
LA PHARMACIE EN LOUISIANE

COLLEGE OF PHARMACY ALUMNI NEWS



Heidi Cram, Pharm.D., and family

PHARMILY SPOTLIGHT: Heidi Cram, Pharm.D.

For Heidi Cram, PharmD, pharmacy has always been more than a profession—it's a calling deeply rooted in family, community, and a belief that patient care works best when it's personal.

A native of Shreveport, Cram followed that calling just down the road to Monroe, graduating as part of the ULM College of Pharmacy Class of 2003. Growing up the daughter of a pharmacist, she spent her early years in independent pharmacies, watching firsthand how trust, relationships, and accessibility could transform healthcare. Those early experiences planted the seed for a career that would eventually come full circle.

While in pharmacy school, she worked as an intern with Brookshire's Pharmacy, gaining hands-on experience that shaped her professional foundation.

After graduation, she broadened her clinical perspective by completing a PGY1 Pharmacy Practice Residency at Ochsner Clinic Foundation's main campus in New Orleans. That residency was followed by a move to Maine, where she worked for the grocery pharmacy chain Hannaford for three years. Eventually, Shreveport called her home.

Returning to Louisiana, Cram rejoined Brookshire's Pharmacy, where her leadership skills truly flourished. From 2009 to 2023, she served as pharmacy manager in Haughton, building strong relationships with patients and staff alike. When Brookshire's pharmacies were sold to Walgreens in 2023, she remained on as a pharmacy manager until January 2025.

Then came the leap.

In February 2025, Cram opened Apotheworx Pharmacy in downtown Shreveport—a bold, purpose-driven venture that reflects everything she values about the profession. Apotheworx is a concierge retail pharmacy, designed to restore what many patients feel has been lost at the pharmacy counter: time, transparency, and genuine connection. "We want to get back to the basics of community pharmacy," Cram explains.

By intentionally limiting insurance contracts and offering membership options for individuals and families, Apotheworx has largely removed the "middleman" that so often complicates care. Patients benefit from transparent pricing, deeper savings, free delivery, and, perhaps most importantly, direct access to knowledgeable pharmacy staff 24/7. Her passion for wellness, women's health, supplements, and functional medicine is woven into the pharmacy's personalized approach, empowering patients to take an active role in their health. (Continued on Page 3.)

STAY IN TOUCH



As a graduate of ULM's pharmacy, Ph.D. or Toxicology programs, the College of Pharmacy hopes you will stay in touch. There are many events throughout the year to help you re-connect with friends and former classmates. We hope to see you at one of these events and ask that you will take a moment to share any exciting news for upcoming newsletters. Connect today!

UPCOMING EVENTS

LPA Annual Meeting/Alumni Reception

July 9-11, 2026

LIVE! Casino & Hotel

Bossier City, LA

**ULM Alumni reception Friday, July 10, 8:00 - 10:00 pm*

Fall Pharm.D. Career Fair and Interviews

Friday, September 25

7:30 am - 3:00 pm

ULM College of Pharmacy

ULM Homecoming Alumni and 70th Anniversary Reception

Friday, September 25

7:00 - 9:00 pm

The Hotel Monroe

120 Walnut St., Monroe, LA 71201

SHARE YOUR NEWS!

Keep your pharmacy friends and colleagues updated. Use the link below to share any news such as new career moves, marriages, births, or condolences.

<https://ulmapps.ulm.edu/webforms/form/college-pharmacy-alumni-news>

FOLLOW US!



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PHARMILY SPOTLIGHT

(Continued from page 1)

Heidi Kram, Pharm.D.

Despite the rapid changes sweeping through healthcare, Cram remains optimistic about the future of pharmacy and encouraging to those considering the field.

“Don’t listen to all the negativity out there,” she says. “Pharmacy has changed over the years, but what profession hasn’t? There are so many opportunities and avenues you can pursue.”

