



# PLS Winter Newsletter

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Igniting the Way .....	2
A Leader and Supporter.....	3
PLS Goes Global.....	4
Confessions of a Conference-holic.....	5
New Initiates and Acknowledgments.....	6





*“Leaders don’t create followers, they create more leaders.”  
- Tom Peters*



# Igniting the Way

BY DARA NGUYEN, PRESIDENT, PHARMD 2020

For our newly initiated 2017-2018 Gamma Nu Phi Lambda Sigma Executive Board, the start of a new year not only brings exuberance, but also a bright vision of purpose for our Chapter. Words cannot express how much of an honor and how humbling it is to have the opportunity to work with a team of inspiring leaders to continue the legacy PLS has imprinted upon WesternU, our pharmacy community, and most importantly our patients. On behalf of the Executive Board as we continue our term, I first want to thank Jane Kim, Alvin Fong, Clarissa Ko, Sun Vega, Mikaela Sampayan, Yasmeen Altawaty, and Dr. Hoffman, the 2016-2017 Gamma Nu PLS Executive Board and Advisor, for accepting us into such a well-respected society. Their constant support is nothing short of unwavering, and guidance motivates us to uphold the prestige of our Chapter with vigor and integrity.

Keeping in mind the credibility earned by PLS members before us, my goal serving as President this year is two-fold. First is furthering our aim of establishing a strong PLS presence both on and off campus, and second is fostering an environment of collaboration, community, and growth among our colleagues. Ultimately, we will continue advocating and advancing the profession of pharmacy by building and strengthening relationships not only with each other, but also with our communities. Together we can educate and reach out to the public about the

integrative role pharmacists can play in their health and well-being. This philosophy is instrumental to our growth as pharmacy professionals, even now as students. Embracing everybody’s unique strengths and experiences, the Executive Board and I invites everyone to collaborate with us if you have any ideas, questions or concerns to explore innovative ways to achieve this vision together. Individually we’re sparks, but together we can ignite a flame to light the way for a brighter future.



# A Leader and Supporter: Dr. David Sanchez.

## PLS faculty of the year 2017

BY CHRISTINE WONG, SECRETARY, PHARMD 2020



**Christine Wong:** What does leadership mean to you?

**Dr. David Sanchez:** Leadership is serving the group organization that you're working for whether it's your peers, the community, or your school. It's not just about leading but it's also about the servitude because you're putting in your own time and effort. Part of leadership is also getting feedback and talking to other people about your ideas because sometimes we are blind to what the right decision is. Sometimes we can get too excited about our own ideas that we miss other good opportunities or fail to see what's wrong with your own idea.

**CW:** Were you always a natural leader?

**DS:** I had to adapt myself. Growing up I was very shy and agoraphobic, but in that scenario, I learned that I had to step up to things and I thought to myself "I'm in the position now and I have to take advantage of it and do what's best for the group that I'm serving." You just have to embrace the experience to see what you are capable of and that in itself opens up more doors and you realize that nothing is ever really that bad. Whenever you do something for the first time, it can be scary but you can even get used to situation of fear and adapt to it.

**CW:** Did you ever expect to be nominated as PLS faculty of the year?

**DS:** I had 0% idea. It was a complete surprise to me and I had no idea I was ever being considered until I got the email from the prior PLS Vice President, Alvin. I even had to email him to ask him what was going on. As a non-pharmacist, the only thing I could do was to support all the pharmacy groups but I never thought I could have such an impact. It's interesting to be involved and it's exciting to be in this position because it makes me feel more connected to the students rather than being an observer.

**CW:** What was your dream job as a child? Did you always know you wanted to be in academia?

**DS:** In middle school, I already knew I was interested in science. My grandmother had diabetes and I was always wondering why she couldn't stop taking her medication. I wanted to create a medication that could supplement all other medications and cure everything. I like bridging science with the development of something.

**CW:** Do you think anyone can do research?

**DS:** I think anyone can if you're curious about things. Any research can pop out from anyone you meet here. Everyone has some question about life and it's easy to go into research if you find something that interests you enough. Research is very dynamic and your questions are always changing because science is always changing. Research is not stagnant at all, it's actually very open.

**CW:** What is the most rewarding part about being a professor?

**DS:** It's getting through complicated ideas with students and seeing students understand it. It doesn't happen in the classroom setting, but you see it when you talk with them one-on-one. I have seen a lot of the students grow throughout the years. You can see the jump from P1 to P2 to P3 to P4. I see P4s on their advanced electives talking about complex disease states when in P1 year, they were struggling with what a beta blocker is. Each year is a jump in maturity and towards becoming true healthcare professionals.

