusing on Hispanic/Latinx students who reside in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. In the 2022 – 2023 academic year, 14 Hispanic P1 – P4 students received \$195,000 in scholarship support. In the 2023 – 2024 academic year, 26 P1 – P4 students received \$322,500 in scholarship support. To increase the pipeline of qualified Hispanic faculty members, a new HCEP Fellowship was created, and in 2023, LLUSP began training its first HCEP Fellow.

As LLUSP nears completion of year two of the grant, it is already seeing incredible results from the deliberate investment of grant funds, time, and energy in recruiting, training, and retaining Hispanic students and faculty. The percentage of Hispanic/Latinx students in the LLUSP P1 class jumped from 11% in 2022 to 37% in 2023. Five HCEP scholarship recipients presented outcomes of their summer research at the Center for Health Disparities and Molecular Medicine annual research symposium in August 2023. In April this year, two HCEP scholars presented research at the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) annual meeting in San Diego. Finally, this spring, two graduating HCEP scholars matched with PGY1 residency programs.

LLUSP is thrilled by the recent successes and is eagerly looking forward to the next phase of the HCEP journey. With the exceptional progress made so far, administrators are confident in LLUSP's ability to continue making a significant impact through the grant.



School Collaborates with Faculty Medical Group to Provide New Pharmacy Services

Loma Linda University School of Pharmacy (LLUSP) - Faculty Medical Group (FMG) Pharmacotherapy Clinic is a recent collaborative service between clinical faculty from LLUSP and clinicians at FMG. Planning for this service began in 2022, and operations are set to begin in Summer 2024. Through this service, high risk patients from several medical specialty departments will be referred to the pharmacotherapy clinic for the management of their chronic disease conditions and complex medication regimens.

Several key components were established during the formation of this unique clinic. One of the factors was the approved and signed Collaborative Practice Agreement (CPA) between the leadership teams of LLUSP and FMG. Additionally, Dr. Alireza Hayatshahi, PharmD, BCPS was named LLUSP Vice Dean of Clinical Affairs and will

oversee the pharmacotherapy clinic operations and services. Thirdly, all pharmacists who provide service to patients must be full-time faculty of LLUSP, residency trained, specialty board certified, advanced pharmacist practitioners in the state of California, and credentialed through the FMG.

Loma Linda University Health (LLUH) Risk Management patients who meet the criteria may be referred by their physicians from general medicine, family medicine, preventative medicine, cardiology, and endocrinology clinics to pharmacotherapy clinic for comprehensive medication and chronic disease management. In the first phase of this service, cardiometabolic diseases including diabetes, hypertension, heart failure, and dyslipidemia are the conditions which the FMG-Pharmacotherapy Clinic will address. The goals of this service are to increase access to healthcare providers and enhance timely medication therapy adjustments, as well as lower the overall healthcare cost.

“From the initial leadership conversations to the actual go-live day of the service, it took several major steps to be completed,” explains Dr. Hayatshahi. “They included a practice agreement, compliance approval, billing agreement, and formalized administrative operations, which took months of full-time and intensive team effort. My hope for our excellent team is to provide timely medication therapy management and enhanced clinical outcomes for patients. Eventually, we would like to serve more patients, which will take continuing efforts towards federal and state legislation to support pharmacists’ provider status and reimbursable services.”



U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT 2024 RANKINGS

U.S. News & World Report released its 2024 rankings, and LLUSP is proud to share our new standings among 13 pharmacy schools in California, 31 faith-based pharmacy schools in the nation, and 141 pharmacy schools nation-wide.

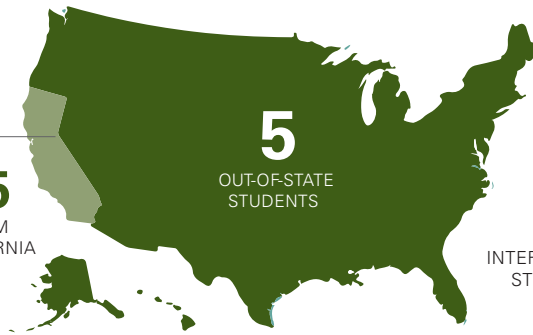
“This ranking reinforces LLU’s national reputation among all colleges and schools of pharmacy in the country,” says LLUSP dean, Dr. Kyle Sousa. “It’s a testament to the hard work and achievements of our talented pharmacy faculty, staff, students, preceptors, and alumni and evidence that we are achieving our mission and preparing tomorrow’s health care leaders.”

For a pharmacy program that is just over 20 years old, the rankings confirm that LLUSP is learning, growing, transforming and moving up!

STUDENT EXPERIENCES

46
ENTERING
STUDENTS

35
FROM
CALIFORNIA



5
OUT-OF-STATE
STUDENTS

6
INTERNATIONAL
STUDENTS

34%
HISPANIC

21-42
AGE RANGE



LLUSP Class of 2027

4 MARRIED

14
FIRST-
GENERATION
COLLEGE
STUDENTS



1.19 to 1
FEMALE TO MALE

LICENSED
PHARMACY
TECHNICIANS
9



MOST COMMON
UNDERGRAD MAJOR:
BIOLOGY



Playing to Win!

LLUSP's annual dodgeball tournament is a hit!

