The Graduate Tracking Project

As a graduate of the Victorian College of Pharmacy, you may be about to receive a questionnaire asking you about your career. Why? Because the College is undertaking a Graduate Tracking Project, that is the biggest national workforce study of pharmacists ever attempted in Australia.

Hospital and community pharmacies nationally have been experiencing a shortage of pharmacists for some years. The shortage is especially acute in rural and remote areas and is being felt quickly. The trend of health professionals away from rural and community pharmacies is being experienced across the whole nation.

The College has already implemented many initiatives to encourage pharmacists back to rural and remote areas. This is not a short-term solution and the benefits will not be felt quickly. The trend of health professionals away from the bush is a complex issue. The project will attempt to identify and understand the myriad of influences at play and will present sophisticated solutions to this chronic problem.

The results of this project will be presented and promoted widely. They will be made available to the pharmacy profession and its organisations, all Australian and New Zealand schools of pharmacy, and State and Federal health departments.

The project will help direct future national strategies to encourage pharmacists back to pharmacy and to rural and remote areas. This is a multi-year project and will require support from all stakeholders.

Win dinner for two at Hotel Laureate

Send in a copy of your pre-1970s graduation ceremony program and go into the draw to win dinner for two, plus a bottle of red or white wine, at Hotel Laureate (a 4.5 star Quality hotel, renovated and refurbished in 2001) at 441 Royal Parade, Parkville.

The College only has official copies of graduation ceremony programs dating back to 1970. To help us locate all of our graduates, keep them informed about the College and enable us to invite them to local, interstate and international reunions — we need your help.

Many thanks to Hotel Laureate for donating this terrific prize.

For more information about the Graduate Tracking Project contact Project Researcher Geoff Dumayne at geoffdumayne@yahoo.com.au
Looking Back

Caleb Bradham (1866-34), a pharmacist from North Carolina, created the first Pepsi-Cola for dyspepsia, or indigestion. In 1902, Bradham began bottling the soft drink in the back room of his drugstore.

Campus pictorial 1881-2002

How many of today’s students, staff and graduates of the College know that the College began its life with classes being taught from a museum and a year later from a private house in Fitzroy?

Victoria’s original Pharmacy Act (1876) called for the recognition, by the Pharmacy Board, of schools of pharmacy. Since its inception in 1857, the Pharmaceutical Society of Victoria had been keen to present pharmacy classes for apprentices, and was in discussion with the University of Melbourne. These negotiations were not fruitful, and as the Society had no lecture hall or laboratories, home for a school needed to be found.

In 1881 the Pharmaceutical Society of Victoria recognised the classes already being taught for pharmacists and chemists’ assistants at the Industrial and Technological Museum, a timber building at the rear of the Public Library in Swanston Street, central Melbourne.

In 1882, the home of John Kruse (the first director of the College) became the venue for classes in chemistry, botany and Latin, and was known as the Melbourne School of Pharmacy. The Society also recognised the pharmacy subjects being taught at the Ballarat School of Mines and the Sandhurst School of Mines.

But a more permanent and flexible site for lectures and practical classes needed to be found. In 1882, the County Court Building at 360 Swanston Street was purchased from the Government for $400 by the Society and classes began there in 1884. In 1936, after the last of many major renovations at the Swanston Street premises (and after the absorption of the Ballarat and Sandhurst Schools of Mines into the local education system and their ceasing to teach pharmacy subjects), the Melbourne College adopted the wider and more accurate title of the Victorian College of Pharmacy.

Eventually the College outgrew its Swanston Street home. In 1951 the property at Parkville on Royal Parade was purchased by the Society and in 1958 the War Memorial Building Appeal was launched. With funding from the Federal and State Governments, plus strong support from the profession and industry, the College moved from the city to the Parkville campus in 1960 and the first full time three-year pharmacy course in Australia commenced.

The College originally comprised two buildings – the Scott and the Sissions. In 1971 a third building – the Manning – was opened, again with much support from the profession and industry, plus Federal and State funding. A fourth building is now planned for the empty space next to the Manning building, currently the College’s car park.

The College has come a long way in 121 years from its humble beginnings.

For a tour of the College and its current facilities contact Sarah Vincent, email sarah.vincent@vcp.monash.edu.au or tel: 61 3 9903 9507.
$4M grant to establish a new Centre at the Victorian College of Pharmacy, Monash University

The Victorian State Minister for Innovation, the Hon John Brumby, recently announced the award of $4 million to establish a Centre for Pre-Clinical Drug Candidate Optimisation at the Victorian College of Pharmacy. The funding will be provided from the State’s Science, Technology and Innovation Infrastructure (STII) scheme.

The Centre will integrate and build on the faculty’s key research strengths in pre-clinical drug development and, through collaborative partnerships with commercial organisations and not-for-profit research institutes, it will help design and identify drug candidates with optimal chemical, metabolic, developmental and biopharmaceutic properties.

The Centre, to be co-directed by Professor William Charman and Dr Susan Charman from the College’s Department of Pharmaceutics, will deliver a crucially needed, time-responsive resource that will add tangible value to the drug candidates of its collaborating partners in the emerging biotechnology and pharmaceutical research sector in Victoria and Australia.

“Simply stated, the Centre aims to fill the critical gap between drug discovery and drug development by identifying better drug candidates that have a higher chance of clinical and commercial success,” said Professor Bill Charman.

“The Centre builds upon our existing strengths in the field of pre-clinical drug development,” said Dr Susan Charman.

“It will allow these activities to be significantly upgraded and expanded to meet the rapidly increasing needs of local commercial groups and research institutes.”

The new Centre will also provide an important and much-needed training ground for pre-clinical researchers to help fill the growing need for skilled and experienced developmental scientists. It is expected to grow to approximately 20 staff over the next few years, and an external Board of Directors of highly respected scientific and commercial leaders will guide its development.

