

# The Educator

## COLLEGE OF PHARMACY ANNUAL REPORT 2013





## The Center for the Sciences and Pharmacy

From its soaring, ultra-modern atrium and cutting-edge labs to inviting social spaces for students to study and unwind, the Center for the Sciences and Pharmacy (CSP) is high tech yet warm and welcoming. This spectacular four-story 126,000 square-foot building is home to the Western New England University College of Pharmacy, the Department of Physical and Biological Sciences, the Department of Neuroscience, and the Department of Psychology.

Since opening in 2011, the \$40 million Center for the Sciences and Pharmacy offers unprecedented opportunities for scientific research, investigation, and collaboration.

Hands-on and simulation activities in the Pharmacy program take place within the Secundum Artem Practice Laboratory, IV Preparation Lab, Multipurpose Lab for compounding, and Patient Assessment Suite. In the Simulation Lab, students engage with a fully interactive simulation mannequin.

Outside, the grounds of the CSP include an educational medicinal garden containing native New England plants.



# Message from the Dean



Greetings from Western New England University College of Pharmacy! I am excited to share with you some of the great things taking place within the College of Pharmacy in this inaugural issue of *The Educator*.

Allow me to start with a little bit of history to provide some context regarding how far we've come. Our founding class of 75 learners, the Class of 2015, enrolled in the College of Pharmacy in the fall of 2011. The planning for that occurred during the preceding several foundational years, when we had our founding six administrators, eight faculty, and four dedicated staff and were in three campus locations as our new facility, the Center for the Sciences and Pharmacy, was under construction. How long ago that seems!

Today, the College of Pharmacy family has grown to 45 committed faculty, staff, and administrators and is located in the Center for the Sciences and Pharmacy (CSP) with our

colleagues from Arts and Sciences. Our family also includes our pharmacy learners. At present, we have three classes enrolled and with the arrival of the fourth class in 2014 we will have achieved our capacity of approximately 300 learners enrolled across the four years of the program. Our founding classes of learners are unique in that they enrolled in an evolving program and have contributed profoundly to its evolution; they are entrepreneurs and trailblazers!

Within this issue you will learn about our learners and their accomplishments, our commitment to the community through giving back, the great work of our faculty and staff, and the engaged participation of our friends and colleagues who have supported us throughout our development. Clearly our success is a collective success, borne from the commitment of dedicated individuals and supported by a University steadfast in the development of a quality program.

As you read *The Educator*, we hope you gain some perspective about the College of Pharmacy, our mission and vision, and what excites us as we move forward. Ralph Waldo Emerson best summed up how our program has evolved in the quote "Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail." On behalf of the trailblazing learners, faculty, staff, and administration I encourage you to visit our website ([www.wne.edu/pharmacy](http://www.wne.edu/pharmacy)) to keep aware of our activities.

Best Regards,

Evan T. Robinson, RPh, PhD  
Dean and Professor

## The Western New England University College of Pharmacy At-A-Glance

### Mission

The Western New England University College of Pharmacy will prepare entry-level practitioners to provide pharmacy care to an increasingly diverse patient population in a variety of practice environments. The comprehensive learner-centered educational program will foster critical thinking skills, embrace professionalism, and instill a commitment to lifelong learning, community service, and leadership. The College will enhance the knowledge base of the pharmacy profession through teaching, service, research, and scholarly activity.

### Vision

The Western New England University College of Pharmacy will be prominently known for excellence in the preparation of pharmacy practitioners as educators of patients and other healthcare professionals and leaders for the betterment of patient care and the community.

