



ST. JOHN'S
UNIVERSITY

College of Pharmacy
and Health Sciences

Year in Review





Table of Contents

1	Dean's Message
2	Leadership
3	Advisory Board
4	CPHS Welcomes Senior Associate Dean for Nursing
5	Faculty Highlights
8	College Initiatives during Pandemic
10	Student Affairs Update
11	CPHS Online Symposium Focuses on Combating Alzheimer's and Parkinson's Diseases
12	Alumni Highlights
16	Relmada Therapeutics Partners with CPHS
17	Meet the Director of Development/Corporate Relations
18	CPHS Faculty Retirees
20	Department Highlights
24	New Health Sciences Center Announced

Dean's Message



I am pleased to present you with the **2019–21 Year in Review**. I hope that this finds you both healthy and happy after more than a year of dealing with the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

During this time, faculty and students in St. John's University's College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences navigated through a maze of changes as they had to quickly readjust from an in-person to a remote learning model. They made herculean efforts as they sought strategies aimed at keeping the campus open for the duration of the pandemic.

Faculty developed a COVID-19 testing facility, supported by our graduate students, which provided COVID-19 tests to St. John's students, faculty, administrators, and staff. Our faculty and students also supervised and administered the COVID-19 vaccine to our University community. They accomplished this while still performing their duties as health-care practitioners (and practitioners in training) at their experiential sites.

Our scientists were also active performing research on COVID-19 and other diseases during this interval. Hopefully, their efforts will aid in the treatment and prevention of disease and future pandemics.

I encourage you to review the faculty and student accomplishments that are detailed here. They have won prestigious awards and garnered significant funding from the government and private organizations.

It has been said that it is not the crisis itself, but how we respond to the crisis, that matters. I am proud to say that the College has responded quite well!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Russell J. DiGate".

Russell J. DiGate, Ph.D.

Dean and Professor

College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences

Leadership



Emily Ambizas, Pharm.D.
*Interim Assistant Dean for
Experiential Education*



Russell J. DiGate, Ph.D.
Dean and Professor



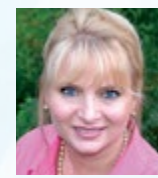
Vijaya L. Korlipara, Ph.D.
*Chair, Department of
Pharmaceutical Sciences*



Joseph M. Brocavich, Pharm.D.
*Senior Associate Dean for
Pharmacy Programs*



Joseph V. Etzel, Pharm.D.
Associate Dean for Student Affairs



Cathleen Murphy, D.C.
*Associate Dean for Health
Sciences Programs*



Colleen Carmody, Ed.D., R.N., C.N.S.
Senior Associate Dean for Nursing Program



Marc E. Gillespie, Ph.D.
*Associate Dean for Graduate
Education, Research, and Assessment*



Jagannath Muzumdar, Ph.D.
*Chair, Department of Pharmacy
Administration and Public Health*



Manouchkathe Cassagnol, Pharm.D.
*Assistant Dean, Community Engagement,
Equity, and Belonging*



Tina J. Kanmaz, Pharm.D.
*Interim Chair, Department of
Clinical Health Professions*



John M. Conry, Pharm.D.
*Special Advisor to the Dean for
Strategic Initiatives*



Sawanee Khongsawatwaja, M.S.
*Associate Dean for Administration
and Fiscal Affairs*

Advisory Board



Robert Blenderman, P.A., M.B.A. '01P

Chief Operating Officer
NewYork-Presbyterian Queens



Katie Boston-Leary, Ph.D., NEA-BC

Director
Nursing Programs
American Nurses Association



Linda M. DaSilva, R.Ph. '81GP

Chair
College Advisory Board
Leader
Life Sciences Market Development
Deloitte Services



**Michael A. Dorato, Ph.D., D.A.B.T.,
Fellow A.T.S. '71P, '73GP, '76Ph.D.**

Vice President
Pharmacology and Toxicology
MBX Biosciences



Peter J. Micca '89CBA

Partner
Deloitte & Touche LLP



Joseph Moscola, P.A., M.B.A. '00P

Executive Vice President
Enterprise Management
Northwell Health



Frank Odeh '93P

Owner
Prosperity Pharmacy



Roger Paganelli '87P

President and Supervising Pharmacist
Mt. Carmel Pharmacy



**James R. Ruger, J.D., Ph.D.
'75P, '77G, '78GP, '83L, '86Ph.D.**

Attorney, Axiom Legal Services
President/Founder, VALID Consulting, Inc.



Ret. Col. John Spain, Pharm.D. '88P

Senior Director
National Payer Account Medical Lead
Pfizer Inc.

CPHS Welcomes Senior Associate Dean for Nursing

Senior Associate Dean for Nursing Programs Named



Colleen Carmody, Ed.D., R.N., C.N.S.

Colleen Carmody, Ed.D., R.N., C.N.S., has been recruited to the faculty of St. John's University as the Senior Associate Dean for Nursing Programs and tenured Associate Professor/Industry Professional in the Department of Clinical Health Professions in the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences.

Dr. Carmody arrived at St. John's University having already established a highly distinguished career in nursing and nursing education. She recently successfully led the re-accreditation process for the nursing program at St. Francis College in Brooklyn, NY.

Dr. Carmody possesses a 40-year career in nursing that has spanned clinical practice in critical care and pediatrics, 17 years of service as an officer in the US Air Force, and 13 years in higher education.

She earned her Ed.D. in Executive Leadership and Education from St. John Fisher College in 2008 and her master's in Nursing as a Clinical Nurse Specialist from the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center in 1997—funded by a full scholarship from the Air Force Institute of Technology. She earned her baccalaureate degree in nursing from Niagara University in 1979. Her areas of teaching and scholarly interest include nursing simulation education, interprofessional education, and disaster preparedness.

Faculty Highlights

Assistant Professor Earns NIH Grant for Cancer Research



Aaron Muth, Ph.D.

Seeking to better understand the connection between a novel protein in the body and certain cancers, **Aaron Muth, Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor, Pharmaceutical Sciences, College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, was recently awarded a \$492,000 National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant for his proposal, "Developing Chemical Probes to Decipher Gankyrin Biology."

The proposal focuses on making chemical compounds that are used to study gankyrin, a protein that plays a major role in the onset and development of various forms of cancer. "It is a mix of excitement and relief," said Dr. Muth on learning about the grant. "I am excited to have the funds to push our research to the next level, and I am relieved, because it was 13 months of waiting to hear a decision on the grant application."