That spirit of optimism reflects her own experience at ULM. Staying close to home was part of the appeal when she chose the ULM College of Pharmacy, but the experience exceeded expectations. She made lifelong friends, stayed active in Kappa Epsilon, and balanced the demands of pharmacy school with time at the rec center, racquetball games, step aerobics classes, and hosting legendary end-of-semester parties at her home in North Monroe.

One faculty member left a particularly lasting impression: Mr. Walter Pierron, whose engaging lectures, practical advice, and memorable stories helped shape her professional mindset.

Life during and after pharmacy school has always been full for Cram. She married her husband, Jason, in 2000 while she was still a student, and together they are raising four children: Austin (14), Alex (11), and twin daughters Evienne and Ella (8). Between owning two businesses and managing a busy household, free time is scarce, but the family still prioritizes travel, LSU sporting events, and gardening when they can.

Looking ahead, Cram continues to dream. She admits she’s still thinking about what comes next beyond pharmacy. For now, her focus is on building Apotheworx and serving her community with intention and heart.

Adding to an already remarkable year, she was recently named an honoree at the 2025 Minority Business Opportunity Awards hosted by the Shreveport Chamber of Commerce. This was an exciting recognition of her entrepreneurial impact and leadership.

From independent pharmacy roots to an innovative concierge model, Cram’s journey reflects the very best of what ULM College of Pharmacy alumni bring to their communities: expertise, courage, and an unwavering commitment to care.



*Heidi Cram, Pharm.D.,
and Dayton Simmons, CPhT*



Inside APOTHEWORx Pharmacy

Dr. Gina Craft named Dean of the College of Pharmacy



Gina Craft, Pharm.D.

MONROE, La. – The University of Louisiana Monroe has named Gina Craft, Pharm.D., as the next Dean of the College of Pharmacy. Craft is a 28-year veteran of ULM, most recently serving as Interim Dean since August 2025.

“It is a pleasure to name Dr. Gina Craft as the Dean of the ULM College of Pharmacy,” said ULM President Dr. Carrie L. Castille. “During her time as Interim Dean and throughout her 28 years at ULM, Dr. Craft has proven that she has the leadership qualities, decision-making skills, and deep pharmaceutical and institutional knowledge that will allow her to excel in this role and move the College of Pharmacy forward. Dr. Craft has a bold vision for the future that is in alignment with this administration’s goals. I look forward to working closely with her to make the best even better,” added Castille.

“I am incredibly honored to be named Dean of the ULM College of Pharmacy,” said Craft. “As a proud Louisianian, this moment is deeply personal to me. Louisiana’s culture, people, and sense of community are truly special, and I have long appreciated the important role ULM plays in preparing pharmacists who serve our state,” she added.

A native of Denham Springs, La., Dr. Craft earned her B.S. in Pharmacy and MBA from ULM and her Pharm.D. from the University of Florida. In her time at ULM, Craft has served in a number of leadership roles, including Director of the School of Clinical Sciences and Associate Dean of the College of Pharmacy, with a scope spanning assessment, administrative affairs, culture, and strategic operations across the College.

Craft also led the College through two accreditation visits and played a key leadership role in securing the original Louisiana Department of Health grant that established the Office of Outcomes Research, through which the College has supported the state for 25 years in areas including data analysis, management of the preferred drug list, and drug utilization reviews.

“Dr. Craft has demonstrated a strong commitment to collaboration on broader university priorities and opportunities,” said ULM Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Michelle McEacharn. “Her appointment reflects both her outstanding record of service and her strong vision for the future of the College of Pharmacy. I am confident she will lead with purpose, collaboration, and a strong commitment to student success and institutional excellence,” stated McEacharn.

Craft’s selection was made after a months-long search by a hiring committee led by ULM College of Arts, Education, and Sciences Dean Dr. John Pratte. The committee presented three finalists for campus visits, with Craft ultimately being recommended and selected.

