



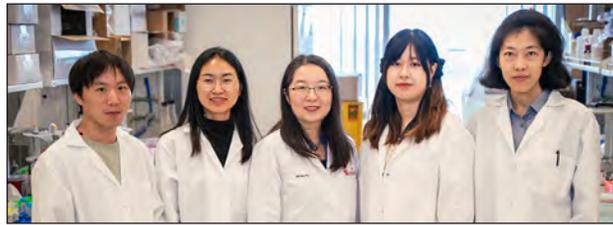
College of Pharmacy
UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

Report to the
Texas Pharmacy Congress
February 9-10, 2026

Gao Receives \$900K CPRIT Grant to Advance Pancreatic, Lung Cancer Treatments

Wei Gao, assistant professor of pharmacology, has received a \$900,000 grant from the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT) to advance a more effective immune-based treatment for pancreatic and lung cancer.

Gao and her team developed Nano 273, a dual-function nanodrug packaged in an albumin-based particle, to target regulatory B cells, activate cancer-fighting immune responses and



Wei Gao, center, is pictured with her team of graduate students and postdoctoral fellows.

limit immune suppression while improving delivery to tumors and reducing side effects.

Early studies showed that Nano 273 reduced tumor growth, extended survival and produced low toxicity in pancreatic and lung cancer models, particularly when combined with standard chemotherapy or immunotherapy.

Gao aims optimize Nano 273 production, evaluating its performance alongside existing treatments and completing additional safety studies toward future clinical trials.

ASHP Honors Eubank for Groundbreaking Antibiotic Resistance Study

Taryn Eubank, Pharm.D., BCIDP, research assistant professor, was presented with the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists' 2025 Drug Therapy Research Award at the ASHP Midyear Clinical Meeting Dec. 7-10 in Las Vegas, Nev.

Eubank's award-winning study, "Reduced Vancomycin Susceptibility in *Clostridioides difficile* Is Associated With Lower Rates of Initial Cure and Sustained Clinical Response," was published in the June 2024

issue of *Clinical Infectious Diseases*. It was the first publication to show the impact vancomycin susceptibility has on clinical outcomes, specifically the sustained clinical response, in patients with *Clostridioides difficile* infection (CDI).

The study identified antimicrobial resistance as an important predictor of treatment failure in patients with CDI spurring future stewardship, antimicrobial and diagnostic development.



Bashirullah Kicks Off Tenure Getting to Know Faculty, Staff and Students

Arash Bashirullah, Ph.D., began his tenure as new dean of the College of Pharmacy by holding informal meetings with students, faculty and staff in early January.

Bashirullah was appointed in October and confirmed by the UH Board of Regents in November.

Bashirullah joined UHCOP from University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Pharmacy, where he served as a professor and associate dean for research and graduate education as well as executive director of the Lachman Institute for Pharmaceutical Development.



New UHCOP Dean Bashirullah holds an introductory meeting with Pharm.D. students on the Pharmacy Council of organizations.

At UW-Madison, he earned numerous honors, including Teacher of the Year on three occasions.

His research examines hormonal signaling regulation and intracellular lipid trafficking linked to neurodegenerative diseases, with work published in leading international journals.

He has been recognized as a Kavli Fellow by the National Academy of Sciences and serves as senior advisory editor for *Genetics*, the flagship journal of the Genetics Society of America.

UHCOP Launches Population Health & Pharmacoepidemiology M.S., Ph.D. Concentration

UHCOP is expanding its Pharmaceutical Sciences graduate program offerings to include a new Pharmaceutical Sciences M.S. and Ph.D. concentration in Population Health and Pharmacoepidemiology.

The program is the first in the Houston metropolitan area to formally integrate population health and pharmacoepidemiology — two closely linked disciplines essential to data-driven health care decision-making.

The concentration builds on the college's longstanding strengths in health outcomes research alongside the university's growing emphasis on data science and population health initiatives.

Students will receive rigorous training in epidemiology, biostatistics, health data science and pharmacoepidemiology, equipping them to evaluate medication-related outcomes in large, diverse populations.

The new doctoral track addresses a regional gap by preparing graduates to lead research that informs clinical practice, health policy and health care system performance, while advancing UHCOP's mission to improve health outcomes and community impact.

The college expects to welcome its first students in the new concentration in fall 2027.

Leslie Joseph, B.S., RPhT, instructional lab manager, was named Outstanding Technician by the Gulf Coast Society of Health-System Pharmacists (GCSHP) for 2025-26 for a second time.