Gankyrin is an understudied protein that is overexpressed in numerous cancer types. "It appears to play a key role in regulating

cancer proliferation and metastasis," he explained. "Hopefully, this work will allow others to better study this protein and allow for future work in developing potential drugs for treating certain cancer types."

While Dr. Muth came to St. John's in 2016, his passion for cancer research is fueled by a loss he experienced as a teenager. "My mom died from cancer when I was 18 years old, and I wanted to find a way to contribute toward understanding and treating cancer," he explained. "This motivates me to this day, as I hope I can contribute to the cancer research world in a meaningful way."

"Dr. Muth is a remarkable researcher, teacher, and colleague," said Russell J. DiGate, Ph.D., Dean and Professor, College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. "His contributions to the field of pharmaceutical sciences are an inspiration to faculty and students alike, and his NIH grant is well-deserved. I am proud to have him as a member of our faculty."

The work of both graduate and undergraduate students has been vital to Dr. Muth's research. "Currently, I have three Ph.D. students working in my lab, and they have been instrumental in generating the preliminary data needed for this grant to be funded," he said. "Graduate students have been involved in the design and synthesis of chemical probes that are a part of this research. I have been fortunate enough to have 18 undergraduates work in my lab and contribute to various aspects of this project."

While Dr. Muth is thrilled to have earned an NIH grant, he finds the research itself gratifying on two fronts. "There really are two extremely rewarding aspects of my research—working with students and making discoveries," he said. "It is exciting to discover something new and contribute to the understanding of a particular disease. It is just as wonderful to watch students develop their skills as scientists and realize that they are contributing something important to the scientific community."

Faculty Highlights

Professor Awarded \$492,000 Grant for Cancer Research



Tanaji T. Talele, Ph.D.

When he lost his sister to an untreatable form of cancer, **Tanaji T. Talele, Ph.D.**, Professor of Medicinal Chemistry, committed himself to creating drug therapies that would combat this insidious disease. Dr. Talele recently received a \$492,000 Support for Competitive Research Grant from the National Institutes of Health for his research in developing new therapeutic molecules to treat cancer. The protein family Dr. Talele is targeting is known as Poly (ADP-ribose) polymerases (PARPs), and the goal is to inhibit only those isoforms (i.e., proteins that are similar to each other and perform similar roles within cells) related to cancer cell growth.

"Selectivity is important," he stressed. "These proteins are very similar, and it becomes challenging to develop a selective molecule for only one protein." This project serves as a tool for biologists to

understand the role of different proteins in that particular family by separating the ones that need to be targeted.

Dr. Talele also received a private grant of \$167,000 from the University of California, San Francisco. "We are creating a single molecule to block two proteins in the cancer cells to circumvent resistance to certain drugs," he explained, adding that the hope is by attacking these proteins, resistance will be eliminated.

Dr. Talele earned his B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. degrees in medicinal chemistry in India before coming to the US. During his academic career, he has authored or coauthored 92 peer-reviewed research papers and has more than 10 manuscripts currently being prepared for submission.

The University's Vincentian mission of service has affected Dr. Talele dramatically since he arrived here in 2005; he believes that his research specialty closely parallels the mandate to bring healing to those in need.

Dr. Talele said that the students working in his lab represent a diverse mix of cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. All educational levels are represented, which includes undergraduate and master's degree students, doctoral candidates, a postdoctoral fellow, and a technician currently working in the field.

Working on a project of this importance also helps the graduate students in his lab advance their own burgeoning careers, but Dr. Talele noted the most important outcome is that it advances the science and will help save lives.

Faculty Highlights

Vincentian Mission Informs Public Health Professor's Research Collaborative Effort

Yolene Gousse '96C, Dr.PH., M.P.H., Assistant Professor/Industry Professional, has enjoyed a long relationship with St. John's University. She came to St. John's as an undergraduate, earning her bachelor's degree in Psychology. After completing graduate studies and holding various public health positions in the public and private sectors, she returned to St. John's in 2017 as a faculty member in the Department of Pharmacy Administration and Public Health in the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences.



The University's Vincentian mission played an important role in Dr. Gousse's career decision to return to her alma mater. "We have the only public health program in New York City anchored in the University's mission of compassion and service to all—one that is located in a diverse, urban community," she commented.

Last year, Dr. Gousse was accepted to the National Institutes of Health (NIH)-funded New York University Program to Increase Diversity in Behavioral Medicine and Sleep Disorders Research (PRIDE Institute). The overarching goal of the NYU PRIDE Institute is to foster the development of academic careers of underrepresented minority (URM) scientists to increase academic workforce diversity.

This is consistent with NIH strategic goals viewing training of URM faculty as a critical component in developing biomedical/behavioral scientists. NIH efforts to increase participation of URM faculty in these training activities are critical for maximizing the potential of URM faculty and the biomedical

research enterprise as a whole. In general, the NYU PRIDE model focuses on academic career development, competitive NIH proposals, peer-reviewed publications, and networking with mentors and peers.

There, Dr. Gousse developed a research proposal to evaluate the quality of care among minority populations diagnosed with chronic hypertension and diabetes in Queens, NY, during the COVID-19 pandemic. Earlier this year, her proposal was funded by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), NIH, under the Small Research Project (SRP) initiative of the NYU PRIDE Institute.

"It is important to ensure quality and continuity of care, especially among those at high risk for COVID-19 infections and/or other diseases due to existing comorbidities," she noted. Findings from this project will help provide recommendations for improving access to care in the region.

The current initiative highlights some of Dr. Gousse's experience working on COVID-19 related projects. Her other research related to COVID-19 includes a pandemic needs assessment for the population of Haiti and a COVID-19 Tracking Application Utilization Assessment in Queens.

Another reason for Dr. Gousse's return was St. John's University's metropolitan and global identity. "The Public Health program and the University's mission facilitate the continuation of my public health research addressing chronic disease disparities and the socio determinants of health in inner-city communities, while also extending my research globally," she stressed. Returning to her alma mater provided her with the opportunity to work with communities locally and abroad, which has been an integral part of her life and public health career.