### Meet the Learners

|                     | Class of 2015 | Class of 2016 | Class of 2017 | Class of 2015-17 |
|---------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|------------------|
| <b>Number</b>       | <b>70</b>     | <b>77</b>     | <b>76</b>     | <b>223</b>       |
| <b>% Female</b>     | <b>56%</b>    | <b>53%</b>    | <b>61%</b>    | <b>57%</b>       |
| <b>Age range</b>    | <b>21-42</b>  | <b>20-53</b>  | <b>19-41</b>  | <b>19-53</b>     |
| <b>Prior degree</b> | <b>40%</b>    | <b>37%</b>    | <b>26%</b>    | <b>34%</b>       |
| <b>Bilingual</b>    | <b>20%</b>    | <b>33%</b>    | <b>17%</b>    | <b>24%</b>       |

# The 2013 White Coat Ceremony: The Journey Begins



**Keynote Speaker**  
**Ms. Margaret Dempsey Clapp**  
RPh, MS, MDiv,  
Former Chief Pharmacy Officer  
Massachusetts General Hospital



**Evan Robinson, RPh, PhD**  
Dean and Professor  
College of Pharmacy



*“The White Coat Ceremony signifies the entrance of our learners into the Doctor of Pharmacy program,”* says Joshua Spooner, assistant dean for student affairs and associate professor of pharmacy practice. “Over the course of four years, they will not only transition from dependent learners to independent practitioners, they will also develop the professional traits necessary to enter the profession with altruism, duty, and compassion. The White Coat Ceremony serves as the first step in the College of Pharmacy’s efforts to promote professionalism.”

Welcoming the Class of 2017, keynote speaker Ms. Margaret Dempsey Clapp, former longtime Chief Pharmacy Officer, Massachusetts General Hospital, told the 76 first-year learners, “Tonight you take on your symbolic mantle or stole—that white coat sets you apart from all others. You accept as your mission the care of your patient. You join a long lineage of apothecaries dating back to 2,600 B.C.”

Ms. Clapp noted that White Coat Ceremonies did not exist when she went to pharmacy school. However, establishing such traditions today is an important part of the evolution of the College of Pharmacy, which welcomed its first class in the fall of 2011.

Looking back at her own White Coat Ceremony, Ogadi Egbuonu, Class of 2015, recalls, “Walking on stage on that important day represented a pivotal step in my educational career. Not only did I feel proud to be a student in the College of Pharmacy, but also privileged to be part of the inaugural class.”



## Wearing the Color of Their Calling

“You actually are a member of the profession as soon as you enter into the professional phase of the College of Pharmacy,” said University President Anthony S. Caprio. “You are learning how to be a professional. . . .that means much about who you are and what you are. You are not just a pharmacist by name. Being a pharmacist implies many important things—all part of this definition of a professional.”

To emphasize the responsibilities of the profession, Ms. Clapp used the analogy of a golden thread that represents the pharmacist’s link to each patient. “It is my sacred covenant of trust with the patient, the trust that every patient will have with each and every one of you. I knew that I needed to do all that I could for that patient to prevent harm, to heal, and to be an advocate for that patient. And now, particularly with healthcare changing, you’ve got to help the patient— because they don’t know what’s going on.”

With the acceptance of their white coats, the members of the Class of 2017 were eager to take on the responsibilities of their profession.

“It’s the end of one journey—it was a lot of hard work to get here—but the beginning of another one,” said Chelsea Thompson, Class of 2017. “It’s exciting to be here with all of our classmates, especially in this newer program. We’re honored to be an integral part of its development, and to begin working hard to become members of the community as practicing pharmacists.”



**Chelsea Thompson**  
Class of 2017



*“Tonight you take on your symbolic mantle or stole—that white coat sets you apart from all others. You accept as your mission the care of your patient. You join a long lineage of apothecaries dating back to 2,600 B.C.”*

**Ms. Margaret Dempsey Clapp**  
Former Chief Pharmacy Officer,  
Massachusetts General Hospital



# Erica Wegrzyn Blazes New Trails with Inaugural Class

## Learner Spotlight: Erica Wegrzyn, Class of 2015

*“Western New England definitely cares about you—they see you as a student, not as a number,”* says Erica Wegrzyn, Class of 2015.

A member of the inaugural class of the College of Pharmacy, Erica Wegrzyn served as its first class president and is currently a peer advisor. She double majored in Biochemistry and Music at Ithaca College, but has now found her true passion in the field of pharmacy.