Joseph previously won the award in 2023, the same year she and fellow UHCOP Instructional Lab Manager Sherrie Myers, RCPHT,

were elected co-chairs of the GCSHP Pharmacy Technician Section.

In addition to her many GCSHP activities, Joseph has been instrumental in recruiting members to serve as preceptors to help supervise Pharm.D. students providing screenings and education at the annual Houston Mayor's Back 2 School Fest.

Student News

Paroma Arefin, Ph.D. student, and **Ogechi Ngwakwe**, Pharm.D. candidate, received Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy travel awards to attend AMCP Nexus 2025.

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Jose Ayala, Pharm.D. student, was named one of 21 recipients nationwide of the CVS Health / American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy Community Pharmacy Award for Student Pharmacists.

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Prachet Bhatt, December Ph.D. graduate, was selected for the American Society of Nephrology (ASN) Kidney Students And Residents program, which provided support to attend ASN's 2025 Kidney Week annual meeting.

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Jeremy Ninan, Pharm.D. student, was named as the Gulf Coast Society of Health-System Pharmacists' 2025-26 Outstanding Student.

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Aiden Tran, Pharm.D. student, was awarded a 2025 Vietnamese American Pharmacists Association scholarship.

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The UHCOP chapters of the Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy and Industry Pharmacists Organization co-hosted their 11th Annual Roundtable event Jan. 23 at UH. The event drew over 60 students and over two dozen representatives from managed care

and, with UHCOP alumna and past president of AMCP-Southwest Angelica Asadi, Pharm.D., R.Ph., MHA, presenting the keynote.

AAPP Chapter Earns Grant for 'Operation Seizure First Aid' Interprofessional, Campus Training

The UHCOP chapter of the American Association of Psychiatric Pharmacists (AAPP) is launching "Operation Seizure First Aid" to strengthen seizure safety and emergency preparedness across the UH campus, thanks to a grant from the AAPP Foundation.

The initiative aims to strengthen public health preparedness across campus, reduce stigma toward epilepsy, and equip future health care providers with essential emergency response skills through in-person training sessions at multiple campus locations over six months.

Although the training will focus on pharmacy, medicine, nursing and optometry students and faculty, the training also will be open to the broader campus community. Project organizers estimate approximately 180 participants will go through the training.

Student Posters Accepted for Presentation at 2025 ASHP Midyear Clinical Meeting



41



UHCOP Pharm.D. students presented the highest number of research posters in Texas — and fourth highest in the nation — among their pharmacy school peers at the 2025 American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) Midyear Clinical Meeting & Exposition Dec. 7-10 in Las Vegas, Nev. Forty-one research posters by UHCOP students were accepted for presentation at the ASHP meeting.

Recipients of the 2024-25 Rho Chi Society-Beta Omicron Chapter Teaching Excellence Awards were: **Bin Guo**, Ph.D.; **E. James Essien**, DrPH, M.D.; and **Matthew Wanat**, Pharm.D., BCPS, BCCP, FCCM.

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Bernadette Asias-Dinh, Pharm.D. ('11), BCPS, BCACP, CDCES, clinical associate professor, earned Best Poster in the practitioner category for the Endocrine & Metabolism Practice Research Network, a subgroup of the American College of Clinical Pharmacy (ACCP). She presented "A1c outcomes after discontinuation of continuous glucose monitoring in an underserved population with type 2 diabetes" at the 2025 ACCP Annual Meeting Oct. 18-21 in Minneapolis, Minn.

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Taryn Eubank, Pharm.D., BCIDP, research assistant professor, was awarded a \$48,625 grant from the Roderick D. MacDonald Research Fund at Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center for her project, "Two-step Diagnostic Testing for Clostridioides difficile infection: Outcomes and Mechanisms of Discordant Results."

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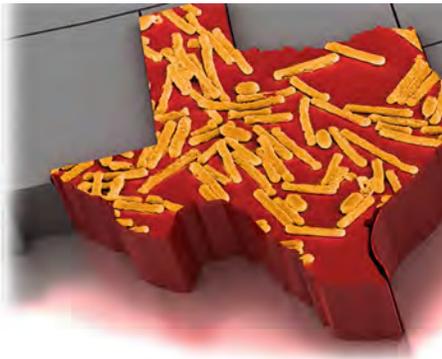
Xinli Liu, Ph.D., associate professor, received a two-year, \$192,636 grant from the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke for her project, "Development of MMP-9 inhibitory monoclonal antibodies to relieve neuropathic pain." Additionally, Liu was awarded a two-year, \$90,000 grant from Indapta Therapeutics, Inc. for her project, "Preclinical evaluation of specialized NK cells for cancer immunotherapy."

