

UAMS Graduate School

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Letter from Dean McGehee

Its hard to believe spring is around the corner. After the holidays, I am ready for it. I love snow, have always loved snow, but after 14 inches and 6 days of generator power, I hope the next White Christmas my family celebrates is on the white sand beaches of the Gulf of Mexico. I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season. I want to publicly say it sure is nice to have Ms. Pattie Hamilton back in the office and feeling and looking as well as ever. Also, many thanks go out to the whole graduate school office for juggling a lot of different roles over the past few months, and collectively, we would all like to thank you for your patience as well. But we are back at full strength and looking forward to the future.

A lot of great things have been going on in the Graduate School, particularly with our faculty. The core of any graduate school lies in its faculty and we have seen significant growth in the number of faculty across our UAMS Colleges. This is great news for graduate students and programs, because faculty growth translates to a broader mentor pool for students, existing program growth and new program development. This fall, under the direction of Drs. Jay Gandy and Morris Cranmer, we began offering the new Graduate Certificate in Regulatory Sciences in the Occupational and Environmental Health program. This program is expecting 19 graduates this spring and is a great example of how the Graduate School helps foster cross-college collaborations, with faculty from the College of Public Health, College of Medicine and College of Pharmacy all very actively engaged. This program also received support from Governor Mike Beebe and the National Center for Toxicological Research. Following remarkable growth in College of Pharmacy faculty, we have a new PhD program in Pharmaceutical Sciences under the direction of Drs. Peter Crooks and Brad Martin. This program evolved from the long standing MS program and enrolled its first three students this semester. The College of Public Health recently recruited Dr. Eric Johnson, a nationally recognized epidemiologist from the University of North Texas Health Sciences Center as its inaugural Chair of Epidemiology. Dr. Johnson led a very successful graduate program while at North Texas and in his short time here at UAMS, has already put together a proposal for a new PhD program in Epidemiology that has been approved by the UA Board of Trustees with approval pending from ADHE. This will bring to three, the number of PhD programs we have in collaboration with the College of Public Health. The other two programs, Health Systems Research and Health Promotion and Prevention Research each celebrated their inaugural graduate this past year.

When programs have outstanding faculty, great things happen, and we are seeing this every day in the graduate school. We have a record number of NIH NRSAs (F awards), American Heart Association fellowships, and SREB fellowships. We have record number of active training grants with an additional T32 pending. We have a record number of K awards as well, which reflects positively on the quality of faculty. We now have two COBRE awards on campus. Dr. Edgar Garcia is in the second successful cycle of his center focused on translational neuroscience, and most recently Dr. Mark Smeltzer has been awarded our second COBRE that will focus on microbial pathogens. We have 20 active students in our joint MD/PhD program, which represents an all time high as well. These items are not meant to be all inclusive, but just to give you a sample of some the great things that are going on here in the UAMS Graduate School. It really is an exciting time to be at UAMS.



New
Graduate
School
Programs
in
2013

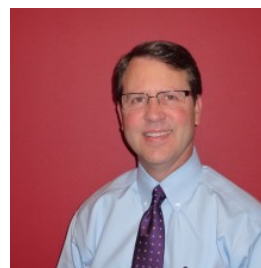
Graduate School Begins Regulatory Science

The rapid expansion of the biomedical industry has created a large demand for regulatory professionals in the food, biopharmaceutical, biotechnology, medical devices and chemical industries.

To help meet this need, UAMS this fall began offering a Graduate School certificate program in regulatory science, with plans to expand it into a master's degree program.

Regulatory science professionals are typically the primary communications links between companies and regulatory agencies and are responsible for keeping up with the increasing scope

and complexity of regulations both in the U.S. and abroad.



Dr. Jay Gandy

"The goal is to train scientists so they can take the basic science they learned in other disciplines and apply that in the regulatory

environment," said Jay Gandy, Ph.D., program director, who is a professor and chair of the Department of Environmental & Occupational Health in the College of Public Health that administers the program.

Pharmaceutical Sciences Ph.D. Program

The University of Arkansas Board of Trustees and Arkansas Department of Higher Education have approved the new Doctor of Philosophy in Pharmaceutical Sciences degree in the Graduate School.

The Ph.D. program is designed to be completed in four years.

The program is composed of two distinct tracks, the Pharmaceutical Sciences track and the Pharmaceutical Evaluation and Policy (PEP) track. The PS-track is focused on

the need to train basic scientists in the areas of drug discovery and development, as well as, the advantages and consequences of radiation exposure in biomedicine. The PEP-track is designed to meet the needs of persons with business, science and health care backgrounds wishing to acquire the research skills in pharmaceutical evaluation, pharmacoeconomics, health outcomes assessment, policy analyses, and pharmacoepidemiologic research.

