Dr. Rommie Amaro kicks off Chu lectureship

Dr. Rommie Amaro

ISU College of Pharmacy recently hosted Dr. Rommie Amaro as the inaugural lecturer under the sponsorship of the Dr. David Chu Annual Lectureship Fund.

Dr. Amaro’s research has been described as “innovative” and “avante garde.” She was awarded the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists & Engineers by President Obama in 2011. Amaro is an assistant professor at the University of California, San Diego.

“Enabling Chemical Discovery through the Lens of a Computational Microscope” was the title of her lecture. Dr. Amaro and her colleagues use technology and complex algorithms to look into biomolecules at the atomic level. “We can use these computers and algorithms as a computational microscope to gain insight beyond which is currently accessible with traditional experimental techniques,” she said.

Dr. Amaro discussed the fact that super computers have become so powerful that it is becoming easier to answer complex questions at the atomic level. According to Dr. Amaro, they are “enabling new frameworks for drug discovery.”

These new frameworks use a combination of math, chemistry, physics and computer software to enhance early stage drug discovery. Traditional experimental methodologies are very expensive and would require testing 2000 to 5000 drug compounds in a lab. The goal of Dr. Amaro’s research is to pipeline the process and reduce the need for expensive biological experiments significantly.

This can be done through computer aided modeling and virtual screening. Traditionally, X-ray crystallography has been used to determine the atomic and molecular structure of a receptor. However, these X-rays are static. Computer simulations take into account that these structures are constantly moving. Instead of relying on one static picture, simulation programs make it possible to virtually visualize all configurations of the receptor and its binding sites.

Virtual screening allows these binding sites to be virtually tested with compounds. Predictions can be made to indicate which compounds that are the most likely to fit into the binding sites and lead to a therapeutic agent. This can greatly reduce the cost of testing compounds in the wet lab. Instead of testing thousands of compounds in the lab, Dr. Amaro said sometimes only a dozen compounds with top predicted scores are needed to be tested.

“As a pharmacy student, I found the details of Dr. Amaro’s research fascinating, and I look forward to following her work in the future,” said Dawn Hughes, a first year pharmacy student.

Much of Dr. Amaro’s research has been done in trypanosomiasis, a parasitic disease common in Africa. She also studies cancer, chlamydia, the bubonic plague and influenza.

“The Dr. Chu lectureship fund has made it possible to enhance our research presence at the ISU College of Pharmacy,” said ISU College of Pharmacy Dean Paul Cady, “Dr. Amaro’s lecture was just the first in what we plan to become a premier lectureship for pharmaceutical scientists and to motivate our students in the area of biomedical research. We are honored that Dr. Amaro was our inaugural speaker and hope she will return to ISU in the future. We also thank Dr. David Chu for making it possible to bring in such gifted researchers.”

Dr. Amaro’s lecture took place Tuesday Jan. 29 at 10 a.m. It was attended by visitors to the ISU Health Science Center in Meridian. It was broadcast via two-way video transmission to guests at the ISU campus in Pocatello.
Talley and Xu to Organize Symposiums

Staying true to ISU College of Pharmacy’s reputation for being one of the best in the nation, Drs. Todd Talley and Dong Xu are shining brightly by organizing symposiums for the 94th annual American Associate for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Pacific Division meeting.

The meeting, to be held June 16 – 19, 2013, at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, will host a variety of lectures all focusing on the AAAS mission of not only furthering the work of scientists and their students but also increasing public understanding and appreciation of science.

The topics of the symposia range from clinical to research, and touch on many subjects in-between. Among those spearheaded by Talley and Xu are:

- Structural Insights for the Development of New Therapeutics (Talley & Xu.)
- Medicinal Chemistry and Biological Insights for the Treatment of Cancer (Talley.)
- Accelerating Biomedical Discovery with Advanced Molecular Simulation and Computational Biology (Xu.)
- Current Progress in Infectious Disease Research and Therapeutic Interventions (Xu.)

According to the meeting website, all scientists, as well as graduate and undergraduate students, are invited to present their research results at the meeting, either orally or as posters.

For more information about the meeting, visit the website at: http://associations.sou.edu/aaaspd/

College of Pharmacy involved in Holiday Giving

Spreading holiday cheer around Idaho, both the Meridian and Pocatello campuses worked hard to create a brighter Christmas for those less fortunate.

During their annual food-drive, Meridian students collected 1,081 pounds of canned and nonperishable food for the Boise location of the Idaho Foodbank, one of the college’s largest collections to date.