By Jen Mathew, MA

Contrary to what one might think, there's something about a dodgeball tournament that brings out the best in everyone. It's a game that most people can play without prior experience, so the playing field is leveled and both the bar and barriers are lowered for players of all kinds! It's almost always a friendly competition that often includes silly costumes or thematic uniforms, sideline cheerleaders, and plenty of laughter.

WIN: Dodgeball brings students together who might not meet or spend time together otherwise.

In 2011, a group of students involved in the Pharmacy Student Network (PSN) organized a dodgeball tournament in which the four classes of students played opposite each other until the team with the most wins was declared the champion. Over the next few years, the event turned into a tradition, and a staff/faculty team often entered the competition. After some time, participation in the dodgeball tournament tapered off until COVID lock-downs finally ended the event for a couple of years. Then, in 2022, the LLUSP Student Ambassadors revived the dodgeball tradition, and the event returned to its former glory and popularity! Student Ambassadors recently hosted their third, wildly successful dodgeball tournament, celebrating with hand-shakes and fruit smoothies afterwards.

WIN: Traditions become school history and culture and create fond memories and unity among students, faculty, and staff.

Loma Linda University's motto is "to make man whole." We believe in treating and developing not just one aspect of life, but the whole of a person— including the mental, emotional, physical, spiritual, and social facets of one's life. Faculty and staff remind students of the importance of exercising, taking breaks from studying and taking time to worship, caring for one's mental health, and connecting with one another.

WIN: LLUSP's dodgeball tournament is an opportunity for students to practice wholeness!





Darren Kang, center



Khayla Chapman



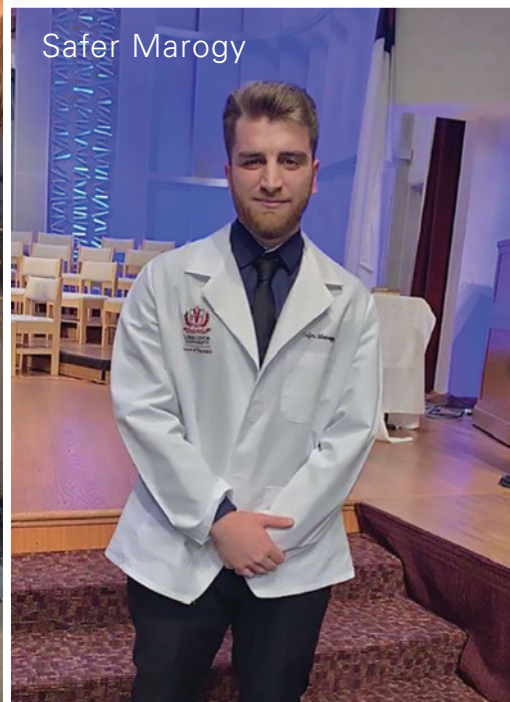
Katerina Colada, front row, center



Timothy Cruz



Brittany Lazzaro, second from left



Safer Marogy

MY FAVORITE EXPERIENCE THIS YEAR WAS...

Pharmacy students reflect on highlights of their 2023-2024 academic year.

My favorite experience was my rotation at Desert Oasis Healthcare. I gained a lot of hands-on experience during many health clinics throughout the Coachella Valley, where we provided flu and Covid vaccines along with blood pressure and glucose readings. While at DOHC, I was also a part of many projects including writing protocols for ketamine and COPD and assisting one of the pharmacists with a case study on Immunonutrition in Wound Care. It was a great learning experience made even more enjoyable by having my classmate Sasha there with me.

– *Brittany Lazzaro, Class of 2024*

One of my favorite experiences was participating in an inter-professional mission trip to Guatemala. The week was filled with many memorable moments, from engaging in medical clinics and offering aid to the local communities, to exploring the history of ancient Mayan ruins in Tikal. This experience not only brought me so much joy but also provided an invaluable opportunity for professional growth which I am deeply grateful for.

– *Khayla Chapman, Class of 2026*

Being a part of the medical staff at Camp Conrad Chinnock was my favorite pharmacy school experience this year. I was humbled throughout the process of relearning insulin dose calculations, administering my own “insulin” (saline) doses for meals, and learning about each camper’s unique experience with Type 1 Diabetes. Camp was definitely the

most hands-on, interactive experience I’ve had throughout my academic career, and I feel I gained much more from it than what I offered. Overall, the experience provided me with a small glimpse of the life-altering changes that diabetes causes, and Camp will continue to have a lasting impact on my life.

– *Darren Kang, Class of 2025*

Looking back on my LLUSP journey this academic year, each experience was a dose of growth. But the SoCal Pharmacy Mixer was like finding the perfect compound - networking with industry leaders, sharing insights, and forging connections were the ingredients of success. I’m excited to continue learning, adapting and growing in this field, and I can’t wait to see what the future holds for pharmacy!

– *Timothy Cruz, Class of 2027*

My favorite experience from this year was getting the chance to return to Camp Conrad Chinnock as a Peer Mentor. I had an amazing time working with the medical team to make sure that we gave the kids an unforgettable summer!

– *Katerina Colada, Class of 2024*

My favorite experience this year was the OSCE (Objective Structured Clinical Exam) assignments during our cardiovascular course. Not only were they a perfect learning opportunity, but they also gave us students the chance to experience real world scenarios and an opportunity to apply our knowledge.

