

Director's Message

By Prof. Vincent H.L. LEE



Prof. Kim BROUWER (first row, fifth from the left) posing with the 2010 pharmacy graduates.

“ Students are well trained, talented, enthusiastic and passionate healthcare professionals. ”

Remarks from Professor Kim L.R. BROUWER, our 2009-10 examiner.

We began this academic year with several changes in leadership. At the University level, Professor Joseph Sung became the 7th Vice Chancellor and President of the University on July 1st. A scholar and educator of international repute, we look forward to his leadership. At the School level, Professor Kenneth K.C. LEE resigned on August 1st to become Professor and Head of Pharmacy, School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Monash University, Malaysia. Professor LEE is an icon of pharmacy in Hong Kong and is a well-respected opinion and thought leader in pharmacy education, practice and pharmacoconomics research. He will remain affiliated with our school as Adjunct Professor of Pharmacy. Finally, at the profession level, Mr. Anthony W.K. CHAN retired from the Department of Health after serving as Chief Pharmacist for 19 years. A member of the School's Advisory Board, Mr. CHAN had provided sound advice in curriculum planning and community outreach. We wish both Professor LEE and Mr. CHAN success and good health in their future. We are looking forward to working closely with Ms. Linda WOO, the new Chief Pharmacist of Department of Health.

To meet the increase in demand for pharmacists in Hong Kong, the School will be proposing to double its annual intake to 60 at the start of the next UGC triennium budget cycle in 2012. There will likely be a critical mass of students to enable the offering of new electives pertinent to a career pathway of their choice and enrich the learning experience of our students.

Transforming our B. Pharm curriculum to enable our graduates to acquire new knowledge and skills in their lifelong career was one of discussion topics in our June 4th retreat. The priority action items include increasing our research productivity and visibility; expanding our community outreach program on drug education and drug safety; engaging our students in career development by reengineering the mentoring program; partnering with universities in China to advance clinical pharmacy and drug development; and publicizing the accomplishments of our academic staff, students, and alumni.

Students are our asset. Prof. Kim L.R. BROUWER, who was our 2009-10 external examiner, was impressed with the caliber of our students. She remarked in her report to the Vice Chancellor, "... students are well trained, talented, enthusiastic and passionate healthcare professionals. The academic staff should be very proud of the achievements of these student" and, indeed, we are. Professor BROUWER is a distinguished professor at the School of Pharmacy, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

I hope you enjoy this issue.

Bringing Clinical Pharmacy to the Community

By Prof. Vivian W.Y. Lee

Established in 2002, the clinical pharmacy clerkship was originally based on one to two internal medicine wards at the Prince of Wales Hospital for a minimum of 9 weeks. In the past 8 years, the clinical pharmacy clerkship program has evolved from hospital focused to other clinical settings. The clerkship program was designed to enable pharmacy students to experience patient-focused pharmacy practice, outside of the classroom, in both hospital and community clinical settings. The program has 4 tracks: cardiology, internal medicine, oncology and infectious disease.

In order to address the needs of drug-related problems in the community, the School launched the geriatric community clerkship in 2009, after two years as a community outreach project. The demand for pharmacists is on the rise, particularly in elderly patients with multiple chronic diseases. The geriatric community clerkship was designed to prepare our pharmacy students with skills in geriatric medicine.

The drug information clerkship program is the latest addition to our portfolio of clerkships at CUHK. After the launch of our first interactive online drug information platform in Hong Kong, called AMPOULE, we noticed the thirst for drug knowledge in the general public. In addition to AMPOULE, the new clerkship programme covers pharmacy informatics and professional publishing related to drug information. Our near-term goal is to develop more clerkships so that our students at CUHK have a spectrum of experiential learning options to entertain. In my view, clinical pharmacy is patient rather than setting focused. Future generations of pharmacists should be well-prepared to accept new challenges in the pharmacy profession for the promotion of better healthcare. Our School is dedicated to expanding new teaching environments to raise the standards of pharmacy practice in Hong Kong.

The Unforgettable Prof. Kenneth K.C. LEE

“ Over the years, I have been struck by the strength and vitality of the CUHKSOP in several ways. ”

It is difficult to describe exactly my feeling as I left the CUHK School of Pharmacy (CUHKSOP) after 18 years of service. My mixed emotions can be easily understood as I had witnessed the whole process from its conception to birth almost 2 decades ago, and have also experienced the joy in watching its growth all through these years. Yet it is now my own wish to leave this young and energetic institution in order to fulfill my personal goals in life.

I still remember the days when the few of us had to do laboratory teaching in a practically empty room that was equipped with nothing more than just a few benches. Now even our external examiners are impressed with the advanced level of our research and the completeness of our facilities. All these, of course, did not come without the dedication and hard work of the staff members.

