

SUMMER 2025 | VOLUME 17

the CAPSULE

LLUSP Graduates Its
20th CLASS
of Pharmacy
Students



LOMA LINDA
UNIVERSITY

School of Pharmacy

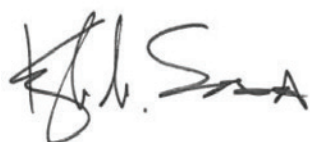
LETTER FROM THE DEAN

At Loma Linda University School of Pharmacy, we continue to celebrate the excellence of our community and the transformative strides we are making in pharmacy education and practice.

One of the most significant developments on the horizon is the launch of our redesigned Doctor of Pharmacy curriculum, scheduled for implementation in Fall of 2026. Key features of the new curriculum include a quarter-based structure, a novel practice readiness lab series, a new religion curriculum, continuous experiential education experiences, and enhanced alignment between didactic and clinical training. Together, these elements are designed to deepen clinical reasoning and ensure graduates are practice-ready from day one. The curriculum also reflects the new ACPE accreditation standards, addresses expanding scope of pharmacy practice, and reinforces our foundational commitment to ethics, faith, health equity, and service.

We are equally proud to recognize the achievements of our faculty and students. This year, Dr. Randy McDonough was elected President of the American Pharmacists Association (APhA), a prestigious national honor and notably, the second time in five years that an LLU faculty member has held this distinction. In addition, our Class of 2025 achieved a residency match rate of over 70 percent, reflecting their dedication, preparation, and the strength of our academic and clinical programs.

As we celebrate these accomplishments and look toward an exciting future, we thank you for your continued partnership in shaping the next generation of compassionate, capable pharmacy leaders.



Kyle M. Sousa, PhD



the **CAPSULE**

SUMMER 2025 | VOL. 17

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SUMMER 2025

ON THE COVER

Marina Abdelmessih, Class of 2025, poses with LLU's mace, typically carried by the provost.



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LOOKING AHEAD:

A Bold New Pharmacy Curriculum Launches in 2026

**By Kris Boyle, PhD, Assistant Dean
for Curriculum Innovation**

Loma Linda University School of Pharmacy is excited to share a major step forward in its commitment to educating the next generation of pharmacists. Beginning with the 2026–27 academic year, the School will launch a fully redesigned Doctor of Pharmacy curriculum—one that builds on the strong foundation established by our alumni and adapts to the evolving demands of modern healthcare.

Rooted in our mission to “continue the teaching and healing ministry of Jesus Christ,” the redesigned curriculum emphasizes scientific integration, clinical excellence, and whole-person care. Faculty collaborated closely with students, alumni, and national experts to ensure each course prepares students not only for licensure, but for lifelong leadership in pharmacy practice.

A central feature of the new curriculum is its quarter-based, longitudinal course structure.



Kyle Boyle



This new curriculum honors the legacy of those who have come before while equipping future graduates to meet the challenges of a dynamic healthcare environment.

Students will progress through integrated sequences in Foundations of Biomedical Sciences (FBMS), Therapeutics, Social and Administrative Sciences, a Pharmacy Practice Readiness lab series, and our professional development series, Pharmacy Success. These longitudinal tracks are carefully scaffolded across the curriculum to build depth, confidence, and clinical reasoning over time. This approach enhances continuity, reduces redundancy, and strengthens the application of knowledge in increasingly complex patient care scenarios. A newly developed religion curriculum, created in collaboration with the School of Religion, emphasizes whole-person care, health equity, and ethics within a pharmacy-specific context.

Another major innovation is our continuous experiential education model. Instead of the current one-day-per-week structure, students will now be embedded in clinical settings five days a week during their Introductory Pharmacy Practice Experience (IPPE) training, allowing for deeper engagement, stronger preceptor relationships, and more meaningful contributions to patient care.

Additional highlights include earlier integration of biomedical and clinical content, an emphasis on health equity, and a stronger bridge between classroom instruction and Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experiences (APPEs).

This new curriculum honors the legacy of those who have come before while equipping future graduates to meet the challenges of a dynamic healthcare environment with the competence and compassion LLUSP graduates are known for.

We look forward to sharing more updates as we prepare to welcome the first class into this forward-thinking curriculum in Fall 2026.



Shryock Hall Makes Space for New Classroom

By Jen Mathew, MA

Although LLUSP's building, Shryock Hall, was constructed in 1936, one of its rooms is just one year old!

Last summer, the west side of the second floor underwent major renovations. The former student lounge and laboratory spaces were torn down and remodeled into one large classroom dedicated to second-year pharmacy classes. Previously, the P2 cohort met in Evans Hall next door, but changes to classroom designations in Evans meant the School of Pharmacy needed to find a new classroom space. After considering many alternatives, construction in Shryock Hall seemed the best option.

The timeline for completing the project was tight, with just 10 weeks between the start of summer break and the beginning of the next academic year. Thankfully, construction finished on time, and the school celebrated with a ribbon cutting ceremony just days before classes resumed.

Maintaining a second classroom in Shryock Hall has facilitated more connection between P1 and P2 students. Additionally, keeping P2 students near Shryock Hall offices has also allowed for more faculty office hours and fostered closer relationships with students before they leave for P3 classes in Centennial Complex and then APPE rotations the following year.