– *Safer Marogy, Class of 2026*



JOSEPH AZURIN'S RED LETTER YEAR

Joseph— who grew up in Indio, California but attended the University of the Philippines Manila to earn a Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy— felt drawn to becoming an expert in the field of pharmacy and had a clear calling to study at LLUSP. But he could not have foreseen just how incredible his journey towards a career in pharmacy would be!

Even as a child, Joseph knew he wanted to work in healthcare because of the influence of his parents who are hospital nurses. His original plan was to pursue medicine in the Philippines and use pharmacy as his undergraduate degree, but plans began to change during his second year of school. Joseph enjoyed chemistry and foundational pharmacy topics which pushed him towards pursuing pharmacy as a career instead of medicine. The idea of utilizing science and pharmaceuticals to cure patients fascinated him, and he soon realized that pharmacy represents an exceptionally intriguing and rewarding career path.

While Joseph was studying in the Philippines, COVID-19 struck and forced him to move back to the United States even before he officially graduated in 2020. After his return to the States, he made the decision to pursue a PharmD degree and was only interested in applying to Loma Linda University School of Pharmacy. “Growing up, many of the doctors and healthcare workers my family knew and went to for care came from Loma Linda University,”

Joseph says. “This made me a fan from the very beginning at a young age and becoming a student here was like becoming one of the healthcare professionals I grew up knowing and looking up to.”

It did not take long for Joseph to start making his mark and very positive impressions at LLUSP. He began volunteering at the Riverside Free Clinic and served as a volunteer at Camp Conrad Chinnock diabetes camp. He participated in mission trips to the Philippines and Mexico, tutored children in the CKC



United States of America



Music Program, and helped to organize and assist with vaccination clinics. Over the last few years, Joseph has held officer positions in six student organizations at LLUSP, including PLS Honor Society and Rho Chi Honor Society. At the start of his P3 year, Joseph was elected president of LLUSP's APhA/CPhA-ASP chapter. On top of all this, he won the local ACCP Clinical Pharmacy Competition and the ISHP Student Scholarship and has maintained an exceptional cumulative GPA. Joseph's dedication to service and studies earned him a reputation as a diligent, ambitious and compassionate student and leader.

Then, in August 2023, Joseph represented LLUSP at the 68th IPSF World Congress held in Bali, Indonesia. The congress, organized by the International Pharmaceutical Students' Federation (IPSF), unites students from around the world each year to foster global discussions on the future of pharmacy. While student pharmacists from over 30 countries attended the event in Bali, Joseph was one of only six delegates from the United States.

"Interacting with other student pharmacists from around the globe has definitely broadened my mind on the wide range of opportunities within pharmacy," Joseph says.

"Interacting with other student pharmacists from around the globe has definitely broadened my mind on the wide range of opportunities within pharmacy."

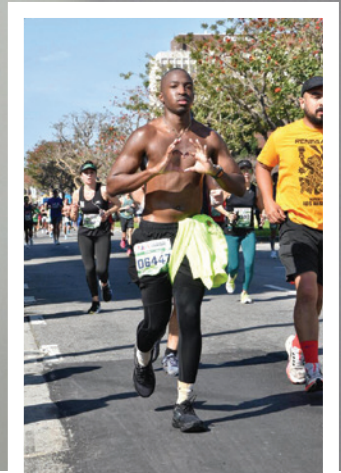
"Truly, it was an enlightening and enriching experience that I will treasure forever."

A couple of months later, in a competition against more than 100 student pharmacists from around the world, Joseph was named second runner up for his research on tranexamic acid in transdermal applications at the IPSF Interregional Research Collaboration. In an attempt to find a promising compound that may enhance advanced transdermal drug delivery, Joseph investigated the novel use of tranexamic acid and its role in the treatment of hyperpigmentation. Participants were asked to create literature reviews and journal clubs on various assigned research topics. After being selected to participate in the final round of the journal club, Joseph emerged as the sole contestant from the United States!

According to Joseph, "This achievement was only made possible by the unwavering support of my friends, faculty mentors, and the invaluable guidance of the entire Loma Linda community. I am deeply grateful to IPSF for the incredible opportunity to represent on such a grand stage."

This spring, Joseph was selected as the 2024-2025 APhA-ASP National Contact Person for the International Standing Committee, making him the ambassador for all foreign organizations to the U.S. His job will be to connect APhA-ASP members with international pharmacy opportunities in IPSF. On top of that, Joseph received the prestigious Ton Hoek Scholarship from the APhA Foundation, distinguishing him as the sole national recipient among student pharmacists throughout APhA-ASP. This award acknowledges his exceptional leadership, global vision, and dedication within the federation and includes a \$1,000 stipend for participation in the 2024 International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) World Congress in Cape Town, South Africa.

As Joseph enters his PY4 year, we have a feeling this isn't the last we'll hear of his successes.



FROM COMA TO THE FINISH LINE

When Samuel D'Autruche became a Loma Linda University student, he had no idea of the health trials he would face or of the love and care that would surround him through that experience. After recovering, Samuel emerged a stronger person physically, mentally and spiritually, and he wanted to give back some of the love and support he received to other students.