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Dipali V. Rinker, Ph.D., LPC, research assistant professor, received a \$55,000 grant from The U Foundation for her project, "Knowledge, Attitudes, and Beliefs of Alcohol and Cancer Risk."



THURSDAY, APRIL 30, 2026
 Bioscience Research Collaborative,
 Rice University
 Abstract Deadline: March 31
 Registration Deadline: April 10
 Audience: Investigators & Trainees



Roy Secures \$300K MDA Grant for Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy Study

With support from a three-year, \$300,000 grant from the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA), Research Assistant Professor **Anirban Roy**, Ph.D., is leading a study to identify molecular drivers in Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD).

Roy's research demonstrated that TAK1, a signaling protein linked to inflammation and muscle survival, becomes abnormally activated early in disease progression.

In addition to defining TAK1-dependent mechanisms driving muscle degeneration and fibrosis in DMD, the project also will evaluate small-molecule TAK1 inhibitors in preclinical models to assess their therapeutic potential, including compatibility with existing DMD treatments.

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Ying Xu, Ph.D. student, was awarded a \$35,338 American Heart Association Predoctoral Fellowship for her project, "AKAP12 recruits PDE8A to Impair Cardiac Function in Heart Failure."

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Luqi Zhao, Ph.D., postdoctoral fellow in the lab of Professor Mingfu Wu, Ph.D., was awarded a two-year, \$163,864 American Heart Association Postdoctoral Fellowship for her project, "Pathogenesis of acquired left ventricle non-compaction."

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Harnessing Technology to Transform Medication Safety
GERIATRIC MEDICATION SAFETY SYMPOSIUM
 May 7-8, 2026 · In-person & Virtual · Cooley University Life Center · Texas Medical Center, Houston
CALL FOR ABSTRACTS
 Abstract Deadline: March 20 · Notification of Acceptance: April 10
 tinyurl.com/gmss-2026

Primary & Panel Sessions · Workshop · Poster & Podium Sessions · CE

College of Pharmacy UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
 UTHHealth Houston McGovern Medical School



Clinical and Translational Research Symposium
SAVE THE DATE: Friday, May 22, 2026
 University of Houston Health 2 Building

Keynote Speakers
 Christine Colvis, Director
 Office of Drug Development Partnership Programs,
 Office of Special Programs, NACTS/NIH
 Pamela Hill, Senior Director
 Global Head, Open Innovation
 AstraZeneca

tinyurl.com/uh-ctr-symposium

College of Pharmacy UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON



UHCOP GOLF CLASSIC '26
 Friday, June 8 · Sweetwater Golf Club · Sugar Land, TX · Registration & Other Details Coming Soon