Student Spotlight

Military Linguist Finds Niche in Speech Disorders Program

by Jon Parham

When Bonnie Slavych left the Air Force in the 1990s she looked for a career that complemented her military work as a language specialist.

That search led her to the Department of Audiology and Speech Pathology where she is now a doctoral student in the AR Consortium for the Ph.D. in Communication Sciences and Disorders. The Nashville, Ark., native said the program is preparing her for a planned career in academia that will include clinical work with patients as well as teaching and research.

"I always knew I wanted to be in a health-related profession," Slavych said. "I was trained to listen, so communications and Speech-Language Pathology complemented my linguist skills."

She entered the master's degree program and found a perfect fit. "It seemed I had a knack for it," she said, pointing to her military background.

After high school and not sure of a career direction, she entered the military, where aptitude testing indicated skills in communications. She graduated from the U.S. Air Force's Intelligence School, where she received a Defense Language Institute award for excellence in Vietnamese.

Her military work included being stationed two years in Okinawa, Japan as an airborne linguist.

She earned her master's degree in 2011. During her time in the M.S. program she participated in the UAMS Voice and Swallowing Center, seeing patients for voice therapy. By then she knew she wanted to continue her education and pursue the doctoral degree.

"I knew I wanted the Ph.D. but I needed real

world experience that working with patients would give me," she said. "The doctoral program is great because I think it is a good balance of clinical, academic and research work.

"I do intend to teach one day — I know that's something I want to do, so the academic instruction is important but I also enjoy research."



Bonnie Slavych, Communications Sciences and Disorders Ph.D. student

She believes research within the discipline is what keeps pushing the boundaries of knowledge in Speech-Language Pathology. Those advances will enable better care for patients.

The clinical side of the job appeals to her as a profession of service that helps others. She has seen patients both young and old.

Whether it's a child with delayed speech development or an older patient with a speech, language, or cognitive impairment due to a medical problem, she said it's a wonderful feeling to see a patient experience a breakthrough thanks to therapy.

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Graduate Student Association News

The Graduate Student Association is a team of students who volunteer to coordinate social, professional, and charitable activities for the graduate student body. GSA officers also branch out into other UAMS organizations in order to keep grad students informed about the issues that affect them. For this Spring semester, the GSA is in the process of arranging several events.

Faith McDaniel has worked to coordinate the second annual UAMS Little Rock Marathon team. Over thirty graduate students are signed up to run in the Little Rock Marathon, Half Marathon, or 10K on March 3. As was the case with last year, runners will adorn UAMS team jerseys to show support for the University and the city of Little Rock. Even if you are not signed up to run an event, come out and support the UAMS team on March 3!

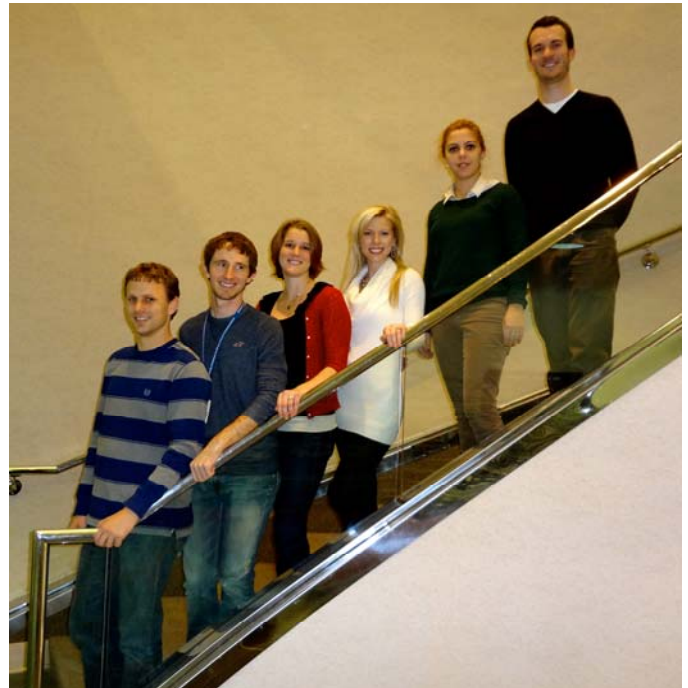
The GSA Crawfish boil has become a spring tradition for the Graduate School. Come eat Cajun-style crawfish, potatoes, and corn to your heart's content. This will be the third annual Crawfish boil that the GSA has sponsored, with more details to come soon!

