





colleagues from Arts and Sciences. Our family also includes our pharmacy learners. At present, we have three classes enrolled and with the arrival of the fourth class in 2014 we will have achieved our capacity of approximately 300 learners enrolled across the four years of the program. Our founding classes of learners are unique in that they enrolled in an evolving program and have contributed profoundly to its evolution; they are entrepreneurs and trailblazers!

Within this issue you will learn about our learners and their accomplishments and

Greetings from Western New England University College of Pharmacy! I am excited to share with you some of the great things taking place within the College of Pharmacy in this inaugural issue of *The Educator*.

Allow me to start with a little bit of history to provide some context regarding how far we've come. Our founding class of 75 learners, the Class of 2015, enrolled in the College of Pharmacy in the fall of 2011. The planning for that occurred during the preceding several foundational years, when we had our founding six administrators, eight faculty, and four dedicated staff and were in three campus locations as our new facility, the Center for the Sciences and Pharmacy, was under construction. How long ago that seems!

Today, the College of Pharmacy family has grown to 45 committed faculty, staff, and administrators and is located in the Center for the Sciences and Pharmacy (CSP) with our

Ewan T. Robinson



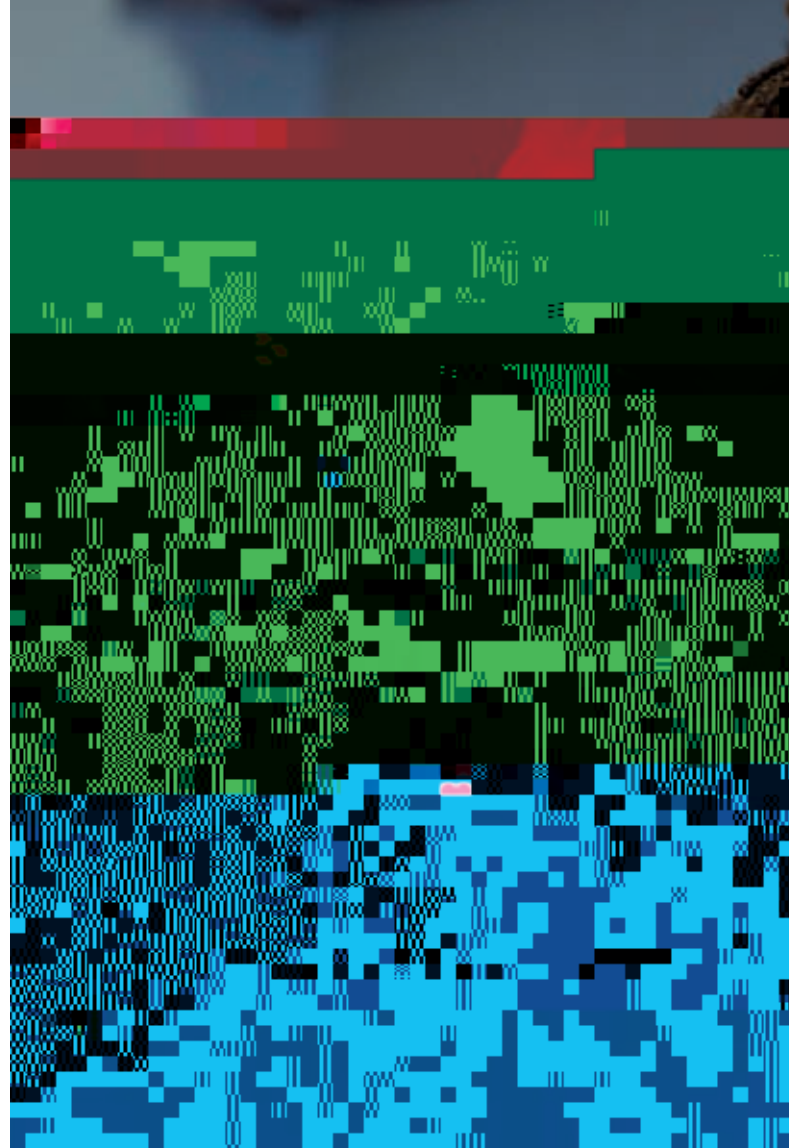
# The White Coat Ceremony of The College of Pharmacy

***“The White Coat Ceremony signifies the entrance of our learners into the Doctor of Pharmacy program,”*** says Joshua Spooner, assistant dean for student affairs and associate professor of pharmacy practice. “Over the course of four years, they will not only transition from dependent learners to independent practitioners, they will also develop the professional traits necessary to enter the profession with altruism, duty, and compassion. The White Coat Ceremony serves as the first step in the College of Pharmacy’s efforts to promote professionalism.”

Welcoming the Class of 2017, keynote speaker Ms. Margaret Dempsey Clapp, former longtime Chief Pharmacy Officer, Massachusetts General Hospital, told the 76 first-year learners, “Tonight you take on your symbolic mantle or stole—that white coat sets you apart from all others. You accept as your mission the care of your patient. You join a long lineage of apothecaries dating back to 2,600 B.C.”