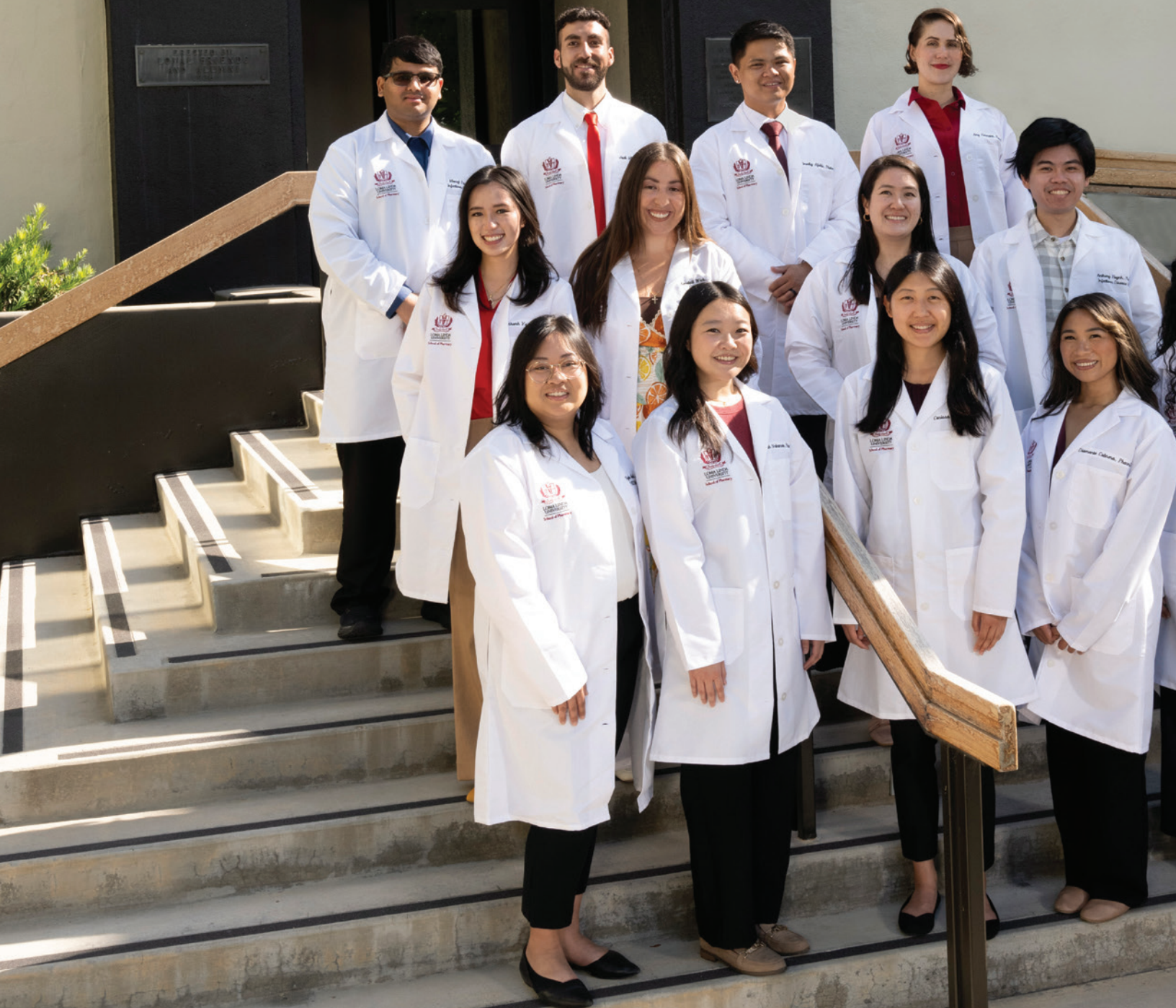




Associate Dean for Academic Affairs
Caroline Sierra, Dean Kyle Sousa, and
Professor Kathryn Knecht, officiate
ribbon cutting in new classroom



SHRYOCK HALL



A woman with long dark hair, wearing a white lab coat over a dark top and black pants, is standing on a concrete staircase. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background shows a building with a wooden railing.

Loma Linda's Pharmacy Residency Program Celebrates 30 Years of Excellence

By Norm Hamada, PharmD

The Loma Linda University Health Pharmacy Residency Program began in 1995 with one resident and a handful of dedicated preceptors. Since then, the program has grown to be one of the largest in California with postgraduate training positions for PGY1, PGY1 Community, PGY2 Cardiology, PGY2 Critical Care, PGY2 Infectious Disease, PGY2 Medication Safety, PGY2 Oncology, and a Hispanic Center of Excellence in Pharmacy Fellowship.

Over 240 residents and fellows have received certificates of completion from our programs. The various programs are made more robust by the formal collaboration between the Loma Linda University School of Pharmacy and the Loma Linda University Medical Center/Loma Linda University Children's Hospital. The extensive list of learning experiences, all with

pharmacist preceptors, have allowed each resident/fellow to choose elective rotations consistent with their interests and career goals.

In fact, just three years after initiating the LLUH PGY1 Community Pharmacy Residency program, it received accreditation this spring for another three-year cycle, which is an impressive achievement for such a young program!

LLUH's postgraduate training allows residents/fellows to gain experience with staffing in the hospital pharmacy, conduct a longitudinal research project, and develop interdisciplinary skills working as a member of a physician-led patient care team. Some residents also receive a Teaching Certificate which reflects their longitudinal learning experience as instructors in both the classroom and Pharmacy Practice Laboratory environments.

THE PERFECT MATCH

By Caroline Sierra, PharmD, BCPPS

An impressive number of LLUSP students matched to prestigious and renowned pharmacy residency and fellowship programs across the country!

The results of this year's American Society of Health System Pharmacists Residency Match for Loma Linda University School of Pharmacy student pharmacists were exciting! In the first phase of the Match, 59% of students secured residency positions, rising to 70% after the second phase of the Match. This notable match rate highlights the strength and competitiveness of our students and is higher than that of many pharmacy schools in Southern California. LLUSP students matched to top programs such as Johns Hopkins Howard County Medical Center, Stanford Medicine Children's Health, Rady Children's Hospital San Diego, and Loma Linda University Medical Center!

The results reflect both the hard work and dedication of our students as well as the support of our faculty, preceptors, and the community. We are so proud of this year's graduating class and all they've accomplished!

70%

LLUSP TOTAL
RESIDENCY
MATCH RATE
2025



JOSEPH AZURIN

Residency Match:
Stanford Medicine
Children's Health



RYAN VALENCIA

Residency Match:
Rady Children's Hospital
San Diego



DIANA SOHN

Residency Match:
Loma Linda University
Medical Center



JAE SOHN

Residency Match:
Johns Hopkins Howard
County Medical Center

OUTSTANDING CLASS OF 2025 STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

Loma Linda University President's Award: **Da Young (Diana) Sohn**

The highest award given to a graduating student is the Loma Linda University President's Award. During the Class of 2025 hooding ceremony, Diana Sohn received the prestigious award in recognition of her superior academic achievement and active involvement in leadership, research, and service while in pharmacy school. Throughout her time in pharmacy school, Dr. Sohn maintained an exceptional GPA and consistently ranked at the top of her class. She

is highly motivated, hardworking and compassionate. Dr. Sohn's interest in pharmacy began when she assisted a pharmacist on a medical mission in the Philippines. The healthcare inequities she observed during the experience left her feeling burdened, and it was then she decided to become a healthcare professional who would share God's love and hope with patients. The next step in Dr. Sohn's journey towards a career in pharmacy is the PGY-1 residency program at Loma Linda University Medical Center.



