



UConn Pharmacy Students Educating the Public at the Cornucopia Festival

Florence Rome Helps Make Her IPPE Rotation a Cultural Experience

By: Jennifer Gayda

When with Rome, do as the Romans did, or the Nigerians, or the Chinese. PI students who spend their Introductory Pharmacy Practice Experience rotation at the CVS site in West Hartford have the pleasure of working with preceptor Florence Rome. Her unique background allows her to connect with students who have also immigrated to America and she truly appreciates their various cultures. Rome was born in Nigeria, attended high school in Switzerland and moved to America after she graduated. She earned her pharmacy degree from St. John's University in 1987.

At her site, students focus on community practice and become familiar with the tasks involved in the day-to-day life of retail pharmacy. These tasks include counseling patients, taking phone calls from doctor's offices, and dealing with insurance issues. "After they are introduced to the pharmacy's physical lay-out and our basic procedures, the students work alongside me, according to a plan we devise together for the best learning experience possible," says Rome.

According to her students, Rome is extremely consistent. In order to make sure they get the most out of their time at her site, she requires them to track their progress at the end of each day on the RxPreceptor system. Since she closely monitors their learning, students are forced to keep the system up to date rather than



Florence Rome knows that students on visas can be at a disadvantage because they may not have had an opportunity to work in the pharmacy

saving it for the last second. This helps them follow their development and reinforce the things they learned each day.

For many of Rome's foreign students, this rotation is the first opportunity they have to experience a pharmacy setting. This is because, unlike students born in America, students that are on visas are not as easily permitted to work in a pharmacy. The lack of hands-on experience puts them at a disadvantage. "Many, myself included, have to learn most of the top 200 drugs from books and notes, as opposed to the students born in the U.S. who usually have

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A Message from the Assistant Dean

On behalf of the University of Connecticut Office of Experiential Education (OEE) I want to wish everyone a safe and joyous holiday season. In addition, I want to share my sincere appreciation to everyone for all of your hard work and dedication to UConn pharmacy students this past academic year. We would be unable to provide them with high quality experiences without your participation in our experiential programs. We appreciate the continued commitment from everyone who participates in our various IPPE and APPE programs.

It's hard to believe as I write this column that another academic semester is about to end with the fall semester final exams getting underway shortly. Reflecting on our major signature event this past fall I want to congratulate all of the 2012 Dennis J. Chapron Preceptor of the Year recipients who were honored at the 11th Annual Preceptor Appreciation Dinner held at Saint Clements Castle in Portland, CT this past October. These awards are given each year to preceptors nominated by our pharmacy students in recognition of the outstanding contributions to the educational development of future pharmacists by demonstrating high standards of professionalism, ethics and clinical practice. The annual awards are named in honor of Dennis J. Chapron, in recognition of his many contributions to the

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no restrictions and can work in a community or clinical pharmacy right along from the first day of starting the pharmacy program,” explains Rome.

Kai Lee, a student who spent a PI rotation with Rome in 2011, experienced this difficulty first hand. Lee moved to America from Korea when he was a sophomore in high school. He faced a number of challenges such as being unfamiliar with the language, being financially independent, and not having a home to go back to during school breaks. The most difficult was the challenge of not having the same opportunities as his peers. “Since, Florence is from a foreign country, she knew the disadvantage we get from not being able to work in a pharmacy and get exposure to it. We shared the feeling of not knowing the material that half of my classmates knew by the time they were applying to pharmacy school,” Lee explains.

We get very excited when we discuss music, food, customs, languages, and did I say food?”

Aside from practical commonalities, Rome enjoys her time with foreign students for cultural reasons as well. She says, “I love training students from throughout the world, and those born abroad are encouraged to share their cultures with my staff and me. We get very excited when we discuss music, food, customs, languages, and did I say food?” Jun Wang, a student who worked with Rome from December 2011 to January 2012, moved to the U.S. from China when he was nine years old.

This commonality and love for their culture allowed them to connect and form a bond outside of their professional responsibilities. They enjoyed reminiscing about their favorite Chinese dishes and shared excitement during the Chinese New Year.

