

Real World

The BSPS mentorship program gives students a new perspective.

Jennifer Bairam, a junior in the Bachelor of Science in Pharmaceutical Sciences (BSPS) program, was eager to get real-world exposure to potential career paths in the pharmaceutical industry. The BSPS mentorship program gave her the opportunity she wanted. It pairs students with alumni who are well established in their fields, says Erin Edmonds, BSPS experiential education coordinator.

Bairam was matched with Jeff Cehelsky '87, vice president of clinical operations at Alnylam Pharmaceuticals in Cambridge, Mass. "I couldn't ask for a better mentor," Bairam says. "We talk about the industry and his work, regulations for clinical trials or drugs that are in production."

Mentors commit to being in contact with their students at least once a month, and many do much more. Bairam shadowed Cehelsky at Alynlym's headquarters during winter break. "It opened my mind and definitely has me thinking a little differently about my career," she says.

Student demand outpaces the current number of 17 mentors; Edmonds ultimately hopes to recruit 50. As she says, “The mentors have been excited to participate because they can see the impact on students in real time.”

Jennifer Bairam values her experience with the BSPS mentorship program.

© **EVENTS**
CALENDAR

Sunday, June 4
Ocean State Tour de Cure

Wednesday, June 7
APhA Medication Therapy
Management Training

Friday, July 28
2017 SURF Conference
(pictured)

**Monday–Wednesday,
July 31–August 2
5th Annual Transporters
Workshop**

Stay connected:



Times Vary • URI Pharmacy Building, Kingston, RI
Choose one of five scenic routes to benefit the American Diabetes Association.

8 a.m.–5 p.m • URI Pharmacy Building, Kingston, RI
APhA's certification training prepares pharmacists to deliver MTM services in a variety of practice settings.

9 a.m.–noon • URI Pharmacy Building, Kingston, RI
Undergraduates in the biomedical, behavioral, environmental, and life science fields present their summer research findings.

8 a.m.–5 p.m. • URI Pharmacy Building, Kingston, RI
The three-day course will focus on Transporters in Drug Discovery and Development: Driving Knowledge from Laboratory to Label.

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THE
UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND
College of Pharmacy News

Spring 2017 | uri.edu/pharmacy-newsletter

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Forward Thinking

The future begins now.



We often talk about the future of health care. At the College of Pharmacy, we believe that a strong future depends on a foundation of excellence, one

built daily through leadership in education,
research, and community engagement.

In this issue of our newsletter, you will see evidence of this leadership in the work being done by the Institute for Integrated Health and Innovation to foster research collaborations across the University; in the ongoing commitment of our alumni to support our students through professional mentorships; and in the achievements of students such as Iman Abera '17, about to begin her postgraduate training. (For the past five years, the College has beat the national average in residency matching.) We are proud of innovators like Dea Belazi '01, who are leading the way to the future of pharmacy, and Jay R. Simon '68, whose own belief in a strong educational foundation inspired him to help create the same for generations to come.

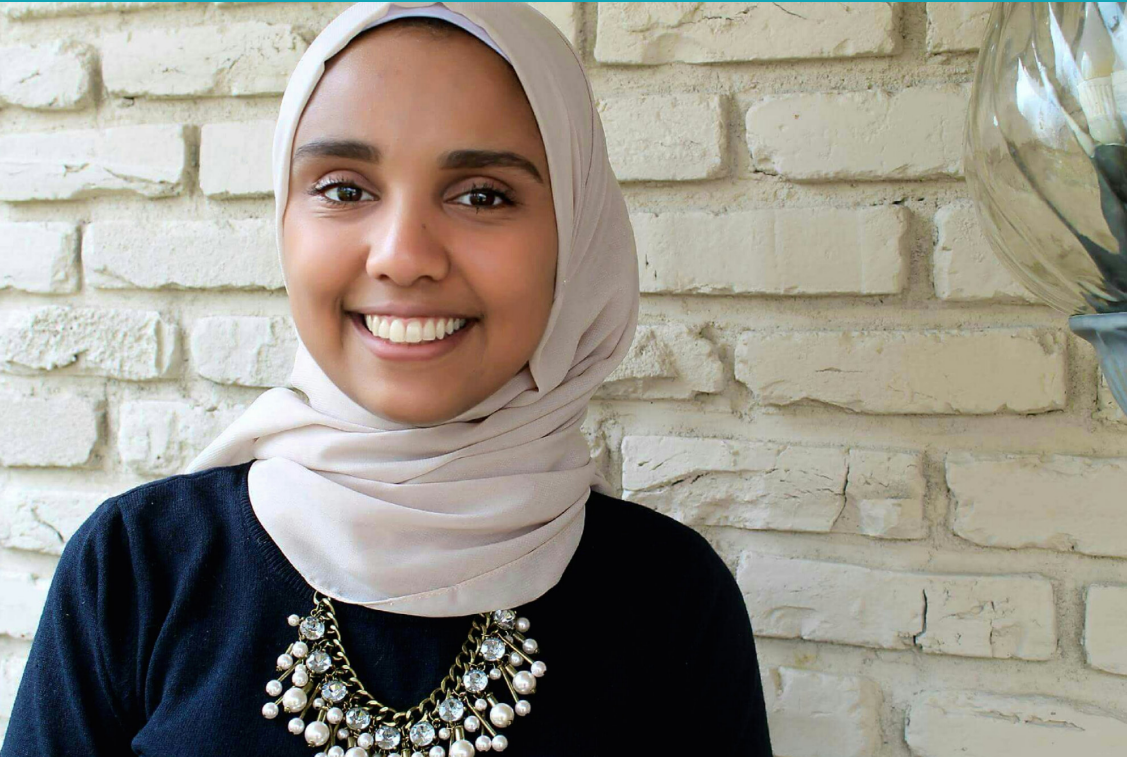
As our graduating seniors begin their next chapter, we look forward to their futures and celebrate their accomplishments. They are the greatest testimony to the culture of excellence our alumni have established.