Samuel's Journey

As a first-year pharmacy student at LLU, a life-threatening bout, similar to meningitis, rocked Samuel's world. He was hospitalized for weeks at Loma Linda University Medical Center while he fought to live, and his recovery took months. Through the process, his body and his mindset were transformed, and Samuel became stronger and developed a profound understanding of the role that community plays in each of our lives. He recalled Loma Linda University's motto "to make man whole" as he experienced the truth of those words and their impact firsthand. The community, the support, and the values of Loma

Linda University played a pivotal role in his holistic healing and growth.

The Linda Williams Scholarship

Samuel was deeply honored to receive the Linda Williams Scholarship, which recognizes excellence and demonstration of characteristics consistent with the mission and values of the School of Pharmacy. The scholarship also salutes extraordinary involvement in service and outreach and bears with it an award of \$5,000. While Samuel was profoundly grateful for the recognition, he felt somewhat undeserving of the commendations it bestowed upon him and thought of other students he felt truly did. At the start of his second year of pharmacy school, he decided to enter several running events in honor of those students and to raise additional funds for the scholarship.

Samuel says the words of 1 Corinthians 9:24-25 resonate with him: "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to

get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever."

"This isn't just about running," explains Samuel. "This is about the legacy we leave behind."

The Races

Samuel committed to participating in multiple races throughout the 2023-2024 academic year: the Riverside Mission Inn Run Half Marathon in October, the San Bernardino Turkey Trot in November, the 34th Annual Lopers Club Holiday Classic Half Marathon in December, the Redlands Half Marathon in March and finally, the LA Marathon in March. For Samuel, each race represented another opportunity to raise awareness and funds for students of Loma Linda University.

The Finish Line

By the end of March 2024, Samuel raised \$2555 for the Linda Williams Scholarship, which will help other pharmacy students committed to excellence and community service and which helped him restart pharmacy school and regain his life.

2023-2024 FACULTY & STAFF HIGHLIGHTS



DEPARTMENT OF PHARMACEUTICAL & ADMINISTRATIVE SCIENCES

1. Since July 2023, **Khaled Bahjri MD, DrPH, MPH** has contributed four research articles to peer-reviewed journals and was honored with the Teacher of the Year award from LLUSP's class of 2027. In July 2024, he was promoted from associate to full professor.

2. **Olivia Francis-Boyle, PhD** was a corresponding author for the manuscript entitled: "Duocarmycin SA Reduces Proliferation and Increases Apoptosis in Acute Myeloid Leukemia Cells In Vitro" which was published in the *International Journal of Molecular Sciences* and has had five posters accepted and presented by trainees from her lab at local and national conferences (including LLU Basic Science Research Symposium, LLU Health Disparities Symposium, ASHP and AACR). She also chaired the poster session for LLU School of Medicine's Annual Basic Science Research Symposium in 2023.

3. **Paul Gavaza, PhD** was promoted to the rank of full Professor effective July 1, 2023. Dr. Gavaza was Associate Professor since January 2014. In 2024, he also published an article on adverse childhood experiences among California student pharmacists in *Mental Health Clinician*. He currently serves as Chair for the Department of Pharmaceutical and Administrative Sciences.

STAFF

4. **Stanley Matsuda, MS**, currently serves as the Director of Education Assessment. Mr. Matsuda recently published a manuscript with assessment colleagues across the country entitled "Racial, Ethnic, and Sex Diversity Trends in Health Professions Programs from Applications to Graduates" in *JAMA Network Open*.

DEPARTMENT OF PHARMACY PRACTICE

5. Alireza FakhriRavari, PharmD, BCPS, BCIDP, AAHIVP was promoted to Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Pharmacy Practice. He co-authored IDSA-endorsed guidelines on prolonged-infusion β -lactams, published on remdesivir hepatotoxicity, won Teacher of the Year and Golden Brick awards, co-presented at LLU Homecoming, and secured a grant to integrate the National HIV Curriculum into his course.

6. Lisa Hong, PharmD, BCPS first-authored an international guideline, published six other peer-reviewed manuscripts, and delivered five platform presentations. She was named a Professional Member of the National Academies of Practice for her contributions to interprofessional education and collaboration and was the recipient of an ACCP Teaching Enhancement Grant and the LLU Global Service Award.

7. Tomona Iso, PharmD, BCPS, APh was named the 2024 Preceptor of the Year. She participated in the ACCP Mentored Research Investigator Training (MeRIT) program and received an Adult Medicine PRN scholarship. She also served as a peer reviewer for *Annals of Pharmacotherapy* and *American Journal of Emergency Medicine*.

8. CJ Jacobson, PharmD, APh, BC-ADM, CDCES wrote "Inhaled Insulin for Individualized Diabetes Management: 3 Case Studies," which was published in *ADCES in Practice*. In addition, he continues to manage clinical research trials involving new diabetes technologies and therapeutic options.

9. Justin Kinney, PharmD, MA, BCCCP, FCCM was awarded fellowship designation in the American College of Critical Care Medicine

(FCCM) for his commitment to the practice of interprofessional critical care through program development, scholarly activity, engagement, and leadership in critical care. Out of approximately 4,200 board-certified critical care pharmacists, only 200 practitioners have achieved this honor.

10. Caroline Sierra, PharmD, BCPPS published manuscripts in *The Journal of Pediatric Pharmacology and Therapeutics*, the *Journal of the American Pharmacists Association*, and the *American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy*. She is a California Delegate for the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists and the Secretary of Knowledge Management of the Pediatric Special Interest Group of the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy. In June 2024 Dr. Sierra was appointed as Associate Dean of Academic Affairs.