She and her class members are the trailblazers, who, in concert with the College’s administration and faculty, are on a journey of discovery as they shape a new learning environment together.

“One advantage of being such a small, new academic community is that we have the opportunity to enact change,” she says. “The faculty and staff come to us to make sure we are progressing as we should be. They take our feedback very seriously.”

While she has spent several years working in retail pharmacy, Wegrzyn has an interest in hospital pharmacy, and eventually working in academia. She and her research partner were recently invited to present a poster at the 2013 AACP Annual Meeting in Chicago. She was thrilled to attend its various presentations because “The meeting is at the forefront of academia, where all the groundbreaking work is occurring,” she says. The meeting also afforded her the opportunity to forge new relationships, “I really enjoyed comparing experiences with other students and networking with faculty from other programs. It was also wonderful to get to know our faculty better outside of the classroom.”

She sees such pedagogical initiatives being implemented here in the College of Pharmacy. As a second year learner, she enjoyed participating in the first round of the modules curriculum, studying therapeutics. Learning about multiple

organ systems and doing recitations to develop a work-up of a cardiac patient, Erica says, “helps you to look at a patient with multiple disease states and prioritize treatment. Putting the entire puzzle together at once helps you to see the big picture.”

Such courses are important she says in the field’s efforts to incorporate Medication Therapy Management (MTM) as a standard of care. “MTM will help to bridge the medical professions. In our modules, we discussed how to partner with physicians and other healthcare providers to ensure optimal patient care.”

As Wegrzyn and her classmates progress, the College of Pharmacy is always a step ahead, developing relationships with preceptors and a roster of rotation sites.

“I’ve been really impressed with our newest dean, Dr. Kim Tanzer [assistant dean of experiential affairs and associate professor of pharmacy practice],” says Wegrzyn. “She and her staff have been so receptive to helping us set up rotations in whatever field we want. She met with preceptors across the country, including the Albany area, where I’m from, to set up rotations for students who come from out of state, as well as many great local rotations. Dean Tanzer has been a wonderful addition to our already remarkable administration.”

With her classmates, Wegrzyn is honored to be laying the foundation for the PharmD program. “That’s a big responsibility because we are shaping what this College will be,” she says. “I want to have a lot of pride when I’m 50 years old, and get to be a preceptor to a student from Western New England. I will be eager to hear how the Pharmacy program will have changed, but also happy to see that it is still providing the quality education that I am getting today.”





*“The faculty and staff are focused on the success of each and every one of us. I don’t think you find that everywhere.”*

**Erica Wegrzyn  
Class of 2015**

# Learner Accomplishments

College of Pharmacy learners have been in the spotlight since the program first opened. Here are some highlights of their recent successes, both as individuals and in groups.



**Grant Stebbins '15** received the Massachusetts Society of Health-System Pharmacists Student Excellence Award.



**Meaghan Paris '16**, shown with Assistant Professor **Shabnam Sani**, was awarded a travel scholarship by the International Academy of Compounding Pharmacists to attend its 19th annual "Compounders on Capitol Hill" meeting in Arlington, VA in July 2013.



**Alana Regan '16** was a recipient of the Skookum Award of Excellence, given to University students who have demonstrated excellence in academics, cocurricular activities, athletics, volunteer work, and community service.



**Christine Galinski '15** was named a Walmart Scholar, a nationwide scholarship award for students who have demonstrated a strong interest in enhancing their preparation for a career in academic pharmacy. The award enabled her and her faculty coapplicant, Assistant Professor **Daniel Kennedy**, to attend the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy annual meeting in Chicago in July 2013.



*The College of Pharmacy awarded 26 learners scholarships totaling \$26,000 for the 2012-2013 academic year.*



**The College of Pharmacy chapter of the American Pharmacists Association - Academy of Student Pharmacists**, under the supervision of faculty adviser **David Baker**, assistant professor of pharmacy administration, and student-director **Tim Pchelka '16**, won the Best Picture award in the *Make Your Mark* video contest sponsored by the American Pharmacists Association. To view the video, please visit: [www.wne.edu/makeyourmark](http://www.wne.edu/makeyourmark).