**CW:** What advice would you give to yourself if you go back to when you were a student?

**DS:** I would tell myself not to worry so much and to just do my best and keep going. I always tell students here that things will be okay and that they'll work out. Stress can build so that's why you always need someone to tell you it will be okay.



# PLS GOES GLOBAL

BY KIMBERLY LIM, PHARMD 2018



My last APPE rotation (R7) was an international rotation at the Taipei Medical University Hospital. It took place during a crucial time for residency applications in the United States, and while it is possible to apply for residencies while overseas, it requires more planning and effort. For those who intend to apply for residency, R7 occurs at the same time in which ASHP Midyear and other residency program open houses are held. As a student with the intention to apply for residencies, I knew that an international rotation could potentially hinder my chances because it is more difficult to demonstrate what you gained from this type of rotation to residency programs. However, since I have always had an interest in global health and how pharmacy is practiced in other parts of the world, I decided to do this rotation with the intention to seek as many unique opportunities as possible.



In Taiwan, there are no technicians, and pharmacists are overwhelmed with work that is usually completed by a technician. Additionally, the path to becoming a pharmacist in Taiwan is different compared to the United States, making it harder for them to advocate for the profession. Although there have been recent strides for more clinical roles, these advocates are often faced with resistance from other pharmacists. I was inspired by their determination and passion to gain more clinical roles and excited to actively participate in helping them expand their scope of practice.

The biggest challenge I faced in Taiwan was the language barrier. Although I am able to understand and speak some Mandarin, it was not enough to understand the doctors or pharmacists when they were communicating with patients and it was difficult navigating through the electronic health records. Luckily, the doctors and pharmacists I was paired with could speak English and helped me translate the records. To communicate effectively with the patients, I improved my non-verbal communication skills, which allowed me to make connections with the patients I interacted with. I realized that as long as I am doing my best to be the patients' strongest advocate, the patients can see my efforts and appreciate them. It made such a great impact on me because it taught me a new level of patient care and practicing empathy based on body language and gestures, despite the lack of a common language. This skill is invaluable as verbal communication is not always a luxury we may have in caring for patients in the United States.



# Confessions of a Conference-aholic

BY KEVIN MAI, PHARMD 2018

My first conference was APhA-ASP's Midyear Regional Meeting in Fall of 2014 as a P1. Without knowing many other people, this could have easily been my last conference. It wasn't until my third conference at APhA Annual Meeting and Exposition where I began to see the same students from other schools. It's this recurrence that builds relationships and makes conferences worthwhile for me.



Through my experiences, I've had the opportunity to connect with people from across the nation. My friend Nimit gave me a tour at APhA Headquarters in Washington DC, Jason showed me that southern hospitality in Atlanta, Georgia, and Helen took me sightseeing in Seattle, Washington. These are people who were simply listening to the same guest speaker.

One of my personal favorite sessions has been the House of Delegates (HoD). This policy process is rough at first, but the dialogue has taught me how to change and shape the profession. There's also an opportunity to run for leadership positions and represent WesternU as a strong voice. Imagine having an idea and being able to share it with hundreds, if not thousands, of pharmacists and students alike. That is what makes the HoD so powerful.

But if that's not your cup of tea, there is something for everyone at a conference. The Expos have hundreds of booths filled with entrepreneurs, innovators, and health care providers who want to showcase their products to you. They have spin-the-wheel along with various other giveaways, not to mention fantastic raffle prizes. For those who are interested in brushing up or testing their clinical skills, certain conferences have quiz bowl competitions. WesternU students have represented well at CSHP, CPhA, and AMCP, instilling a sense of pride in our profession and our program. At night, there's many socials to help us relax and meet other people from all walks of life. There's always something to do and someone to meet.

Conferences have become the highlights of my pharmacy career. As students, we often hear that pharmacy is a small world and conferences bring us that much closer. I have been to 30 conferences during pharmacy school thus far, with plans to attend 4 other conferences before I graduate. It is my hope that everyone stays engaged in our profession whether it's your 3rd or your 30th conference.



# PHI LAMBDA SIGMA WELCOMES THE NEW INITIATES TO OUR FAMILY

## PharmD 2020

Alison Agustin  
Ashley Jeong  
Dara Nguyen  
Thao Nguyen  
Bhavika Patel  
Christine Wong



## PharmD 2019

Downey Her  
Hajer Ibrahim  
Farnnam Kachouei  
Allison Lee  
Angela Nguyen  
Erica Trinh



## PharmD 2018

Kimberly Lim  
Grace Tran

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### Faculty of the Year

Dr. David Sanchez

### PLS Student Member of the Year

Divvjyot (Gorby) Singh

### Authors

Dara Nguyen  
Christine Wong  
Kimberly Lim  
Kevin Mai

### Editor and Design

Alison Agustin  
Christine Wong

