



Dr. Yon Rojanasakul

Benedum Distinguished Scholar Award Honors School of Pharmacy Faculty

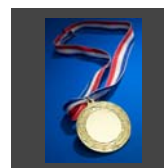
Yon Rojanasakul, Ph.D., professor and acting chair in the West Virginia University (WVU) School of Pharmacy Department of Basic Pharmaceutical Sciences, is the most recent recipient of the Benedum Distinguished Scholar Award, the premier research honor bestowed by the university. The award recognizes excellence in creative research with Rojanasakul being honored in the biosciences and health sciences category. The Distinguished Scholar Award, initiated in 1985, is funded through the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation and coordinated by the Office of Academic Affairs and Research.

Rojanasakul came to WVU as an Assistant Professor in 1989 after earning his Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin in Madison. While at WVU, Rojanasakul has established an internationally recognized research program in the area of free radical biology and cancer chemotherapeutics while also excelling as an educator, including receiving seven Outstanding Teacher Awards in the School of Pharmacy. He has published over 130 peer-reviewed manuscripts in high impact journals.

His research has led to the discovery of key molecular targets and signaling pathways involved in cancer cell death and chemoresistance. His research also addresses the development of innovative drug delivery strategies for gene-based therapeutics through an understanding of the biological barriers that prevent these agents from reaching their targets. The overall goal of his research is to develop more effective strategies for the treatment and diagnosis of cancer.

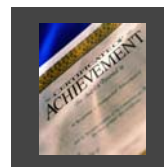
“Dr. Rojanasakul is an extremely worthy candidate for recognition of his outstanding achievements in research,” said Patricia Chase, Ph.D., dean of the WVU School of Pharmacy. “His distinguished 19-year career demonstrates his love for research, teaching, and service. He is a wonderful faculty member, a mentor to both students and faculty, a committed researcher, and a dedicated Mountaineer.”

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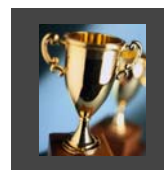
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SoP Trainees Receive Top Honors at HSC Research Events

The WVU Health Sciences Center Research Day and Van Liere Convocation is an annual showcase of the research conducted at the university. The April event featured over 100 presentations, including two oral and 26 poster presentations by trainees in the School of Pharmacy.

Presentation topics spanned all aspects of research from basic laboratory findings, to clinical observations, and population-based trends.

Awards were made in 14 categories. Eight trainees from the School of Pharmacy were award recipients.



Anurag Mishra placed first in the M.S./Dental/Basic

Science I category for his poster, "Evaluation of unique pulmonary toxicity of carbon nanotubes using in vitro methods." His mentor is Dr. Liying Wang.

Gretchen Pierce received second place in the Health Assessment II



category for her poster, "Oxycodone-related fatalities in West Virginia." Her

mentor is Dr. Michael Smith.

Rahul Khanna received first place in the Health Assessment III



category for his poster, "Early detection and costs of breast cancer in West Virginia women." His mentor is Dr. Suresh Madhavan.

Nidhi Kaushal received first place in the Basic Science II category for her poster, "CM156, a sigma receptor antagonist, mitigates stimulant and neurotoxic effects of methamphetamine in mice." Her mentor is Dr. Rae Matsuoto.



Nicole Bryan received first place in the Basic Science V category for her

poster, "Activation of inflammasomes requires intracellular redistribution of ASC." Her mentor is Dr. Yon Rojanasakul.

Anand Iyer received third place in the postdoctoral fellows category for his poster, "Novel role of c-FLIP in Akt-mediated NF-kappaB regulation: implications for death receptor

signaling." His mentor is Dr. Yon Rojanasakul.

Kimberly Kelly received second place in the Basic Science V cate-



gory for her poster, "The effects of apocynin on aged rats following MCAO and tPA reperfusion." Her mentor is Dr. Jason Huber.

Siera Talbott

received second place in the Basic Science VI category for her poster, "FLIP s-nitrosylation modulates NF-kappaB activation through changes in interaction with RIP1." Her mentor is Dr. Yon Rojanasakul.



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In May, the WVNano Initiative held its first Research Symposium, with two students from the Pharmaceutical and Pharmacological Sciences Graduate Program receiving top honors.

Therwa Hamza was awarded first place for her poster, "Cefazolin embedded polypeptide nanofilms promising for infection prevention: a preliminary study on cell responses." Ms. Hamza is a second-year

graduate student working under the mentorship of Dr. Bingyun Li.

Anurag Mishra, a first-year graduate student, received second place for a reprise of his HSC poster presentation on the pulmonary toxicity of carbon nanotubes.

In the National Spotlight!

Nidhi Kaushal, a third-year graduate student, received two competitive travel awards for her research. She presented her findings at the Behavioral, Biology and Chemistry: Translational Research in Addiction meeting in San Antonio, Texas. She also presented her findings in New Orleans, Louisiana, at the annual meeting



of the American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics, the premier scientific society for conducting basic and clinical pharmacological research. Ms. Kaushal reported the ability of new compounds developed by the research team to counteract the effects of cocaine and methamphetamine.

Graduate Students Shine at STaR Symposium

Two pharmaceutical and pharmacological sciences graduate students swept the top honors at the Science, Technology and Research (STaR) Symposium in Charleston, West Virginia.