For further information contact Professor Bill Charman, on tel: 61 3 9903 9519, or email bill.charman@vcp.monash.edu.au
Welcome to Janet White

A new Faculty Manager has been appointed to the Victorian College of Pharmacy following the recent retirement of Registrar Michael Watson.

Janet White is the first female Faculty Manager in the College’s 121-year history. She brings a broad and impressive background in university administration to this important role. Her previous position was General Manager Resources in the Faculty of Business at RMIT.

After graduating from the University of London with a Bachelor of Science majoring in geography and environmental science, Janet undertook research in the private sector before taking time out to raise a family and help run the family farm. Since arriving in Australia 19 years ago she has worked at senior levels of administration and management at three Victorian universities. In addition to RMIT, Janet worked at the University of Melbourne, where she held three consecutive general manager positions in the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry, the School of Graduate Studies and Melbourne Scholarships, where one of her key achievements was to implement the National Melbourne Scholarships program. Earlier, at La Trobe University, she was Executive Officer in the School of Behavioural Sciences.

Janet will be working closely with the Dean, Heads of Department and all other College staff to navigate many important future projects for the College including the introduction of the new Bachelor of Medicinal Chemistry in 2003 and the construction of the highly awaited fourth building on the Parkville campus.

“I have had a warm welcome from Pharmacy and I am delighted to be working in such an interesting and challenging environment.”

New Zealand students visit the College

Fourth year students from the School of Pharmacy at the University of Otago, New Zealand, visited the College again this year. They enjoyed a tour of the facilities and presentations from senior staff regarding new and established teaching and research programs. Many of the students were interested in postgraduate study at the College, or had questions regarding how to register as a pharmacist in Victoria.

Schoolgirl scientist comes from Hawaii to see the College

Twelve-year-old Hawaiian schoolgirl Cara Chang took a tour of the Victorian College of Pharmacy as part of her prize for winning the Discovery Young Scientists Challenge (DYSC).

The DYSC is a science contest for children run by the Discovery Channel and the Travel Channel in the USA, which offers as its prize the contestant’s ‘dream science trip’.

The contest rewards outstanding students with an aptitude for science, problem-solving, leadership and creativity, and who are effective science communicators.

In her winning essay, Cara said her dream science trip would include a visit to ‘Monash University in Australia’ to witness the amazing scientific breakthroughs being conducted in cell research.

‘With scientific advances such as stem cell research, we are closer to eradicating some diseases and helping extend the quality of life to people everywhere,’ Cara wrote.

Cara and her family were taken on a tour of the College facilities, which included time spent talking to Dr John Haynes, a lecturer in the Department of Pharmaceutical Biology and Pharmacology, about his prostate stromal cell research.

Cara Chang with Dr John Haynes.

Cara Chang from Hawaii visiting the College
Wound care has emerged over the last 10 years as a discipline in its own right, requiring a high degree of specialisation. It is no longer considered a secondary responsibility carried out by nurses and other health professionals.

The College initially recognised this need by establishing a Graduate Certificate in Wound Care for health professionals. A Graduate Diploma is now available, and the new Master of Wound Care will be the only multi-disciplinary postgraduate course delivering a specific qualification in wound care in the southern hemisphere. All health professionals working in the area of wound care including doctors, veterinary surgeons, pharmacists, podiatrists and nurses will be able to apply for admission to the Masters program.

The course comprises:
- course work (core and elective modules) – to allow health professionals to develop the necessary knowledge (areas include Diabetic Foot, Scar Management, Reconstructive Surgery, Dermatology, Burns and Risk Management)
- clinical component – to allow health professionals to develop and apply the necessary practical skills
- research component – to provide the opportunity to contribute to the growing body of knowledge in wound healing.

The course provides access to information and resources to allow health professionals the opportunity to develop the necessary knowledge and skills. It features flexible use of innovative online technology to enhance learning and interaction. Access to much of the course information is freely available online, developed with a collaborative approach involving Monash University, National Ageing Research Institute, Wound Foundation of Australia, University of Melbourne and La Trobe University.

The development of the course will play an important role in fostering the growth of wound care specialists in an important emerging field of practice and research.

For more information and enrolments, contact Carolyn Fox (Program Coordinator) on tel: 03 9903 9017 or email cce.coord@vcp.monash.edu.au

Three dimensional structure of the enzyme Helicase from the Hepatitis C virus. Researchers at the College are using high performance computing to study the function of this protein.

Master of Wound Care

Bachelor of Medicinal Chemistry

The College will introduce a new degree program in 2003, to add to the Bachelor of Pharmacy, double degree in Pharmacy/Commerce and Bachelor of Formulation Science.

The Bachelor of Medicinal Chemistry (B.Med.Chem.) degree teaches the science that underpins the design and development of pharmaceuticals and involves aspects of both pharmacy and chemistry.

This new degree is a joint initiative of the College and the Faculty of Science at Monash University. B.Med.Chem. graduates will have employment opportunities in pharmaceutical research in industry, research institutes and universities.

“This new degree has been devised in response to the increased demand for graduates in this area of chemistry,” stated Course Coordinator Professor Peter Scammells. “The Royal Australian Chemical Institute (RACI) and other professional bodies in Britain and the USA have noted the shortage of medicinal chemists in editorial comment. This degree will provide a strong foundation in basic chemistry so graduates will also be able to pursue careers in other areas of chemistry such as the polymer and plastics industry, forensic chemistry and the fine chemical industry.”

The B.Med.Chem. is a three-year, full time program with an optional fourth/Honours year and will be taught at Monash University’s Clayton and Parkville campuses.