Over the years, I have been struck by the strength and vitality of the CUHKSOP in several ways. First has been the spirit of volunteerism and involvement by many of our students, and the excellence which so many have brought to the table. They invariably tackle the problems they face with energy, courage and excellence. Second has been the openness of leadership, both at the school and the faculty level, to new ideas and opportunities for the school. Third is the unusual strength, dedication and deftness of the entire staff of the school. This is a relatively small but extremely capable and hard working staff. Without them, the school would never have achieved its present status.

The chemistry of the above results in a wonderfully enriched professional environment to guide our youngsters' careers and a collegiate forum upon which we can share our work and the fruits that arise.

The CUHKSOP is a unique place within the academic circle of Hong Kong. To many people outside, it is their dream place to be in, either as a student or as a staff member. I have been extremely lucky and honoured to be part of it for so many years.

As they say, good things never last. However, it is my firm belief that the school will continue to grow and prosper. I am sure when I look back in a few years' time, I will be able to hold my head high and tell people that I was once a founding member of one of the top pharmacy schools in Asia.



Photo Story Story Story

Drug Safety Public Lecture Series

The School of Pharmacy recently launched a free public lectures series to inform the public on the safe use of medicine. This feature complements the interactive drug information platforms AMPOULE and PHARM.

Upcoming Public Lecture List:

Date	Lecture Titles	Venues
9 Oct 2010	Effective Use of Osteoporosis Medications in Post-menopausal Women	Caritas Integrated Family Service Centre – Shau Kei Wan
20 Nov 2010	Acid Reducers: Determining which treatment is most appropriate	Mong Kok Community Hall
11 Dec 2010	Improving Cognitive Function of Alzheimer's and Dementia in the Elderly	Caritas Integrated Family Service Centre – Shau Kei Wan
19 Feb 2011	Safe and Appropriate Use of Erectile Dysfunction Drugs	Lecture Theater, Hong Kong Central Library
16 April 2011	Therapy used for Supportive Care in Patients Receiving Chemotherapy	T.B.C.
18 June 2011	Safety and Efficacy of Psychiatric Medications	Caritas Integrated Family Service Centre – Shau Kei Wan

For reservation and more information, please visit our web site:
<http://www.pharmacy.cuhk.edu.hk/news/pl.php>



Prof. Vivian Lee presenting souvenir to Ms. Amanda



Prof. Vivian Lee sharing

Research Updates **Research** Research

Fighting The Growing Problem Of Brain Diseases

By Prof. Larry W. BAUM

Professor Larry Baum collaborates with physicians to collect and examine DNA from patients with brain diseases, including dementia, stroke, and epilepsy, as well as other diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease. These DNA samples allowed over 20 publications, including contributions to a paper in the journal *Nature* identifying a gene that affects the heartbeat and can lead to stroke. About 1% of people worldwide have epilepsy, a disease in which the brain sometimes “short-circuits” and temporarily gets overexcited in a seizure, which leads to uncontrolled movements or thoughts. Although drugs to treat the disease have existed for a century, about a third of patients still are not effectively treated by drugs. To learn why, he and his collaborator Professor Patrick Kwan at the Prince of Wales Hospital compared variations in the genes of epilepsy patients who do or do not respond to drug treatment. They found that variations in two genes were associated with drug response. Their student Chunbo Zhang grew cells with one of these genes to discover that it can pump some epilepsy drugs but not others out of the brain, which might explain drug resistance. They and Professors Pak Sham and Stacey Cherry at the University of Hong Kong have conducted a study of about 500 epilepsy patients and approximately one million DNA variations to see which change the risk of getting epilepsy.

His other major research focus is development of new treatments for Alzheimer’s disease (AD). He has examined curcumin and similar molecules as potential AD drugs. Curcumin is a molecule comprising about 5% of turmeric, or *geung wong*, which is used in curry. In US studies, curcumin prevented memory loss and brain degeneration in animals. His student Stanley Cheung gave curcumin and similar drugs to mice engineered to make proteins found in patients with AD. Curcumin-treated mice lived longer and had less brain damage. Therefore, curcumin might be used for the treatment of AD. To increase the absorption of curcumin by the body and thus possibly the effectiveness of curcumin, Professor Albert Chow made curcumin into nanoparticles, which are balls so tiny that 100 million could fit on the period at the end of this sentence. Their small size gives nanoparticles a huge surface area, increasing their ability to dissolve. They might also cross directly into the blood and brain, to deliver curcumin where it is needed to treat AD. Professor Baum will treat mice with curcumin nanoparticles to see whether they are more effective than curcumin given as an ordinary powder. To test whether curcumin can treat humans, he conducted the world’s first study in AD patients of curcumin, demonstrating its safety. He also demonstrated that curcumin binds iron and copper atoms and administered an iron-binding drug to mice to determine whether the drug may treat AD.



Turmeric root (left) and slices (right)



Prof. Ellis Hon and Ms. Amanda Li were speakers for “Management of eczema in children”.