**Briana Santaniello '15** was awarded an Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy Foundation/Pfizer Managed Care Pharmacy Summer internship at PerformRx in Philadelphia, PA, and traveled to the Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy Educational Conference in San Antonio in October 2013.



**Linda Mustafa '15** was named a Commonwealth Coast Conference Senior Scholar-Athlete for women's tennis.



**Gregory Lewis '15** represented the College of Pharmacy at the American Pharmacists Association National Patient Counseling Competition in New Orleans in March 2013.



*College of Pharmacy learners logged a total of 3,749 volunteer service hours (minimum 20 hours per learner) in a variety of University and community settings.*

# Learner Organizations

## Pharmacy Student Governance Association (PSGA)

As the overarching student governing group, PSGA oversees and coordinates other learner organizations and serves as a liaison between learners, faculty, and administration. In spring 2013, the PSGA organized the first annual—and very successful—golf tournament. Its newest tradition will be an annual formal dance to which learners, faculty, and administration will be invited.

## American Pharmacists Association Academy of Student Pharmacists (APhA-ASP)

The chapter has provided patient care programs, held annual patient counseling competitions and fundraising events, attended local and national meetings, and competed in the annual Patient Counseling Competition. Patient care program events included Operation Heart, Operation Self-Care, and chapter-created respiratory education. The respiratory education event was unique since it was interprofessional by including physician assistant students. They collaborated in educating the community on the proper use of nebulizers, inhalers, and peak flow meters. The Chapter's most exciting accomplishment this year was winning first place in the Best Film category of the APhA-ASP "Make Your Mark" PharmFlix Video Contest.



## American Society for Health System Pharmacists/Student Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP/SSHP)

ASHP/SSHP is open to those interested in working in hospitals and health-systems settings. It offers opportunities for advocacy, continuing education, drug information, national meetings and conferences, professional policies and practice standards, publishing opportunities, and residency options. The chapter also oversees the area's divisional Clinical Skills Competition, in which learners enhance their skills in collaborative practice with physicians in providing direct patient care.

## Phi Delta Chi

Phi Delta Chi is the country's first professional fraternity in pharmacy and has more than 70 chapters nationwide. The College of Pharmacy's chapter is committed to raising funds and increasing awareness for worthy causes, such as blood pressure screenings and a toy drive. It also works with St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.



## Alpha Zeta Omega Pharmaceutical Fraternity, Delta Tau Chapter

Founded in 2012, Delta Tau has focused on developing the chapter's organizational structure, chartering the chapter, initiating its first fraters, fundraising, performing community service, and holding several social events, which culminated in its first semi-formal. Some of Delta Tau's projects included a Thanksgiving Anything Drive and a toy drive, the Color Me WNE 5K walk for cancer, and hosting a weeklong diabetes awareness table on campus.

## Student National Pharmaceutical Association (SNPhA)

An educational service organization, SNPhA encourages learners to be voices for change and activism and serve as advocates for increased health awareness in underserved communities. SNPhA members have counseled patients, supplemented their own clinical knowledge, applied for special scholarships, and attended conferences.



# Learning By Doing: Student Engagement in the Community

## Learners Roll Up Sleeves at Blood Pressure Awareness Health Fair

On February 23, 2013, College of Pharmacy learners participated in a health fair at the Macedonia Church of God in Christ, Springfield, MA. This health fair's focus was on high blood pressure awareness and was titled: "Why Blood Pressure Matters." Dr. Izabela Collier, clinical assistant professor of pharmacy practice, ambulatory care, along with College of Pharmacy learners performed blood pressure screenings and consulted attendees on high blood pressure prevention and treatment. The event was a great success for community residents and College of Pharmacy learners.