Loma Linda University School of Pharmacy Dean's Award: **Asya Bookal**

To recognize her exceptional academic achievement and outstanding service, Asya Bookal received the LLUSP Dean's Award during the school's commencement weekend hooding ceremony. Dr. Bookal's calm demeanor reflects thoughtfulness, confidence, and humility. She possesses exemplary leadership skills and a passion for community service, and she strives to promote the field of pharmacy. LLUSP is confident Dr. Bookal will take these attributes with her and be equally successful in her PGY-1 residency experience at AdventHealth in Florida.



SERENDIPITY

How Angelica and Andrew Became Pharmacy Students

By Jen Mathew, MA

ser-en-dip-i-ty (noun): the occurrence and development of events by chance in a happy or beneficial way

In a college preparatory elective class during her freshman year of high school, Angelica Torres learned about a career in pharmacy when she and her classmates were tasked with investigating various professions. Although Angelica randomly selected the vocation of pharmacy, she became increasingly interested in it and thought perhaps someday she would like to become a pharmacist!

Her interest in pharmacy grew during frequent trips Angelica made with her grandfather around that same time in her life. While they waited to pick up his medications, Angelica observed the pharmacists with curiosity.

Years later, Angelica's dad suffered a severe reaction to a poisonous spider bite and was rushed to the Emergency Department at Loma Linda University Medical Center (LLUMC). During surgery preparations, doctors noticed his sugar levels were extremely high, and he was diagnosed with diabetes. Subsequently, Angelica often accompanied her father when he returned to LLUMC for weekly diabetes management classes and to the pharmacy. She was always impressed by the friendly and caring demeanor of the doctors, nurses, pharmacists and educators at Loma Linda. "The staff talked with my Dad as if they'd known each other for years, and we felt like they genuinely cared about him," Angelica recalls.

From that point on, she held LLUMC in high esteem and began dreaming of coming to Loma Linda University for pharmacy school. During several visits to LLUMC's pharmacy with her father, she began talking to pharmacists there and learning about the pharmacy school at LLU. "I want to be a genuinely caring and compassionate healthcare provider for my patients, and I knew that LLU would prepare me to be that kind of pharmacist."

Later, as a college student at California State University, San Bernardino, Angelica began following LLU School of Pharmacy (LLUSP) on social



media and becoming familiar with the program as well as its faculty and staff. “In every post I saw, people were so smiley and happy!” She recalls checking out the “People of Shryock Hall” stories on Instagram with her boyfriend Andrew to learn about the staff and faculty. They both felt drawn to the friendly faces they saw in the video introductions.

In fact, they were so interested in meeting the People of Shryock Hall that when they saw advertising on their campus for a recruitment event which would include LLU School of Pharmacy, Angelica and Andrew purchased tickets so that they could meet Dr. Willie Davis and learn about how Angelica could become a student at her “dream school.”

This was, of course, unbeknownst to Dr. Davis, who had forgotten about the recruitment event and had mistakenly made other travel plans! When he suddenly

Both Angelica and Andrew are still enamored with the program, its faculty and staff, and their student cohort.

remembered the morning of the event, just before heading out of town, he realized there was no way he could arrive to the event on time. However, something told him he needed to postpone his trip and head over to the Cal State San Bernardino campus. By the time he arrived at the room where he was to present, he was nearly an hour late.

But amazingly, Angelica and Andrew were still there, waiting for him.

Andrew says, “We figured it was worth it to stay. Dr. Davis was one of the main reasons we bought tickets to the event!”

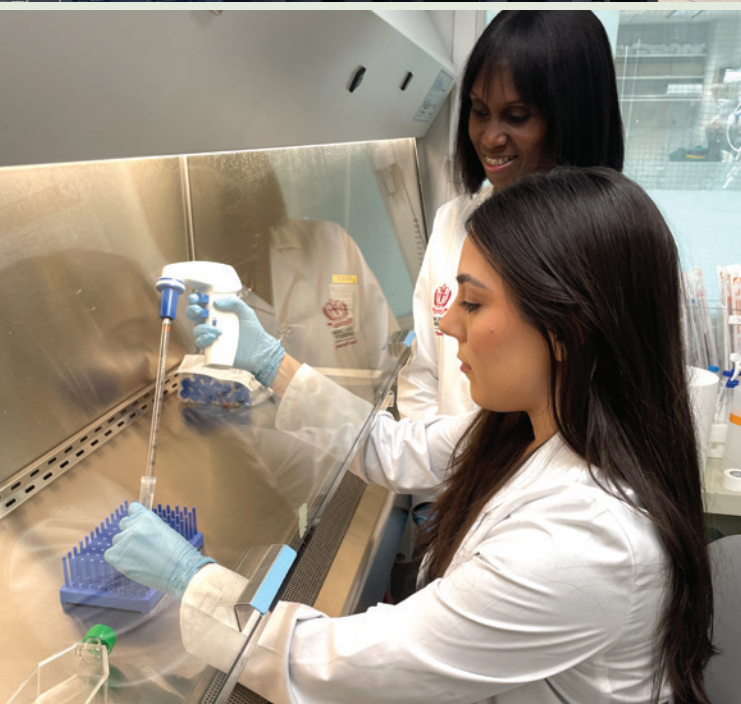
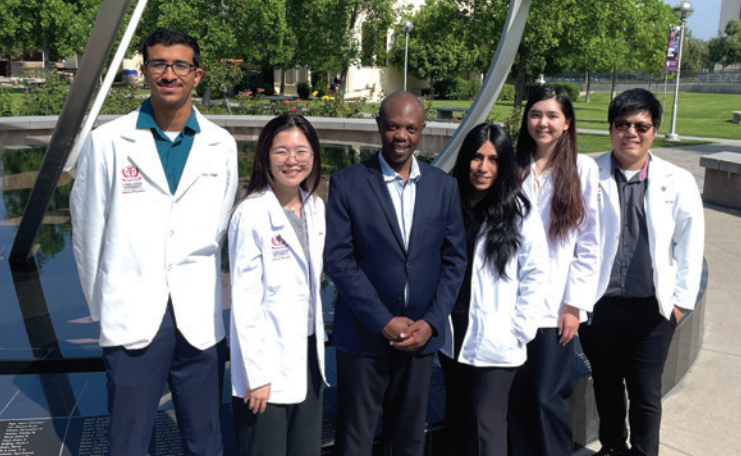
Seeing that there were just two people left in the classroom at that point, Dr. Davis decided to forego the formal presentation and instead sat down for a friendly conversation with Angelica and Andrew. They discussed their backgrounds, their goals, and why pharmacy and LLUSP might be a good fit for them.