tinyurl.com/uhcop-golf

College of Pharmacy UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

Recent Publications

- Inhibition of the GSK3 β /Nav1.6 complex suppresses early-stage Alzheimer's hyperexcitability. Baumgartner TJ, Silva-Pérez M, Haghhighijoo Z, Dvorak NM, Singh AK, Goode NA, Singh J, Grebenkova BG, Marosi M, Di Re J, Koff L, **Wijitremktong W, Bala M, Liao H**, Lijffijt M, Szafran AT, Bolt MJ, Mancini MA, **Cuny GD, Chow DS**, Limon A, Chin J, Laezza F. *Alzheimers Dement*. 2025 Jul;21(7):e70507. doi: 10.1002/alz.70507.
- Effectiveness of Continuous Glucose Monitoring in a Pharmacist-Run Collaborative Drug Therapy Management Service for Underserved Individuals With Diabetes: A Quasi-Experimental Study. **Gee JS, Rosario N, Garey KW, Asias-Dinh B**. *Clin Diabetes*. 2025 Jul 22;43(4):554-560. doi: 10.2337/cd25-0010.
- Efficacy, safety, pharmacokinetics, and associated microbiome changes of ibezapolstat compared with vancomycin in adults with Clostridioides difficile infection: a phase 2b, randomised, double-blind, active-controlled, multicentre study. **Eubank TA, Jo J, Alam MJ, Begum K, McPherson JK, Le TM**, Horvath TD, Haidacher SJ, Poggio EC, Lin R, Yue CS, Ducharme MP, Koudssi G, Mercier J, Alder JD, Silverman MH, **Garey KW**; Ibezapolstat Phase 2 Investigator Group. *Lancet Microbe*. 2025 Aug;6(8):101126. doi: 10.1016/j.lanmic.2025.101126. Epub 2025 Jun 11.
- The canonical ER stress IRE1 α /XBP1 pathway mediates skeletal muscle wasting during pancreatic cancer cachexia. **Joshi AS, Tomaz da Silva M, Vuong AT, Xu B, Singh RK, Kumar A**. bioRxiv [Preprint]. 2025 Aug 4:2025.05.05.652304. doi: 10.1101/2025.05.05.652304. Update in: *EMBO Mol Med*. 2025 Dec;17(12):3607-3635. doi: 10.1038/s44321-025-00337-w.
- Drug development studies supporting zileuton as a parenteral adjuvant to attenuate antibiotic-associated nephrotoxicity. **Hudson CS, Smith JE, Vuong LT, Teran NS, Pouya N**, Sheikh-Hamad D, **Liu X**, Kajiji S, **Tam VH**. *Antimicrob Agents Chemother*. 2025 Aug 6;69(8):e0028725. doi: 10.1128/aac.00287-25. Epub 2025 Jul 8.
- The Impact of Podcasts on Knowledge, Engagement, and Empathy Outcomes in Pharmacy Education. **Vu A, Diec S, Wang EM, Rosario N, Davis SR, Guerrero T, Wollen J**. *Pharm Educ*. 2025;25(1):442-449.
- Single-cell spatial transcriptomics unravels the cellular landscape of abdominal aortic aneurysm. **Zhao G**, Cho CS, Liu H, Hwang Y, Si Y, Kim M, Deng Y, Zhao Y, Xue C, Guo Y, Chang L, Mizrak D, Yang B, Kang HM, Zhang J, Lee JH, Chen YE. *JCI Insight*. 2025 Aug 22;10(16):e190534. doi: 10.1172/jci.insight.190534.
- Comparing the Altis RepliGut Organoid System to MDCK Monolayers in Predicting the Oral Absorption of Lenalidomide. **Hudson CS**, Cheong J, Yu J, Chen EC, Salphati L, Durk MR, Lai B, Samy K. *Pharmaceutics*. 2025 Aug 30;17(9):1140. doi: 10.3390/pharmaceutics17091140.
- Association between Duration of Candidemia and Clinical and Healthcare Resource Utilization Outcomes among Hospitalized Adult Patients with Candidemia Who Received Empiric Treatment with an Echinocandin Across United States Hospitals. Lodise TP, **Garey KW**, Aram JA, Nathanson BH. *Clin Infect Dis*. 2025 Sep 1:ciaf472. doi: 10.1093/cid/ciaf472. Epub ahead of print.
- Validation of the Sensal Health MyAide™ Smart Dock Medication Adherence Device. **Wallace D, Ganna S, Aparasu RR**. *Pharmacy (Basel)*. 2025 Sep 1;13(5):123. doi: 10.3390/pharmacy13050123.
- Exploration of zileuton protective mechanisms against vancomycin-associated nephrotoxicity. **Hudson CS, Smith JE, Sun R, Vuong LT**, Truong LD, Sheikh-Hamad D, Nigo M, **Hu M, Tam VH**. *Toxicol Appl Pharmacol*. 2025 Sep 4;505:117543. doi: 10.1016/j.taap.2025.117543. Epub ahead of print.
- Fiber-type vulnerability and proteostasis reprogramming in skeletal muscle during pancreatic cancer cachexia. **Xu B, Joshi AS, da Silva MT, Liu S, Kumar A**. bioRxiv [Preprint]. 2025 Sep 17:2025.09.15.676415. doi: 10.1101/2025.09.15.676415.
- Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Cancer Mortality and Mediating Effects of Sociodemographic, Clinicopathologic, and Treatment Factors. **Olateju OA**, Arekemase HE, **Mehta HB**, Eke AC, Shen C, **Thornton JD**. *J Racial Ethn Health Disparities*. 2025 Sep 25. doi: 10.1007/s40615-025-02634-z. Epub ahead of print.
- Hyperactivation of Transforming Growth Factor- β -Activated Kinase 1 Causes Skeletal Muscle Pathology Reminiscent of Inflammatory Myopathies. **Tomaz da Silva M, Roy A, Kumar A**. *Am J Pathol*. 2025 Oct;195(10):1885-1904. doi: 10.1016/j.ajpath.2025.07.005. Epub 2025 Jul 24.
- Faecal pharmacokinetics, microbiome, and bile acid changes in healthy subjects given intravenous followed by oral omadacycline; a Phase 1 clinical trial. Jo J, Carlson TJ, **Hu C**, Williamson JC, Belin YT, Horvath TD, Haidacher SJ, **Bassères E, Begum K, Alam MJ, Garey KW**. *J Antimicrob Chemother*. 2025 Oct 3;80(10):2719-2726. doi: 10.1093/jac/dkaf278.
- Signaling networks governing skeletal muscle growth, atrophy, and cachexia. **Joshi AS, Tomaz da Silva M, Kumar S, Kumar A**. *Skelet Muscle*. 2025 Oct 10;15(1):29. doi: 10.1186/s13395-025-00397-z.
- Estrogen-Related Receptor Alpha Promotes Skeletal Muscle Regeneration and Mitigates Muscular Dystrophy. Nguyen TTH, Huang YX, Poliakova S, Citu C, Mann E, Sopariwala DH, Zhao Z, **Kumar A**, Narkar VA. *FASEB J*. 2025 Oct 15;39(19):e71094. doi: 10.1096/fj.202501764R.
- Comparison of machine learning methods versus traditional Cox regression for survival prediction in cancer using real-world data: a systematic literature review and meta-analysis. Huang Y, Bazzazzadehgan S, **Li J**, Arabshomali A, Li M, Bhattacharya K, Bentley JP. *BMC Med Res Methodol*. 2025 Oct 28;25(1):243. doi: 10.1186/s12874-025-02694-z.
- Prevalence of multiple sclerosis and disease-modifying therapy use in older adults in the United States, 2011-2021. **Li J**, Hutton GJ, **Aparasu RR**. *Mult Scler*. 2025 Nov;31(13):1595-1599. doi: 10.1177/13524585251368687. Epub 2025 Sep 2.
- Buprenorphine Adherence Trajectories and Their Impact on Opioid Overdose and Healthcare Costs. **Olateju OA**, Varisco T, Weiner S, **Thornton D**. *Drug Alcohol Rev*. 2025 Nov;44(7):1907-1919. doi: 10.1111/dar.70035. Epub 2025 Sep 11.
- New investigational agents for the treatment of Clostridioides difficile infections. Tran MN, **Eubank TA**, Kullar R, McFarland LV, **Garey KW**, Goldstein EJ. *Expert Opin Investig Drugs*. 2025 Nov;34(11):869-885. doi: 10.1080/13543784.2025.2579016. Epub 2025 Oct 28.
- Candidiasis epidemiology and outcomes including emergence of Candida auris from a large, Southern US metro area: a six-year evaluation. **Huynh-Phan R**, Plauche A, Musick WL, Phe K, Hoffman WJ, Mohajer MA, Lasco T, **Beyda ND, Eubank TA, Garey KW**. *Antimicrob Steward Healthc Epidemiol*. 2025 Nov 3;5(1):e296. doi: 10.1017/ash.2025.10200.
- TAK1 is a key regulator of oncogenic signaling and differentiation blockade in rhabdomyosarcoma. **Vuong AT, Joshi AS, Roy A, Mathukumalli K, Ho PT, Bhat R, da Silva MT**, Samanta T, **Trivedi MV, Guo B**, Kaiparettu BA, **Kumar A**. bioRxiv [Preprint]. 2025 Nov 5:2025.11.03.686399. doi: 10.1101/2025.11.03.686399.
- A Lack of Studies on the Metabolism and Disposition of Hot Compound Class: Triphenylphosphonium-Conjugated Compounds. **Hu M, Chen J**. *Curr Drug Metab*. 2025 Nov 3. doi: 10.2174/0113892002393074251023081112. Online ahead of print.
- Duration of Concurrent Oxycodone and Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors Use and the Risk of Opioid Overdose. **Okeke C, Olateju O**, Yunusa I, **Bhatt P, Thornton JD**. *Ann Pharmacother*. 2025 Oct 8:10600280251372646. doi: 10.1177/10600280251372646. Online ahead of print.

Faculty Author

Current/Recent Student, Fellow/Resident, Postdoc/Staff