Wang says that he is interested in retail pharmacy “partially because of how she emphasized and taught things.” He says that Rome taught him the basics of being a good pharmacist and a strong leader. He describes her as someone with good charisma who is “friendly, cheerful and really cares about her coworkers.”

On the other hand Lee says, “the most valuable thing that I learned from her is that you need to find happiness from small stuff... She was laughing most of the time and tried to keep everyone active and happy... I learned that it was about mindset that makes you happy and keeps you going.”

Both Wang and Lee were impressed by Rome’s attitude and leadership style. They describe her as a positive and hard-working individual who is never late for work and always kept the site clean. She is also well known and liked by her customers in the West Hartford area. She manages to develop relationships with them by greeting them by their first name to keep the pharmacy atmosphere as friendly as possible.

Rome says her favorite part about being a preceptor is “seeing the students learn, grow, and achieve.” She hopes that after their time with her, students will learn how rewarding a profession in retail pharmacy can be and how enjoyable it is to have the opportunity to help people everyday. ■

School of Pharmacy as an associate professor of pharmacy practice who was instrumental in the development of clinical pharmacy education in Connecticut.

This year, two new awards recognizing our preceptors participating in our Introductory Pharmacy Practice Experiences (IPPE) were presented by the UConn Office of Experiential Education during the Preceptor Appreciation Dinner. Pharmacist Brian DePaoli, from Norwalk Hospital was recognized as the IPPE Institutional Preceptor of the Year, and pharmacist Susan Roarty, from Target Pharmacy in Southington, CT, was recognized as the IPPE Community Preceptor of the Year.

The Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experiences (APPE) Preceptor of the Year recipients were pharmacist Jim Prota, director of pharmacy at Connecticut Hospice in Branford, CT and Dr. Megan Ehret, associate professor of pharmacy practice, who practices at the Institute of Living in Hartford, CT. Mr. Prota offers APPEs in the specialty areas of hospice care with an emphasis on pain management and Dr. Ehret offers APPEs in the specialty areas of psychiatry and clinical research. We will provide a more detailed article during our next edition of Preceptor News on each of our award recipients.

On behalf of the Office of Experiential Education, I offer our sincere thanks to all of our preceptors who enhance the education of our UConn pharmacy students and are dedicated to the development of the next generation of pharmacists.

Sincerely,



University of
Connecticut

Contributors:

Elizabeth Anderson, Daniel Buttrey, Jennifer Gayda, Philip Hritcko, Jacqueline Lomp, Mary Ann Phaneuf, Peter Tyczkowski, and Myles Udland.

Phil Bunick Closes Out His Career at the UConn Health Center

By: Jennifer Gayda

After 40 years of work in hospital pharmacy, and 36 years as a pharmacy director, Philip Bunick, pharmacy director at the UConn Health Center in Farmington, retired this August. Bunick started his job at UConn five years ago, and has been a pharmacy director at three different hospitals over the years.

A 1972 graduate from UConn, Bunick is amazed at how much pharmacy has changed since then. He loves working with students because, “they keep you in touch with what is currently happening in pharmacy.” Bunick believes that working with students is a give and take, and he benefits from the experience as much as they do. He says, “They have a lot of insight and refreshing ideas. It’s nice to get a new perspective.”

In his five years at UConn, Bunick has made a number of changes at the Health Center. He helped reestablish a relationship with the School of Pharmacy, which has allowed more pharmacy students to complete rotations at the Health Center. Last July, the pharmacy began a residency program in collaboration with the School of Pharmacy. He also assisted in the enhancement of clinical programs and the reestablishment of the anticoagulation clinic.



Phil Bunick, formerly the director of pharmacy at the Health Center, is trading in “the exam week that never stops” for more time with his family and volunteer work in the community

Students keep you in touch with what is currently happening in pharmacy.

Thanks to Bunick, the UConn Health Center now precepts a P2 and P4 student on rotation. Bunick is no stranger to working with students. In 20 plus years, working with up to ten students a year, he is constantly running in to past students, several of whom have ended up working for him. “Those who make a good impression on their rotations have an advantage finding a job in this difficult job market,” he explains.