Research by Dr. Lisa Hong and others leads to new consensus recommendations on the use of prolonged-infusion beta-lactam antibiotics

By Ansel Oliver

An international panel of authors led by Lisa Hong, PharmD, BCPS suggests that prolonging the infusion period of beta-lactam antibiotics can significantly benefit clinical outcomes, particularly for severely ill patients. This is one of the top recommendations to come out of what is now the first international consensus guideline on prolonged-infusion of beta-lactam antibiotics.

Prolonged-infusion of the subset of antibiotics can safely increase the time that drug concentrations remain above the minimum inhibitory concentration (MIC) to better eliminate deadly bacteria.

Authors hope their recommendations will be a factor in helping frontline healthcare workers and administrators make more informed choices on how to administer beta-lactam antibiotics based on available evidence.

The recently published guideline is the result of a multi-year review of more than 6,000 published articles.

Dr. Lisa Hong, associate professor of pharmacy practice at Loma Linda University, said prolonged-infusion dosing regimens have previously been implemented worldwide but inconsistently.

“While more research is needed to answer whether benefits of prolonged-infusion depend on specific organisms, infection types, or special

populations, it is important to note that there has been no signal of worse efficacy or safety outcomes with prolonged-infusion compared to short infusion,” Hong said.

The committee made a total of 12 recommendations for pharmacokinetic and pharmacodynamic targets, therapeutic drug-monitoring considerations, and the use of prolonged infusion of beta-lactam therapy across various patient populations, including severely and non-severely ill patients, pediatric patients, and patients with obesity.

The group was composed of 17 multidisciplinary experts from the United States, Europe, and Australia.

The group’s guidelines have been endorsed by seven organizations around the world: American College of Clinical Pharmacy, British Society for Antimicrobial Chemotherapy, Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases, Infectious Diseases Society of America, Society of Critical Care Medicine, and Society of Infectious Diseases Pharmacists.

The consensus recommendations were published in *Pharmacotherapy: The Journal of Human Pharmacology and Drug Therapy*. Hong is the first woman to serve as lead author on a guideline published in this journal.



LLUSP Faculty Member To Become APhA President

LLUSP Faculty continue their streak as national leaders.

At the American Pharmacists Association (APhA) annual meeting this past March in Orlando, Florida, Dr. Randy McDonough, PharmD, MS, BCGP, BCPS, FAPhA was sworn in as president elect of the organization. Dr. McDonough, who serves as Professor of Pharmacy Management and Innovation for Loma Linda University School of Pharmacy (LLUSP), will soon become president of the organization at next year's annual meeting in Nashville, TN.

Just four years ago, LLUSP's dean at the time, Dr. Michael Hogue, was inaugurated as president of APhA. McDonough's election makes him the second LLUSP faculty/administrator in a very short period of time to lead the largest association of pharmacists in the U.S.

Currently, as president-elect, Dr. McDonough chairs the Strategic Directions Committee (SDC) for the association. In the first few months as president-elect, he has attended or plans on attending the Academies Leadership Meeting (ALM) in Washington DC; National Alliance of State Pharmacy Associations (NASPA) Leadership Conference in Denver, CO; APhA's institute on Substance Abuse Disorder in Salt Lake City, Utah; and ASHP Annual meeting in Portland, OR. Additionally, McDonough has been asked to be the keynote speaker for several professional meetings.

"I am excited and humbled that I was elected President-elect for APhA," says McDonough. "My whole career has been an example of challenging the status quo, to push for adequate and fair reimbursement for our patient care services, to fight back against the unfair business practices of PBMs, and to create a brand of pharmacy practice that provides a meaningful career for all pharmacy personnel. I will continue to challenge and disrupt the status quo, and I hope that my work inspires others to do the same."

"I will continue to challenge and disrupt the status quo, and I hope that my work inspires others to do the same."



CONGRATULATIONS TO LLUSP'S TEACHERS OF THE YEAR!

1. Dr. Kris Boyle – Class of 2024

What PY4 students say: “Dr. Boyle is a role model for us, has a friendly and humble character and explains the topics very well by bringing in different kinds of examples from real life.”

2. Dr. Alireza FakhriRavari – Class of 2025

What PY3 students say: “Dr. F always finds a way to get students involved in class, and he is very creative in his teaching methods. He makes learning the material much more digestible, understandable, engaging and fun. Dr. F is truly passionate about his field of interest and cares that the students are invested.”

3. Dr. Victoria Maskiewicz – Class of 2026

What PY2 students say: “Dr. Maskiewicz uses relatable and fun analogies in her explanations. She knows what questions to ask in the homework and problem sets so that we will be successful on assessments. She always hears our concerns and responds in a favorable manner.”

4. Dr. Khaled Bahjri – Class of 2027

What PY1 students says: “Dr. Bahjri goes above and beyond to make sure students understand the material. His approach is polite, encouraging and supportive.”

BRINGING HEALTHCARE TO THE UNHOUSED

LLUSP alumnus, Dr. Shawn Smith, brings healthcare services to first-of-its-kind homeless shelter

By Donajayne Potts, MBA

Several days a week, Shawn Smith, PharmD, LLUSP Class of 2017, drives to Victorville to lead a team of 40 healthcare and social service providers working together to help people experiencing homelessness to find a path forward.