Up to that point, Andrew had only attended the recruitment event to support Angelica and hadn’t seriously considered becoming a pharmacist himself, but he became convinced during his conversation with Dr. Davis that he, too, should pursue a career in pharmacy.

Both Andrew and Angelica appreciated that Dr. Davis explained how pharmacists can be an important part of a community and can serve as a bridge between a patient and his or her physician. Angelica feels that pharmacists are often a friendly face in a setting and field that is often confusing and overwhelming to patients. Additionally, she looks forward to explaining to patients *why* they need to take certain medications.

In August, Andrew and Angelica became students at LLUSP in the Class of 2028. Both are recipients of HCEP (Hispanic Center for Excellence in Pharmacy) scholarships and six months later, both Angelica and Andrew are still enamored with the program, its faculty and staff, and their student cohort. “We are thoroughly happy to be here!” Andrew reports. “Friends from undergrad tell me I smile more now! They ask me, ‘Is it easier than undergrad? Do you have less work?’ and I tell them, ‘Absolutely not! It’s more difficult, and I have a lot more responsibilities! I’m just enjoying it so much more!’”

Angelica says, “I’m not learning just to learn; I’m actually studying things I’m passionate about, and I’m loving it!”



For Some Faculty and Students, Summertime is for Scholarship

By Jen Mathew, MA

In April, first-year pharmacy students Nathan Murcia and Alexia Garipey learned they were selected for LLUSP's Summer Research Fellowship Program. As winners of the fellowship award, they will conduct research with faculty over the summer and earn work-study pay or a stipend. Dr. Kathryn Knecht, Professor in the Department of Pharmaceutical and Administrative Sciences, will serve as their faculty mentor as they research the possible effects of health and lifestyle factors on glaucoma.

Other students will also conduct research this summer with faculty outside of the fellowship program and on a volunteer basis. Third-year students Jessica Harris, Rita Dementyev, and Ivan Jacuinde will work with Drs. Tomona Iso and Huyentran Tran to research equity iron therapy for patients with heart failure with reduced ejection fraction. Melody Cruz, a fourth-year student, will assist Dr. Olivia Francis Boyle in the Chan Shun research lab to study CRLF2 expression in tumor biology. Assistant Professor Dr. Aimable Ngendihimana will be assisted by P3 students Rachel Ko, Aya Miyajima, Connie Rodriguez Flores and Benjamin Barruga with various research projects related to antibiotic in-use shelf life, chlorpyrifos, and atorvastatin.

Assistant professors Dr. Tomona Iso, Department of Pharmacy Practice, and Dr. Olivia Francis-Boyle, Department of Pharmaceutical and Administrative Practice, are responsible for managing and overseeing the Summer Research Fellowship Program, including coordinating logistics and selecting awardees.

According to Dr. Iso, the program fosters invaluable experiences for both faculty and students. "For faculty, it provides a unique platform to mentor and support the next generation of researchers while contributing to advancements in the field. For students, it offers the chance to gain a deeper understanding of research methodologies, skills essential for their future careers, and to develop critical thinking skills that extend beyond the classroom. This program not only strengthens their foundational research skills but also inspires long-term interest in scholarly work and evidence-based practice."

Quiz Bowl 2024 Champions

School: Loma Linda

Points: 6200



LLUSP WINS CSHP QUIZ BOWL!

For the second time in our school's history, Team LLUSP won the Quiz Bowl at California Society of Health-System Pharmacists (CSHP) Seminar. The jeopardy-style competition-- hosted in November of 2024 in Palm Springs-- included teams of 8-10 students from each of California's pharmacy schools. Participants on LLUSP's team included Khayla Chapman (P3), Brianna Bryan P3), Joseph Azurin (P4), Inshaal Rehman (P3), Joshua Torres (P4), Darren Kang (P4), Nicole Pustea (P3), and Katherine Reynaldo (P3).

To form the team that would represent LLUSP, the local chapter hosted an online quiz bowl open to all members. The students with the top eight highest overall scores were selected to join the team. Leading up to the CSHP competition, the team divided topics among themselves so each member could focus on mastering a specific area. This collaborative approach allowed them to cover more information and support one another's learning. The team reviewed topics and studied notes for days and even weeks. Inshaal Rehman helped coordinate logistics by creating group chats, distributing materials, and ensuring everyone was well-prepared leading up to the event.

The Quiz Bowl lasted two and a half hours and covered a super wide range of topics including artificial intelligence, geriatric psychology, and personal finance, to biostatistics, vaccinations and pharmacy law.

At the end of the quiz bowl, the winners were immediately announced, and LLUSP's team members relished the victory by taking pictures with the quiz bowl trophy.

Inshaal says, "I am incredibly proud of our team's hard work and dedication. It was an unforgettable experience, and we were honored to bring home the championship title for LLUSP!"

"I'm extremely thankful to the Loma Linda SSHP chapter for the opportunity to represent the school at the state level!" says Joseph Azurin, who wrote and submitted answers on behalf of the team during the competition. "Thank you to the rest of the team for their valuable input and their trust in me to answer the questions."

Dr. Caroline Sierra, advisor for LLUSP's CSHP chapter and associate dean for LLUSP's Academic Affairs says, "Winning the CSHP Quiz Bowl reflects our students' hard work and expertise while highlighting the impact of collaboration in providing excellent healthcare. We are incredibly proud of our exceptional pharmacy students on the Quiz Bowl team!"



“My entire career has been an example of challenging the status quo, advocating for adequate and fair reimbursement for our patient care services, and pushing back against unfair business practices.”



Professor McDonough named president of the American Pharmacists Association

APhA is the oldest and largest pharmacy association in the United States

By DonaJayne Potts, MBA

Loma Linda University School of Pharmacy professor Randy McDonough, PharmD, has been named the 170th president of the American Pharmacists Association (APhA).