Congratulations, Class of 2017.

– E. Paul Larrat, Dean



STUDENTS



Positive Outlook

For Iman Aberra '17, the future looks bright.

“With one project, you can impact a whole hospital,” says Iman Aberra '17, explaining what inspires her most about hospital administration and medication safety. “If you can look at system errors and holes and find ways to prevent them from happening, you can make a big difference in the care of patients.”

After graduation, Aberra will begin a residency in general pharmacy practice in the highly regarded

program at Froedtert and the Medical College of Wisconsin, where she hopes to gain experience through a range of rotations. “I fell in love with how involved and visible pharmacists are at Froedtert,” she says. “I felt the residency would give me the opportunity to talk in depth with patients and preceptors.”

As a student who was initially drawn to URI in part because its “not too big or too small” size

meant having greater access to faculty, Aberra also hopes to teach one day. “I’d like to work with students as a preceptor,” she says. Her first piece of wisdom: “Always be positive.”

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MATCH DAY: In March, URI College of Pharmacy had a 75.6% success rate for postgraduate year-one matches, higher than the national 67.2% average.

RESEARCH

Combined Forces

Big ideas in health are strengthened by interdisciplinary collaborations.

Theatre students simulating a hospital room environment for nursing students. A university-based retirement community that promotes aging in place. A smart drug therapies research cluster formed by faculty in pharmaceutical and biomedical science, biology, physics, and chemical engineering.

These were some of the projects presented at the Big Ideas in Health forum in April, hosted by the Institute for Integrated Health and Innovation to promote interdisciplinary collaborations across the University.

“The idea is to start conversation,” says Professor of Biomedical and Pharmaceutical Sciences Bongsup Cho, who worked with Professor of Psychology David Faust to help organize the event. Cho, along with fellow College of Pharmacy faculty Xinyuan Chen, Deyu Li, and Jie Shen, is among the researchers in the smart drug therapies cluster, which brings its cross-disciplinary members together for regular brainstorming and information-sharing discussions on themes such as mechanism-based drug delivery systems to address non-adherence and drug release systems that respond to signals such as light and temperature. “We don’t have a medical school, but we have very impressive biomedical and engineering talent at URI,” Cho says. “Nationally, we are seeing these types of collaborations make a real difference in health research. We each have our own expertise, but we have to work together to see the bigger outcome.”

He adds, “This is only the beginning.”



ALUMNI

Game Changer | Dea Belazi, Pharm.D. '01 is always looking forward.

“I’m a trends person,” says Dea Belazi, Pharm.D. '01, founder and CEO of Pennsylvania-based pharmacy benefits management company AscellaHealth. “I like to build instead of maintain. I’ve always been fortunate to have opportunities to create new niches and technologies that can make an impact, save money, and help the industry evolve.” In his keynote address at this year’s Seminar by the Sea in March, Belazi spoke about specialty pharmacy, just one area where he sees growing opportunities for pharmacists. He shares some of his thoughts:

On the future of pharmacy: There’s a glaring opportunity for community pharmacy to become more of a health center—vaccines, blood pressure, wearables. It will be more than filling a prescription; it will be helping to fill that primary care role.

On specialty pharmacy: It’s become bigger

and more impactful. If you pretend it isn’t happening, you’ll be a dinosaur left behind. If you don’t have the knowledge or experience, access it through reading, continuing education, and seminars to get up to speed.

On wearables: As people adopt them—for example, maybe it’s an insulin pump that talks to your watch and phone to manage insulin levels and communicate with your doctor—these technologies have the possibility to make an impact on adherence in real time.

Advice to young alums: Pharmacy is a great profession for many reasons, but it gives you the chance to really learn and understand how the health system works. Get involved in the bigger picture so that you can be innovators.

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Dea Belazi (far left) on a campus visit as one of the 2013 Distinguished Achievement Awards honorees.



GIVING



Giving the Dream

After Jay R. Simon '68 retired, the good life took on greater meaning.

When Jay R. Simon '68 retired as professor emeritus of neurobiology at Indiana University School of Medicine a few years ago, he reflected on his 35-year career in research and teaching. “I started thinking about how much I owed to URI,” he says. “My education there laid the foundation for the rest of my life.”

The realization inspired Simon, a New Jersey native, to create an endowed scholarship for out-of-state, third-year Pharm.D. students as a way to show his gratitude to the College where he got his start. (“I remember when I got accepted, my father held up a sign that said, ‘U-R-In!’” he recalls.) “I worked very hard, but I don’t think I would have accomplished all that I have without the strong basics I got at URI. I think anyone who feels that way should support the University,” says Simon. He adds, “You always hear that it feels so good to give. It turns out, it really does.”

Instant Impact:

Gifts to the **Annual Fund: College of Pharmacy** make a direct impact on our students by providing funds to attend conferences, pursue educational and professional opportunities, and more. Please help us reach our goal of \$100,000 before the fiscal year ends on **June 30**.

Giving is easy: Visit urifoundation.org or contact Myrna Bizer at mbizer@uri.edu or 401.874.9017.

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