"Dr. Gousse firmly believes that research into helping underserved populations is rooted squarely within the University's Vincentian mission. "This has been a unique opportunity—being able to work with the University that played a key role in shaping my career, character, and values."

College Initiatives during Pandemic

COVID-19 Vaccine Offered to St. John's Community through Collaborative Effort

From the earliest days of the global COVID-19 pandemic, interdepartmental collaboration across St. John's University has been the guiding principle and driving force in efforts to protect the broader St. John's family.

That shared spirit and willingness to act collectively to keep each other safe and healthy was overwhelmingly evident as students and employees availed themselves of the opportunity to get the COVID-19 vaccine during the Spring 2021 semester at a temporary clinic in Taffner Field House on the Queens, NY, campus.

The Campus Vaccination Working Group, comprised of John M. Conry, '96P, '98Pharm.D., Clinical Professor of Clinical Health Professions and Chairperson, Department of Clinical Health Professions, College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (CPHS); Kathryn T. Hutchinson, Ph.D., Vice President, Division of Student Affairs; William M. Maidhof '99P, '03Pharm.D., Associate Professor/Industry Professional, Department of Clinical Health Professions; Maria M. Mantione '96P, '98Pharm.D., Director, Doctor of Pharmacy program, and Clinical Professor, Community Pharmacy

Practice; and Luis G. Manzo, Ph.D., Executive Director of Wellness and Assessment, spearheaded the on-campus vaccination effort.

"We are proud of our students and their commitment to taking care of themselves and each other throughout this past year by adhering to public health guidelines and taking the next step by getting vaccinated," said Dr. Hutchinson. "I really look forward to having more in-person activities across campus in the fall, and by being vaccinated as a community, we are one step closer to making this a reality."



In late December, St. John's received confirmation that it was designated a vaccination site, but it was not until late April that dosages of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine were made available to the University for distribution. It was Dr. Maidhof who retrieved them from the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center of New York in Manhattan. He was also responsible for filling out the requisite paperwork for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"My job was to make sure the storage of the vaccine was appropriate, that our freezers and refrigerators were operating properly, and that all of our paperwork with the state and the city was in order," he explained.

After receiving a shipment of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine from the New York State Department of Health, multiple departments across the University actively worked to distribute the vaccine to students and employees. The vaccine was then offered to family members of employees.

Student pharmacist Lisa Capriola welcomed the opportunity to administer the vaccine to fellow students on campus after administering thousands of doses at long-term care facilities throughout the local area. "I think it is wonderful that St. John's did this," she said. "We have tons of space and so many students who were willing to help out."

"Our faculty and students volunteered their time testing and vaccinating for the last year," said Russell J. DiGate, Ph.D., Dean and Professor, College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. "Anyone in our College who was capable of administering the vaccine did so. I am delighted that the faculty and students were so forthcoming with their time. They did it because they are health-care providers, and this is what they do."

Experiential learning, long a hallmark of a St. John's education, was top of mind even when teaching and learning took on new and innovative formats during the earlier days of the pandemic. Dr. Conry and his colleagues spent the last year developing the COVID Health Resource Outreach Service Program (also known as the CROSS COVID Initiative), to develop the plan that was implemented for clinical faculty members and student pharmacists to vaccinate St. John's students. The plan was a collaborative effort between the College's Urban Institute and the Division of Student Affairs.

"Our clinical faculty are spread across sites throughout New York City and Long Island, but we wanted to do something on campus as well," Dr. DiGate said. "We thought that as soon as testing became available, and eventually vaccinations, we could become heavily involved."

Dr. Mantione echoed those sentiments, and remarked on how quickly they were able to mobilize their effort. "We had been doing all of the back-end planning for months, so when we got the word, we were ready to go," she stressed. All vaccinations and postvaccine screening were handled by CPHS faculty and student pharmacists.

"It was a great opportunity for them to give back to the University in this way," she noted. "It was also somewhat historic. They went through their last year of pharmacy school in the middle of a pandemic. The vaccine is our way out of this. The opportunity to not only be involved in the vaccination process and get everybody healthy and protected is gratifying, and to do it at St. John's is amazing."



Student Affairs Update

The 2020–21 academic year presented many challenges for the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences' (CPHS) Division of Student Affairs.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all in-person classes and student events transitioned to an online format. Administrators immediately worked to identify alternative methods of delivering programming to meet the many needs of our student body. We offered virtual tutoring sessions; academic workshops; career fairs; personal and professional developmental programming; mentoring initiatives; networking opportunities; community outreach initiatives with elementary, middle, and high school students; professional ceremonies; and cocurricular events.

The College's Academic Success Center offered tutoring services for all pharmacy and health sciences students seven days a week by utilizing web-based technology for individual or group sessions. From September 2020 through May 2021, 111 tutoring sessions were offered over the course of the year, totaling 196 hours.

Lecture-style workshops delivered via WebEx focused on academic and personal development topics, including effective note-taking, avoiding procrastination, and strengthening time management skills. The various mentoring programs offered through the College were successfully converted to distant delivery platforms over the past academic year. Fifty undergraduate students were matched with successful alumni practitioners to participate in this year's CPHS Alumni Mentoring

Program, and our Faculty-Student Mentoring Program was noted to have greater student participation when offered as an online program compared to years past.

Over the past year, several new certificates were developed (e.g., Financial Literacy and Executive Leadership) to assist our students in their professional and personal development. The College was able to offer seven three-day programs aimed at educating all students on the importance of wealth accumulation and protection, liabilities, and assets; managing loan debt; and planning for retirement.

In the upcoming year, the College will expand the Financial Literacy Certificate opportunity to our alumni from the last decade. More than 175 pharmacy and health sciences students participated in this programming and provided positive feedback. In addition, a three-day Executive Leadership Certificate program was developed; pharmacy and health sciences students participated in a discussion with alumni that focused on the importance of soft skills (i.e., advocacy, volunteering on a board, information technology in health-care decision making, etc).

The College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences awarded 72 scholarships to students in the undergraduate and graduate programs. Award recipients demonstrated academic success and a commitment to service. The College would like to thank the benefactors who continuously support our students as they work to achieve academic success.

MEET THE TEAM



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CPHS Online Symposium Focuses on Combating Alzheimer's and Parkinson's Disease

As the number of Americans suffering from neuropsychiatric disorders such as Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease continues to increase, pharmacists are well positioned to positively impact the lives of patients living with these conditions.

