

Summer 2021

## SharksRx Newsletter Summer 2021

Nova Southeastern University

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Barry and Judy Silverman  
College of Pharmacy  
NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

**NSU**  
Florida

# SHARKS NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2021



## Dean's Message



Michelle A. Clark, Ph.D.  
Dean

This is our first newsletter since the COVID-19 pandemic was officially recorded in the United States, and I am excited to share with you all that has been happening at the College.

In March 2020, the College quickly adapted to an online delivery format, the NSU BlendFlex model, to complete the academic year and ensure our students experienced as little disruption to class schedules as possible. We worked diligently with our hospital and community partners to ensure our students continued to have the required IPPE and APPE experiences. Commencement for the Class of 2020 was held virtually and, while we missed celebrating this milestone event in person, it gave us great joy to congratulate our graduates as they moved on to residencies, fellowships, and full-time employment.

As we end one academic year and look forward to the start of another, we stand in unity remembering the many friends and family members lost, and those whose lives have been altered, not only by COVID-19 but by the many social and economic changes 2020 has brought. The College of Pharmacy *pharmily* will continue to educate and develop inclusive leaders in the science and practice of pharmacy who will improve health through discovery, innovation, advocacy, and the delivery of optimal patient care.

As you enjoy the newsletter you will see great things happening at NSU College of Pharmacy and some of the accomplishments of our *pharmily*. We look forward to your continued support of our efforts to make NSU College of Pharmacy a premier college of pharmacy.

*Fins Up!*

Michelle A. Clark, Ph.D.

## College of Pharmacy at the Forefront of COVID-19 Immunization Initiative



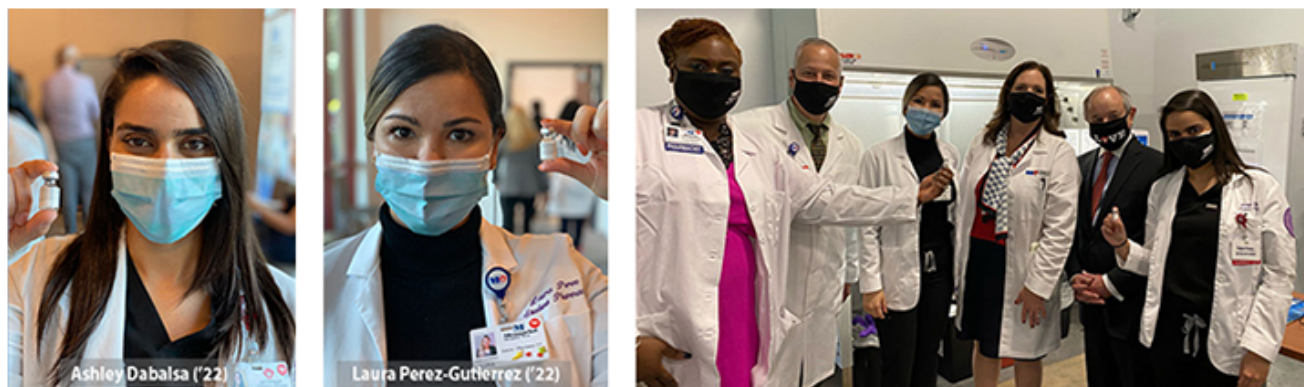
The College of Pharmacy is invested in the health of the community and is proud to help professionals achieve their goals while meeting the College's vision of service to advance the health and well-being of our communities.

NSU College of Pharmacy faculty train students and pharmacists to be certified immunizers under the APhA Immunization Certification program. Since January 2021, over 250 pharmacists, including retired pharmacists from Florida and around the U.S, as well as the Bahamas, have completed the certified immunizer training offered at NSU.

In March 2021, NSU was designated a closed point of distribution by the Broward County Department of Health for the COVID-19 vaccine. The College of Pharmacy, in collaboration with the Ron and Kathy Assaf College of Nursing, began vaccinating eligible individuals in the NSU Community, initially with the Johnson&Johnson (Janssen) COVID-19 vaccine and later with the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. Faculty, staff, and students volunteered to man the daily appointment schedule and ensure a smooth operation. More than 6,000 vaccines were administered.