## Team Up Pressure Down Health Fair Educates Alumni at Homecoming

The College of Pharmacy held a Team Up Pressure Down health fair event during Western New England University Homecoming Weekend 2012. The event was made possible due to a grant awarded to the College of Pharmacy from the National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS) Foundation as part of the Million Hearts initiative. The focus of this national initiative is on the coordination and enhancement of cardiovascular disease prevention activities across the public and private sectors. Its goal is to prevent one million heart attacks and strokes over five years.

The fair focused on blood pressure awareness. Thirteen learners from the Class of 2016 used their skills in evaluating the blood pressure of 91 attendees at Homecoming. They used their counseling skills to advise patients on healthy diets, exercise, and medication adherence.

Reaction from the alumni patients was positive as well. "I think this is a great idea that really promotes what the students are learning at the College of Pharmacy," said University alumna Sharon Smith G'99. "Facts about average sodium intake were very helpful, and something that I've never gotten from my doctors before. And the prizes were healthy!"



## Learners Turn Educators at Senior Spectacular 2012

College of Pharmacy faculty and learners participated in the "Senior Spectacular 2012: Get Ready for Retirement and Beyond" at the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame on November 3, 2012. This community event featured exhibits, informational seminars, workshops, demonstrations, and entertainment designed to appeal to older adults and caregivers. Members from the Classes of 2015 and 2016, alongside faculty, provided information on heartburn and high blood pressure, answered medication questions, and offered blood pressure screening services to more than 100 attendees.

## College Gives Back at 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Continuing Pharmacy Education and Preceptor Development Conference

The College of Pharmacy held its third annual Continuing Pharmacy Education and Preceptor Development Conference on June 11, 2013. Ninety-four pharmacists from the local Massachusetts and Connecticut area attended. Sessions included Pharmacy Law Update, Reach Every Student, JNC8: What to Expect, and Immunization Update.



## A Passion for Pharmacy Helps Couple Collect a Lifetime of Memories

### Donor Focus: Norman and Minna Halperin

Norman Halperin was a pharmacist for more than 60 years, working until he was 85. “He loved the connection with people, the interaction with people in being a pharmacist,” says his widow, Minna. “Norm loved to schmooze.”

Norman graduated from UConn at just 20 years old, but had to wait until he was 21 to be licensed in both Connecticut and Massachusetts. He realized his life’s dream in 1955, when, with Minna’s help, he opened Norman’s Pharmacy in Springfield, MA.

The pharmacy quickly became a social hub of the city’s East Forest Park neighborhood. “It was really like a general store; it had that atmosphere,” says the couple’s son, Robert (Bob) Russman-Halperin.

Selling everything from greeting cards to hard liquor, the pharmacy was an official Post Office site, early Massachusetts’ Lottery retailer, and offered an old-time soda fountain and counter that generated more conversation than revenue. “People would buy one cup of coffee and sit and talk for two hours,” laughs Minna.



Minna, the daughter of an immigrant pharmacist, was integral to the drugstore's success. She worked behind the scenes doing bookkeeping and by Norman's side on the busy sales floor, all the while raising their sons, Robert and Douglas.



Norman was creative and entrepreneurial in developing innovative ways to serve his patients. He carefully crafted his own advertising and offered home prescription delivery with a car he dubbed The Pill Wagon. On the front end he painted, "Here comes Norman" and on the rear it read, "There goes Norman."

One of his biggest publicity ventures was hiring a Santa Claus to arrive by helicopter in the store's parking lot to drum up holiday business. "They sold everything; people even did their Christmas shopping at the store," says Bob's wife, Wendy Russman-Halperin.

Norman also enjoyed the role of mentor; he supervised dozens of pharmacy students through the years and fundraised for scholarships. His love of people also made him an avid volunteer. He served as treasurer for the Western Massachusetts Pharmacy Association for 40 years and was also treasurer of the local Cub Scouts. Along with Minna, he was a dedicated volunteer for the Shriners Hospitals for Children.

Norman would do anything for Shriners, from filling in for security at the front desk at 6:00 a.m. to smashing up used plaster casts to recycle parts. Today, Minna remains an active Shriners' volunteer.