The course includes subjects such as Biomolecules: Structure and Function, Toxicology, Chemistry of Drug Action, Functional Pharmacology in Drug Design, Drug Discovery, Drug Development and Emerging Technologies in Drug Discovery.

For more information about the course, visit www.vcp.monash.edu/chemistry/bmedchem.html or contact the Course Coordinator Professor Peter J. Scammells, email peter.scammells@vcp.monash.edu.au

The wound clinic at Austin & Repatriation Medical Centre during clinical teaching sessions.
The College began collaboration with the Universiti Sains Malaysia in Penang when Assistant Lecturer Suzanne Caliph from the Department of Pharmaceutics visited Malaysia to teach microsurgery techniques to postgraduate students.

Suzanne is an expert in the surgery techniques required to determine how important the body’s lymphatic system is to the overall absorption profile of a drug molecule. Universiti Sains Malaysia has been keen to begin these lymphatic drug transport studies, and its Deputy Dean of research and postgraduate studies, Professor Yuen Kah Hay, invited Suzanne to teach the techniques to postgraduate students in the university’s School of Pharmaceutical Sciences.

She spent three days in Penang teaching students how to cannulate animals’ lymph ducts – a technique that allows researchers to determine how much of a drug has entered the lymphatic system. She intends to return to Penang to see what progress the students have made.

“It was a very productive trip,” Suzanne said. “I had a chance to meet people with the same research interests, and there are now opportunities for future collaborations.” Suzanne graduated from the College in 1993 (nee Lynam). Since then she has completed the Master of Pharmaceutical Science (Pharmaceutics Research) and Graduate Certificate in Higher Education, both at Monash. She is also a part time community pharmacist and a mother of a two and a half year old boy. As of January 2003, Suzanne will be working as a Lecturer in the Department of Pharmaceutics.

What does an Italian Palace have to do with innovations in the teaching of pharmacy?

The conference delegates with Professor Bill Kent (seated, far left), Director of the Monash Centre in Prato.

Microsurgery expertise on show in Penang

The Monash Pharmacy Practice Symposium Prato, Italy, 9-10 September 2002

The College’s Department of Pharmacy Practice recently conducted a highly successful Symposium at Monash’s European Centre, the beautiful Palazzo Vaj in Prato, Italy. The theme of the Symposium was ‘Experiential Teaching and Learning in Pharmacy’. Through this theme attendees explored the use of practical placements, case and problem based learning and other experiential practices that are integral to the curricula of many schools of pharmacy today.

This Symposium presented an opportunity for academics, preceptors and students to explore and share the experience of novel teaching in pharmacy around the world. Speakers from across the globe presented their experiences and shared some of their insights into dynamic and flexible teaching in pharmacy. Workshops (PeArL sessions, otherwise known as Personally Arranged Learning Sessions) were conducted to explore specific areas of interest in small group settings. Attendees represented universities and practice settings in Australia, UK, Canada, USA, Malaysia and Singapore.

The meeting was so successful it was decided to revisit the theme in 2004 – again in Prato – with an even wider international audience expected. The Department of Pharmacy Practice will be conducting the next Symposium in Melbourne in September 2003 with the theme ‘Innovations in Teaching, Learning and Research in Pharmacy Practice’.

For those interested in attending the Melbourne 2003 Symposium, more details can be found at www.vcp.monash.edu.au/practice/symposia/melb2003

For those interested in the presentations and outcomes of the 2002 Prato Symposium, visit www.vcp.monash.edu.au/practice/prato

For further information about the Department of Pharmacy Practice, visit www.vcp.monash.edu.au/practice/
Monash researchers win global recognition for malaria drug discovery research

Monash researchers are part of an international research team awarded the prestigious Drug Discovery Project of the Year Award 2001 from the Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV, Geneva, Switzerland). MMV is a leading international public/private partnership, funded by organisations such as The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, formed to develop new drug treatments for malaria, which kills between one and two million people each year.

Professor Bill Charman and Dr Susan Charman from the College are collaborating with academic and industrial research groups in the USA (University of Nebraska) and Switzerland (Swiss Tropical Institute and F. Hoffman-La Roche) to develop a new class of low cost, fast-acting, highly effective drugs.

The Monash team, which also includes Dr Francis Chiu, Dr Seetal Dodd and Dr Kylie McIntosh, has identified and designed new drug candidates with optimal pharmaceutical properties so they can be rapidly developed at a reasonable cost.

“This project is an excellent demonstration that partnerships like MMV can fill the glaring innovation gap that has built up over decades in major global diseases of the poor like malaria,” said Dame Bridget Ogilvie, chair of the MMV Foundation.

Adverse drug reactions in oncology patients

Adverse drug reactions in oncology patients is the topic of a PhD research study by Phyllis Lau, a pharmacist undertaking research in the Department of Pharmacy Practice.

Working with Michael Dooley, Director of Pharmacy at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Institute and with her supervisor, Dr Kay Stewart, Phyllis interviewed 170 patients about the unwelcome effects they experienced from their treatment and analysed a further 503 patient medical histories. She created a scale of adverse drug reactions that most affected patient wellbeing, which included constipation, nausea, vomiting, fatigue and hair loss.

Phyllis discovered that there is a vast gap between how doctors view the seriousness of reactions to chemotherapy, opiates and antiemetics, how patients viewed them and how disruptive to their wellbeing and recovery patients rated those reactions. She also found that many of the reactions were predictable and that this should be taken into account in patient treatment. She was recently invited to present her findings at the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Annual Meeting, a major oncology conference in the USA.