The Loma Linda University School of Pharmacy (LLUSP) graduate co-founded Symba Center, a faith-based, nonprofit, free clinic serving the High Desert region.

Symba Center works out of a Victorville facility to provide solutions to meet the health and wellness needs of low-income, uninsured, and homeless populations. It utilizes an interdisciplinary approach to care, including behavioral health, substance use disorder counseling, case management, and housing navigation.

Victorville, a high desert community, has the second-highest concentration of homeless residents in San Bernardino County, second only to the city of San Bernardino. Like other cities, Victorville saw a spike in the unhoused population after the COVID-19, jumping 33% in one year, according to a 2023 county report. Victorville has more than 600 homeless residents in the city — Loma Linda has 17.

To address the full spectrum of issues leading to homelessness, the city of Victorville conceived and built The Wellness Center. It is the first non-congregate housing and healthcare facility of its kind in San Bernardino County and opened in December 2023.

The unique and innovative campus, on 4.5 acres of city-owned land, is vital in helping sheltered and unsheltered individuals stabilize and rebuild their lives. The center is a low-barrier emergency shelter, offering 110 non-congregate



housing units, with wraparound support services, recuperative care, and a medical clinic on-site. The campus also includes a commercial kitchen, classroom space, recreational amenities, animal care, and office space for intense case management and support services designed to return people to stability.

The city of Victorville contracted the nonprofit Symba Center to provide medical care, behavioral health, and support services on campus. Nurse practitioners, pharmacists, and licensed therapists are available to treat most health-related issues.

Smith says many of the unsheltered have chronic diseases. “If left uncontrolled, they will be hospitalized and suffer from long-term complications — impacting their ability to maintain housing,” Smith said. “This community now has one place to get the services they need, be served, and serve others.”

It Started in a Dorm Room

Smith, CEO of Symba Center, is also an assistant professor at Western University of Health Sciences College of Pharmacy. He teaches longitudinal physical assessment and tobacco cessation curriculum.

The Wellness Center clinic is a practice site for his students. “I train and show them how to leverage community resources to provide services,” Smith said.

Since the pandemic, Symba Center has been at the forefront of healthcare in Victorville, bringing vaccines, wound care, and other medical services to shelters and encampments in the region.

Today, Symba Center’s team provides healthcare at the Wellness Center’s dedicated clinic space, which Smith says is a stark contrast from seeing patients in homeless shelter closets or make-shift tents.

“We had always envisioned a community center where those who needed any social service could have it all in one place,” Smith said. “We didn’t know at the time what it would look like, where it would be, or when it would materialize, but we prayed our gifts would be used for good.”

He and a classmate developed the concept of Symba in a Loma Linda University dorm room in 2016. “We wanted to see communities transformed through the integration of systems, excellence in provided services, and compassion for all people,” Smith said. “We believe people deserve better.”

His passion for serving vulnerable and underserved communities grew after going on several LLU-sponsored student mission trips to Belize, Brazil, and Romania. “Bringing healthcare to the doors of those who need it is the most rewarding experience in my life,” he said. “I found a mission field at home and directed all the inspiration from LLU mission trips and rotations to this clinic in Victorville.”

Like-Minds at Loma Linda University

Five Symba Center healthcare team members have more than a commitment to making man whole in common — they are also Loma Linda University graduates recruited by Smith.

Gaea Jamine Uppala, DNP, RN, from School of Nursing

Uppala and Smith share a mutual friend. Smith says he was particularly interested in adding her to the Symba Center healthcare team because her skills as a psychiatric nurse would be incredibly useful, as the unhoused may suffer from mental health issues. Although Uppala is employed elsewhere, she agreed to work at the clinic after prayerful consideration.

Darlene Tyler, PhD, FNP, MSN, from School of Nursing

Tyler has worked with homeless patients her entire career and says serving them is her life’s calling. She responded to Smith’s request for help and has been working part-time since the Wellness Center opened.

Abhijeet Andrews, OT, from School of Allied Health Professions

He is the Community Development Director at the Wellness Center and works to build community relationships and marketing support. Andrews is an occupational therapist (OT) and enjoys helping people in practical ways. He meets with clients to teach and reinforce skills like hair brushing, teeth brushing, and other basic hygiene routines.

Joshua Wendt, MD, from School of Medicine

Wendt’s involvement in Street Medicine as a medical student at LLU prepared his heart for service with the Victorville clinic. Smith says he needed a physician to get things off the ground. He met Wendt through the music ministry at their church and asked him for help. Although Wendt was already working full-time and had other volunteering commitments, he agreed to help with the clinic as a volunteer until Smith could find another physician to serve as a permanent, full-time employee. In the meantime, Wendt sees patients via video visits.

Rooted in Faith

Smith attributes his life path and the people he’s met to God’s leading. “Of course, I put in the work every day, but many things have aligned that otherwise would have seemed impossible,” Smith said. “Loma Linda University not only taught me how to care for patients; it taught me how to ensure my practice is rooted in faith.”

He believes his outlook would have been very different if he had attended another school.

“LLU School of Pharmacy inspired me to continue the teaching and healing ministry of Jesus Christ,” Smith said. “This calls for community transformation, to push the boundaries of what is — to see how pharmacists can be more innovative, on the forefront of providing healthcare for patients.”