“I wish to thank the other members of the search committee for the great work that they did, especially in reaching out to colleagues at other institutions to recruit good candidates and in providing a professional vetting process for evaluating all applications. I also wish to thank the students, staff, and faculty of the College of Pharmacy for creating such a positive interview experience for the candidates, all of whom commented on how well they enjoyed their time in Monroe,” said Pratte.

Upon her appointment, Craft reflected further on the impact that ULM and the College of Pharmacy have had on her life. “The profession of pharmacy has been very good to my family and me over the years, and that connection became even more personal with my son’s recent graduation from our program. To lead a College that has contributed so much to the profession in Louisiana is both humbling and inspiring. I look forward to building on our strong foundation and working alongside our faculty, staff, students, alumni, and partners to advance the College’s impact in the years ahead,” said Craft.

Dr. Craft’s appointment is pending approval from the University of Louisiana System Board of Supervisors.

ALUMNI NEWS

Remembering a friend of the College of Pharmacy: Robert J. Toups



Robert Toups, 84, passed away peacefully at his home on April 29, 2026. He was a native of Galliano, LA, and a resident of Duplessis, LA.

Rob is survived by his wife of over 31 years, Susan Thomas Toups, ex-wife Mary Busch, sisters Beverly Toups Cheramie and Carol Toups Cheramie (Lujack), son Todd Toups (Stacy), grandchildren Dominique Toups, Candace Toups, Hannah Toups, and five great-grandchildren Noelle Toups, Jocelyn Toups, Rhyann Radovich, Alena Ferris, and Christopher Ferris. He is preceded in death by his parents Clovis "Bayou L'Ours" Toups and Nolia Griffin Toups, his brother Jimmy Toups (Joanne), his brother-in-law Gelpi Cheramie, and his grandson Todd (T.J.) Toups Jr.

Rob graduated from Northeast Louisiana State College (now ULM) with a Doctor of Pharmacy in 1968. During his career Rob was a permanent member of the ULM Alumni Association and was a founding member of Dean's Advisory Council where he received the title of Member Emeritus. He was chosen as the ULM Alumnus of the year in 2003 and was voted the Phi Delta Chi Most Distinguished Alumnus in 2004.

He served as president of the Louisiana Pharmacists Association in 2005 and received that organization's Pharmacist of the Year award in 2008. He was awarded the Pharmacy Achievement Award in 2006. He was a deeply respected figure in the pharmacy profession and was also a member of the Louisiana Independent Pharmacists Association, the National Community Pharmacists Association, and the American Pharmacists Association. After graduating, Rob returned to Lafourche Parish where he opened Bayou Pharmacy (Galliano). In 1970, Rob was elected to the Lafourche Parish School Board where he served for 12 years. While on the school board he was a member of the board of directors and was chairman of the finance committee. He is credited with founding the Lower Tenth Ward Educational Center in 1973. He was especially proud of the specialized instruction for students with disabilities that the center provided. This center is generally recognized as having paved the way for more integrated programs within the Lafourche Parish School Board system. During the '70's and '80's Rob was involved in several business ventures before moving to Ascension Parish where he continued working as a pharmacist and businessman. Outside of his professional career Rob was probably best known for enjoying good times with family and friends. He was a long-time member, and past King, of the Krewe of Versailles Mardi Gras Krewe. He was involved with and was a past admiral of the Golden Meadow-Fourchon Tarpon Rodeo. In 1993, he was named the Ambassador Depute pour Nouvelle-Ecosse by Governor Edwin Edwards.

He also enjoyed meeting with friends and spending time on the water as a member of the Gonzales Boat Club (later Lake Maurepas Boat Club) in Head of Island, LA. Rob was extremely passionate about LSU Football (Stadium Club member and season ticket holder 40+ yrs). He was a member of the Tiger Touchdown Club, The Tiger Grid Iron Club where he served as treasurer, and the Krewe of Ragoo (Marvin Dugas) tailgating crew. He was highly respected in the LSU donor community and was a long-time member of the Tiger Athletic Foundation. He was awarded "The Purple Jacket" in 2016 when he was inducted into the TAF Hall of Distinction for his significant contributions to LSU Athletics and was recognized during an on-field ceremony at Tiger Stadium in 2017. Throughout his career Rob had many more accomplishments - from defining curriculum for pharmacy school graduation requirements and helping establish new compounding pharmacy legislation, to sponsoring local Boy Scout Troops and coaching youth sport teams.