Read more about Phyllis and her research in the November Monash magazine – or view the magazine online at www.monash.edu.au/pubs/mommag/ (If you are a graduate of the College and don’t currently receive the Monash magazine, make sure you update your details on the tear-off slip at the back of this newsletter.)
The Cyril Tonkin Scholarships

A major scholarship, named in honour of Dr Cyril Tonkin, was endowed in 1976 to promote innovation and leadership in the profession of pharmacy.

Miss Sarah Amy Lloyd, whose father conducted a pharmacy business in Geelong, established the fund to honour her family doctor and great friend Dr Tonkin, who had first qualified as a pharmacist from the College in 1910.

It was her belief that the profession of pharmacy and the health professions generally would benefit if young pharmacists with leadership potential could be given an opportunity early in their careers to advance their studies and/or to travel. In endowing the Scholarship, Miss Lloyd expressed the wish that the selected scholars should be informed of the selfless service rendered by Dr Tonkin during his lifetime and that they be asked to regard that service as an inspiration to aspire to the highest professional standards in their own service to humanity.

The Pharmaceutical Society of Victoria, as the then governing body of the College, was appointed to be the trustee and administrator of the Scholarship. The original bequest of over $250,000 was, at the time, the largest scholarship fund of its type ever established in Australia for the pursuit of academic and professional excellence by students of a non-university educational institute.

Prior to the College gaining faculty status at Monash University in 1992, support for scholarships was hard to attract as most research funding was directed towards universities. The Cyril Tonkin Scholarship filled this critical gap for the College and continues to foster excellence in academic studies and research.

Since the first Cyril Tonkin Scholarship was awarded in 1976, there have been 37 recipients including Masters and PhD scholars, and research fellows at the College. Other recipients have been practicing graduates who have been given scholarships to study or experience important areas of practice development in Australia and overseas.

The Scholarship deed requires that scholarships are granted by the Society on the recommendation of the College's management committee, so that only the most highly qualified candidates with the requisite potential for leadership are chosen as Cyril Tonkin Scholars.

Many Scholarship winners have gone on to become excellent ambassadors for the College, the profession and the Scholarship. Recipients currently work in all areas of the profession, in academia and in industry both nationally and around the globe.

Dr Cyril Tonkin

Dr Tonkin excelled in his dual careers as a pharmacist and as a doctor. Graduating from the College in 1910, he earned both the Intermediate Gold Medal in 1908 and the Final Examination Gold Medal in 1910. His early education was made possible by several scholarships, further testament to how crucial such support can be.

He first became apprenticed to pharmacist David Alexander Cossar in 1906. The Cossar family are also well known patrons of the College, the main hall at the Parkville campus named in honour of their philanthropy.

In 1909 Tonkin worked as an assistant demonstrator to medical students and as a demonstrator at the College from 1910-12. He enrolled as a medical student at Melbourne University but his studies were interrupted by the First World War when he enlisted in the medical corps, mirroring the career of another famous graduate of the College, Sir Weary Dunlop.

He served as a Staff Sergeant in the First Light Horse Field Ambulance from 1914-16. Transferring to combat duty and promoted to Lieutenant, he was posted to the 12th Machine Gun Company in which he served until 1918. Dr Tonkin also served as a Major at Army Headquarters being Assistant Director General Medical Services (Pharmaceutical) until 1939, following in the footsteps of his early mentor Major D. A. Cossar.

After the war he completed his medical studies in 1921. He was a Lecturer in Botany at the College from 1920-45 and was examiner in materia medica for the Pharmacy Board of Victoria for 30 years until 1953.

Always a strong supporter of scholarship and research, he was awarded a Fellowship by examination of the Pharmaceutical Society of Victoria in 1932. He became an Honorary Life Member of the Society in 1964. In 1959 he was made an Officer of the Order of the British Empire for his services to pharmacy, medicine and the community.

The first Scholarship recipient to be awarded the Degree of Master of Pharmacy, Grant MacPherson, receiving his degree from Sir Willis Connolly, President of the Victoria Institute of Colleges.

Dr Cyril Tonkin 1925.
To uphold promulgate and perpetuate the founder’s declared wish that the selfless service of Dr. Tonkin rendered in his lifetime to his fellows should be an inspiration to the recipients of the Scholarship so that they in their turn may strive to uphold the highest professional standards in their services to humanity.

*Cyril Tonkin Scholarship Trust Deed*
Snapshots of the lives and careers of Cyril Tonkin Scholarship recipients

"I was a recipient of the Cyril Tonkin Scholarship and graduated with a Masters in Pharmacy majoring in pharmacy, and currently own two pharmacies in the Melbourne metropolitan area. I am at the moment completing a part time course in DBA (Doctor in Business Administration). Postgraduate studies broadened my horizons and strengthened my personal development. I have learnt to appreciate the importance of aiming for excellence, no matter how old you are!"

Raymond Chan Scholarship recipient 1988-89

"The Cyril Tonkin Scholarship enabled me to complete a Masters degree for which I conducted research on Alzheimer's Disease and Conformational Analysis of Nootropic Agents. This also provided a stepping stone for my PhD degree. I was then fortunate enough to pursue postdoctoral research at the University of Sheffield in the UK. I am now working in the policy development area for the PSA."

Kay Sorimachi Scholarship recipient 1986-87

"The support from the Scholarship helped me to complete my Masters research into cutaneous absorption of hydroquinone and the role of binding on absorption processes. Since completing my Masters I have completed a Doctor of Pharmacy degree at the University of Iowa. Since graduating from the University of Iowa in 1990 I have had a number of appointments and now I am Associate Professor (Clinical) in the Department of Internal Medicine, Division of Hematology, Oncology and BMT in the College of Medicine at the University of Iowa. I am also the Co-Director of the Clinical Trials Support Core for the Holden Comprehensive Cancer Center at the University of Iowa."