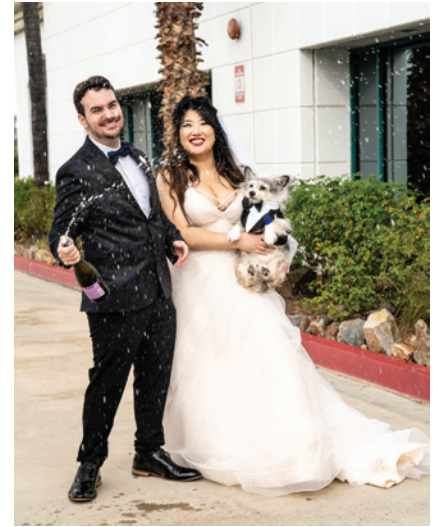
ALUMNI NOTES

At the close of 2022, **Gibby Rodriguez, PharmD, MS, BCMAS (Class of 2015)** successfully completed an exit exam to earn a Masters in Applied Pharmacoeconomics from the University of Florida. Currently, he serves as a U.S. Regional Medical Head for the western region at Indivior, overseeing the management of both the Medical Science Liaison (MSL) and Medical Outcomes and Value (MOVL) teams that are comprised of talented PharmDs, RNs, and MDs. In the upcoming summer of 2024, Dr. Rodriguez will be poised to start an Advanced Executive Leadership program at Indivior. Outside of his professional endeavors, Dr. Rodriguez recently

refurbished and moved into his inaugural home, developed golf as a new pastime, established roots in his local church, and reignited his love for music and drumming.

Tony Joseph Eid, PharmD, REHS, APH, CHC, BCMTM, FACC (Class of 2006) was recently inducted as a Fellow of the American College of Cardiology (FACC). This recognition is a testament to his dedication to the field of cardiology and his commitment to providing exceptional care to patients. In addition, Dr. Eid currently serves as the Assistant Dean of Experiential Education and Associate Professor in the College of Pharmacy at California Northstate University.

ALUMNUS WEDDING



Dr. Craig Hatt (Class of 2016) married his wife Melissa in San Diego on New Year's Eve, 2023. Dr. Hatt says, "Like stars in the night sky, marriage shines, guiding love's course through life's boundless expanse."

ALUMNI BABIES



Leah Samantha Koch
Birthday: July 28, 2023
Weight and Length: 8 lbs 9 oz; 20 in
Parents: Stephanie (Hamilton) Koch (LLUSP Class of 2018) and Adam Koch (LLUSM Class of 2018)

We are excited to welcome our first baby girl. She is a happy and active baby. We love watching her grow!



Kim Chu
Birthday: November 25, 2023
Weight and Length: 7 lb 9.5 oz; 19.69 in
Parents: Oanh Lam Chu (Class of 2019) and Steven Chu

Our hearts are full with the arrival of our third bundle of joy. She is the perfect finishing touch to our family. We thank God everyday for blessing us with our beautiful children.



Aiden Cash Lee
Birthday: January 11, 2024
Weight and Length: 5 lbs 11 oz; 19 in
Parents: Robi Cocjin Lee (Class of 2017) and Bryan Lee

My husband and I welcomed our second child this year. It was a tiring couple of weeks at first, but we are blessed to have him happy and healthy.



Aiden Suchak
Birthday: April 30, 2024
Weight and Length: 7 lbs. 4 oz; 20 in
Parents: Mohini (Patel) Suchak (Class of 2014) and Shyam Suchak

We are so excited to welcome Aiden into the world! His big sister, Nia, loves having a baby brother and being by his side. Our family feels complete, and we can't wait to see what the future holds for him.

AND THE WINNERS ARE...

Three VIA (Very Important Alumni) were honored this spring at two events hosted by Loma Linda University School of Pharmacy.

At the Homecoming Reunion Dinner in March, Dean Kyle Sousa presented LLUSP's Rising Star award to Dr. Minh Nguyen (Class of 2019) for his exceptional achievements in practice and his potential to make significant contributions to the profession of pharmacy. Since graduating from LLUSP, Dr. Nguyen has practiced pharmacy in several locations and in various roles. After graduation, he served as a staff pharmacist at Victor Valley Global Medical Center, then Hemet Valley Medical Center, and then Kindred Hospital Riverside, all within two years. Finally, Dr. Nguyen moved to Adventist Health Bakersfield, where he transitioned from staff to a clinical pharmacist. Last fall, he earned his BCPS certification to secure a senior pharmacist position practicing full time clinical service, primarily in cardiology at the hospital. Dr. Nguyen says his ultimate goal is to become more involved in clinical work, where he has the opportunity to provide the best care for his patients. Additionally, Dr. Nguyen remains supportive of LLUSP and serves on its Alumni Advisory Committee.

Dr. Walanika Lum (Class of 2008) received LLUSP's Alum of the Year award, also during the Homecoming Reunion dinner, for her valuable contributions to the practice of pharmacy and future generations of pharmacists. Dr. Lum was president of the third graduating class of LLUSP. Since then, her practice specialties include inpatient pharmacy, specialty compounding, home infusion and pharmacy informatics. Currently, she is the Pharmacist in Charge of Providence Northern California Home Infusion Pharmacy services based in Eureka, California. She remains engaged with the School of Pharmacy by serving as a valued member of its Alumni Advisory Committee. Additionally, she is establishing the Northern California APPE preceptorship for LLU pharmacy students with interests in inpatient pharmacy, ambulatory pharmacy, and home infusion.