“The student competition at this event gets better each year,” said Dr. Paul L. Hill, vice chancellor for science and research of the

West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, which hosted the event.

“These undergraduate and graduate researchers are doing excellent research that could make a real difference in the quality of life for West Virginians in the future. We want to do everything we can to develop their growth as scientists

and encourage their interests and abilities.”

Siera Talbott, a sixth-year graduate student working with Dr. Yon Rojanasakul, received the first place award for her presentation, “FLIP s-nitrosylation modulated NK-kappaB regulation: implications for death receptor signaling.”

Jarod Kabulski, a fifth-year graduate student working

with Dr. Peter Gannett, was awarded second place for his presentation, “Aubound P450 platform: an in vitro tool for predicting in vivo drug metabolism.”

“This is truly outstanding and amazing since only two awards were given at the symposium and both winners were from the School of Pharmacy,” said Yon Rojanasakul, chair of the Department of Basic Pharmaceutical Sciences.

The students were presented their cash prizes by the first lady of West Virginia, Gayle Manchin, at the Symposium Banquet.

This event serves as a forum for the state’s science and technology enterprise.

Participants gather to share research developments, ideas and collaborations.



West Virginia first lady, Gayle Manchin (pictured left in both photos), presents awards to Talbott (left photo) and Kabulski (right photo)

Health Outcomes Students Awarded Fellowships



Kimberly Blake, a third-year graduate student, received an American Foundation for Pharmaceutical Education (AFPE) pre-doctoral fellowship. Ms. Blake received her Pharm.D. from Auburn University in 1999 and an

M.B.A. from WVU before joining the Health Outcomes Research Program at WVU in 2006.

The goal of the AFPE fellowship is to provide support for outstanding advanced Ph.D. candidates.

“We are delighted that Kim has received this highly competitive fellowship,” said Suresh Madhavan, chair of the Department of Pharmaceutical Systems and Policy. “She is highly deserving of this

award and represents the caliber of Ph.D. students in the School of Pharmacy.”



Elvonna Atkins is the inaugural Novo Nordisk Fellow in Health Outcomes Research. Ms.

Atkins joined WVU in 2009 after earning her M.S. and serving as a research program coordinator at Florida A&M University. Her research in-

terests are in the areas of hypertension and cancer.

The fellowship was made possible by a grant from Novo Nordisk, Inc. The collaboration was established to support the training of future outcomes research scientists.

Both students aspire to move into professional positions in the pharmaceutical industry or in academia following completion of their training.

Notes from Dr. Matsumoto



Rae Matsumoto, Ph.D.
Associate Dean for Research
and Graduate Programs

Research at the WVU School of Pharmacy continues to grow. This issue of the Research Quarterly highlights select achievements of our graduate students.

The Graduate Program in Pharmaceutical and Phar-

macological Sciences is the largest biomedical Ph.D. program at the WVU Health Sciences Center. There are currently 36 students in the program. Three other graduate students from cancer cell biology and the M.D./Ph.D. programs also have mentors who are faculty in the School of Pharmacy.

The growth of our graduate program would not have been possible without concomitant development of the research enterprise. In 2008, the WVU School of Pharmacy more than doubled its funding from the National

Institutes of Health (NIH), surpassing the \$1 million mark for the first time. Our NIH rankings also moved up an impressive 21 spots in one year. Overall, the School of Pharmacy has over \$3 million in grants and contracts from federal, state and other sources.

Continued growth of research in the School is anticipated by unprecedented efforts to leverage external funding. During the month of April, faculty throughout the School rallied in response to the stimulus packages associated with the American Recovery and Rein-

vestment Act. Fifteen grant applications were submitted in a single month to federal agencies.

April was also marked by the announcement of the Benedum Distinguished Scholar Award in health and biosciences to Dr. Yon Rojanasakul, professor and acting chair in the Department of Basic Pharmaceutical Sciences. The Benedum award is the most prestigious research honor granted by WVU.

We look forward to continued achievements in research in the WVU School of Pharmacy during 2009.

Outstanding Graduate Student Awards

Congratulations to three outstanding graduate students who were recognized at the School of Pharmacy's awards ceremony.

Cody Peer, a fifth-year student, received the Outstanding

Research Award in Basic Pharmaceutical Sciences.

Mr. Peer's research focuses on mass spectrometry applications to biomedical problems. His mentor is Dr. Patrick Callery.



Kimberly Blake

received the Outstanding Research Award in Pharmaceutical Systems and Policy. Ms. Blake's research focuses on medication therapy management services. In addition, she is an active contributor to the Health Research Center's evaluation of school-based components of the West Virginia Healthy Lifestyles Act. Her mentors are Dr. Carole Harris and Dr. Suresh Madhavan.



Rahul Khanna

received the Outstanding Achievement Award.

This award recognizes a student whose impact extends beyond the boundaries of the graduate program. In addition to his research productivity, Mr. Khanna is recognized for his service as an instructor in two courses for pharmacy students. His research mentor is Dr. Suresh Madhavan.

We congratulate these outstanding students and



wish them continued success in their programs.

To view earlier issues of the Research Quarterly, please visit our website at:

<http://www.hsc.wvu.edu/sop/research/index.html>

The Research Quarterly is a publication of the WVU School of Pharmacy Research and Graduate Programs. For more information, please contact 304-293-1450.

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