During his life, Rob had a very positive influence on his family, his community, and his profession. All who knew him, loved him, and all who met him were better for it. He made friends wherever he went and was always willing to help anyone in need. Rob will be deeply missed by his family and friends.

A special thank-you to his faithful sitter, Pam Parnell, who helped care for him in all stages and challenges of his disease until the very end. Also, thank you to the employees of Southern Grace Hospice who helped him have a peaceful passing. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Rob's memory to Alzheimer's Services of the Capital Area, 3772 North Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70806. This link takes you directly to their website: Alzheimer's Services of The Capital Area: <https://alzbr.org/>

Celebrating Our Newest Alumni: Class of 2026

55

**Pharm.D.
Graduates**

22

**Pharm.D.
Latin Honors**

PGY1 Residencies

Kaitlyn Williams: Memorial Hermann- Texas Medical Center in Houston, TX

Jordan Chenevert: University Medical Center- New Orleans

Carson Wilkie Rigby: Manning Family Children's Hospital in New Orleans, LA

Valerie Panyanouvong: St. Dominic Hospital - Jackson, MS

Olivia Thornton: University Medical Center New Orleans - New Orleans, LA

PGY2 Residencies

Meg Hamilton: UT Southwestern Medical Center critical care pharmacy residency in Dallas, TX

Maggie Brian: Regional One Health/ University of Tennessee Health Science Center critical care pharmacy residency

Dylan Leboeuf: Baylor University Medical Center, Dallas, TX Emergency Medicine residency

Alex Domingue: Health First Holmes Regional Medical Center, Melbourne, FL, PGY2-Critical Care

KeAnna Kimble: VA-Little Rock, AR- Central Arkansas Veterans HCS, PGY2-Geriatric, Little Rock, AR

Kylie Michot: University of Mississippi Medical Center, PGY2-Critical Care, Jackson, MS

Spring '26 Toxicology Graduates



Connect with the College of Pharmacy on LinkedIn

The College of Pharmacy has a new LinkedIn page and would love for you to give us a follow! You can connect with your school, alumni, colleagues, and potential employers. It is also a great way to showcase your experience, education, achievements and skills while staying updated on industry news.

Click the icon below or find us on LinkedIn by searching "University of Louisiana Monroe College of Pharmacy."



ALUMNI NEWS

Ethan Roberts (Pharm.D.'23/M.B.A. '22) joined the specialty team as a consultant for [Visante](#).

Emily Harvey Waguespack (Pharm.D.'23/M.B.A. '22) joined the specialty team as a consultant for [Visante](#).

Logan Dugas (Pharm.D.'24) PGY-2 Resident Oncology Pharmacist at Moffitt Cancer Center was selected as the HOPA 2026 Top Ten Trainee Research Abstract award winner at the annual conference in New Orleans.

Alfred "Roddy" Rodrigue (B.S. Pharmacy '70) Retired as Divisional Manager after 30 years with Abbott Laboratories. Still licensed and works part time twice a month.

Lee Ann Cain (B.S. Pharmacy '96) earned ASHP's Certified Pharmacy Executive Leaders (CPEL) credential in May 2026.

Cobly Glatter (Pharm.D./M.B.A '23) started a new position at Arkansas Heart Hospital.

Condolences to the family of Robert J. Toups (B.S. Pharmacy '68). Rob passed away on April 29, 2026.

Quintin Good (Pharm.D. '21) was promoted to District Pharmacy Supervisor for Walgreens in Shreveport.

Chase Campo (Pharm.D. '19) started a new position as Pediatric Clinical Pharmacist for Ochsner LSU Health in Shreveport, LA.