One month later, during the annual Honors & Awards ceremony for the School of Pharmacy, Dr. Noela Ndrekaaj (Class of 2009) received the LLUSP Alumni Preceptor of the Year Award. Dr. Ndrekaaj, who serves as the Pharmacy Supervisor at Pediatric Hematology/Oncology and Stem Cell Transplant Clinic at Loma Linda University Children's Hospital, was recognized for her exceptional contribution to student development, particularly in cultivating leadership skills. Her strategy of posing thought-provoking questions not only engages students but also deepens their understanding, encouraging an open dialogue where queries are addressed comprehensively. Moreover, her practice of providing positive reinforcement and celebrating student achievements significantly enhances the educational journey. Dr. Ndrekaaj's dedication to developing future leaders in pharmacy, coupled with her approachability and supportive nature, make her an invaluable asset to LLUSP's experiential education program.



Dr. Minh Nguyen



Dr. Walanika Lum



Dr. Noela Ndrekaaj



CATCHING UP WITH MICHAEL IBRAHIM

By Jen Mathew, MA

“Ultimately, if a decision is made for the right reasons and for patients’ health, then it’s going to be a good one.”

As a new and nervous first-year pharmacy student at LLUSP, Michael Ibrahim attended a CVS hiring event hosted by the School. He had never worked in a pharmacy setting before and felt anxious about whether he might struggle to find pharmacy work. But Michael never struggled at all. He was quickly hired as a pharmacy intern for CVS and has worked for the company ever since. In fact, after 17 years of service, Dr. Ibrahim was promoted in January to Division Vice President for CVS, which is, perhaps, the highest rank of any LLUSP graduate in the company!

In his current role, Dr. Ibrahim first covered CVS’s Pacific region (including the states of California, Oregon, Washington, Hawaii and Arizona) before being transferred in May to North Carolina to cover the South Atlantic region for the company. As Division VP, Dr. Ibrahim ensures the 1500 operating stores in his division are catering to the needs of patients every day. He oversees efficient workflow operations, compliance and regulatory measures, and fiscal responsibility for the division. However, Dr. Ibrahim doesn’t manage stores directly—eight Regional Directors report to him, and those directors oversee another 10 District Leaders with an average of 20 stores each. Dr. Ibrahim relies on an effective team of managers to relay to him what is happening in each region and district of CVS sites. Ultimately, Dr. Ibrahim’s role involves visiting the leaders in those stores, recognizing their achievements, and learning more about some of the barriers they face in order to help them find solutions.

“At the bottom of it all,” Ibrahim says, “we want to support patients, make sure they are adherent to their medication regimens, help them avoid unnecessary hospital stays, and aid them on their paths to better health.”

According to Dr. Ibrahim, although there is much he is responsible for, it is also fun work because he is always working with people. He enjoys his interactions with his direct reports and believes the feeling is mutual. “There is a power to humility and being a student all of the time rather than acting like you know it all and being The Boss,” he says. Dr. Ibrahim believes this sense of humility allows him to be more curious and less judgmental about why his regional and district leaders and pharmacy managers do what they do, which in turn allows him to make a greater impact. “This is what I thrive to do with my team, no matter where I am or who I manage.”

And to think, Dr. Ibrahim’s success started with a hiring event at LLUSP! “I’m thankful that Loma Linda opened its arms wide to all possible retailers, hospitals, residencies, etc. From Day One, they introduced us to all kinds of opportunities for career development and career paths. I have no regrets!”

But that isn’t all that Dr. Ibrahim appreciated about LLUSP. As a Coptic Orthodox Christian, he felt that his own values and beliefs were shared by and supported by his pharmacy school. “LLU taught us to continue the legacy of what Christ wanted us to do on Earth. It made me believe that wherever I work and whatever I do, it should be for the good of others. And now, as a pharmacist and a leader, I want to work on behalf of patients every day. Loma Linda gave me this foundation, and it still gives me great purpose and pleasure.”

Also to this day, Dr. Ibrahim still enjoys camaraderie with his former classmates. “The Class of 2011 was the best class ever! We were very close, and we maintain that connection even today on social media and through messaging each other. LLUSP cultivated that culture of building connection, and it has helped us remain connected through the years.”

REMEMBER WHEN...



... these people worked at LLUSP?

How many of them can you name? It's hard to believe that in both photos, only one person remains at the School of Pharmacy. (Dr. Alan Connelly, Associate Dean of Finance, in the first picture, and Ms. Milly Brieno, Director of Student Affairs, in the second picture.) All of the others have either retired, relocated, passed away, or left for other work opportunities. We are reminded that change is inevitable, at work and in other aspects of our lives. Thankfully, however, God is constant, with us always, and watching over our beloved pharmacy school.

YOUR SUPPORT MATTERS



Your gift supports and impacts our pharmacy trainees, their patients, and the community they serve in so many ways!

KEEP IN TOUCH WITH LLUSP!



Use this QR code to send us your updated contact information and tell us what you're doing now. And if you aren't receiving our LLUSP alumni emails, let us know so we can add you to our distribution list. We'd love to hear from you!



LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY

School of Pharmacy

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HOMECOMING

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Many Strengths.
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