To that end, clinical pharmacy faculty from the Department of Clinical Health Professions of St. John's University College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (CPHS) applied for and received a medical education grant of more than \$20,000 from Biogen, a biotechnology company specializing in the discovery, development, and delivery of therapies for the treatment of neurological diseases.

Using funds from the grant, CPHS hosted a geriatrics symposium entitled, "Neuropsychiatric Disorders in Older Adults." This was a four-hour Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education-accredited continuing education program for pharmacists.

Held online on April 8, the symposium's goal was to provide pharmacists with the latest, evidence-based research and tools needed to successfully optimize drug therapy in patients with Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease and support caregivers, according to Sharon See, Pharm.D., BCPS, BCGP, Clinical Professor and Assistant Chair, Department of Clinical Health Professions.

Dr. See served as Primary Investigator, and her Co-investigators were Judith L. Beizer, Pharm.D., BCGP, Clinical Professor; John M. Conry '96P, '98Pharm.D., Clinical Professor and Chairperson, Department of Clinical Health Professions; and Sum Lam, Pharm.D., BCPS, BCGP, Clinical Professor. Dr. See noted that the College has traditionally run many types

of symposia on topics such as HIV and cardiology, but this was the first of its kind in this subject area.

Held in conjunction with the Office of Continuing Professional Education, the symposium was offered to pharmacists in the tristate area, including, but not limited to, alumni and preceptors of CPHS, with 100 pharmacists registering. Dr. See, Dr. Beizer, and Dr. Lam, as well as Kimberly E. Ng '12Pharm.D., BCPS, Assistant Professor, each presented on the following topics: Medication Considerations in Older Adults, Pharmacotherapy for Alzheimer's Disease, Management of Behavioral and Psychological Symptoms of Dementia, and Management of Parkinson's Disease.

"There's a growing need for this kind of education," said Dr. See. "Most of us know someone with Alzheimer's or Parkinson's disease. This was a perfect opportunity to share best practices on how to manage these neurologic disorders."

Dr. See said that participants received surveys before the symposium to determine baseline knowledge and after the symposium to gauge how much knowledge they gained from the presentations. The overwhelming majority indicated they felt their understanding of these topics was substantially increased.

A symposium like this plays to the strengths of the University's Vincentian mission, Dr. See stressed. "There's no one else like us in this realm."

A faculty member since 1998, she appreciates the collaborative environment of St. John's. "I love my colleagues. In my department, most of us have been here 10, 15, and 20 or more years—and that says a lot."



Judith L. Beizer,
Pharm.D., BCGP



John M. Conry
'96P, '98Pharm.D.



Sum Lam, Pharm.D.,
BCPS, BCGP



Kimberly E. Ng
'12Pharm.D., BCPS



Sharon See, Pharm.D.,
BCPS, BCGP

Alumni Highlights

College Raises 20K for Memorial Scholarship

The College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences raised \$20,000 on Giving Tuesday for a memorial scholarship in honor of Maya Babayev, a fourth-year Doctor of Pharmacy student who passed away in April of 2020.

She was a first-generation college student and the eldest child in her family. Maya had a positive impact on everyone she encountered throughout her life. Her family said she had a kind and soft soul. She was a person of few words, but every word she spoke always brought a smile to everyone's face.

"Nobody could ever tell that she continuously fought a tremendous battle," said Nicole Babayev, a fellow Pharm.D. student and friend. "Regardless of the hardships she had to face, academia was always her top priority."

Nicole praised Maya's eternal optimism and determination to get well physically and succeed academically. Her dream job was to work at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center as a clinical pharmacist, specializing in oncology.

Joseph V. Etzel '88P, '90Pharm.D., Associate Dean for Student Success and Associate Clinical Professor of Pharmacy, shared that "despite having experienced many personal challenges, Maya persevered through her obstacles, determined to complete her degree and graduate with her classmates."

Maya's kindness, determination, and strength served as an inspiration for her classmates and professors. Over the next two years the College will continue to hold a Giving Tuesday campaign to create an endowed scholarship to honor Maya and support future pharmacy students committed to the profession.



Alumni Highlights

St. John's University's P.A. Program Celebrates 25 Years of Accreditation

The Physician Assistant (P.A.) program in St. John's University's College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences is celebrating 25 years of accreditation. St. John's P.A. program has graduated exceptional physician assistants who went on to be leaders in P.A. education, health-care administration, and state and national P.A. advocacy.

"We extend heartfelt gratitude to the many educators and staff for their contributions over the years," said Russell J. DiGate, Ph.D., Dean and Professor, College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences.

St. John's University has a long history of educating physician assistants. The first P.A. in New York State was issued a license in 1971; shortly afterward, St. John's began enrolling undergraduate students in a pre-P.A. track. After three years of undergraduate course work, students who qualified either applied to Bayley Seton Hospital, formerly known as the United States Public Health Service Hospital, or Bronx Lebanon Hospital Center, for the P.A. program professional phase.



L to R: Catholic Medical Center, Class of 1996, and Bayley Seton, Class of 1996

Ultimately, Bronx Lebanon made a decision to close their P.A. program; Bayley Seton Hospital, along with its physician assistant program, also closed. All qualified St. John's undergraduate pre-P.A. students now attended Catholic Medical Center (CMC); independent students were also eligible to apply.

By this time, the P.A. program had moved to its current location at the Dr. Andrew J. Bartilucci Center, formerly known as St. Anthony's. Eventually, the Accreditation Review Commission of P.A. Programs issued a standard of accreditation that hospital systems could no longer sponsor P.A. programs; P.A. programs had to be sponsored by a University.

St. John's took over the sponsorship of the CMC's P.A. program on March 1, 2007, and issued graduates both their bachelor's degree and P.A. certificate. Mr. Schmidt transitioned with

the P.A. program and served as the program's Director until he retired.

In 2019, St. John's Physician Assistant program enrolled its first Master of Science Physician Assistant cohort, which marked the end of their bachelor P.A. program. The last bachelor's cohort graduated in May.

Alumni Highlights

CPHS Clinical Laboratory Sciences Program Fills a Critical Need

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Clinical Laboratory Sciences (CLS) program in the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences at St. John's University. Clinical laboratory scientists assist physicians by detecting the presence or absence of disease through the performance of laboratory analyses. They provide the data that help physicians determine the best treatment for patients.