Dr. Shane D. Scott Scholarship recipient 1988-89

"The Scholarship provided me with the financial backing to conduct research in my field of interest, pharmacology. My research topic was into the anti-muscarinic activities of antidepressants. This research helped me to approach problems with a disciplined, scheduled attitude. The experience benefited me a lot in my community pharmacy. It helps me to grasp the main points of importance when I read through research papers or CMI. I can also handle any major projects, with confidence! Overall, I believe it was the most rewarding experience in my postgraduate study and would not have been possible without the Scholarship."

James Kwok Scholarship recipient 1978-79

"The Cyril Tonkin Scholarship enabled me to focus on my postgraduate studies without the financial worry which limits so many other students."

"The Cyril Tonkin Scholarship afforded me the opportunity to undertake full time postgraduate training in the Department of Pharmaceutical Biology and Pharmacology. My research focused on the study of novel, ‘allosteric’ mechanisms of drug action at G protein-coupled receptors (GPCRs). This research led to 10 publications from my PhD thesis, followed by an offer to undertake postdoctoral training at the University of Minnesota, USA, prior to my appointment to my current position as Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Pharmacology, University of Melbourne. I am head of my own laboratory with expertise in Molecular Pharmacology and Drug Discovery. I am acknowledged as a world leader in the study of allosteric mechanisms at GPCRs, with invited reviews on the topic having been published in authoritative journals such as Nature Reviews and Pharmacological Reviews. Since my return to Australia in 1999, I have been awarded two consecutive National Health and Medical Research Council grants, a USA National Institutes of Health grant and a Victorian Young Tall Poppy award. The research that I undertook as a Cyril Tonkin scholar has opened many doors for me, and continues to underpin my ongoing research interests in novel drug mechanisms."

Dr. Arthur Christopoulos Scholarship recipient 1991

"The Cyril Tonkin Scholarship played a significant role in my career and personal growth, giving me the opportunity to continue my postgraduate studies at the College. With my Masters degree, I was able to come to the USA to continue my education at Purdue University where I obtained my Doctor of Philosophy degree. Subsequent to my PhD, I went back to school full time to obtain an MBA from Yale University. During my Masters at the College, I was given unrestricted use of the College computer. As a result of this early exposure to computing, I was the first scientist in the world (as far as I am aware) who wrote about the use of artificial intelligence in pharmaceutical formulation development. Three years ago, I founded GF Communications, which created one of the most popular pharmaceutical websites – www.PharmCast.com – in the United States. Despite the downturn of the Internet economy, www.PharmCast.com continues to flourish. Looking back, the Cyril Tonkin Scholarship has given me the opportunity to embark on a career path which I had not dreamed of before!"

Dr Felix Lai Scholarship recipient 1978-80

"Obtaining a Scholarship was of paramount importance at the time. My thesis was based on delivering proteins in subcutaneous implants. After completing my thesis I decided to purchase a retail pharmacy. There are certain disciplines and skills that I learnt during my postgraduate studies that I will always have no matter which field I move into. I highly recommend the Scholarship to anybody who wants to take on further studies."

Steve Kastrinakis Scholarship recipient 1990-91
“Personally the most beneficial aspect has been the satisfaction gained in assisting students, trainees, technicians and new (and old) graduates.”

“Overall, I believe it was the most rewarding experience in my postgraduate study and would not have been possible without the Scholarship.”

“I went back to study in 1984 after having two children. I was the first mature age Masters student at the College. I researched post market drug surveillance – from which I developed an interest in drug safety and went on to work in the pharmaceutical industry. After seven years with Amgen Australia I was transferred to Amgen Inc in California where I was responsible for clinical safety of their international clinical trials – my title was Project Manager International Clinical Safety Department. I had been working in pharmacy part time and the Scholarship allowed me to focus full time on my research.”

Barbara Thompson
Scholarship recipient 1984-85

“During 1991-1995, my postgraduate research explored the mechanisms of altered drug pharmacokinetics in liver disease under the supervision of Dr Denis Morgan, then Reader in the Department of Pharmacoeconomics. A significant finding to come from this work was that in liver cirrhosis, oxidative drug metabolism was shown to be more sensitive to oxygen supply, and that oxygen supplementation restored drug clearance to normal in cirrhotic animals. I was extremely fortunate to have attracted funding from the Cyril Tonkin Scholarship, and am grateful to have received the opportunity to pursue a career path that otherwise would not have been possible for me. The qualification and experience gained from a doctoral degree course definitely provided a solid platform from which my career was able to take its present course.”

Pascal Hickey
Scholarship recipient 1991-93

“Following a number of years studying computer programming and system design to enable me to understand what computers could do for pharmacy I applied for, and was awarded, a Travelling Fellowship by the Trustees of the Cyril Tonkin Fund. This facilitated a study tour in the USA and Canada in 1978 to examine the current application of computers in the professional and managerial areas of pharmacy practice. This was at a time when stand-alone personal computers were in their infancy and the capital cost in relation to their speed and capacity made them difficult, if not impossible, to cost-justify for most small businesses including community pharmacies.

However, the observations made and the reports prepared for various pharmacy organisations in Australia encouraged me to make the personal financial investment and be one of the initial users in Australia. The practical experience gained gave me the opportunity to influence ongoing software design and to also encourage my colleagues to embrace this new technology. I believe that this was of great practical benefit to all of us by enabling us to reduce our ‘clerical’ time, and devote more time to our professional services.

Personally the most beneficial aspect has been the satisfaction gained in assisting students, trainees, technicians and new (and old) graduates to more effectively utilise these tools in their professional careers. This would not have been possible without the financial involvement of the Tonkin Fund and also of Sigma Co, who volunteered extra funding to make it possible for a greater number of sites to be visited during the tour.”