Condolences to the family of Scott Baggarly (B.S. Pharmacy '87, MBA '01, PhD. Pharmacy Administration '03). Dr. Baggarly passed away on May 26, 2026.

COLLEGE OF PHARMACY SEEKING ALUMNI AMBASSADORS

The College of Pharmacy is seeking alumni to help recruit future pharmacists right where they are. We believe our best ambassadors are alumni who live the mission every day. Here are easy ways to make a big impact:

- Give a short talk at a high school, community college, or pre-pharmacy club; host a shadowing visit at your site.
- Provide a brief testimonial we can use on web and socials (why ULM, your current role, one tip for students).
- Know someone who's curious about pharmacy? Send them our way and we'll personally follow up.
- Connect us with a teacher, counselor, or organization that welcomes health-career speakers.

The College can provide talking points, slides, handouts, and support.

Thank you for paying it forward and helping us grow the Pharmily. Your voice is exactly what future students need to hear. If you're in, just take 60 seconds here: [Alumni Recruiter Interest Form](#)

Questions? Please don't hesitate to reach out to Mary at mrhea@ulm.edu or (318) 342-3803.

PHARMACY NEWS

SAVE THE DATE FOR HOMECOMING 2026



HOMECOMING 2026

ALUMNI PARTY
Friday, September 25
7:00 - 10:00 pm

SUPER TAILGATE
Saturday, September 26
Time: TBD

Celebrate 70 years of Excellence with us!

STUDENTS PRESENT CHECK FROM ANNUAL POOR MAN'S RUN



ULM Pharmacy students and administrators present check to St. Vincent de Paul Community Pharmacy in Monroe, Louisiana

The College of Pharmacy Student Council president, Shelby Estess, and vice president, Jodi Bourgeois, recently presented a \$14,500 check to St. Vincent de Paul Community Pharmacy, made possible by proceeds from the annual Poor Man's Run held on February 28.

This student-led event is held each year with one goal in mind: helping members of our community access the medications they need. Money was raised by race registrations, sponsorships, and the first ever car show! We are proud of our students for turning compassion into action!

ULM receives \$2.26 million to launch Food Is Medicine program

The University of Louisiana Monroe (ULM) has received \$2.26 million from the Ouachita Parish Police Jury (OPPJ) to launch the Food Is Medicine program. The mission of the program is to transform the health outcomes and economic landscape of Northeast Louisiana (NELA) by integrating clinically prescribed nutrition with professional medical care to prevent and treat diet-related chronic illness. The NELA region currently faces some of the highest national rates of chronic diseases such as obesity, type 2 diabetes, and hypertension. The funds from the OPPJ were designated from the American Response Plan Act (ARPA).

"The Food Is Medicine program will further the mission of ULM to be a model for how regional universities uplift entire communities. The use of food as prescriptive medicine to treat and prevent diet-related illnesses is a way that ULM can go beyond simply educating our students, but also transform lives in communities across Northeast Louisiana. The rich agriculture of this region offers a practical laboratory to demonstrate the important connection between food and health," said ULM President Dr. Carrie L. Castille.

"We are grateful for the partnership of the Ouachita Police Jury and for them entrusting our university with these funds that will create a program designed to bring about generational change for our region. The ULM Colleges of Pharmacy and Health Sciences are uniquely positioned to carry this program to fruition through our clinical expertise and desire to see communities improved through healthcare. We look forward to partnering with other stakeholders as this program develops on our campus," added Castille.

"This funding represents a strategic investment by the Police Jury in the long-term health of our community, and we are proud to support ULM as it launches the Food Is Medicine program. This initiative addresses health challenges at their dietary roots while strengthening connections between healthcare, education, and our local agricultural economy. We are confident this effort will deliver meaningful, lasting outcomes for individuals in Ouachita Parish and across the broader region," said Ouachita Parish Police Jury President Shane Smiley.