Representing more than 62,000 members, APhA is the nation's oldest and largest pharmacy association. From its headquarters in Washington, D.C., the organization plays a vital role in shaping policies and regulations that impact pharmacy practice at both the national and state levels.

Since its founding in 1852, APhA has led the profession by advancing the role of pharmacists, student pharmacists, and pharmacy technicians as medication experts in team-based, patient-centered care. Through advocacy, education, and innovation, the association continues to strengthen the impact of pharmacy on public health.

McDonough said he has spent his life preparing for this leadership role.

"My entire career has been an example of challenging the status quo, advocating for adequate and fair reimbursement for our patient care services, and pushing back against unfair business practices," McDonough said. "I've worked to create a brand of pharmacy practice that provides a meaningful career for all pharmacy personnel."

McDonough is board-certified in geriatrics and as a pharmacotherapy specialist. He is the co-founder and owner of Innovative Pharmacy Solutions and a professor of Pharmacy Management and Innovation at LLU School of Pharmacy. He is co-owner and CEO of Towncrest Pharmacies, Wellness Apothecary, Bennett Pharmacy, and Cornerstone Apothecary Pharmacies, where he oversees the development, implementation, and quality assurance of all clinical services and operations.

He has presented internationally on pharmaceutical care, Medication Therapy Management, and the implementation of patient care services in the community pharmacy setting. McDonough is nationally recognized for developing innovative pharmacy business models and has received numerous honors, including the APhA Daniel B. Smith Award, NCPA Independent Pharmacist of the Year, IPA Innovative Pharmacist of the Year, and Parata's Lifetime Achievement, Entrepreneurial, and Patient Care Pharmacist of the Year Awards.

LLUSP's Leadership Legacy

McDonough is the second faculty member from LLU School of Pharmacy to be elected into the top leadership role within the APhA. Former dean Michael Hogue, PharmD, FAPhA, FNAP, became APhA's 165th president in March 2020 and in 2023, assumed the role of the association's 15th Executive Vice President and Chief Executive Officer. Hogue served as the school's dean for four years, and played a pivotal role in COVID-19 vaccination efforts across campus and throughout San Bernardino County.

Kyle M. Sousa, PhD, dean of LLU School of Pharmacy, said it's remarkable that this is the second time in just five years that an LLU faculty member has been elected to serve as APhA President. "This is a true testament to the caliber of leadership within our Doctor of Pharmacy program," Sousa said.

"Dr. McDonough's well-deserved honor reflects his leadership, innovation, and unwavering dedication to advancing the pharmacy profession," Sousa said. "His passion continues to inspire all of us here at the School and exemplifies the impact our faculty have in shaping the future of healthcare."

2024-2025 FACULTY & STAFF HIGHLIGHTS



DEPARTMENT OF PHARMACEUTICAL & ADMINISTRATIVE SCIENCES

1. Dr. Olayemi Adeoye, MBBS, PhD, MPH joined the LLU team that provided training to the University of the Southern Caribbean on Evidence-based Research Synthesis. More specifically, he presented on “Funnel and Forest Plots Used in Synthesis Research.” Dr. Adeoye also helped train staff and faculty from and outside of LLUH on “Comprehensive Systematic Review,” provided through the LLUH Center for Evidence Synthesis.

2. Dr. Khaled Bahjri, MD, DrPH, MPH was promoted to the rank of tenured Full Professor. In recognition of his outstanding contributions, he also received the LLUSP Community Service Award. Finally, since July 2024, Dr. Bahjri has published a research article in a peer-reviewed journal.

3. Kristopher E. Boyle, PhD authored two research publications exploring the anticancer properties of duocarmycin SA, a potent anticancer antibiotic with promise against hard-to-treat cancers. His first publication was titled “A comprehensive review of the antitumor properties and mechanistic insights of duocarmycin analogs,” and appeared in the journal *Cancers*. His second contribution was an original research article titled “Seco-

duocarmycin SA in aggressive glioblastoma cell lines,” published in the *International Journal of Molecular Sciences*.

4. Ike de la Peña, PhD received a subcontract grant as part of an NIH-funded research project focused on the development of ADHD therapeutics. He delivered a continuing education talk on the opioid crisis during LLU’s Homecoming 2025. He published four research articles in high-impact journals, including *Translational Psychiatry* and the *Journal of Pharmaceutical Investigation*. Additionally, Dr. de la Peña was a finalist for the Kinzer-Rice Award, a university-level recognition for excellence in teaching.

5. Olivia Francis-Boyle, PhD was promoted to the rank of Associate Professor. Her three posters were accepted and presented by trainees from her lab at local and national conferences (including the LLU Basic Science Research Symposium and the American Association for Cancer Research) and one online poster abstract was accepted by the American Society of Hematology. Additionally, she served as the Chair of the School of Pharmacy’s Assessment Committee and the Chair of the Basic Science Research Symposium’s Steering Committee which was responsible for planning last year’s symposium.

6. Paul Gavaza, PhD co-authored six peer-reviewed publications spanning diverse areas of pharmacy education, practice, and health outcomes research. These included national surveys on pharmacy faculty and student perspectives on artificial intelligence and competency-based education, an exploratory study on

pharmacists' experiences with prayer and spirituality in patient care, and an international study linking mindset to psychological wellbeing among pharmacy students in Zimbabwe. Dr Gavaza also contributed to a cost analysis of antivenom therapy using data from the North American Snakebite Registry.

DEPARTMENT OF PHARMACY PRACTICE

7. Lisa Hong, PharmD, BCPS was named LLUSP's Preceptor of the Year and received the ACCP Adult Medicine (AMED) PRN Outstanding Paper of the Year Award. In the past year, she delivered two national presentations, published eight peer-reviewed manuscripts, and presented five posters. She also led a successful medical mission trip to Kenya and is serving as the ACCP AMED PRN Secretary/Treasurer and Newsletter Committee Chair.