His experiences have also made him an asset in selecting who will become accepted into the School of Pharmacy. For the past few years Bunick has been involved with the interview process. He says he is extremely grateful that the School of Pharmacy asked him to be a part of this process since he believes that “the sky is the limit for pharmacy today” and the students selected will play a tremendous role in shaping the future of the profession.

Bunick prefers to refer to his retirement as a “rebalancing” of his life. He is excited to get a break from the demanding hours involved with being a pharmacy director, but he hopes to continue working part-time at a pharmacy in order to stay connected to the profession. He describes his current job as “an exam week that never stops.” He says, “There is always a high level of hustle and bustle, stress and yes, excitement being in a hospital as busy as the UConn Health Center.” Bunick acknowledges the fact that it will be a considerable transition to no longer living such a hectic life.

Volunteer work is something in which Bunick hopes to become more heavily involved. As chairperson of the Human Services Commission in Vernon, Connecticut he has contact with a number of non-profit organizations. He can see first-hand the important work these agencies perform and their need for volunteer assistance.

Bunick is also looking forward to having more time to spend with his family and grandchildren. As pharmacy director, he has to be in constant contact with the hospital, even when on vacation. “You never finish working when you’re in charge, especially in this day when telecommunicating is possible from just about anywhere,” he explains.

Though Bunick will be greatly missed at the university, it is safe to say he has contributed considerably to both the UConn Health Center and the School of Pharmacy. ■

Since 1925, Yale Has Been an Integral Part of Pharmacy in the State of Connecticut

By: Jacquelyn Lomp

In 1925, the UConn School of Pharmacy was first established in New Haven as the independent Connecticut College of Pharmacy in an old Yale Medical School facility. Since then, the School of Pharmacy has kept a close partnership with Yale and the Yale-New Haven Hospital, providing students with the opportunity to prepare for the many different career options in pharmacy practice.

According to *U.S. News & World Report's* "America's Best Hospitals 2011," Yale-New Haven Hospital is included among the top hospitals in the United States. With this prestigious recognition, students at UConn's School of Pharmacy are able to take advantage of all the experiences that Yale-New Haven Hospital offers through clinical rotations including: cardiology, critical care, drug information, emergency medicine, institutional pharmacy, internal medicine, investigational drug service, medication safety, neurology, oncology, organ transplant, pediatric pharmacy, pharmacy administration, pharmacy informatics, psychiatry, and surgery. On a daily basis, students work closely with their preceptors to optimize patients' medication therapy, provide drug information to the medical team, and address medication issues that arise during the course of the day.

"Yale-New Haven Hospital provides a breadth of different experiences from UConn."

Two, UConn School of Pharmacy faculty members have their clinical practice site based at Yale-New Haven Hospital. Dr. Trinh Pham, associate clinical professor of pharmacy practice, has been collaborating with Yale-New Haven Hospital since 1999. Her area of specialty is oncology and she has a close working relationship with the clinical oncology pharmacists and oncologists at the Smilow Cancer Center. Dr. Rachel Eyler, assistant clinical professor of pharmacy practice, started at Yale-New Haven Hospital in 2011. Dr. Eyler's area of specialty is nephrology and she precepts students for internal medicine rotations.

Because Yale-New Haven Hospital is a teaching hospital, the relationship between the School of Pharmacy and Yale-New Haven Hospital continues to stay strong year after year. The school and the hospital's pharmacy department are dedicated and committed to furthering the education of pharmacy students as they finish the program. There is a collaborative working relationship with a common goal to help students excel in the program and allow them opportunities to experience the practical application of what is learned in a classroom.

"It is a pleasure to have UConn students with us on rotation, not only to learn but to impact patient care as well," says Dr. Eyler. Students on rotation at Yale-New Haven Hospital are able to work with pharmacy residents and gain insight into what is involved with residency training. "Yale-New Haven Hospital provides a breadth of different experiences for UConn students," says Dr. Pham. "They have preceptors from internal medicine to pharmacy administration working with the



The Connecticut College of Pharmacy opened in October 1925 in this former Yale Medical School building at 150 York Street in New Haven, Connecticut.

students and helping them in their professional growth. The hospital has many rotation practice settings that students can choose from and have different types of experiences at the hospital."

