All change at the Reading School of Pharmacy

The Reading School of Pharmacy has undergone a number of key staffing changes over the last 12 months. With the appointment of Professor Adrian Williams to Head of the School of Chemistry, Food and Pharmacy, Professor Helen Osborn became the new Head of Pharmacy.

Staff changes

After 3 years as the Head of Pharmacy Professor Adrian Williams has been appointed as the Head of the School of Chemistry, Food and Pharmacy. Tasked with the challenge of steering the School of Pharmacy through the next few years, Professor Helen Osborn has taken up the post as Head of Pharmacy. As a result of these changes Dr Marcus Rattray has become the Director of Research and Dr Kenneth Shankland will now head the Pharmaceutics division.

One notable departure this year was that of Mr Dave Allen, a key member of the technical support staff. Dave worked at the University for 17 years, spending the last 6 and half years in the School of Pharmacy. He was involved in teaching sessions through the whole MPharm programme, and will be greatly missed. We wish him every success in his future endeavours.

Students and staff win awards

In December 2011, Ranveer Bassey (MPharm Part 4 student) was awarded a ‘Future of Pharmacy Student Award’ in the Alliance Healthcare Pharmacy Awards (in association with the BPSA) for his evaluation of the role of community pharmacists in delivering the government’s healthcare agenda. www.reading.ac.uk/about/newsandevents/releases/PR422682.aspx

In January 2012 three Pharmacy students also received Chancellor’s Awards for their fantastic first and second year results. High achieving University of Reading students were recognised by the Chancellor Sir John Madejski at the inaugural Chancellor’s Award ceremony: www.reading.ac.uk/about/newsandevents/releases/PR423285.aspx

It was not only the students winning awards this year, Dr. Vitaliy Khutoryanskiy (Reader in Pharmaceutical Materials) was awarded the Royal Society of Chemistry’s 2012 McBain Medal for his imaginative use of colloid, polymer and interface science in the development of novel materials: for example, for his work on muco-adhesion and materials for drug delivery. www.reading.ac.uk/about/newsandevents/releases/PR426929.aspx.

Student health in the hands of our students

Supported by a grant from the University’s Annual Fund, our pharmacy students have been running “health checks for students”. The project has provided an opportunity for pharmacy undergraduates to undergo extracurricular training to provide healthy lifestyle checks for other students, covering aspects such as healthy eating, smoking, alcohol consumption, exercise and wellbeing. Testing determined blood glucose and cholesterol levels, blood pressure, weight and hip circumference and body mass indexes were calculated. Modifiable risk factors for cardiovascular disease and diabetes were identified and personal health goals were set, with referral to further support given if necessary.

The pharmacy students participating in the project have benefitted from the opportunity to use their clinical and communication skills, and commented that “The health checks are an excellent way of putting theory into practice” and “It was a huge enrichment to a variety of skills vital in the profession of pharmacy. I wish I could have done it in previous years.” Such activities are likely to be included in the MPharm course in the future to increase clinical contact and practice opportunities.
Student knowledge tested to its limits

On the 9th December, 2012, our local student representatives of the British Pharmacy Students’ Association (BPSA) held their annual McNeil Responding to Symptoms competition, aimed to improve students’ communication skills and knowledge of over-the-counter medicines. The participants (from all four year groups) were given ten minutes to prepare for a ‘responding to symptoms’ scenario, where they were able to search the relevant literature before facing their ‘patient’ and the judges! The students were judged on their questioning style, professionalism and competence – all good practice for the fourth year OSCE examinations. We warmly congratulate this year’s winner, Anna Douglas (MPharm Part 2 student) and the runner-up, Farhana Rahman (MPharm Part 3 student). They each won a prize of £50 and £25, respectively; Anna will go on to represent Reading School of Pharmacy at the national competition. All fifteen student participants were awarded a ‘professional development point’, which contributes towards a BPSA Professional Development Certificate when five points are accumulated.

Pharmacy research goes from strength to strength

Academics associated with Reading School of Pharmacy have published over 45 papers in scientific journals in the last 12 months. The School has welcomed 17 new PhD students so far this year, bringing our total to over 40.

Research led by Che Connan on tissue engineering, was featured in the Daily Mail and Sunday Express. Rachel Howard has recently co-authored a paper published in The Lancet, on reduction of medication errors through pharmacist led intervention.

Prescribing course achieves commendations from Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC)

The Independent Prescribing course, run through the Centre for Inter-Professional Postgraduate Education and Training (CIPPET) was recently monitored by the NMC. The reviewers said “The programme is delivered by an experienced, committed and enthusiastic academic team. The quality of teaching and student support is evaluated as excellent and is commended. The programme has an excellent reputation with regards to the quality of the teaching and the organisation of the programme. Students want to come on the programme due to the positive feedback from other students about the high quality of the learning experiences.” They went on to say “a major strength of the programme is the learning opportunity presented by the inter-professional learning with pharmacy students. The teaching quality of the pharmacological element of the programme is outstanding in that it draws from a number of expert lecturers from the School of Pharmacy.

In particular the use of the therapeutic profile document within clinical practice and the learning environment is outstanding and provides a framework for the acquisition of in-depth pharmacological knowledge and understanding and provides an exceptional base for prescribing practice.”

Graduation 2011

We are very proud of our 2011 MPharm graduates and enjoyed a fantastic ceremony in July with our graduands accompanied by their parents and supporters.

The celebrations continued with a drinks reception hosted by the staff at the Museum of English Rural Life.

We did not enjoy such good weather as in previous years but it was still a glorious day and even the rain stayed away long enough for the traditional photographs to be taken.

FACEBOOK PAGE:

The Reading School of Pharmacy has its own Facebook page, where you can find up-to-date information about the school and its activities. http://www.facebook.com/pages/Reading-School-of-Pharmacy/181519751864280

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