The Food Is Medicine program will follow an accelerated seven-month implementation timeline. Months one through three will be focused on infrastructure design, procurement of high-fidelity simulation equipment, and intensive faculty training. Months four through seven will include the installation of a state-of-the-art teaching kitchen to serve as a hub for culinary medicine training and community demonstrations, as well as the development of clinical protocols, and the launch of community engagement initiatives.

The ULM College of Pharmacy will lead in the development of prescriptive nutrition protocols and order sets, allowing providers to prescribe produce and groceries as precisely as medication. The implementation of the program will also include intensive faculty training, which will allow for the rapid credentialing of ULM faculty through expert-led workshops and national conferences.

"ULM, via all of our health sciences programs, including the College of Pharmacy, is dedicated to optimizing health outcomes for our region. By incorporating nutrition into our clinical frameworks, we are empowering our health professionals to integrate nutrition with the same evidence-based precision as traditional pharmaceuticals. This program allows us to address one of the root causes of chronic disease, directly fulfilling our mission to improve the well-being of the Northeast Louisiana community," said Dr. Gina Craft, Interim Dean of the ULM College of Pharmacy.

Craft describes the program as "a highly interprofessional initiative," stating that while the College of Pharmacy will lead the development of the clinical protocols and the produce formulary, the College of Health Sciences, along with other partners, will be deeply integrated into the program for clinical rotations and simulation training.

Craft also points to the ULM Athlete Nutrition pilot as an immediate proof of concept for the Food Is Medicine program. This project will document how tailored nutrition strategies already used by ULM athletes can be scaled to help community members with chronic diseases.

PHARMACY NEWS

(Continued from previous page.)

While the initial \$2.26 million will help lay the groundwork for the program, ULM officials plan for Food Is Medicine to experience sustained growth through clinical partnerships with local clinics and hospitals and collaborations with regional food banks and NELA farmers to stabilize a "farm-to-clinic" pipeline.

Additionally, the program is positioned to secure long-term federal funding through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) Produce Prescription grants. The goal is to transform Ouachita Parish and Northeast Louisiana into a national leader in healthcare innovation.

More details about the ULM Food Is Medicine program will be released throughout the seven-month implementation phase.

[ULM Office of Marketing and Communications](#)

ULM College of Pharmacy leads with top ROI, high licensure pass rate, and 100% job placement

By ULM Office of Marketing and Communications

MONROE, La. — It is no secret that the University of Louisiana Monroe has taken an aggressive approach to aligning with the workforce needs of Louisiana, evidenced by a strong commitment to bolstering industry advisory boards within academic programs, reviewing curriculum relevance to ensure students are day-one ready, and engaging more broadly with executive workforce leaders to understand the true needs on the “other side” of a degree.

A new study published by the [Postsecondary Education & Economics Research Center](#) (PEER), which was featured in several national media outlets, including the Washington Post and Inside Higher Ed, highlighted the ROI of certain graduate degrees across fields within the state of Texas. This study showed that a pharmacy degree (Pharm.D.) is one of the highest in earnings after graduation, with average annual earnings of \$132,520.

“The highest returns among the 18 degrees come from pharmacy (Pharm.D.) programs, medicine (M.D.) programs, and law (J.D.) programs, which increase the earnings of students by 114 percent, 110 percent, and 59 percent, respectively,” the report states. The average earnings for pharmacy ranked second only to the M.D. degree.

Dr. Michael Cockerham, President of the Louisiana Pharmacists Association, indicates that Louisiana pharmacists serve as the state’s most accessible frontline providers, offering a critical lifeline for patient care across our rural and underserved parishes.

“The impact is reinforced by the high return on investment of the Pharm.D. degree, second only to an M.D. This ensures Louisiana can attract and retain the talent necessary to drive pharmaceutical excellence and quality patient care for our citizens,” said Cockerham.

