

UCSD Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences Welcomes 60 Future Pharmacists

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Sixteen men and 44 women will be officially welcomed to the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) [Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences](#) in a White Coat Ceremony to be held on Friday, September 23 at 3 p.m. in the Institute of the Americas Auditorium on the UCSD campus in La Jolla. The first-year students will receive the white coats they will wear in clinical settings during their studies. This class brings the four-year-old program to its initial steady-state class size, with 60 first-year students.

This year marks another first – the first year in which all four classes are enrolled – as the School’s inaugural class, 24 students who entered in 2002, will graduate in spring 2006.

The Skaggs School is the only public university school of pharmacy in Southern California, and one of only two in the state. Its four-year program leads to a doctorate in pharmacy (Pharm.D.) degree and offers unique classroom and clinical training in conjunction with UCSD’s School of Medicine. Second-year pharmacy students at UCSD share the same classes with medical students, and in their fourth year, participate in advanced clinical practice experiences with medical students.

“Our program emphasizes the critical role of pharmacists as part of the patient care team,” said Palmer Taylor, Ph.D., Dean of Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Associate Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences at UCSD. “The medical community now looks to the pharmacist as a key partner. With a long history of UCSD scientific excellence and patient-care experiences with the School of Medicine, the Skaggs School is uniquely positioned to train pharmacists as therapeutic consultants to the patient and to other health professionals.”

With the focus of health care delivery shifting from acute care to management of chronic conditions such as heart disease, diabetes and asthma that involve increased emphasis on complex drug therapy, the role of the pharmacist has become more important than ever. Sequencing of the human genome has led to new avenues for drug development and the pharmacists of the future will be increasingly called upon to match therapeutic selection and

dosage schedule with an individual patient's genetic makeup, as well as monitor drug interactions and patient outcomes.

Taylor notes that UCSD provides a variety of clinical settings for its pharmacy students to hone their patient-care skills, having a diverse health care system with outpatient clinics including the Moores Cancer Center, two UCSD hospitals, plus affiliations with the Veterans Hospital, Childrens Hospital and several other community practices.

The Skaggs School is also well-positioned geographically, with strong partnerships being developed across the UCSD campus. For example, researchers with the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, the San Diego Supercomputer Center and Jacobs School of Engineering share common pharmaceutical interests, offering opportunities for innovative research collaborations with the School of Pharmacy.

"In addition, many of our students are interested in various facets of pharmaceutical research and development and will be valuable future resources for the biotechnology and pharmaceutical industry," Taylor said.

Students entering the School at Friday's White Coat Ceremony will prepare for a multitude of career choices – including hospital or specialty pharmacy, community pharmacy, pharmaceutical management, drug development in the pharmaceutical or biotechnology industry and regulatory pharmacy.

"Interactions with the UCSD Medical School are expected to build a mutual respect that prepares health professionals to work closely together in the future," said Taylor.

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