According to Lisa Hochstein, Program Director, Associate Professor, and Industry Professional, most people do not realize there is a critical shortage of clinical laboratory personnel. "That's basically because people don't know about this profession," she said.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused the profession to receive more attention. "When they started

talking about diagnostic tests, rapid tests, antibody tests, that's what we do," she observed. "It got us some notoriety, and here at St. John's we probably had more students apply than in years past."

Prof. Hochstein noted that many of her former and current students had family members go through the program, which can accommodate approximately 15–18 students each year. There is little flexibility due to limited laboratory space and slots at partner institutions, such as hospitals, for students to do their clinical laboratory rotations. Often, these sites end up hiring students.

St. John's is a three-plus-one school, which means the entire senior year is the clinical year. Students attend lectures on Mondays and Tuesdays, and do their rotations during the remainder of the week.

"My thought is that if you learn the didactic material right away, you remember it," she stressed.

Students also have to take a national certification exam in their senior year. Prof. Hochstein believes the way St. John's teaches its CLS students allows the material to remain fresh in their minds.

The CLS program immediately went virtual during the pandemic. Hospital administrators told Prof. Hochstein that students could no longer work on the premises, forcing them to miss the last eight weeks of their rotations. In order to qualify for their license, students need to complete 720 rotations hours. Most students had already attained that number, but they still needed to be tested in their subject areas. Happily, all of the students passed and received their certifications.

Jasjit Kaur Multani '12P, M.P.H., M.L.S.(ASCP)CM, and Khushpreet Kaur '21P are cousins and graduates of the program. Ms. Multani knew she wanted to pursue a health-care profession when she entered college. "The professional nature of the CLS program is so appealing to me, and I knew job prospects after graduation would be high," she stressed.

Ms. Kaur added she knew little about the profession before deciding to pursue it. "Since automation is becoming more prevalent in all aspects of clinical laboratories, being a part of a technologically savvy generation was a plus for me. The high demand for CLS graduates in health care, the ability to continue my education, and my cousin's work experience inspired me to pursue a career in this field."

Alumni Highlights

Toxicology Program Celebrates More than 50 Years at St. John's

In April of 1970, the inaugural class of toxicology majors observed the nation's first-ever Earth Day with their presentation of a two-day symposium on the environment. More than a half-century later, St. John's is widely recognized as the first higher education institution in the US to establish a Bachelor of Science in Toxicology degree program, which is based in the University's College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (CPHS).

Toxicologists have the critical responsibility of keeping the public safe from harmful substances found in food, the environment, drugs, and other sources. Through research, frequent testing, and data collection, toxicologists help protect and improve the lives of millions.

St. John's has expanded the Toxicology program to include a Master of Science in Toxicology and a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Pharmaceutical Sciences, with a concentration in toxicology. The program also offers a bachelor's/master's pathway, which enables students to obtain graduate credit as undergraduate seniors, thereby shortening their time in attaining the master's by one year.



Vincent DePaul Lynch, Ph.D., founder of St. John's Bachelor of Science Program in Toxicology

The St. John's program is unique, Sue M. Ford, Ph.D., DABT, Director of the Toxicology program and Associate Professor, Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, added, because "it is well-rounded rather than specialized. It is grounded in the sciences and provides a focused

education in all aspects of toxicology, including analytical, medical and pharmaceutical, environmental, and regulatory toxicology. The students graduate with the ability to step directly into many career paths, and the curriculum has the prerequisites and background for medical and graduate programs."

The program thrives because of the dedication and enthusiasm of the toxicology faculty and graduates, according to Dr. Ford. "The classes for our major courses are small, and we get to know our students and their objectives."

The faculty also make an extraordinary effort to involve the toxicology undergraduates in national and regional meetings of professional organizations, including those hosted by the Society of Toxicology. "Immersion in professional meetings such as these shows our students that they're part of a larger body of scientists," Dr. Ford said.

Relmada Therapeutics Partners with CPHS

St. John's University's College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, in collaboration with Relmada Therapeutics, Inc., is proud to announce a new fellowship for pharmacy program graduates. The St. John's University/Relmada Pharmaceutical Industry Fellowship in Clinical Development—Major Depressive Disorders (MDD) is a one- or two-year postgraduate experience for individuals who have earned a doctor of pharmacy degree.



"Relmada Therapeutics, Inc. is on the cutting edge of research and has a growing team with decades of drug development experience at all stages," said Joseph M. Brocovich, Pharm.D., Senior Associate Dean for Pharmacy and Associate Clinical Professor, College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. "This new fellowship is an excellent learning and research opportunity for graduates seeking extensive experience in clinical development."

Relmada Therapeutics, Inc. (Nasdaq: RLMD) is a clinical stage, publicly traded, specialty pharmaceutical company that develops novel versions of proven drug products, together with new chemical entities that potentially address areas of high, unmet medical need in the treatment of chronic pain. Founded in 2004, Relmada Therapeutics is headquartered in New York City.

"We are excited to partner with St. John's on this important fellowship program as we advance REL-1017 for the treatment of MDD, a major unmet medical need," said Maged S. Shenouda '88P, Chief Financial Officer, Relmada Therapeutics. "Relmada's passion for excellence and the superb quality of St. John's Doctor of Pharmacy program are a powerful combination."

The overall objective of the fellowship is to provide hands-on experience in the clinical development of special population clinical studies (Phase 1) and late phase (Phase 3) clinical studies to support the filing of a new drug application (NDA) for a MDD pharmaceutical.

The fellowship combines clinical development experience with broader exposure to areas such as regulatory, quality assurance, nonclinical, and CMC (chemistry, manufacturing, and controls), to introduce and develop valuable skills in the overall NDA pathway.

Fellows will use their skills to make a positive impact on the advancement of a therapeutic candidate for the treatment of MDD. The fellowship involves establishing strong working relationships with health economics and outcomes research, medical affairs, regulatory affairs, quality assurance, and clinical development activities.



Meet the Director of Development/Corporate Relations



Rachel J. O'Reilly

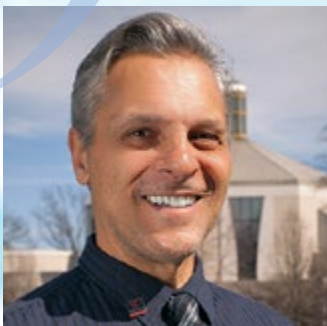
Director of Development/Corporate and Foundation Relations
College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences

Based in St. John's University's Office of Advancement, Ms. O'Reilly is dedicated to aligning the philanthropic interests of corporations, foundations, alumni, and friends with the College's mission and priorities to achieve shared goals and meaningful change.