Graeme Hawkins
Scholarship recipient 1978

“The C. J. Tonkin Scholarship was pivotal to my ability to pursue a Masters degree at the College during which the world renowned pharmaceutical scientist, Takeru Higuchi, visited the college and offered me the possibility of continuing my graduate studies at the University of Kansas as an Interseach Scholar I accepted, and completed my PhD at the University of Kansas in 1980. I believe I am the only female PhD graduate of Prof. Higuchi. After working at BuroughsWellcome and Merck/Interex, I joined the faculty of the University of Michigan in 1983 and have been in academia ever since.

On the science side, David Fleisher and I won the Ebert Prize in 1987 for the best paper in the Journal of Pharmaceutical Sciences and I was elevated to Fellow status in the AAPS in 1981. I also received the Parke-Davis Distinguished Scientist Award in 1994 and have been invited as Visiting Professor at the NIHs in Tokyo and the Universities of Paris and d’Auvergne.

On the service side, I have also been quite active in scientific associations, including Member-At-Large of the AAPS (1994-8), Executive Council of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft fuer Pharmazeutische Verfahrenstechnik (APV) from 1997-2001, and am currently Vice-President of the Controlled Release Society (President in 2004).

To date I have graduated almost 20 PhD students and a new crop is on the way. Current areas of research interest are predicting, and where necessary, improving the oral bioavailability of drugs. I think it is safe to say that I am best known for developing biorelevant dissolution tests (along with my colleague Prof. Christos Reppas at the University of Athens in Greece), but the project that is most satisfying is my cooperation with the World Health Organisation to develop dissolution tests to use as bioequivalence study surrogates in developing countries, where pharmacokinetic studies may be difficult to realise.

I think the strong support I received early in my research career gave me the courage and confidence to tackle new concepts and new environments, including going to the States for graduate school, transferring from industry to academia and (perhaps the greatest hurdle) moving to Europe. This involved learning a new language – and teaching it in – in less than one year.

No doubt that the support that was given to me has also prompted me to give back to Pharmacy whenever I can – be this through service to scientific organisations, taking workshops to developing countries (part of the FIP international program) or giving talks to students in local schools.”

Professor Jennifer Dressman
Scholarship recipient 1976

To see the full quotes from the scholarship recipients, visit www.vcp.monash.edu/alumni/
In 1904, the banana split was invented by Dr. David Strickler, a pharmacist, at Strickler’s Drug Store in Latrobe, Pennsylvania.

Alumni in profile:

**hospital pharmacist**

**Andrew Harding** (1993).

—in profile—

Andrew Harding, who has also had a fascinating international career, but of a very different type. Andrew is a hospital pharmacist who volunteered in a clinic in India and now, through Australian Volunteers International (AVI), is ‘chief pharmacist’ at one of the two hospitals in the Marshall Islands.

“...One reason I chose pharmacy was because of its opportunities to work in different areas and different settings. After completing my traineeship at the Austin, I worked at the STD clinic opposite the old Lincoln School of Health Sciences. I then spent about two years at Peter MacCallum Cancer Institute (having the fun of being there to participate in its relocation without closing its doors!).

I left Peter Mac to do the UK backpacker thing – doing locum work in hospitals interspersed with trips through Eastern Europe, Scandinavia and the UK itself. I did this with my travelling companion Katherine for a couple of years before both returning home via India.

I had planned a long time ago to do some volunteer work in a street clinic in Calcutta. I wanted to do something different and to use my skills to help others. This also gave me the opportunity to learn about medicines for leprosy, TB, malaria, filariasis and other diseases I wouldn’t encounter often.

India is like a second home to me. My mother is Indian and I have many close relatives in India. I had visited India many times in my youth and love its warmth, hospitality, variety and clash of cultures!

Early during my undergraduate course I read an article about a doctor setting up a street clinic in Calcutta to help patients who couldn’t afford care (most of India). He had started seeing just a few patients, literally on the street, and now it has grown into four busy clinics. I wanted to be able to help out.

Initially this was only going to be for a few weeks, but ended up being for six months – the full length of my visa.

Kath returned home and I stayed to work at the clinic, which focused primarily on children. Mothers and their children would travel sometimes for many hours overnight to come and see the eight local paediatricians at the clinic. They would patiently queue up with the other 100+ patients waiting to be seen for things such as malaria, TB, burns, filariasis, scabies and the never ending gastro-intestinal problems. Once they took their turn with the doctor in the open-air clinic, they would then wait for their medication. The clinic aimed to have a qualified pharmacist to oversee the dispensing and the final check. This position was always filled by a volunteer pharmacist. Staff, or other volunteers, would draw pictures on preprinted envelopes to show how many tablets to take and the time of day to take them. The system worked quite smoothly.

After returning from India, I accepted a job at Monash Medical Centre where I worked for four years. I was involved in setting up the acute medical unit for the aged and also in edging a pharmacist in the door of the...
Emergency Department (ED). ED is an area of clinical pharmacy I would like to see grow. There is such a great role and potential for pharmacists in ED, particularly with early interventions and picking up adverse drug reactions.

Somewhere in this time Kath and I got married! (November 1998)

Kath was always keen to volunteer somewhere, but this time there were two of us. We applied to AVI requesting a place where an occupational therapist and a pharmacist were both required. We were offered positions in the Marshall Islands. In Katherine’s case there hadn’t been an OT or physio for the hospital for many years. In the pharmacy, the pharmacist had accepted the job of hospital administrator and the pharmacy services had since declined.

The Marshalls are a group of 29 low-lying atolls (and about 1,200 islands), scattered over 2 million square kilometres of ocean, just north of the equator near the date line. Bikini Atoll is one of the atolls in this group – infamous for the US nuclear testing in the 1950s. Many islands were destroyed in the process and others are uninhabitable even today. People still suffer some after-effects from those shameful days.