Dr. Ip Tai-pang and Mr. Godfrey Lui were speakers for “Effective Use of Osteoporosis Medications in Post-menopausal Women”.



experience on safety of children medications.



Mr. Godfrey Lui explaining different medications for Osteoporosis.



Public lectures are well attended by the public.

From The Alumni Alumni Alumni

Dr. Stephanie LEE

1995 Graduate
Lecturer
University of Leicester, UK

I was among the first batch of pharmacy graduates from CU. Since then, I had the fortune to go to some great institutions in the world. I went on to do a PhD at Trinity College, University of Cambridge; then I worked at ICR (London U), Oxford U and Leicester U. I had long dreamt of studying at Cambridge and I had great expectations; I could say I was not disappointed. Studying at Cambridge University and carrying out scientific research at the world famous MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology has been a precious experience and a real eye-opener. There I found a very positive and enthusiastic academic research atmosphere. I was struck by how much people were committed to doing science. And you had the chance to work in the same laboratory with several Nobel laureates; one actually won the Nobel Prize while I was there and I could still remember that we all went for celebration with champagne in the canteen the day the announcement was made. For the great opportunity and learning experience that I had, I really had to thank Cambridge for giving me the scholarship and I also had to thank many at CU Pharmacy and Pharmacology from whom I have learnt a lot as a student. I thank Prof Jim Damani profusely. I did my graduation research project with him, and that was my first research experience. He was very enthusiastic about science; I felt inspired and encouraged. Although he no longer teaches, his influence is still there. I hope to do the same with my students. I hope to inspire them and share with them my enthusiasm about science.

I would like to take this opportunity to say a few words of encouragement to the current students of CU Pharmacy. I do not doubt that you will learn a lot particularly about Pharmacy during your time at CU. Yet CU also has a strong tradition for general education and electives; I know that some students may, without much thinking, see them as chores. I have taken a few good electives that have broadened my horizons, and I would like to encourage you to make the most of the system. I would also like to encourage you to learn to think independently and think on your own. Independent thinking will be useful to you long after you forget certain factual knowledge that you learnt from a textbook or lecture.

Although I choose science and I believe in the contribution of science to society, I recognise that people are different and will have different preferences. With pharmacy as a major, becoming a pharmacist is an obvious career path, yet you can have other choices if you wish. I have been talking with Prof Vincent Lee about making a difference. I guess the important thing is to have enthusiasm and commitment to whatever you choose to do. And with that we CAN make a difference.

“ The important thing is to have enthusiasm and commitment to whatever you choose to do. And with that we CAN make a difference. ”

Ms. Kitty LAW

2006 Graduate
Hospital Pharmacist
in Shanghai

July 2007 was a turning point in life. A few weeks after becoming a registered pharmacist in Hong Kong, I started my pharmacy practice in Shanghai. I serve as a pharmacist in the international medical services department of Huashan Hospital, Fudan University. It is a JCI accredited institution of tertiary medical care, as well as medical education under Fudan University. The international medical establishment aims to provide premier medical services to guests from all over the world.



As expected, pharmacy practice in China is different from that in Hong Kong, particularly in licensure and ranking system, laws and regulations, and daily operation. In addition to patient care, hospital pharmacists are involved in a series of clinical and academic activities, such as postgraduate programmes in pharmacy, pharmaceutical manufacturing, scientific research and clinical pharmacy services, etc. I still remember the challenges I encountered when adapting to the new environment, especially the language and cultural barriers. Thanks to the all-round training from CUHK School of Pharmacy, gradually I was able to identify the necessary knowledge and skills required by a competent pharmacist in China, and learn from mistakes in order to prevent future failures. As a result, in 2008, I successfully obtained the primary health professional skill qualification in China.

In recent years university students in Hong Kong have turned to China to seek opportunities. They highly valued the working experience in the mainland, which they considered beneficial to their career development. For the pharmacy profession, Supplement VI and VII to CEPA allows registered pharmacists in Hong Kong to sit the mainland's licensed pharmacist qualification examination and to apply to register in accordance with the mainland's regulations, as well as to provide short-term services in the mainland for a maximum duration of 3 years. This could facilitate professional collaboration and exchanges of the two sides, and may have strong impacts on future development of the profession.

The diversity of the pharmacy profession and the huge potential demand for high quality pharmaceutical services in China are some of the chief attractions. The opportunity for success in various fields is open for people with courage, vision, ambition, passion and imagination. In this ever-changing world, not only do we need to adapt to the changes, but also to forge ahead and create our own future.

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School of Pharmacy CUHK

Expanding the pharmaceutical universe,
Creating opportunities for life

6/F Choh-Ming Li Basic Medical Sciences Building
The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Shatin, New Territories
Hong Kong

Tel: +852 2609 6860
Fax: +852 2603 5295
Email: pharmacy@cuhk.edu.hk
<http://www.pharmacy.cuhk.edu.hk>