## A Shared Sense of History

Minna and Norm shared an unusual hobby, collecting memorabilia related to pharmacy, particularly mortar and pestles. In their travels, the couple would scour flea markets and shops on a constant quest to add to their collection. They enlisted family and friends in their search, resulting in an extensive collection from all over the world.

When the couple decided to sell their house and move into a more manageable apartment, their sizable collection also needed a new home. It found one at the new College of Pharmacy, opening down the street.

Founding Dean Evan Robinson was delighted when Douglas Halperin contacted him to see if the collection could be donated to the new school. "When we walked into the Center for the Sciences and Pharmacy and saw the empty display shelves at the entrance, we knew it was a perfect fit," says Bob.



Sadly, Norman passed away in December 2011. Before he died, he and Minna were honored at a dedication ceremony celebrating their donation of 150 mortar and pestles, along with other pharmacy memorabilia. They also established the Norman and Minna Halperin Scholarship.

"Dad just thought the College of Pharmacy was fantastic," says Bob.

Minna now enjoys visiting the College to see how her collection provides a sense of history for the future pharmacists who pass by it each day.

Yet the best inspiration for today's students is the collection's accompanying plaque that describes Norman's commitment to his patients. "He loved the pharmacy profession," says Wendy. "He wasn't doing a job. He was doing his passion."

# Meet the College of Pharmacy

## Dean's Office



**Evan Robinson, RPh, PhD**  
Dean and Professor,  
Pharmaceutical &  
Administrative Sciences



**Louise Backer**  
Assistant to the Dean



**Susan Kahelalis**  
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## Office of Experiential Affairs



**Kim Tanzer, PharmD**  
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**Karen Smith**  
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**Joanne Moore**  
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## Office of Student Affairs



**Joshua Spooner, PharmD**  
Assistant Dean and  
Associate Professor,  
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**Bonnie Mannix, MS**  
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**Debbie Parker**  
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## Department of Pharmaceutical and Administrative Sciences



**James Knittel, PhD**  
Chair and Professor



**David Baker, RPh, MBA, JD**  
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**Diptiman Bose, PhD**  
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**Shamima Khan, PhD, MBA**  
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**Shannon Kinney, PhD**  
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**Clinton Mathias, PhD**  
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Pharmacology

## Office of Academic Affairs



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**Thomas Moore**  
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**Scott Sherman**  
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**Quan Wei, PhD**  
Instructional Designer



**Matthew Dintzner, PhD**  
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of Medicinal Chemistry



**Daniel Kennedy, PhD**  
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of Pharmacology



**Ronny Prierer, PhD**  
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**Jilla Sabeti, PhD**  
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**Shabnam Sani, PhD, PharmD**  
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**Natalia Shcherbakova, PhD**  
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**Rodney Siwale, PhD**  
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**Kathleen Bielecki-Wilken**  
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**Anthony Zimmermann, PharmD**  
Chair and Professor



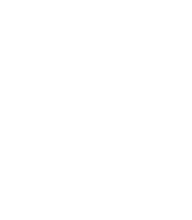
**Kam Capoccia, PharmD, BCPS**  
Clinical Associate Professor  
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**Izabela Collier, PharmD, CDE**  
Clinical Assistant Professor  
of Ambulatory Care