Faculty and students at the Puerto Rico Regional Campus in San Juan participated in COVID-19 vaccination drives at Farmacia San Martin 3 in Manati and at the Department of Health site in Naguabo. Several students from Puerto Rico travelled to the Fort Lauderdale/Davie campus to participate in the on-campus vaccination clinic. In addition, students and faculty were eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccinations at the NSU designated vaccination locations including the Puerto Rico Regional Campus.

### Pharm.D. Students Reconstitute the First Syringes of COVID-19 Vaccine in South Florida



On the first day the COVID-19 vaccine became available, two NSU College of Pharmacy students, **Ashley Dabalsa** ('22) and **Laura Perez-Gutierrez** ('22) had an experience of a lifetime - they were involved in reconstituting for administration the COVID-19 vaccine at Memorial Healthcare System, which was the first institution that started providing the vaccines in South Florida.

## STUEY Finalists and Winners



The Student Life Achievement Awards, affectionately known as the "STUEYS", is an annual celebration of NSU's best in Academic Excellence, Student Centeredness, Integrity, Innovation, Opportunity, Scholarship/Research, Diversity, and Community. The college is proud to acknowledge its 2021 finalists: **Graciela M. Armayor**, Pharm.D. (Administrator of the Year); **Jose A. Rey**, Pharm.D. (Co-curricular Advisor of the Year); **Madeline Camejo**, Pharm.D. ('97) (Alumni of the Year); **Sasha Babilonia Acevedo** ('23) (Regional Campus Student of the Year); **APhA-ASP** (Graduate Organization of the Year); and our two outstanding winners: **Ashley Dabalsa** ('22) (Overall Student of the Year 2021) and **Cleveland Clinic Florida** (Corporate Partner of the Year).

## New Partnership with University of Puerto Rico Aguadilla





The College of Pharmacy is pleased to announce our newest partnership with University of Puerto Rico Aguadilla. The dual-degree program will join our other partnerships with Halmos College of Arts and Sciences and the Guy Harvey Oceanographic Research Center, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Puerto Rico, and Universidad Central de Bayamon, for a select number of highly motivated, qualified students to obtain their B.S. in Biology and Pharm.D. degrees in a period of six to eight years. Eligible students must apply from high school to one of the listed schools as dual degree students, and maintain requirements for admittance. To learn more about our dual-degree program contact us at [nsupharmacyinfo@nova.edu](mailto:nsupharmacyinfo@nova.edu).

## New Additions to the *Pharmily*

The College of Pharmacy is excited to welcome a diverse group of scholars, leaders, and researchers to our *pharmily*. They will support the College's mission of educating and developing the next generation of scientists and practitioners in pharmacy.



Yadollah Omidi, Pharm.D., Ph.D.

[Biography](#)



Christopher Lynch, M.Ed., Pharm.D.

('97)

[Biography](#)



Tricia Gangoo-Dookhan, Pharm.D.

('00)

[Biography](#)



Rucha Acharya, Pharm.D.

[Biography](#)



Melissa Santibañez, Pharm.D. ('15)

[Biography](#)



Daniela Fernandez, Pharm.D. ('18)

[Biography](#)



Gerardo Ramos-Otero, Pharm.D. ('18)

[Biography](#)



Kevin Avilés Oliveras, Pharm.D. ('20)

[Biography](#)

The College of Pharmacy also welcomes new staff members in our *pharmily*: **Jannette Gamble**, Executive Assistant to the Dean; **Marta Guevara**, Administrative Assistant, Experiential Education; and **Ivanna Fernandez**, Administrative Coordinator, Student Services.

## SharksRx Successes in Research and Funding

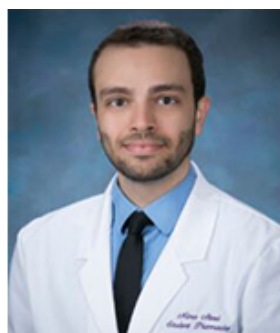
In the period between July 1, 2020 and April 3, 2021 the NSU College of Pharmacy faculty had many achievements:

- Papers published: 57
- Presentations at meeting: 16
- External Grants awarded: \$289,893
- Internal Grants awarded: \$102,688
- Total grant funding awarded: \$392,581

The faculty below were recognized in 2020 for their success in securing extramural funding:

- **Ana María Castejon, Ph.D.**, *Sponsored by Immunotec, Inc.*
- **Richard Deth, Ph.D.**, *Sponsored by DOD–U.S. Army Medical Research Acquisition Activity & Boston VA Research Institute, Inc.*
- **Leanne Lai, Ph.D.**, *Sponsored by Consumer Healthcare Products Association*
- **Jean J. Latimer, Ph.D.**, Dir, NSU AutoNation Institute for Breast Cancer Research and Care, *Sponsored by DOD–U.S. Army Medical Research Acquisition Activity*
- **Dmitriy Minond, Ph.D.**, *Sponsored by U.S. DHHS NIH–NIAMS & U.S. DHHS NIH*
- **Cynthia Moreau, Pharm.D., CPh, BCACP**, *Sponsored by NACDS*
- **Silvia E. Rabionet-Jolly, Ed.D.**, *Sponsored by University of Puerto Rico/U.S. DHHS NIH–NIMH*
- **Appu Rathinavelu, Ph.D.**, Executive Director, NSU RGICR, *Sponsored by Community Foundation of Broward and sponsor's name withheld*
- **Elizabeth Sherman, Pharm.D. ('07)**, *Sponsored by University of Miami/U.S. DHHS–HRSA*
- **Malav Suchin Trivedi, Ph.D.**, *Sponsored by Solve ME/CFS Initiative, DOD-U.S. Army Medical Research Acquisition Activity*
- **Albert Wertheimer, Ph.D.**, *Sponsored by Consumer Healthcare Products Association*

## Student Innovators Create Health Care Media Platform



Nima Ataei, M.S | Founder



Aaron Johnson, B.S | Founder

Fourth year Pharm.D. students **Aaron Johnson** ('22) and **Nima Ataei** ('22) created a health care media platform, *Hour Invite*, to educate society on health care related factors across multiple disciplines.

Since its inception in November 2019, *Hour Invite* has reached national and international audiences through podcasts and webinars with prominent health care professionals in a wide range of topics from professional development, to facial plastic surgery, and why primary teeth are important. Guest speakers from a variety of disciplines have presented at Hour Invite including the Nobel Laureate in Physiology or Medicine 2005, Barry J.

Marshall, B.S., M.B.; Patricia Flatley Brennan, R.N., Ph.D., Director, National Library of Medicine; leaders in pharmacy field such as Christopher Fortier, Pharm.D., Chief Pharmacy Officer, Massachusetts General Hospital; Scott Knoer, M.S. Pharm.D., CEO of the American Pharmacists Association; and renowned author Joseph DiPiro, Pharm.D.

Through *Hour Invite* Johnson and Ataei continue to mentor students, nationally and internationally, via their webpage, podcasts, newsletters, and webinars. <https://hourinvite.com/>

## Ph.D. Candidate Secures Internship with Medidata Solutions



**Shimone Parmar**, Ph.D. candidate in the Social and Administrative Pharmacy sequence, secured a summer internship with Medidata Solutions, a leading company in the digital transformation of life sciences with platforms for clinical development, commercial, and real-world data. Parmar will spend several months working on scientific research sponsored by the Medidata Institute, Acorn AI and Medidata's thought leadership forum.

## Graduates Achieve their Goal



Two hundred and fifty-one graduates of the Pharm.D. Class of 2021 completed their academic requirements and celebrated their commencement at the Hard Rock Stadium in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Fifty applicants were matched into PGY-1 residency positions and 20 alumni in PGY-2 match. Areas of PGY-2 specialization include: Cardiology; Infectious Disease; Psychiatry; Pediatric; Critical Care; Oncology; Ambulatory Care; and Internal Medicine. In addition, 8 students obtained fellowship positions in the following areas: Regulatory Affairs; Health Economics and Outcomes Research; Medical Affairs; and Association Leadership and Management.

The College also graduated 4 Ph.D. in Pharmaceutical Sciences, 5 M.S. in Pharmaceutical Sciences, and 9 M.S. in Pharmaceutical Affairs.

## Alumni Successes





**Osmel "Ozzie" Delgado** ('02) leads Healthcare Outcome Performance Company (HOPCo) as Chief Operating Officer. HOPCo is the national leader in musculoskeletal value-based outcomes management, service line management, and practice management. Prior to joining HOPCo, Delgado served as Chief Operating Officer for Cleveland Clinic Florida since 2014.