Recently, Yale-New Haven Hospital, in collaboration with the UConn School of Pharmacy, created a different type of experience where students can reserve a block of three months for their rotations at the hospital. During these longitudinal rotations students will be able to work on a research project, in addition to their clinical rotation activities.

Year after year, pharmacy students are exposed to hospital settings where they can take advantage of the opportunities provided to them. Working with Yale-New Haven Hospital, UConn School of Pharmacy is setting their students up for success with a wealth of experience. ■

Clinical Pharmacy Rotation Offers Opportunities to Learn a Different Business Model

By: Jennifer Gayda

Students with a special interest in transplants, oncology, HIV or Hepatitis C may want to consider spending a rotation with Dr. Meghann Jones at the Walgreens in New Haven. The clinical pharmacy, which is attached to the Yale-New Haven Hospital, spends a great deal of time working with patients in these four group areas. Dr. Jones, a UConn School of Pharmacy alumna, began precepting community one and community two students in the fall of 2012.

Dr. Jones has kept close contact with the School of Pharmacy since she graduated in 2008. "I was always lucky enough to have fabulous preceptors and I was excited about the chance to pass that on," she says.

Dr. Jones expressed interest in becoming a preceptor and Peter Tyczkowski, educational outreach coordinator, felt she would be a perfect fit. "It's great for students to see someone younger who is already successful in the field. Meghann went out there and went after something, and I think she has a lot going on that students would be really interested in seeing."

Dr. Jones began her current job as pharmacy manager when the pharmacy first opened in February 2011. She manages a staff of twelve and is also in charge of program development, which involves developing patient outreach and counseling programs for the populations in these four main groups.

Rotations with Dr. Jones are heavily based on patient counseling. The pharmacy services patients from the Smilow Cancer Hospital and has access to limited oncology medications that other pharmacies do not. These medications require extensive counseling and diligent follow up after chemotherapy. Students develop empathy skills as they learn how to understand what the patient is going through, and be able to properly assist them and their families.

The students on rotation are also introduced to the challenges of working with patients from very diverse backgrounds. The hospital services a wide range of patients from individuals on the streets of New Haven, to those who are flown in from around the country to visit the hospital. The pharmacy works a great deal with insurance issues, and students will have the advantage of becoming familiar with this aspect of pharmacy.

The Walgreens at the hospital has a small front end, something that Dr. Jones says has been challenging, but beneficial. Students will gain an understanding of the business and financial aspects of pharmacy as they observe the ways that pharmacists handle this layout. This will give students interested in management an advantage as they learn techniques and skills to properly run a business.

Dr. Jones describes the rotation as very active and says that she hopes that her students will be extremely engaged. Dr. Jones is the group leader in her district for the HIV centers of excellence. This responsibility allows her to be creative in organizing community events, and students are able to experience this innovative process along with her.

Dr. Jones modeled her precepting style after one of her favorite rotations, which was in a nephrology unit with Dr. Donald Felitto, a 2010 Preceptor of the Year. During this rotation Jones would go in to the office on her own and perform medical-reconciliation with the patient. She would discuss the patient's case with Dr. Felitto, and they would decide on the



P4 student Christy Fisher [left] on rotation with Dr. Meghann Jones '08 [far right] at the Walgreens at Yale-New Haven Hospital.

necessary changes as a team. Dr. Jones hopes to bring this technique of independence and open conversation into correspondences with her own students. Her goal is to have students counseling patients on their own by the end of their rotation.

The rotation offers students a chance to gain a number of unique experiences in the field of pharmacy. "Dr. Jones is a standout in terms of her interest in working with students," says Tyczkowski. "She is on a leadership track in her company, and it's really good for our students to see this." ■

Save the Date

The School of Pharmacy's Preceptor Appreciation Dinner will take place on Thursday, October 24, 2013 at Saint Clements Castle in Portland, CT.



