April 2009

Dear Alumni and Friends:

My 16 months as dean of the Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy have been a true homecoming. Not only did I return to academia after 17 years in industry, I returned to the school from which I earned my pharmacy degree in 1977. As an alumnus reconnecting with my alma mater, I am pleased to discover just how much the School has grown to meet the changing needs of both students and the pharmacy profession.

Some of these changes you’ve experienced yourself. Maybe you remember classes in the old Lincoln Avenue building in Newark in the 1940s, or (like me) the move to the Busch Campus in the 1970s, or the adoption of the PharmD in the 1990s. Then, as now, thinking forward has made us one of the nation’s very best pharmacy schools.

I am eager to share with you the many exciting things happening at our School.

Nurturing Pharmacy’s Future: Our Students

One of the great pleasures of my move from industry to academia has been the chance to interact with our exceptional students. They are bright, energetic, and dedicated to the field of pharmacy. In this exceptionally diverse group of young men and women rests a secure future for our profession. Today’s School of Pharmacy students—much like those who went before—are impressive.

- We receive about 3,600 applications and enroll a class averaging 220 students each year.
- First-year matriculating students have a mean verbal and math SAT score near 1400 and average in the top 5% of their high school class.
- Currently enrolled students hail from New Jersey as well as 17 other states stretching from Massachusetts to Texas and California. We have earned a national reputation for excellence.
- Students from all over the globe, many of whom are their families’ first collegians, choose the Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy. The School will always support upward strivers.

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Today’s students continue the School’s tradition of dedication to pharmacy practice, patient care, and community leadership. In a 2008 survey of graduating students, the majority indicated they planned on careers as pharmacists in community and hospital settings. Others aspired to enter the pharmaceutical industry, government service, independent research, and academia. Increasingly, students recognize the PharmD as an excellent foundation for the pursuit of advanced degrees in such professional fields as law, research, medicine, public health, and business.

Visit us at pharmacy.rutgers.edu and stay connected with your School
Training New Pharmacists: the PharmD Program

Today the School of Pharmacy offers the PharmD degree, the sole professional degree granted nationally. Multiple experiential rotations are keys to that program’s success. Very few schools can match Rutgers’ clinical rotation program in breadth and depth. The School has worked very hard to build the professional relationships that introduce our students to the widest range of experience. Our success shows in the 1,320 sites that welcome our students and the 1,600 preceptors who mentor our students in:

- professional settings such as hospitals, chain and independent community pharmacies, managed care, community health centers, government agencies, and industry;
- practice specialties such as emergency medicine, ambulatory care, oncology, internal medicine, neonatal/pediatrics, and infectious diseases; and
- placements across New Jersey and in California, Texas, Illinois, Virginia, Maryland, Florida, and Puerto Rico.

Students complete a minimum of seven five-week experiential rotations, working closely with preceptors and clinical faculty who generously share their time, expertise, and professional values. Over and over, students praise their professional practice experiences as the highlight of their education. And, just as frequently, preceptors praise our students for their enthusiasm and preparedness. Students are often hired at one of their rotation sites—a true testimonial.

Scholarships are critical to our students’ success. In the 2008-2009 academic year, we provided 23% of our PharmD students with more than $245,000 in direct scholarships, funded by generous supporters. Ever mindful of Rutgers’ role as a public university and the School’s tradition of providing an accessible education to upward-reaching students, we have set an ambitious goal of funding scholarship support to 50% of students within the next five years.

Developing 21st-Century Scientists: the MS and PhD Programs

The contributions of our graduate students to the intellectual vitality of the School of Pharmacy are indispensable. While pursuing their own studies, these young scholars assist professors as integral members of research teams and as teaching assistants in PharmD courses. About 90 graduate students bring fresh insights to the lab and classroom in three programs: Pharmaceutical Science; Medicinal Chemistry; and Toxicology, a joint program with the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. Increased funding for graduate fellowships is high on the School’s wish list.

Supporting Bold Advances: Faculty and Research

It is a privilege for me to work each day with this stellar faculty. Our 80-plus professors—divided between clinical practice and basic science—are among the top scientists and ablest practitioners in the profession. It is largely on their scholarship and teaching that the School of Pharmacy is recognized as being among the best in the Northeast. In fact, in 2008, the school ranked 6th among the nation’s 111 pharmacy schools in total NIH funding; our $11 million in research awards surpassed all other northeastern pharmacy schools.