ULM is proud to be the leader in training Louisiana’s pharmacy workforce through its College of Pharmacy—the state’s only publicly supported comprehensive center for pharmaceutical education, research, and service. Founded in 1956, ULM’s College of Pharmacy celebrates 70 years of training pharmacists who have been employed all over the state of Louisiana. Additionally, the College offers a Ph.D. program that is more research-focused, and the research of faculty—such as cancer, neuroscience, drug development, drug delivery, and nanotechnology—is literally changing lives.

“In a state with a high burden of chronic disease, accessibility creates meaningful opportunities for preventive care, chronic disease management, medication counseling, and ongoing patient support,” said Dr. Gina Craft, Dean of ULM’s College of Pharmacy. “At ULM, the College of Pharmacy is uniquely positioned to contribute to that work as Louisiana’s only publicly supported college of pharmacy, educating approximately 70 to 75 percent of the state’s pharmacists.”

ULM’s College of Pharmacy job placement rate is 100%, with a 5-year residency match rate of 80% as compared to 78% nationally. The licensure outcomes of the program are equally noteworthy:

- The College’s recent North American Pharmacist Licensure Examination (NAPLEX) results show an 89% first-time pass rate, which places ULM above the national average of 86% and within the top third of all ACPE-accredited pharmacy programs nationwide.
- The College’s 5-year NAPLEX pass rate is 84%, compared to a national rate of 81%.
- The College’s 5-year Multistate Pharmacy Jurisprudence Examination (MJPE) pass rate is 90%, compared to a national rate of 78%.

PHARMACY NEWS

(Continued from previous page)

These statistics underscore the competitive advantage of graduates of the program, but the real beneficiaries here are the people and communities that receive the care of the pharmacy graduates. As the value of a college degree is questioned, ULM's pharmacy graduates provide the answer—on the frontlines, improving lives across Louisiana every day.

To learn more about ULM's College of Pharmacy including information on how to apply, visit <https://www.ulm.edu/pharmacy/>.

ULM Honors Program students present at the annual meeting of the Southern Regional Honors Council



CAPTION: Pictured L-R: Cecil Pradhan, George Khawas, Maddie Cason, Sarah Charrier, Dr. Joshua Stockley, Michelle Thapa, Gwen Abadie, Jayden Allridge

MONROE, La. – The University of Louisiana Monroe Honors Program attended the annual meeting of the Southern Regional Honors Council on March 26-28, 2026, in Montgomery, Ala.

College of Pharmacy Toxicology senior, Gwen Abadie, presented with George Khawas, a senior computer science major; Michelle Thapa, a junior pre-nursing major; Cecil Pradhan, a sophomore computer science major; Jayden Allridge, a freshman mathematics major; and Maddie Cason, a freshman biology major.

Their presentation “Cultivating Connection: The Greenhouse Model of Student Leadership.” focused on how honors students should not just join communities, but build and administer them. Their session explored how the honors council transitioned from a rigid, top-down model of governance to a “Greenhouse” model of leadership. Instead of micromanaging from assigned positions of authority, the council focuses on providing “nutrients” – budget, social media, mentorship – to allow any member of the honors student body to grow in leadership. By utilizing flexible, project-based committees, this structure lowers barriers to leadership, allowing non-council students to pitch and lead their own academic workshops and cultural events.

Attending the conference were honors students and administrators from colleges and universities across the Southern region of the United States.

View the full article at:

[Link to full story about ULM Honors group attending conference](#)

PHARMACY NEWS

ULM College of Pharmacy faculty secures \$380K NSF grant to improve cold-storage of live-saving medicines



HUY DAO, PH.D.

NSF GRANT RECIPIENT- ASST. PROF. OF PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES

By ULM Office of Marketing and Communications

MONROE, La. – Dr. Huy M. Dao, Assistant Professor of Pharmaceutical Sciences at the University of Louisiana Monroe, has received a \$380,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to improve how protein-based medicines — such as vaccines and biologics — survive freezing and thawing.