Additionally, she serves as a key contact for executive alumni and other corporate leadership interested in exploring mutually beneficial collaborations, including postdoctoral fellowships. If you would like to discuss the many opportunities for you to make an impact and leave a lasting legacy at the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, Ms. O'Reilly would be delighted to hear from you.

She can be reached directly at oreillyr@stjohns.edu; 718-990-6776.

CPHS Faculty Retirees



Frank A. Barile '77P, '80GP, '82Ph.D., Professor, Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, enjoyed a career as a faculty member that spanned more than 35 years, first at the City University of New York and then at St. John's University. Dr. Barile distinguished himself with a strong record of research in in vitro toxicology, teaching, and service.

He is a recipient of the prestigious National Institutes of Health (NIH) Academic Research

Enhancement Award grant and the NIH Minority Biomedical Research Support awards.

Dr. Barile has authored more than 75 research papers and abstracts in peer-reviewed biomedical and toxicology journals, as well as five books and three book chapters. He is on the editorial board of two toxicology journals. Dr. Barile has been serving as an Editor of *Toxicology in Vitro* since 2012. He is an active member of eight professional societies. He was awarded Professor of the Year in 2003. Dr. Barile served as Chair of the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences from 2014 through 2017. He was the President of the In Vitro and Alternative Methods Specialty Section, Society of Toxicology.

Dr. Barile volunteered with the New York City Medical Reserve Corps at the COVID-19 antibody testing site at the SOMOS Community Center in Brooklyn, NY, from March through June of 2020. His contribution made a tremendous impact on the health of New York City residents. As a scientist and licensed pharmacist, he was well-prepared to supervise, administer, and interpret the results of this testing and counsel patients on their status as formerly symptomatic or asymptomatic victims of COVID-19 exposure.

His academic training includes postdoctoral fellowships at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Bronx, NY, and at Columbia University. Dr. Barile earned his Ph.D. in Pharmacology, M.S. in Toxicology, and B.S. in Pharmacy from St. John's University.



Michael A. Barletta, Ph.D. '65P, '70GP, Professor, Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, is a nationally recognized cardiovascular pharmacologist who served as a pharmacology faculty member in the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences from 1974 through 2020. He successfully balanced his career

by making contributions in three critical areas: teaching, service, and research.

Dr. Barletta mentored numerous M.S. and Ph.D. students with research primarily focused in the diabetes and cardiovascular fields. He published more than 50 peer-reviewed papers and presented several abstracts at scientific symposia.

As a New York State-licensed pharmacist, he brought his practical experience to the classroom. He was awarded Professor of the Year in 1992 and 1993. He also received an outstanding faculty achievement medal in 1988. Dr. Barletta was a member of five different professional societies. He earned his Ph.D. in Pharmacology from New York Medical College, and his M.S. in Pharmacology and B.S. in Pharmacy from St. John's University.



Cesar Lau Cam, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, was an eminent scholar who, over a 51-year career as a faculty member in the College, brought distinction to St. John's University and to his department.

Working with graduate and undergraduate students as their mentor, Dr. Lau-Cam published more than 80 peer-reviewed articles and made more than 120 presentations of his research at scientific conferences. His passion for teaching and research comes through clearly in all of his conversations.

Dr. Lau-Cam served as a Science Advisor at the chemistry branch of the US Food and Drug Administration in New York from 1979 through 1988, and as a Visiting Professor in the Department of Pharmacognosy at Rutgers University in 1989. He served as a consultant to various pharmaceutical companies throughout his career and as a reviewer of scientific journals, including the *Journal of Pharmaceutical and Biomedical Analysis*, *Life Sciences*, and the *Journal of Pharmaceutical Sciences*.

Dr. Lau-Cam earned his M.S. and Ph.D. in Pharmaceutical Sciences (Pharmacognosy) from the University of Rhode Island, and a B.S. degree in Pharmacy from the University of San Marcos, Lima, Peru. He was a recipient of the prestigious Fulbright Fellowship from 1963 through 1965 during his graduate studies.



Robert A. Mangione '77P, '79GP, '93PD, '99Ed.D., is a quadruple graduate of St. John's University. He completed a pharmacy internship at Lenox Hill Hospital in Manhattan, NY, from 1977 through 1978, and an American Society of Health-system Pharmacists-accredited pharmacy practice residency at Mercy Medical Center (now Mercy Hospital) in Rockville Centre, NY, from 1978 through 1979, prior to joining the St. John's faculty.

During his tenure at St. John's, he served as a clinical faculty member at Nassau County Medical Center (now Nassau University Medical Center) from 1979 to 1981, and at Long Island Jewish Medical Center and Schneider Children's Hospital (now Cohen Children's Medical Center) from 1981 to 1990. While at the children's hospital, Dr. Mangione also served as the institution's Pediatric Clinical Pharmacy Coordinator.

He was appointed Assistant Dean for Pharmacy Student Affairs in 1990, Associate Dean in 1996, and Dean of the College in 1999. He served as Dean of the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences until 2012, when he was named University Provost. In 2018, he decided to step down as University Provost and return to the full-time faculty in the Department of Pharmacy Administration and Public Health. He was also named Provost Emeritus in 2018. Dr. Mangione also served as the University's National Collegiate Athletic Association Faculty Athletics Representative prior to his appointment as Provost.

Dr. Mangione's professional interests include pharmaceutical care for patients with celiac disease, pediatric pharmacotherapy, and poverty issues in health care and education. He served as a member of the Scientific/Medical Advisory Council of Beyond Celiac (formerly the National Foundation for Celiac Awareness), and he also holds membership in the Society for the Study of Celiac Disease.

He previously served as the President of the Long Island Society of Health-system Pharmacists, Editor of the *New York State Journal of Pharmacy*, and as a contributing editor to the *Children's Hospital Quarterly* and to *U.S. Pharmacist*. In addition, Dr. Mangione served for 10 years as a professional member of the New York State Board of Pharmacy. He has authored or coauthored more than 100 publications.