In addition to social events, Neil Detweiler has done an excellent job of keeping the graduate school involved in community service by arranging a Habitat for Humanity Service Saturday each semester. Students have been involved in a variety of projects ranging from construction in Habitat's new Restore facility, to laying sod for a new Habitat family this past fall. Another Habitat Service Saturday is in the works for this spring semester, and all graduate students are encouraged to participate.

Finally, the Canoe Trip is the GSA's way to end the school year with a bang. The officers rent canoes from Buffalo River Outfitters late May to early June, and grad students may reserve spots on the canoes for a Saturday out on the Buffalo River. It's a great way to take a brief respite from classes or the lab, spend some quality time with your friends and

peers, and enjoy nature as you slowly float several miles down the river. Spots are limited, so it's always a good idea to make your reservations early.

Although the GSA is organized for the benefit of grad students, it is also emphatic about building relationships between students and graduate faculty/staff. As such, faculty members and graduate school staff are welcome and encouraged to attend all GSA events. Further, any questions/suggestions/comments anyone may have may be directed to the GSA's email address: GSA@uams.edu.



GSA Officers (from left to right): Adam Brown, president; Chad Cragle, ASG representative; Faith McDaniel, president emeritus; Katie Marshall, secretary; Serra Ucer, vice president; Neil Detweiler, treasurer. Not pictured: Emily Reichard, ASG representative; Daniel Sappington, recycling coordinator.

Graduate Student Teachers of Central Arkansas

The graduate school at UAMS is continuing to produce creative scientists and groundbreaking research. From new white-coat inductees to dedicated students, the graduate school community is steadily enriching. One important improvement is the development of the Graduate Student Teachers of Central Arkansas (GSTCA).

The GSTCA was developed by Ph.D. student Laura MacDonald and Dr. Kristen Sterba with the help of the Graduate School and its Dean, Dr. Robert McGehee. This group saw a need to provide teaching opportunities for our graduate students. Many universities have teaching assistant placements for graduate students; as an academic health center, UAMS instead provides first-rate research opportunities. Many graduate students want both. The GSTCA is providing for those students.

One goal of GSTCA is connecting UAMS student-scientists with local undergraduate professors. Professors from local colleges are opening their classrooms to our student-teachers. These professors find an opportunity in their curriculums to incorporate our students' research and cooperatively develop scientific lesson plans. Ph.D. students with expertise in specific research areas are bringing their knowledge to universities with the hope of enriching undergraduate education. The local colleges benefit by receiving cutting-edge information on new research taught by enthusiastic student-teachers, while the graduate students benefit from the teaching experience and exposure.

Another central goal of the GSTCA is to properly train future science-educators in pedagogy. The GSTCA and its organizers recognized the importance of preparing our students before they ventured out into the world of teaching.



Kristen Sterba, Ph.D., Graduate School assistant dean (left) and graduate student Laura MacDonald

Before teaching, the Ph.D. students attend professional-education seminars on teaching methods, techniques, and curriculum development. Recent seminars led by educational professionals have included topics such as: "How to Engage Your Students and Promote Active Learning," "How to Create an Online Academic Portfolio and Teaching Statement," and "Learning Styles, Learning Theories...and what they mean in the Real world!" Also, day-long symposiums are offered.

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Graduate Student Teachers continued from page 5

Mark your calendars for Tuesday May 21st, for this year's symposium held in Rayford Auditorium; our theme will be "Engaging Students."

GSTCA
Symposium
May 21st
"Engaging
Students"

Another goal of the GSTCA is fostering sustainable outreach programs. In addition to undergraduate education we are actively pursuing other outreach opportunities—judging science fairs, collaboration with community science-education programs, and developing ties with lower, middle, and high school science teachers. As the GSTCA grows more exciting outreach openings will be pursued.

The GSTCA has already provided successful teaching opportunities to UAMS graduate students. Last year, six graduate students taught lessons relating to their research in the University of Central Arkansas, Hendrix College, as well as the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff. Four more students will teach

this semester. It is our hope that this number continues to grow as more students take advantage of this expanding program. Laura MacDonald, a GSTCA founder, captures the essence of this program, "I had a really good undergraduate professor who was enthusiastic and went the extra mile in explaining course material. It really gave me an interest in teaching." Our graduate student-teachers are paying-forward the gift of quality education all-the-while learning to become professional scientists and educators.

It is our hope that a passion for science education continues to thrive alongside quality scientific research. Training future teachers, providing educational opportunities, and reaching out to the Central Arkansas community are the goals of the GSTCA. If you are interested in these goals and helping grow the GSTCA, please contact either Dr. Kristen Sterba, Lee Ann King, Danielle Fortune, or Daniel Sappington.