College of Pharmacy alumnus **Dave Lacknauth**, Pharm.D. ('02), Executive Director of Pharmacy Services and System Integration at Broward Health, was recognized by the South Florida Business & Wealth magazine as the 2021 Excellence in Healthcare honoree. Lacknauth provides leadership and administrative direction for the development, implementation, evaluation and operational management of system-wide integrated pharmacy services that are consistent with Broward Health's mission, values and strategic plan.



**John M. O'Brien**, M.P.H., Pharm.D. ('00) started a new position as President and Chief Executive Officer for the National Pharmaceutical Council (NPC), a health policy research organization dedicated to the advancement of evidence, science and medical innovation. O'Brien is responsible for overseeing NPC's policy research and communications capacity, partnerships with other health care organizations, and strategic vision.



**Melissa Ortega**, M.P.H., Pharm.D. ('10) chairs the ASHP's Section of Community Pharmacy Practitioners Executive Committee. Ortega brings to the role her experience as Past President at Massachusetts Society Health System Pharmacists. The section provides a home within ASHP for pharmacists, student pharmacists, pharmacy residents, and pharmacy technicians who practice in community/ambulatory pharmacy-based settings and who are involved in direct patient care, leadership and management, and implementation of advanced practice models and education.



**Richard Ashworth**, M.B.A., Pharm.D. ('99), President, CEO, and Board Member at Tivity Health, was appointed board member at the American Society on Aging. Ashworth will be working with fellow board members to champion issues and initiatives that enable older adults to thrive. Tivity Health is a leading provider of healthy life-changing solutions, with flagship brands such as SilverSneakers®, Nutrisystem®, Prime® Fitness, Wisely Well™, South Beach Diet® and WholeHealth Living®.





In November 2020, alumna **Dorinda Segovia**, Pharm.D. ('92) was appointed to the Florida Board of Pharmacy by Governor Ron DeSantis. Segovia is the vice president of pharmacy services at Memorial Healthcare system in Miramar. She has supported the College of Pharmacy community since 1992 as a student mentor, affiliate assistant professor, guest speaker and member of the College admissions and curriculum committees. Segovia is actively involved in combating the opioid epidemic by educating our youth and serves as vice chair in FSHP's legal and regulatory counsel.



**Jorge J. García**, M.S., Pharm.D. ('10) was appointed to the Board of Trustees of the Association of Community Cancer Centers. He serves as an assistant vice president at Baptist Health South Florida with responsibility for system-wide oncology pharmacy services primarily at the Miami Cancer Institute, the Lynn Cancer Institute, and inpatient oncology pharmacy services at several acute hospitals. García is also a board member at the Florida Society of Clinical Oncology (FLASCO), a recipient of the FLASCO 2018 Above and Beyond Award, and a fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives.



**Fernando Lopez**, Ph.D. ('18) was appointed assistant secretary for the Office of Aging and Adult Services at the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH). Lopez joins LDH at a critical time, as the ongoing pandemic hits older adults particularly hard. He is a passionate and innovative public health professional with skills centered around vulnerable population health. Lopez completed his Ph.D. with a concentration in Social and Administrative Pharmacy.

## SharksRx Alumni Legacy Fund



## LEVELS OF GIVING



The SharksRx Alumni Society created the legacy fund to support the College through the knowledge, skills, and financial resources needed to invest in the future of pharmacy education. The Society's goal is to grow student scholarship opportunities. You can help meet this goal by supporting the SharksRx Alumni Legacy Fund. Your contributions help the next generation of pharmacists in perpetuity. For more information on the Legacy Tree contact [Carla Luque, Pharm.D.](#), assistant dean, student services. To purchase an engraved leaf with your inscription [click here](#).

## Upcoming Alumni Events

The College of Pharmacy Alumni events and Continuing Education courses are updated on the College of Pharmacy [website](#).

The NSU Alumni Association (NSUAA) hosts a variety of programs and events to keep you involved and active throughout the year. Please check the [NSUAA website](#).

### Share your story

Email your updates and stories to [copalumni@nova.edu](mailto:copalumni@nova.edu).  
Please include one or two high resolution photos when possible.

Join our social media groups and keep updated on what's happening in and around the  
College of Pharmacy.



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