St. John's University has honored Dr. Mangione with the Outstanding Faculty Achievement Award in 1989, the Vincentian Mission Award in 1995, the Pietas Medal in 2002, the St. Vincent de Paul Medal in 2008, and the Spirit of Service Award in 2018. Pharmacy students voted him Teacher of the Year in 1987, 1989, 1990, and 1996, and he was presented with a Leader in Education Award from The School of Education at St. John's in 2009.

Department Highlights

Clinical Health Professions

The Department of Clinical Health Professions (CHP), which offers programs in Clinical Laboratory Sciences, Pharmacy, Physician Assistant, and Radiologic Sciences, has made significant progress toward enhancing its programmatic offerings during the past two years.

The Physician Assistant Program graduated its last undergraduate class in 2021 and is now offering a graduate program leading to a Master of Science degree in Physician Assistant. The department has also hired a new Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) Program Director and four additional DPT faculty members to seek accreditation for a new Doctor of Physical Therapy education program.

Additionally, the department has hired a Senior Associate Dean for Nursing to seek accreditation for a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree. CHP has grown to include a total of 62 faculty members.

In the areas of research and scholarship, the CHP department faculty annually published more than 200 peer-reviewed books, journal articles, newsletter articles, and poster abstracts; provided hundreds of presentations; and secured numerous education-related and patient-care focused grants.



One of the most significant initiatives accomplished by the CHP Department during 2020–21 was the development and implementation of the COVID-19 Health Resources and Outreach Service Program of St. John's University (CROSS). CROSS was developed under the leadership of John M. Conry, Pharm.D.,



Clinical Professor of Clinical Health Professions and Chairperson, Department of Clinical Health Professions, through the Urban Institute to serve as a hub of various initiatives in response to the pandemic.

The efforts of the CROSS program, together with the leadership of administrators in the Division of Student Affairs, led to COVID-19 testing, contact tracing, and immunizations for the St. John's community. It kept the COVID-19 caseload under 100 cases in any two-week time frame as required by New York State.

As part of the testing initiative, a total of 26 CHP faculty volunteers and 23 student pharmacist volunteers staffed 42 COVID-19 testing clinics on campus. Each testing clinic was staffed by two CHP faculty volunteers and two or three student pharmacist volunteers.

Once the University was approved as a COVID vaccination site and the vaccine was delivered, a total of 21 CHP faculty volunteers and 44 student pharmacist volunteers administered 1,150 Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine doses during 11 vaccination clinics on campus.

A satisfaction survey completed by 294 individuals revealed that 95 percent (i.e., 260 people) were satisfied with the service, and 92 percent would opt to be vaccinated again through this service. In addition to the many hours of volunteer services provided to the campus community by the CHP department faculty and students, many continued to work on the front lines providing direct patient care.

Department Highlights

Pharmacy Administration and Public Health

Faculty in the Department of Pharmacy Administration and Public Health have made significant strides in scholarship, teaching, and service activities during the 2019–20 and 2020–21 academic years. Here are some highlights:

A total of 10 grant proposals were submitted and approved.

Faculty were published in more than 70 publications.

Taehwan Park, Ph.D., joined the department in 2019 as an Assistant Professor and has been a great asset.

The College has broadened its network with public health agencies to secure sites for fieldwork practice.

Administrators and faculty in the Public Health program have been active in collaborating with other programs within the University to develop a pathway that enables students to earn a bachelor's and master's degree in a more condensed period.

The College celebrated National Public Health Week virtually during the week of April 5. Webinar guest speakers included Joseph R. Masci, M.D., Chairman, Global Health, Elmhurst Hospital Center, and Professor of Medicine, Infectious Disease, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, and Chris Keely, Chief Operating Officer, New York City Test and Trace Corps, Assistant Vice President, Office of Ambulatory Care, NYC Health & Hospitals.

CDR (Ret.) Harlem J. Gunness, Ph.D., M.P.H., Associate Professor/ Industry Professional and Director, Public Health Program, Pharmacy Administration, serves on the University's COVID-19 Investigation Team. Dr. Gunness has appeared on numerous media outlets discussing the pandemic and why certain neighborhoods in Queens, NY, continue to struggle more than one year later.

Yolene Gousse, Dr.PH., M.P.H., published an article with Provost Emeritus, Julia A. Upton, R.S.M. '73G, '75G, "The Use of It's Never Too Late Technology (iN2L) in Enhancing Well-Being Among the Elderly in a Residential Setting," in the *Journal of Women & Aging*. Dr. Gousse, in collaboration with the AIDS Center of Queens County, was successful in securing an external grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

The Pharmacy Administration program continues to actively engage with undergraduate and graduate students in their academic work and career development. Thesis students continue to work with individual faculty mentors on conducting original research on topics of their interests in pharmacy administration.

Students presented their research work virtually this past year at the International Society for Pharmacoepidemiology's mid-year meeting, as well as at the International Society for Pharmacoeconomics and Outcomes Research.

Besides mentoring graduate students, faculty also advise undergraduate pharmacy students. Jagannath Muzumdar, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Pharmacy Administration and Public Health, and Taehwan Park, Ph.D., published an article with sixth-year Pharm.D. candidate students Vienica Funtanilla and Namosha Mohite, "Content Analysis of 2012–2019 FDA Warning Letters and Notices of Violations using the Economic, Clinical, and Humanistic Outcomes (ECHO) Model," in *INNOVATIONS in Pharmacy*.

Dr. Park received summer support from the University for his research on racial differences in adverse outcomes following androgen deprivation therapy for prostate cancer.