There are two hospitals in the Marshall Islands – a small one on the crowded island of Ebeeye, and the main one on Majuro which has half the country’s population of 60,000. There are no retail pharmacies, so everybody uses Majuro Hospital for their medications.

The pharmacy has one trained pharmacist (myself) and four pharmacy technicians. Three of the four technicians have done a basic one year health assistant course and the other has no medical training. The five of us run a pharmacy department for inpatients and outpatients seeing about 200 outpatients a day and dispensing over 500 items during a nine-hour working day.

On a small island in the middle of the Pacific, importing stock and the logistics of transportation is a major challenge. When I arrived about 25% of items were ‘out of stock’. Sourcing pharmaceuticals was my first task and then I needed to assess consumption. We have now settled on ordering once every quarter and getting most sent in a 20-foot long shipping container from Honolulu.

The next challenge was to introduce some weekly technician training. I ran a course for one hour a week for a year for the technicians as none of them had had any direct pharmacy training. This covered topics as simple as ‘what is a drug’, ‘different drug forms’, ‘script abbreviations’, etc.

Our most recent project has been to introduce a computer system to the pharmacy. I ‘obtained’ an old PC that the staff could just play on, delete things, install new programs, change screen size etc. to become comfortable with the computer. They then all attended a basic computer training course. In August we received FRED (a popular dispensing program) and have been using and learning about that system since.

However, it’s not all work. Kath and I have had opportunities to travel to the outer islands and experience traditional Marshallese lifestyle. Living on an atoll that is 50 kilometres long and at the most 100 metres wide provides an ideal environment for scuba diving. The diving is sensational! How will we ever return to a normal existence in Melbourne again?”
Alumni cricket match

‘When I first heard that there was going to be a cricket match between Victorian and NSW pharmacists I thought, ‘yes I want to be part of that’. On discovering that the match was going to be played in Bowral at the Sir Donald Bradman Oval, I was so excited that I literally fell off my chair. My passion for cricket led me to travel to the West Indies in 1999, so I thought to myself – I must make the Victorian side.

Sarah Vincent (Foundation Development Manager at the College) did her best to assemble a full side but it seemed as though we were going to be a few players short. Another factor which made it difficult for the Victorian team was that we only had one get-together prior to the match and not all members of the team were able to attend (including myself). In fact I met all the team members for the first time on the Saturday night before the game at the Pharmacy Alumni Dinner.

Two students made an eleventh hour journey by car that day just so that we would have enough players to field a team. You could hardly say we had the ideal preparation. In contrast the NSW side had played a number of games as a team already. On game day the weather did not smile on us. It was overcast with light rain falling.

A wise man once said, ‘if you win the toss, nine times out of ten you bat, the other time you think about bowling then you bat.’ As fate would have it Victoria lost the toss and NSW batted.

Shaun White and Paul Wickham opened the bowling for Victoria and did a great job. They restricted NSW to 0-50 off 18 overs. The problem was we did not get any crucial early wickets. Ted Perifanos came on and picked up two quick wickets and after 25 overs NSW was 2-71. The second 25 overs were both good and bad. Although we picked up seven wickets, NSW made 108 runs to finish with a total of 9-178. The NSW opening batsman produced a match winning innings of 75 not out. As I did not have an intimate knowledge of the team’s capabilities, I used nine bowlers so each player could feel as if they made a contribution.

Unfortunately for Victoria the rain had made the wicket soft, and because the wicket was not rolled between innings, the divots on the pitch made batting extremely difficult. I don’t offer this as an excuse but as a matter of FACT. Victoria was in trouble at 2-10 before Emmanuel Chessari (46) and Geoff Crisp (29) steadied the ship. A middle order collapse, which included three ducks, saw Victoria slip to 7-88 before Paul Wickham came to the crease. He belted 36 at better than a run a ball to give Victoria the faintest glimmer of hope. Unfortunately, the run rate was too great and in the end we were all out for 149.

NSW completed a deserved victory. The fact that NSW used their best five bowlers for ten overs each – and given Victoria’s limited preparation – I believe we have plenty of room for improvement. Next year I hope Victoria will be better prepared in our ruthless pursuit for victory.’

For information about joining next year’s team (the dinner and match all being held in Melbourne in 2003) contact Sarah Vincent on tel: 61 3 9903 9507.

Pharmacists vs Students football match

March 2003, Optus Oval, Parkville

The Monash Parkville Sports Association will present next year the first toughly fought battle between pharmacists (older and wiser) and students (younger and fitter). The game will be played at Optus Oval, beginning at 12noon on a Sunday in March to be announced. The day includes a spectator lunch with guest speakers, a jumper presentation to players prior to the game, sponsor expo stalls, a post-match presentation and drinks plus spectator events including the first goal kicked, a raffle and more.

Pharmacists need to be registered in Victoria before 28 February 2003 to be eligible to play. Students must be either enrolled at the College or be undertaking their traineeship in 2003.

The chief organiser is fourth year student Robert Sztar (Young Pharmacists Committee). Interested players should register with Karen Reid at the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (Victorian Branch) office on tel: 61 3 9903 9510 or email karenr@pvavic.com.au
Reunions galore!
The alumni program continues to thrive nationally and around the globe. Two big reunions were held in November, one for graduates from 1970-72 and the other for those who began their studies at the College 50 years ago – in 1952. The second international alumni reception was held in September, this time in London.

The Second International Alumni Reception, London 2002
College graduates from around the world joined Professor Colin Chapman and his wife Margaret, both graduates from 1970, at a recent alumni event in London.

The venue was the trendy nightspot the Pharmacy Restaurant and Bar, so called because it is styled by well-known artist Damien Hirst somewhat like a space-age pharmacy. In attendance were staff from the College, UK based graduates working in community and hospital pharmacies, academia and industry, plus representatives from the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain.