“When everyone gives a little, the combined outcome is overwhelming,” said Holiday Committee Chair Gabriel Bargen.

Pocatello students collected 1100 items of canned and nonperishable food for the Pocatello location of the Idaho Foodbank.

“I have really enjoyed being able to give back to the community as a student,” said Sara Baker, P3, who organized the Pocatello food-drive.

Along with the Foodbank, both campuses worked to raise money to help needy families in their areas.

Meridian students worked with Toys for Tots and also held a silent raffle that raised over $2,100 for four Treasure Valley families through the Salvation Army’s Adopt-A-Family program and community referrals.

Pocatello student, James Lufkin, P1 Class President, organized a pharmacy apparel sale that raised over $240 for a local needy family.
Continuing Ed Seminar

The Idaho State University College of Pharmacy is pleased to offer our annual continuing pharmacy education (CE) program, designed to update your therapeutic knowledge base and rejuvenate your pharmacy practice skills. This one day seminar will provide you with current information and a fresh perspective on a variety of topics.

Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians are invited to attend this seven hour program which includes one hour of pharmacy law. Each presentation is ACPE accredited. Additionally, the hour of pharmacy law is separately approved by the Idaho State Board of Pharmacy and meets the continuing education requirements for pharmacist licensure in Idaho. Morning refreshments, a catered lunch, and an afternoon snack will be provided. If you have questions regarding this continuing education program, please call the Office of Continuing Pharmacy Education at 208.282.2586.

Program Dates

Meridian - March 10th
Pocatello - March 17th
Coeur d’Alene - April 14th

Spaghetti Feed Sponsors 9 Year Old Jaxon

Mark your calendar! Friday, February 22nd celebrates the 20th annual Spaghetti Feed, Raffle & Auction sponsored by the students from Idaho State University College of Pharmacy.

Listed as number 18 in the Idaho State Journal’s “Things To Do in Pocatello,” the Spaghetti Feed, Raffle & Auction is one event you don’t want to miss.

Serving up delicious helpings of homemade spaghetti, students, faculty and staff make the night one to remember. With a portion of the proceeds from the event being donated to The Make-A-Wish Foundation to help fund the wish of a local child the event offers nourishment for your body as well as your mind.

This year our sponsored child is Jaxon, a 9-year-old boy from Pocatello that loves to swim. The youngest of four children, he suffers from Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy. Jaxon’s wish is to travel to Hawaii in the spring.

We welcome you to bring your family and enjoy great food, an exciting raffle, and fun activities for children. Tickets are $5 per person or $20 per family and available in advance or at the door.

Help us send Jaxon and his family to Hawaii by joining us, Friday, February 22 at 6 p.m. in the Idaho State University Student Union Ballroom.

After granting Jaxon’s wish, the remainder of the proceeds from the event will help fund College of Pharmacy students’ visits to rural communities to hold health screenings and administer flu shots.

It’s not too late to help sponsor our event with a monetary donation or by donating items for the silent and live auctions.

For advanced tickets or more information contact Julie with the ISU College of Pharmacy at 282-3393 or julie@pharmacy.isu.edu.
Pharmacist Survey

The College of Pharmacy at ISU-Meridian is working with the Idaho Alzheimer’s Planning Group (IAPG) to develop a state plan to help Gem State Residents better understand Alzheimer’s Disease, and get the help needed to care for these patients. The 2012 Idaho Legislature recognized the importance of this through support of Concurrent resolution 112. The first step of the IAPG was to conduct an Idaho Alzheimer’s needs assessment in collaboration with the BSU Center for the Study of Aging. A consistent message from all participants representing all regions of the state was the need for information about available services. In response, Call 2-1-1 Idaho Care line has incorporated referrals for Alzheimer’s. Few Idaho residents know about this resource.

Pharmacists have frequent contact with the community and are respected for their knowledge. We are now surveying pharmacists to better understand opinions about the pharmacist role in providing information on Alzheimer’s resources. Please help us by taking the short survey at the following address.

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Z9Y8TDV

Take Time to Join Us:
College of Pharmacy & ISU Events

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<td>alumni get-together in Sacramento</td>
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| ISU Continuing Pharmacy Education Seminar          | March 10 - Meridian  
|                                                   | March 17 - Pocatello  
|                                                   | April 14th - Coeur d’Alene  |
| 20th Annual Spaghetti Feed Raffle & Auction        | February 22nd    |
| Spring Break                                      | March 25th - 29th |

For information on any of these events contact Julie Hillebrant at 208-282-3393 or julie@pharmacy.isu.edu