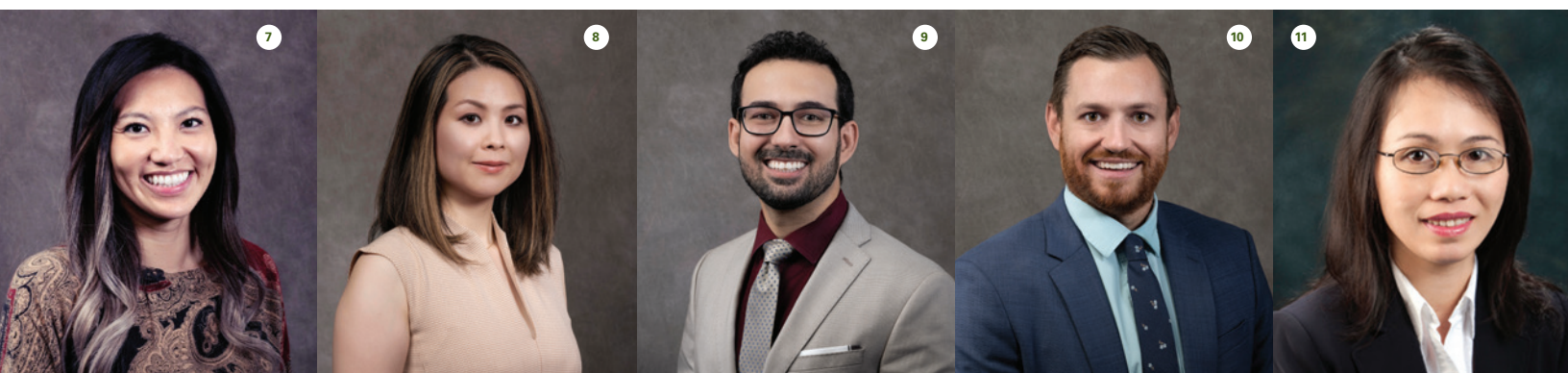
8. Tomona Iso, PharmD, BCPS, APH published a research article in the *European Journal of Hospital Pharmacy* and presented research posters at the ACCP annual meeting. She also served as a peer reviewer for several journals, including *Annals of Pharmacotherapy*,

American Journal of Emergency Medicine, and *JBI Evidence Synthesis*.

9. Alireza FakhriRavari, PharmD co-authored a manuscript titled "Meta-analysis on safety of standard vs. prolonged infusion of beta-lactams" and another manuscript evaluating various equations for calculating vancomycin AUC. He also won Keynote Speaker and Golden Brick awards and received a grant to integrate the National HIV Curriculum into his course.

10. Justin Kinney, PharmD, MA, BCCCP, FCCM helped author a paper addressing ketamine use in the pediatric intensive care unit population. In addition, he was named a 2025 LLUSP Teacher of the Year.

11. Huyentran N. Tran, PharmD, BCCP, BCPS was honored with LLUSP's Teacher of the Year award for the Class of 2027. During the 2024-2025 academic year, she published two manuscripts in peer-reviewed journals and co-authored three posters in collaboration with colleagues, residents and students. She also received a grant through the HCEP Summer Research Program to support student-led research initiatives. In addition, Dr. Tran continues to serve as Program Director of the PGY2 Cardiology Pharmacy Residency, which successfully completed its ASHP re-accreditation review this year.





Congratulations
to the

2025 TEACHERS OF THE YEAR!

Student votes determined the winners, which were announced by each of the class presidents during LLUSP's annual Honors & Awards Ceremony in May.



**1. Dr. Kathryn Knecht,
Class of 2028**

**2. Dr. Huyentran Tran,
Class of 2027**

**3. Dr. Jessa Koch,
Class of 2026**

**4. Dr. Justin Kinney,
Class of 2025**

Dr. Michael Lauw Named Alumni Preceptor of the Year



At LLUSP's Honors & Awards Ceremony, Dr. Michael Lauw (Class of 2020) was recognized as the 2025 Alumni Preceptor of the Year. Dr. Lauw is a clinical outpatient pharmacist at Loma Linda University East Campus Hospital. A proud Loma Linda alumnus, he became a preceptor in 2023 and has quickly become a valued member of the Experiential Education team. His rotation is known for being well-organized, personalized,

and supportive. Students consistently describe him as approachable and committed to their learning. He encourages independent thinking, provides timely feedback, and helps students build confidence in essential clinical skills. His colleagues value his responsiveness and flexibility in accommodating students. Dr. Lauw's dedication to teaching is clear, and his impact on students has been lasting and meaningful.

Are you interested in giving back to LLUSP and helping to mold the next generation of pharmacists by serving as a preceptor?

Reach out to Dr. Farnoosh Zough, LLUSP's Director of Experiential Education, at FZough@llu.edu.





LET YOUR PHARMACY CAREERS COMMENCE!

Congratulations to the 50 members of LLUSP's Class of 2025, whose four long years of pharmacy education culminated in a gratifying and celebratory commencement weekend!

Special highlights included:

- ♦ LLUSP alumni couple Dr. Jason Kiroyan (Class of 2018) and Dr. Celesti Kiroyan (Class of 2014) served as guest speakers for the hooding ceremony, sharing their inspiring personal experiences and reflections with the Class of 2025 and their families.
- ♦ Dr. Christie Bolous (Class of 2016) hooded her younger sister, Dr. Lauren Bolous. Likewise, Dr. Rita Hanna Al-Kass (Class of 2024) hooded her cousin, Dr. Reem Hanna Al-Kass.
- ♦ During the baccalaureate service on Sabbath morning, Pastor Randy Roberts used AI-generated celebrity twins for Dean Sousa and class president Ahmed Bahjri as an object lesson for mirroring God's image by extending his love and sharing his true character with patients.
- ♦ At commencement, several faculty and staff were acknowledged and presented awards for their service.
- ♦ Dr. Kevin Komoto, chief operating officer of Komoto Healthcare and president of the California Pharmacists Association, delivered a powerful commencement speech about the future of pharmacy.
- ♦ **THE BEST PART:** when the VIPs from the Class of 2025 received their diplomas and the crowd erupted into celebration!

Welcome, graduates, to LLUSP's community of alumni! We look forward to seeing you again for Homecoming in March, 2026!



PharmDs Mentoring PharmTechs

Many Loma Linda University School of Pharmacy alumni have encouraged pharmacy technicians at their sites to pursue Doctorate of Pharmacy degrees. Some of those techs are now LLUSP students!

“I’ve had the privilege of mentoring **Julien Ortega and Connie Hernandez**, both of whom started as cashiers at my pharmacy. I supported and encouraged them as they pursued their pharmacy technician licenses, and I was incredibly proud to recommend them when they applied to LLUSP. Now, they are starting rotations in their third year of pharmacy school! Watching them grow and take steps toward becoming pharmacists has been so fulfilling, and I’m excited to see where their journeys lead.”