This award is particularly notable as NSF funds only the most rigorous fundamental research, and grants of this kind are rarely awarded to faculty in pharmacy or health sciences, making it a meaningful recognition of the scientific novelty of Dr. Dao's work at the intersection of engineering and medicine.

"Every day I walk past a quote on the staircase at the College of Pharmacy that says, 'If at first you don't succeed, you're normal.' I carried that mindset going in — I didn't expect to win on the first try. So, this is a genuinely pleasant surprise, and I'm incredibly thankful to ULM and our College for creating the conditions where this research could thrive," said Dr. Dao.

Dr. Dao's project, "Freeze Induced Protein Instability Driven by Air Water Interfacial Stress," will investigate the fundamental mechanisms of cryopreservation-induced damage in biologics.

Many of these medicines are damaged when they are accidentally thawed during shipping and then re-frozen, making them unsafe to use and leading to costly waste. Dr. Dao's research aims to understand why this damage happens and develop a simple pre-treatment that allows these medicines to withstand multiple freeze-thaw cycles without losing their effectiveness.

The findings could make the medical supply chain more resilient, reduce medicine waste, and ultimately improve patient access to critical treatments. Looking further ahead, this work has the potential to expand into the preservation of living cells and tissues, opening doors to advances in regenerative medicine and cell-based therapies.

The three-year project will also provide hands-on research training for ULM students and include science outreach to local high school students in the Monroe community.

"Dr. Dao's award is a significant accomplishment that reflects the quality of research taking place in the ULM College of Pharmacy. His work addresses a practical and important challenge in protecting critical medicines, while also creating opportunities for our students to engage in meaningful scientific research," said Dr. Gina Craft, Dean of the ULM College of Pharmacy.

PHARMACY NEWS

ULM SNPhA Chapter's "Food Under the Bridge" initiative places third nationally in competition.



CAPTION: Pictured L-R: Zack Vandagriff (P2), Rachel Ni (P3), Callie Tims (P3), & Colby Dean (P3)

Members of the ULM chapter of Student National Pharmacists Association (SNPhA) attended the regional conference in March, where its new "Food Under the Bridge" initiative won 3rd nationally in the Health Equity in Action competition. This initiative, spear-headed by Callie Tims, helps feed the homeless populations of Monroe and West Monroe, Louisiana.

The team, consisting of Zack Vandagriff (P2), Rachel Ni (P3), Callie Tims (P3), & Colby Dean (P3), advanced as finalists in the competition, a national platform recognizing innovative community outreach efforts. As finalists, they were challenged to present a five-minute video and participate in an interview, highlighting both the impact and sustainability of their initiative.



CAPTION: Pictured is a group of ULM chapter members who attended the conference.

YOUR SUPPORT MATTERS



When you support pharmacy education, you invest in our students and the future of the profession.

Your gift helps fund student education, facility improvements, faculty development, community outreach and other programs that strengthen the mission of the ULM College of Pharmacy.

Ways to Give

ANNUAL GIVING

You can give directly to the Dufilho Society by check or online.

Check

Payable to ULM Foundation and mailed to:

ULM Foundation
700 University Avenue
Monroe, LA 71201

*Specify Dufilho Society in memo line

Online

www.ulm.edu/give

Click "Give to Academics"

Designation: Academics: Select a College, School or Program
Scroll down to select "Dufilho Society" from the second drop-down list

OTHER WAYS TO GIVE

Other ways to give include stock or security gifts, IRA gifts, endowments such as chairs and professorships, planned giving through a will or estate, or a naming opportunity.

For more information or to learn how to leave a lasting legacy to ULM, please contact the ULM Foundation by phone at (318) 342-3636 or by email at foundation@ulm.edu.

Thank you for supporting

Pharmacy

education!

If you participated in the optional licensing renewal fee during your recent pharmacy license renewal, please know that your support makes a huge impact on educating future pharmacists.

The students, faculty and staff at the ULM College of Pharmacy greatly appreciate your contribution to the pharmacy profession.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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