From Honors Student to Preceptor, Alumna Deborah Cios, Pharm.D. '08 Gives Her Perspective on Rotations

By: Jennifer Gayda

Dr. Deborah Cios, a member of the Doctor of Pharmacy Class of 2008, knows that there is more to pharmacy than knowing and dispensing medications. She believes that a large part of a pharmacist's job involves teaching, whether it be educating patients on proper medication usage or educating pharmacy students who will one day be caring for patients of their own. Now at Boehringer Ingelheim, Dr. Cios has worked with students from various universities for several years, and was a preceptor for UConn students at the Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston where she still works per diem.

The Brigham and Women's Hospital is a 793-bed, nonprofit teaching affiliate of Harvard Medical School. Dr. Cios was a senior clinical pharmacist in internal medicine at the hospital. Her role was to consult with and make recommendations to patients who have a high risk of being readmitted to the hospital. She worked with patients who were on complicated medication regimens and may not have been compliant with them. She worked primarily in the inpatient setting to get an understanding of why they were not following the regime, and performing medication reconciliation.

Dr. Cios was also the PGY1 and PGY2 residency program coordinator at the hospital. These programs are full-time, one year residencies that give pharmacists an opportunity to develop the necessary skills to work as pharmacy clinicians. These residents co-precept students from various schools in the area, so the hospital is used to having students involved in its daily routine. The hospital also holds four to five student presentations each day.

As a student, Rachel Mullin, Pharm.D. '12, spent both her critical care and institutional rotations at the Brigham and Women's Hospital under Dr. Gaspar Hacobian. Dr. Cios works closely with Dr. Hacobian to precept institutional students, which is how she and Mullin met. Mullin found the student-friendly atmosphere

extremely beneficial. "You really get a chance to be exposed to what other students are doing, no matter which rotation you are on," she said.

Mullin enjoyed her time at the Brigham and Women's Hospital so much that she decided to apply for the PGY1 Residency program. She was accepted and started her PGY1 residency in July 2012. Dr. Cios initially got her interested in the program and provided her with all the necessary information to apply. Mullin says that Dr. Cios "kept a very even playing field during the application process" and Mullin describes her as "really approachable, down to earth, humble, and easy to talk to."

"Not all schools are created equal but with these students, I know that they have strong skill sets."

At the site, students on rotation typically worked as an extension of Dr. Cios. The students first observe Dr. Cios in a medical counseling situation and they are then allowed to try it themselves under her observation. She believes it is important to take a slightly hands off approach to teaching in order for the students to get the most out of their experience. This is the technique that her favorite preceptors used with her when she was a student, and she found it to be the most effective way for her to learn. "The best preceptors let their student be hands-on and take a primary role in patient care with oversight," said Cios.

One of the most important things that Dr. Cios tries to teach her students is the importance of forming relationships and keeping in contact with those they meet in the pharmacy world. Dr. Cios became a

preceptor because of the close contact she kept with the University of Connecticut.

Dr. Cios says that she enjoys working with UConn students because "you know the type of student you're getting coming from UConn." She is familiar with what is being taught at each stage of the pharmacy program. She says, "Not all schools are created equal but with these students, I know that they have strong skill sets." Dr. Cios loved her time at UConn and thinks very highly of the School of Pharmacy. "The program is a good balance and provides pharmacy students the skills to pursue careers in clinical, retail or industry-based pharmacy," she explains. "Students get to work with faculty that are on top of their game with research... coming from a research university is highly regarded when you are working at research-intensive institution."

Dr. Cios hopes that from their time with her, students learned that all patients could benefit from meeting with a pharmacist in the hospital. She wants them to understand that the small glimpse they get of a patient in the hospital is not enough and pharmacists need to be involved in all aspects of longitudinal medical care. Her goal is that students will learn how to "provide patients with the necessary knowledge and tools to help them when they leave to prevent them from being readmitted to the hospital." ■

Did You Know...

We are always looking for volunteers for our community outreach events? If you, or a pharmacist you know, is interested in working with students at such events as health fairs, community clinics, and shelters, please contact our office.