–Dr. Jigisha Tanna (Class of 2013), Pharmacy Manager, CVS Health

“**Jonathan Deanda** and I first met at the 24-hour Kaiser Permanente Outpatient Pharmacy in Fontana, CA in 2016 when I was an intern pharmacist. As a pharmacy tech at the time, Jon helped train me in multiple Kaiser Permanente systems, insurance nuances, and even assisted me during consultations with Spanish speaking patients. As we worked together, I not only came to appreciate Jon’s professionalism and expertise but also gained insight into his personal background and aspirations. Having gained a deep understanding of Jon’s journey and his passion for serving his community, it became clear that the Loma Linda School of Pharmacy was the ideal fit for him. To support him in this next chapter, Jon and I regularly met to discuss his concerns about the steps ahead. His main hesitation was the idea of leaving Kaiser Permanente to pursue full-time studies, so I suggested an alternative: he could transition into an intern role after licensure and remain with the company. As a result, Jon joined the pharmacy I manage as an intern pharmacist. He has been

able to apply his coursework, refine his clinical skills, and receive ongoing support as he progresses toward his ultimate goal of becoming a pharmacist. Reflecting on the mentors who have shaped my journey, I am deeply grateful for their guidance and the impact they’ve had on my personal and professional development. I firmly believe that the growth and advancement of our field are fueled by the investment we make in students, providing them with the tools, knowledge, and encouragement to thrive. There is a unique sense of fulfillment that comes from fostering others’ growth, and it is this reciprocity of learning and service that I find truly rewarding.”

–Lawrence Chui (Class of 2020), Pharmacy Manager, Kaiser Permanente

“I have known **Kathleen Ranoa** for about 15 years. I am very lucky to have her as my pharmacy technician and now my intern pharmacist. Kathleen presents critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and strong communication skills. Her ability to multitask and prioritize effectively is essential in a fast-paced retail setting where patient needs, provider inquiries, and medication safety all demand immediate attention. Most importantly she has patience and compassion in helping patients manage their medications and provide them the most cost-effective solutions while showing empathy and understanding in every interaction. Kathleen shows these core values that will make her a great pharmacist. I am sure she is prepared and will excel in any practice settings.”

–Dr. Kim Cai (Class of 2008), Pharmacy Manager, Albertsons/Vons

ALUMNI NOTES

Diana Chui Ching Yeung, PharmD, APH, Class of 2012

Last year, I began a new role as an inpatient clinical pharmacist at LLU Children's Hospital. It is an honor to return to my alma mater in service to pediatrics—my first love in pharmacy. My colleagues' warmth and dedication have made my homecoming truly special. In April, life took me to Chicago. I now work a flexible schedule, flying back to serve in LLUCH while exploring opportunities to give back locally through student-run free clinics. This summer, I will also join the volunteer medical team at Camp Conrad Chinnock to support children with type 1 diabetes. Outside of work, I have embraced healing through creativity and movement—knitting, sewing, and distance running. My children now run alongside me. I hope to show them that living with purpose, connection, and care isn't just possible—it's essential, beautiful, and deeply life-giving. To every student and graduate reading this: May your journey bring you the same joy and fulfillment that mine continues to offer!



Diana Chi Ching Yeung

Mary Thompson, PharmD, Class of 2016

I am currently serving as Clinical Pharmacy Coordinator for Dignity Health. I'm preparing to help with opening a brand new hospital this coming fall. Last year, I was nominated for the Values in Actions Award for bringing pharmacist-driven care to our Critical Care Units. In this role, I have provided critical care rounds, updates in practice, and antibiotic stewardship while I work directly with our pulmonologists and infectious disease team. I also build and drive pharmacy policies and practice and participate in the system-wide development of pharmacy residencies. This fall, I will take the BCCCP exam. I joined SCCM and have had the amazing support of my colleagues and critical care team in pharmacy and hospital leadership. The next steps in my career include pursuing a JD so I may serve the underserved patient population through healthcare law and ethics. I hope to enroll in a program that allows me to practice pharmacy while simultaneously training for my law degree. On the home front, I live on a farm with my sweet husband and two lovely daughters! We have twenty one chickens, a pig, and two sheep. My family gardens full time and sells eggs on the side to support our farm. It's been a fun and fulfilling life, and I am grateful to LLU for my training and the roots of faith and patient-centered care.



Mary Thompson

James Dexter, PharmD, Class of 2018

On May 25th, I married Dr. Ngan Pham (now Dr. Ngan Dexter) during a beautiful ceremony in the indoor arena of our "Fifty Horse Ranch!"



James Dexter

ALUMNI AWARDEES 2025

At Loma Linda University School of Pharmacy's Homecoming dinner, hosted at a venue in downtown Redlands in March, Dean Kyle Sousa presented awards to two distinguished alumni, recognizing their achievements in and contributions to the profession of pharmacy. Congratulations to our esteemed alumni!

LLUSP Rising Star: Dr. Kirsten Vyhmeister

For her exceptional achievements in practice and the potential to make significant contributions to the profession of pharmacy, Dr. Kirsten Vyhmeister (Class of 2021) was named Loma Linda University School of Pharmacy's 2025 Rising Star.

Dr. Vyhmeister graduated from LLUSP with dual degrees, a Doctorate of Pharmacy and Masters of Bioethics. She went on to complete both PGY1 Pharmacy Practice and PGY2 Cardiology residencies with Loma Linda University Health. Over her two years of residency, she delivered seven lectures and three ACPE-accredited continuing education webinars, one of which was hosted by California Society of Health-System Pharmacists. Her involvement in research during residency resulted in three peer-reviewed publications, the most recent of which was published with Dr. Huyentran Tran and Dr. Paul Gavaza and Class of 2024 alumni Dr. Murphy Nguyen and Dr. Grace Kang.

In 2022, Dr. Vyhmeister achieved Board Certifications as a Pharmacotherapy Specialist and in 2023, after completing residency, she joined the Critical Care Pharmacy team at Sharp Grossmont Hospital in San Diego, California, as an evening Critical Care Specialist. In her position at Sharp Grossmont, she acts as an alternate preceptor for PGY1 and PGY2 Critical Care Residents' Medical ICU, Surgical ICU, and Cardiology rotations, and serves on the Resident Advisory Committee, Clinical Task Force, and Sharp System Critical Care Pharmacy Committee.