**Courtney Doyle-Campbell, PharmD**  
Clinical Assistant  
Professor of Ambulatory Care



**Gregory Herman, PharmD, MBA**  
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Professor of Ambulatory  
Care



**Mark Klee, PharmD, BCPS**  
Clinical Assistant Professor  
of Internal Medicine



**Maya Leiva, PharmD**  
Clinical Assistant Professor  
of Acute Care



**Melissa Mattison, PharmD**  
Clinical Assistant Professor of  
Community Care



**Yoonsun Mo, PharmD, BCPS**  
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of Acute Care



**Eric Nemeč II, PharmD**  
Clinical Assistant Professor  
of Informatics



**Jared Ostroff, PharmD**  
Clinical Assistant Professor  
of Ambulatory Care



**Katelyn Parsons, PharmD**  
Clinical Assistant Professor  
of Ambulatory Care



**Lucia Rosé, PharmD, BCPS**  
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of Infectious Disease



**Corey Scheer, PharmD**  
Clinical Assistant Professor  
of Acute Care



**Shusen Sun, PharmD**  
Clinical Assistant Professor  
of Emergency Medicine



**Kim Gallo**  
Staff Assistant



# Perceptions from Preceptors

## Pharmacy Pros Learn from Students as Well as Teach Them



Dr. Ed Tessier (left), and Dr. Brian Joyce (right), both with Baystate Franklin Medical Center in Greenfield, MA, are among 200 preceptors whom the College of Pharmacy draws on for Introductory Pharmacy Practice Experience (IPPE) and Advance Pharmacy Practical Experience (APPE) rotations.

Learners are required to complete IPPE rotations within institutional and community pharmacies during the first three years of the program. These rotations occur weekly during the academic year. In their fourth year, they participate in six APPE rotations, each lasting 40 hours a week for six weeks.

“The students are very good,” Dr. Joyce says, a pharmacist for 34 years who worked with three learners both semesters last year. “They are very intelligent. They are interested. They are anxious to learn.”

He enjoys being a preceptor because he gets to teach things he’s picked up over the years. “They learn the book version,” he says, “and of course you need to learn the day-to-day practice. This is an opportunity to share a few things that I didn’t get out of books.”

Among them are several formulae—“Learn these and you’ll have no problem with the math”—and adopt the attitude that there’s something wrong here and your task is to find it. “It’s just a mindset,” Dr. Joyce says. “It helps you do a good job verifying what your technicians are doing, for instance. Sharing these pearls is one of the things I like to do as a preceptor.”

He works closely with Dr. Tessier, who has been a pharmacist since 1980 and a pharmacy educator almost as long. Dr. Tessier likes being a preceptor because students challenge him, simply by asking questions like, why do you do that? “We stop and say, why do we do that?” he says. “Is there evidence to support it? Is there a better way to do it? We learn from them as much as they learn from us.”

He particularly enjoys precepting students from the College of Pharmacy because he gets to “be on the ground floor as the school launches.”

*“The thing that really appeals to me about Western New England is that the bar is set high. The College really commits to making sure that students understand there’s a patient at the end of everything we do.”*

**Dr. Ed Tessier**  
Baystate Franklin Medical Center  
Greenfield, MA



# Izabela Collier Brings Strength, Drive, and Passion to the Classroom and the Community

## Faculty Focus: Dr. Izabela Collier

Dr. Izabela Collier, clinical assistant professor of pharmacy practice, ambulatory care, is ardent about the field of pharmacy—as a practitioner helping patients with diabetes, a professor passing her knowledge and experience on to learners, and a researcher helping people.

*“She has a passion, a dedication, and a drive to really be the best for the learners both in the classroom and out,”* says Clinical Associate Professor Kam Capoccia. “Her inner strength just inspires and motivates. I couldn’t do my job the way I do without her.”

Dr. Collier emphasizes and demonstrates the value of empathy, says Class of 2015 learner Melissa Putnam. “She has always supported me in my pharmacy career,” Melissa says. “Her hard work and own success, as well as her ability to make one feel comfortable, make for a great mentor.”

Her enthusiasm stems from having a role in the development of the brand-new College of Pharmacy, Dr. Collier says. “I’m thrilled to be here. It’s a ton of work starting everything from scratch. But at the end of the day I’m really, really happy.”

This isn’t the first time Dr. Collier has been a part of Western New England. She came to this country from Poland in 1993 at age 17. She finished her senior year at nearby Chicopee High School and enrolled at Western New England, which she loved. It gave her skills and friends, along with gaining confidence. Pharmacy was a surprise suggestion from her advisor, a history professor. “It was an excellent fit,” she says.