Military Linguist continued from page 3

Her research interest is in quality of life issues for those with voice or swallowing disorders. She joined UAMS faculty members Richard I. Zraick, Ph.D., a professor in the Department of Audiology and Speech Pathology and Samuel R. Atcherson, Ph.D., an assistant professor in the Department, as an author of a 2011 research article "Readability of Patient-Reported Outcome Questionnaires for Use with Persons with Swallowing Disorders" in the leading peer-reviewed journal *Dysphagia*.

Zraick praised Slavych's drive: "I think her strengths are her enthusiasm, strong work ethic and a genuine desire to help those who are communicatively impaired." He added, "Bonnie is the ideal doctoral student, and a great role model for clinicians wishing to pursue a doctorate and enter academia."



Dr. Richard Zraick

Student Awards



Tristan Fowler, Cellular Physiology and Biophysics

Received the 2012 President's Poster Competition Award at the American Society for Bone and Mineral Research



Joseph Graham, Microbiology and Immunology

Received a travel award to the American Society for Rickettsiology Annual Meeting



Laura MacDonald, Microbiology and Immunology

Received a travel award to the American Society for Rickettsiology Annual Meeting. Received the Charles C. McCleskey Research Award for Outstanding PhD presentation at the American Society for Microbiology South Central Branch meeting



Rose Willett, Cellular Physiology and Biophysics

Received a travel award from the American Society for Cell Biology to attend the annual meeting



Caylin Winchell, Microbiology and Immunology

Received a travel award and honorable mention for her poster at the Bacterial Type IV Secretion Workshop



Brent Molden, Interdisciplinary Biomedical Sciences

Awarded a NIH F30 NRSA Predoctoral fellowship (Major Advisor Dr. Giulia Baldini)



Asif Pathan, Pharmacology

Awarded an American Heart Association Predoctoral fellowship (Major Advisor –Dr. Nancy Rusch)



Naeem Patil, Interdisciplinary Toxicology

Awarded an American Heart Association Predoctoral fellowship (Major Advisor-Drs. Lee Ann MacMillan-Crow and Phil Mayeux)

Student Awards (continued)



Kerry Jordan, Nursing Science

For having received the Jonas Nurse Leaders Scholar Program Fellowship



Sarah Norman Ashby, Pharmaceutical Sciences

For having received the American Federation of Pharmaceutical Education/
Kappa Epsilon Nellie Wakeman Fellowship



Sharla Smith, Health Systems Research

For having received a Southern Regional Education Board Doctoral Dissertation
Award



Melody Allensworth, Neurobiology and Developmental Sciences

Won the Presidential Poster Competition in the Obesity Category at the Endo-
crine Society meeting



Nisha Nanaware, Pharmacology

Selected to serve as the American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists
(AAPS) National Biotechnology Conference Liaison on the AAPS Biotech Section
Student Committee



Angela Odle, Neurobiology and Developmental Sciences

Ranked in the Top 5 in the Presidential Poster Competitiuon in the Neuroendo-
crinology Category at the Endocrine Society meeting



Shraddha Thakkar, Bioinformatics

Received a Margaret C. Etter Student Lecturer Award at the American Crystallo-
graphic Association meeting. Received an American Crystallographic Association
meeting travel award. Received the AAPS Innovation Biotechnology Award



Zachary Waldrip, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

Received the Paul L. Day Award for Outstanding Academic Achievement in the
Department of Biochemistry

2012-2013 Graduate School Photos



Kristen Sterba, Ph.D. assistant dean at the UAMS Graduate School, helps kick off the school's 12th annual Career Day for Biomedical Sciences. More than 200 attendees heard about research and a wide variety of career options.



Graduate School students and faculty enjoy the 2012 Research Induction Ceremony reception. Thirty-three doctoral candidates received white coats in front of an overflow crowd of friends, family, and colleagues.



Nandini Sakurikar and the Communications staff record a Graduate School informational video presented at the University of Arkansas Board of Trustees meeting.



Dean McGehee, carves the turkey at the annual 2012 GSA Thanksgiving Potluck.

Upcoming Dates & Events

Graduate School Spring Break	March 18—22
Spring Reception	April 4
McGehee Lectureship	April 10
Student Research Day	April 10
Summer Registration	April 22 – May 10
Reception Honoring Graduates	April 30
Last Day to Submit Thesis or Dissertation to Library	May 3
Commencement	May 12
GSTCA Symposium “Engaging Students”	May 21

UAMS



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