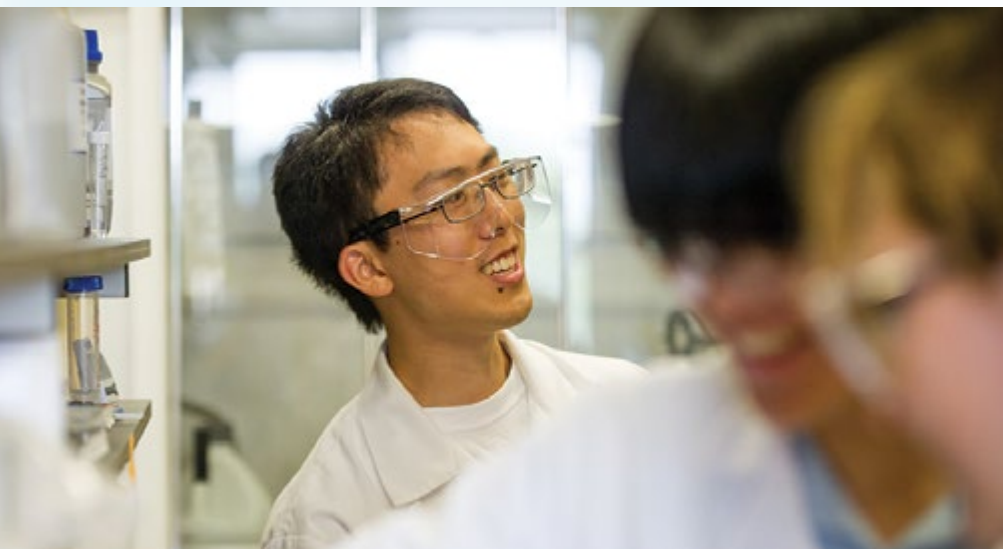


Department Highlights

Pharmaceutical Sciences

The faculty from the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences (PHS) demonstrated extraordinary commitment, determination, and adaptability as they navigated through the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2020–21 academic year.

Their health science expertise helped ensure a safe and healthy return of students to campus. The majority of the department's faculty and graduate students are trained and experienced in sterile techniques and the proper use of personal protective equipment.



Woon-Kai Low, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, led the PHS Graduate Education and Policy Committee, which included Xingguo Cheng, Ph.D., Associate Professor; Vivek Gupta, Ph.D., Associate Professor; Ashley T. Martino, Ph.D.,

Associate Professor; John Wurpel, Ph.D., Associate Professor; and Sabesan Yoganathan, Ph.D., Associate Professor, in devising protocols for the safe, socially-distanced, and productive return of graduate students to their research laboratories in the Summer of 2020.

These protocols provided a template for other units of the University as they looked to open safely. This team also devised and approved remote protocols for the presentation and defense of doctoral dissertations and master's theses. Their strategy proved effective.

This year, the department graduated 18 Ph.D.s in Pharmaceutical Sciences and 10 Masters of Science (two in Industrial Pharmacy, two in Medicinal Chemistry, two in Pharmacology, two in Pharmacotherapy, and two in Toxicology, plus four M.S. in Biological and Pharmaceutical Biotechnology).

Marc E. Gillespie, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, and Associate Dean for Graduate Education, Research, and Assessment, set up a joint venture between Admera Health and St. John's University to operate a COVID-19 nucleic acid (acute infection) and respiratory panel testing facility. St. John's provided 1,200 sq. feet of laboratory space, with sufficient equipment to conduct the US Food and Drug Administration/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-approved COVID-19 tests using a self-administered sample collection, saliva, or nasal swab.

This facility provided for on-site testing of students, faculty, and staff for COVID-19, thereby assuring the health and safety of the St. John's community. This testing facility was up and running in October 2020 through the Spring 2021 semester, and was staffed largely by PHS graduate students.

The pandemic forced the University to close all campuses and revert to online teaching and learning. However, our students still needed hands-on laboratory training, with the learning outcomes and professional competencies that these experiences create.

Felicia Carvalho, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, and Director of Undergraduate Laboratory Instruction, adapted quickly to these circumstances with flexibility and innovation. With a focus on the outcomes and competencies required of these lab courses, Dr. Carvalho developed new content to relate to hands-on activities and developed assessment protocols that assured and reinforced learning objectives. For the Summer of 2020, Dr. Carvalho developed online lab courses that addressed the requirements for students whose learning in the spring was disrupted due to COVID-19.

In the Fall of 2020, students returned to the hands-on laboratory courses—but now with sufficient social distancing. This task involved more than 1,000 students, and six separate laboratory courses split into 34 different sections. In order to maintain safe distance while in the lab, the sections were further divided into two or three separate groups.

These laboratory courses were redesigned and delivered as hybrids, with online teaching and assessment combined with hands-on learning and practice. In the Spring of 2021, five completely different laboratory courses were taught to more than 1,000 students in 38 sections each, which were further divided into smaller groups for safe distancing. Dr. Carvalho and her team, including Pratibha Agdern, Joyce Festa, Velda Glover, and Susana Solis, trained teaching fellows and graduate assistants with whom they delivered this logistical and educational wonder.

While these represent a few of the standout efforts from the PHS faculty, administrators, staff, graduate fellows, and assistants that served to ensure the health, safety, and education of our students, University, and community during this time of pandemic, the PHS faculty continued their outstanding record of innovative research, scholarship, publications, and extramural funding.



The record is documented by more than 120 peer-reviewed articles; eight book chapters; more than 40 abstracts accepted for publication with presentations at regional, national, and international online scientific meetings; and more than 30 invited presentations by members of our faculty.

Preliminary data from the Office of Grants and Sponsored Research indicate that the PHS faculty brought in \$1,354,105 in direct costs and \$360,471 in indirect costs, for a total of \$1,714,576 in total extramural funding for the 2021 fiscal year for ongoing research activities. This represents an increase of more than 50 percent over the 2020 fiscal year.

New Health Sciences Center Announced

Coming Fall 2024 to Transform Learning and Landscape of Queens Campus

St. John's University has been awarded a \$5 million New York State Higher Education Capital Matching Grant (HECap) that will be used to help finance the construction of a new building—a Health Sciences Center at the Queens, NY, campus.

“

The new Health Sciences Center will provide state-of-the-art technology and flexible room layouts to allow for a multitude of teaching and learning styles.”

RUSSELL J. DiGATE, Ph.D.

Dean and Professor

College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences

Work is expected to commence in the third quarter of 2021, and the building is slated to be ready for occupancy and available for students and classes by Fall 2024. The Health Sciences Center will promote interprofessional education amongst existing academic programs and will enable students to learn together and work as a team, similar to the real-world situation found in any clinical setting. Additionally, the new Health Sciences Center will house state-of-the-art simulation facilities for students to learn in a safe and realistic clinical environment before embarking upon required clinical rotation requirements at off-campus sites.





“

The University's new Health Sciences Center will enable St. John's to train the next generation of caregivers at a time of tremendous change and opportunity in health care.”

REV. BRIAN J. SHANLEY, O.P.
President
St. John's University





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