She got her degree and worked at Baystate Medical Center, where she became a certified diabetes educator. She also cofounded a private diabetes clinic for people with language barriers; Dr. Collier speaks four languages. Hearing that Western New England was starting a College of Pharmacy, she called up the founding dean, Evan Robinson. Impressed by his vision, she asked to be kept on the list for when they started hiring faculty; she started at the College of Pharmacy on July 1, 2010, a year before the first class entered the program.



Her practice site is at the VA Hospital in Leeds, MA where she founded a diabetes clinic. At the College, her courses include Health Care Communications, a course in the endocrine, reproductive, and genitourinary system, and women’s health.

“Teachers made a difference in my life,” she says. “That’s why I took the position. I want to see the learners succeeding, achieving wonderful things. We want to give them the skills and the stamina, just like what was given to me.”

Her research centers around diabetes education and insulin protocols. Currently Dr. Collier has two papers in press, one for the *Ambulatory Care Survival Guide* (3rd ed.), from the American College of Clinical Pharmacy, and the other in the *American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy*. She recently spoke at an American Association of Diabetes Educators conference.

“When you look back at where I was when I came to this country and where I am now,” she says, “I’m really thrilled. As a faculty member, your work can be more visible and you can forge the way for pharmacy and make the world a little bit better.”



# Quan Wei Adds a Human Touch to Today's High Tech Classroom



## Staff Spotlight: Dr. Quan Wei

You won't find her teaching an Immunology class or doing research in the Pharmaceuticals lab, but Quan Wei plays an essential role in the educational process at the College of Pharmacy. That's because pharmacy education has gone high-tech today, putting the access to unprecedented resources directly into the hands of professors. Dr. Wei, the College's instructional designer, helps the faculty effectively combine the use of technology and pedagogy.

She was the inaugural recipient of the College of Pharmacy Staff Award last May. "My job," says Dr. Wei, "is to help faculty use technology in the classroom to improve their teaching and ultimately help their learners."

Creating a learning environment on the cutting edge of classroom instruction was a top priority when the Center for the Sciences and Pharmacy was designed. Each of its three 80-seat stadium style classrooms features a specialized PC podium that incorporates SMART Technology. Every pharmacy learner is provided with a tablet computer for use in the classroom, labs, experiential practice settings, doing research, writing papers, or taking exams.

A native of China where she earned her bachelor's degree in physics, Wei earned a master's degree in instructional technology from Wright State University and her PhD in the discipline from Utah State University. She joined the Western New England University College of Pharmacy in 2011.

Wei's options were wide open when she began looking for a full-time position in higher education two years ago. "As an instructional designer or technician, you can work any place, in any field," she says, "because you are not a subject expert, but a technology expert. We look at how we can combine the technology and pedagogy and use it to stimulate learning."

Dr. Wei felt the opportunity to work at the new College of Pharmacy was the perfect match for her background. She was excited to help faculty incorporate such tools as SMART Technology and Turning Point clickers that learners use to electronically answer questions.

Today, she helps train new faculty and provides ongoing assistance to incorporate new tools into higher level classes as the inaugural class advances. "In the first week of each semester, I spend 10-15 minutes at the start of each class to make sure things are going smoothly," she says, "I don't want the faculty to ever feel panicked in front of their learners because the projector isn't working."

During orientation, she provides learners with a two-day training session on the technology they will be using throughout the semester. Dr. Wei is also a comforting presence to learners during online tests. "I tell them that my door is always open if they have questions and I am always there during tests to make sure no one gets stuck in the middle of an exam."



It is that commitment to customer service that makes Dr. Wei such a valued staff member.

"Quan has been instrumental in the adoption of a number of educational technologies within the College of Pharmacy," says her manager, Dr. Beth Welch, associate dean for pharmacy academic affairs. "She personally assists faculty, staff, and learners to create positive educational experiences which utilize technology to the fullest extent. She goes beyond expectations in providing these services. On a moment's notice she is there to assist. Quan is a wonderful colleague, always willing to help with a smile on her face."





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