“The alumni dinner at the Pharmacy Restaurant in Notting Hill Gate was a great success,” said Professor Chapman. “The meal and location were superb – I now know what to do with all the old beakers in the basement at the College!”

Many thanks to the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain for helping to advertise the event through their Pharmaceutical Journal and on their website.

The first international gathering of graduates was in Singapore in 2001, to coincide with the FIP Congress. A cocktail party was held for alumni, representatives from the international pharmacy industry based in Singapore and staff from the Pharmacy Department of the National University of Singapore with which the College has a vigorous student exchange program. Council members from the Pharmaceutical Societies of Singapore, Malaysia and Australia also attended.

The 1970-72 reunion dinner
The College organised a huge reunion for its 1970, 1971 and 1972 alumni on Saturday 23 November 2002. Hosts for the night were Professor Colin and Mrs Margaret Chapman, who both graduated in 1970. Special guest speaker was Professor Geoffrey Vaughan who was Lecturer, Senior Lecturer and Head of the School of Pharmaceutical Chemistry from 1961 to 1979 and Dean of the College from 1979 to 1987.

The night included a sumptuous dinner and a tour of the new facilities at the College.

For photos and more news from both the 1970-72 and 1952 reunions, check the next issue of the alumni newsletter, due out in May 2003.

To stay informed of the College’s alumni events and activities, visit www.vcp.monash.edu.au/alumni

The Golden Jubilee 50th anniversary reunion
An afternoon tea was held at the College on 6 November 2002 to honour all those graduates who began their studies at the College in 1952.

More than 70 alumni from around Australia attended the event, which was hosted by Mr Alistair Lloyd AO (1955).
Online initiative to improve quality prescribing

The Health Insurance Commission has joined forces with the Victorian College of Pharmacy, Monash University to develop an online training program to improve quality prescribing.

The Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) Online program (which is part of the PharmaCE website) is a national initiative for doctors and pharmacists and is designed to achieve greater compliance with the requirements of the PBS regulations.

This initiative is in response to routine audits of pharmacy claims by the Health Insurance Commission (HIC). They revealed an increase in the number of patients who stockpiled prescribed medications and anomalies in the use of the Safety Net card that allows families to receive prescribed benefit medications at a discounted rate.

“Last year the cost to the taxpayer of providing medicines on the PBS exceeded $4.3 billion,” said Paul Loughran, Director of the College’s Centre for Continuing Education. “We believe that this innovation in online education will lead to enhanced quality use of medicines and cost savings to the PBS.

“The PBS works because of the commitment by doctors and pharmacists. However, the regular introduction of amendments to the PBS makes it hard for them to keep pace with these changes,” said Paul. “The online approach offers doctors and pharmacists immediate access to information on ways to make correct supply of pharmaceutical benefit medications.”

Last year more than 169 million pharmaceutical benefit items were prescribed and dispensed. According to the HIC, some 66% of these medications were prescribed to concession card holders such as pensioners and social security recipients.

With over 31,000 doctors and 5,700 pharmacies, providing opportunity to access information and educational initiatives to health professionals is a challenge. The PharmaCE website aims to overcome these barriers, especially for those health professionals who service regional and remote communities.

Since the launch of the PharmaCE website last year, over 200,000 health professionals have ‘logged on’ to access the range of educational programs in drug therapy, oral health and methadone training.

The PBS Online program will be launched and available to health professionals in November 2002.

For more information visit the PharmaCE website at www.pharmace.vic.edu.au
Update Form

Please help to keep us — and your fellow alumni — up to date with your latest news. Fill in the update form, tear it off and send it to:
Alumni Newsletter
Victorian College of Pharmacy
Monash University (Parkville Campus)
381 Royal Parade
Parkville Vic 3052 Australia
or fax to: 61 3 9903 9581 (confidential fax).

Name

Home address

Postcode

Country

Business address

Postcode

Country

Telephone (H/B)

Email (H/B)

Fax (H/B)

Graduation Year

News about yourself

Have you received any postgraduate or additional professional qualifications since graduating?

Would you like further information on ...

☐ Becoming involved in the Practical Experiences Program?

☐ The 2003 alumni cricket challenge match and dinner?

☐ Postgraduate study at the College such as the MBA or Master of Wound Care?

☐ The 2003 Pharmacy Practice Symposium?

☐ Making a bequest to the Victorian College of Pharmacy in your will?
The College alumni program only has official graduation records dating back to 1970. We can track down pharmacists through the Pharmacy Board of Victoria Register, which is a public record document. But the Register only helps us find pharmacists who are still registered in Victoria, and haven’t retired or moved interstate or overseas. It doesn’t help us contact graduates who are working in industry, research or other areas.

To help us locate all our alumni, keep them informed about the College and enable us to invite them to local, interstate and international reunions – we need your help!

Send us a photocopy of your graduation record and you will go into the draw to win this great prize kindly donated by the Hotel Laureate.

Quality Hotel Laureate
Located two doors from the College, the Hotel was originally built in 1961 as the Motel ParkRoyal. It has been completely renovated to 4.5 star standard. The 96 hotel rooms/suites/apartments, lobby, restaurant and bar have been thoroughly refurbished with al fresco eating areas, café and bar, and meeting rooms added, creating a contemporary hotel that is sophisticated and modern.

Please note that the Hotel Laureate’s special corporate rates apply for all staff and graduates of the College.

For more information about the Hotel Laureate at 441 Royal Parade Parkville, tel: 61 3 9380 9222, or visit www.hotellaureate.com

Alumni news

Let us know your news! Fill in the update form and keep us informed about your personal and career achievements.