This impressive ranking reflects the highly valued research conducted by our basic science faculty in the departments of Chemical Biology, Medicinal Chemistry, Pharmaceutics, and Pharmacology and Toxicology. Research done in our labs has a direct impact on human health and individual opportunity to live healthy lives. Among the key areas of research are:

- molecular targets and pathways in carcinogenesis and cancer chemoprevention;
- molecular mechanisms in toxicology, environmental toxicology, and drug metabolism;

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• novel antibiotics, anticancer drugs, and chiral chemistry/asymmetric catalysis;
• drug transporters, drugdelivery mechanisms, and nanotechnology; and
• medical countermeasures against chemical threats.

Our clinical faculty in the Department of Pharmacy Practice and Administration do their own research while sharing their dedication to direct patient care with students. The majority are board certified in specialties such as oncology pharmacy, pharmacotherapy, and psychiatric pharmacy. There is no better training for the next generation of pharmacists than to stand at the sides of these accomplished men and women, learning the culture and values of our profession in the very settings where they soon will practice.

Partnering with Industry: Pharmaceutical Fellows
Having come to academia from industry, I am particularly impressed by the great success of our Institute for Pharmaceutical Industry Fellowships in partnering with our corporate colleagues in New Jersey. Now in its 25th year, the Institute annually awards fellowships at one of 13 partner companies to about 75 PharmD graduates from all over the United States; that makes ours the largest such program in the country. Specialized training from industry mentors allows these young pharmacists to move into clinical research, regulatory affairs, marketing, and product development, among other areas. More than 450 former fellows now hold prominent positions in the pharmaceutical industry, making innovative contributions as pharmacists in the corporate setting.

Linking Past and Future: Our Alumni
My own return to the School underscores the need to forge better connections with our alumni—more than 5,500 pharmacy professionals who live in nearly every state in the nation. For me, the benefits, both personal and professional, have been many and meaningful. I have been embraced by my former classmates, energized by our eager young students, and inspired by the innovation and dedication of our faculty. Reaching out to our alumni—in new ways and with renewed energy—is a priority of mine. I’d like to start by extending three invitations to reconnect:

All-Class Alumni Reunion Dinner
This year, our annual reunion moves from November to May to take advantage of Rutgers’ Reunion Weekend, May 15-17, 2009, featuring more than 20 alumni events. The one you won’t want to miss: the All-Class Alumni Reunion Dinner, sponsored by the Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy and the School of Pharmacy Alumni Association, on Saturday, May 16, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. in Neilson Dining Hall on the George H. Cook Campus. Reconnect with classmates and faculty over cocktails and a buffet dinner as we honor two of our most prominent alumni, Professors Thomas Medwick PHARM’52 and Nicholas Lordi PHARM’52, as Alumni of the Year. As always, we are also honoring the 50-, 25-, and 10-year classes; this year the spotlight is on the classes of 1959, 1984, and 1999.
Pre-register at: Ralumni.com/reunion

Rutgers Day
Bring the whole family to the first-ever Rutgers Day, a festive celebration of all things Rutgers, on Saturday, April 25, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Featuring more than 400 fun-filled events—including tours, exhibits, lectures, performances, and hands-on activities—Rutgers Day expands on the success of Ag Field Day and the New Jersey Folk Festival. Be sure to visit the Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy’s Mini Health Fair on the Busch Campus, where pharmacy students, faculty, and alumni will perform blood

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pressure screenings, demonstrate glucose-monitoring devices, and dispense expert advice on medication and healthy living.
Learn more at: rutgersday.rutgers.edu

New Alumni Communications
Our commitment to more frequent communications with our alumni and friends begins with this letter—the first in a regular correspondence—and a new alumni newsletter currently under development. We have also launched a brand-new web site, with easier navigation and more features specifically for alumni and friends. From the alumni page, you can access events, association news, the upcoming alumni newsletter, and profiles of our accomplished alumni. Thanks go to our dedicated Pharmacy Alumni Council for its contributions to the alumni page.
Make connections at: pharmacy.rutgers.edu/content/alumni_friends

I hope to meet you at one of our upcoming events.

Warm regards,

Christopher J. Molloy, PhD, RPh
Dean and Professor of Pharmacology and Toxicology
PHARM’77, GSNB’87

P.S. Don’t miss a thing! Stay connected with the Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy through regular email updates.
Go to pharmacy.rutgers.edu and click on the Alumni Newsletter button to give us your email address.