Outside of work, Dr. Vyhmeister has continued to be involved with her local chapters of California Society of Health-System Pharmacists. She was elected as an Alternate Delegate for the Inland chapter in 2022, attending House of Delegates at the 2022 Seminar meeting, and this year was elected as Delegate for the San Diego chapter where she also serves on the New Practitioner Committee.



LLUSP Alum of the Year: Dr. Emily Hollinghurst

To recognize her valuable contributions to the practice of pharmacy and future generations of pharmacists, Dr. Emily Hollinghurst (Class of 2012) was named Loma Linda University School of Pharmacy's 2025 Alum of the Year.

After graduating from LLUSP, Dr. Hollinghurst completed her PGY1 Pharmacy Practice and PGY2 Oncology Pharmacy residencies at LLU Medical Center. Immediately after finishing residency in 2014, Dr. Hollinghurst worked as the adult inpatient oncology pharmacist at LLUMC where she participated in daily rounds and monitored and managed patients undergoing complex chemotherapy treatments. Dr. Hollinghurst worked briefly for Cigna's PBM, focusing on oncology therapeutics; however, when there was an opening at LLU Specialty Pharmacy, Dr. Hollinghurst knew she wanted to return to working with patients and teaching students and residents. From 2019 to 2023, she served as a member of the specialty pharmacy team where she focused on oral oncolytics. Dr. Hollinghurst pioneered the specialty pharmacy residency program at LLUSP as well as developed the Medi-Cal MTM program within the pharmacy. During her tenure at LLUMC, she was a preceptor and mentor for several students and residents.

Dr. Hollinghurst has presented at CSHP Seminar and Asembia's annual conference. She has served as a contributor to pharmacy CE programs accessible to pharmacists across the country. Dr. Hollinghurst holds an Advanced Practice Pharmacist license in California and has maintained her BCOP certification since 2016. Since July 2023, Dr. Hollinghurst has been a breast cancer science liaison within the US Oncology Medical Affairs division at AstraZeneca.

Besides her work as a pharmacist, Dr. Hollinghurst is a wife and a mom to two beautiful children. In her free time, she enjoys gardening and running.



Catching Up with **DR. JAMES WHITE IV**





By Jen Mathew, MA

I was always strong in science and math and felt compassion for people, so I knew I was going to do something in the medical field,” says Dr. James White (LLUSP Class of 2006). But most likely, Dr. White’s decision to become a pharmacist was influenced by his father who served as a pharmacist at Loma Linda University Medical Center for over 30 years.

When it came time to decide which pharmacy school he would attend, Dr. White says it came down to its proximity to his home, where he had a strong support system, and the way the faculty at Loma Linda University School of Pharmacy (LLUSP) presented the work of pharmacists. Their description of a career in pharmacy aligned with the kind of work he envisioned himself doing— one which was focused on compassion and taking care of the needs of patients, irrespective of their backgrounds.

White remembers that Dr. Willie Davis, one of his faculty advisors, offered him valuable support, especially during his second and third years of pharmacy school. “He told me things I needed to hear, and he continues to be a source of encouragement to me today.”

After graduating from LLUSP, Dr. White worked for CVS for 16 years, ending his career there as a head pharmacist. But two years ago, he had the opportunity to work as a staff pharmacist for an independent pharmacy located in Beaumont, California, close to where he lives. At Total Care Pharmacy, Dr. White works with a team of 10 people to fill approximately 3000 prescriptions a week, provide immunizations, offer delivery and mail-in services that extend beyond state lines, and do all they can to help patients.

Working near his home is important to White, whose two children (eight and 13 years old) are autistic and have special needs. “During my years with CVS, and especially



“Stay connected to those you went to school with as much as you can. Be a friend and resource to them and let them be the same for you— not just for your next career step, but for human friendship and camaraderie, which are very important.”

when I was pharmacist in charge (PIC), I was required to do a lot of driving all around southern California, and I wasn't offered anything close to home, so I wasn't able to spend a lot of time with my kids. I was also dealing with my own health issues, which made extensive driving more difficult.”

Dr. White believed that working at one location close to his family was the best solution, though it took him some time to find a position near his home. Now that he is working at Total Care, he and his wife of 15 years are able to share and tag-team their parenting efforts. Both children are homeschooled and have severe food allergies, so meals are made from scratch. “Between full time work and taking care of my kids, there's a lot going on! I'm happy that I'm able to prioritize family now,” White says.

Recently, Dr. White attended LLUSP's annual Homecoming Reunion Dinner for the first time. Now that he is working closer to home, White feels he has more flexibility in his schedule, so when fellow alum Dr. Kimberleigh Ingram (Class of 2011) reached out to him about coming to the Homecoming dinner, he was eager to finally join the festivities.

“I've actually known Kim since we were in elementary school. We've kept in touch all of these years. But I also have occasionally connected with other alumni who worked for CVS, like Jigisha Tanna (Class of 2013), Elise Chen and Donald Tung (Class of 2011).”

Nearly 20 years after graduating from pharmacy school, Dr. White knows the importance of relationships in and out of work and home. He admits it's been a challenge to keep in touch with classmates and other colleagues, but to current pharmacy students and recent graduates, he says, “Stay connected to those you went to school with as much as you can. Be a friend and resource to them and let them be the same for you— not just for your next career step, but for human friendship and camaraderie, which are very important.”

REMEMBER WHEN...



...the School of Pharmacy was located in a different building?

For 10 years, from the time the school first opened in 2002 until the end of summer in 2012, the schools of pharmacy and nursing shared West Hall. Pharmacy faculty, staff and students used several offices and three downstairs classrooms on the north side until the School outgrew those spaces and former dean, Dr. Billy Hughes, championed the cause for moving LLUSP into its own building. Shryock Hall has served as home base for the School of Pharmacy for 13 years now, but its alumni from the classes of 2006-2012 will only feel nostalgia for West Hall's "pharmacy practice lab," student lockers, hallway potlucks, and basement classrooms with their skinny tables, structural support poles, and rolling blue chairs.

(Pictured are Sean Patrick Bennett McGrath, Guarang Patel, and Christopher Lucas, Class of 2009)

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!



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School of Pharmacy

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