Ms. Clapp noted that White Coat Ceremonies did not exist when she went to pharmacy school. However, establishing such traditions today is an important part of the evolution of the College of Pharmacy, which welcomed its first class in the fall of 2011.

Looking back at her own White Coat Ceremony, Ogadi Egbuonu, Class of 2015, recalls, “Walking on stage on that important day represented a pivotal step in my educational career. Not only did I feel proud to be a student in the College of Pharmacy, but also privileged to be part of the inaugural class.”



Ms. Margaret Dempsey Clapp  
Former Chief Pharmacy Officer,  
Massachusetts General Hospital

## Learner Spotlight: Erica Wegrzyn, Class of 2015

***“Western New England definitely cares about you—they see you as a student, not as a number,”*** says Erica Wegrzyn, Class of 2015.

A member of the inaugural class of the College of Pharmacy, Erica Wegrzyn served as its first class president and is currently a peer advisor. She double majored in Biochemistry and Music at Ithaca College, but has now found her true passion in the field of pharmacy.

She and her class members are the trailblazers, who, in concert with the College's administration and faculty, are on a journey of discovery as they shape a new learning environment together.

“One advantage of being such a small, new academic community is that we have the opportunity to enact change,” she says. “The faculty and staff come to us to make sure we are progressing as we should be. They take our feedback very seriously.”

While she has spent several years working in retail pharmacy, Wegrzyn has an interest in hospital pharmacy, and eventually working in academia. She and her research partner were recently invited to present a poster at the 2013 AACP Annual Meeting in Chicago. She was thrilled to attend its various presentations because “The meeting is at the forefront of academia, where all the groundbreaking work is occurring4hg9(4eg9p4rg1(4eg9p4 g9p4ag9p4lg9(4lg9(4 g9p4tg9p4hg9(4eg9p4 g9p4gg9p4rg



Erica Wegrzyn  
Class of 2015

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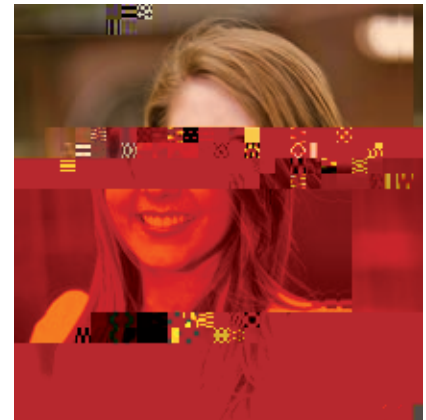
*College of Pharmacy  
learners have been in the*



**The College of Pharmacy awarded 26 learners scholarships totaling \$26,000 for the 2012-2013 academic year.**



**The College of Pharmacy chapter of the American Pharmacists Association - Academy of Student Pharmacists**, under the leadership of faculty member David Baker, a past president of the organization, and the support of Tim Pchelka '16, a past president of the organization, presented the **Make Your Mark** scholarship to the winners of the competition.



**Briana Santaniello '15** was awarded the **Make Your Mark** scholarship for her academic excellence and leadership. She is a member of the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society and the American Pharmacists Association. She plans to continue her education at the University of Illinois at Chicago.



**Linda Mustafa '15** was awarded the **Make Your Mark** scholarship for her academic excellence and leadership. She is a member of the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society and the American Pharmacists Association. She plans to continue her education at the University of Illinois at Chicago.



**Gregory Lewis '15** was awarded the **Make Your Mark** scholarship for his academic excellence and leadership. He is a member of the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society and the American Pharmacists Association. He plans to continue his education at the University of Illinois at Chicago.



**College of Pharmacy learners logged a total of 3,749 service hours (minimum 20 hours per learner) in a variety of University and community settings.**



## **Pharmacy Student Governance Association (PSGA)**

As the overarching student governing group, PSGA oversees and coordinates other learner organizations and serves as a liaison between learners, faculty, and administration. In spring 2013, the PSGA organized the first annual—and very successful—golf tournament. Its newest tradition will be an annual formal dance to which learners, faculty, and administration will be invited.

## **American Pharmacists Association Academy of Student Pharmacists (APhA-ASP)**

The chapter has provided patient care programs, held annual patient counseling competitions and fundraising events, attended local and national meetings, and competed in the annual Patient Counseling Competition. Patient care program events included Operation Heart, Operation Self-Care, and chapter-created respiratory education. The respiratory education event was unique since it was interprofessional by including physician assistant students. They collaborated in educating the community on the proper use of nebulizers, inhalers, and peak flow meters. The Chapter's most exciting accomplishment this year was winning first place in the Best Film category of the APhA-ASP "Make Your Mark" PharmFlix Video Contest.

## **American Society for Health System Pharmacists/Student Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP/SSHP)**

ASHP/SSHP is open to those interested in working in hospitals and health-systems settings. It offers opportunities

## **Learners Roll Up Sleeves at Blood Pressure Awareness Health Fair**

On February 23, 2013, College of Pharmacy learners participated in a health fair at the Macedonia Church of God in Christ, Springfield, MA. This health fair's focus was on high blood pressure awareness and was titled: "Why Blood Pressure Matters." Dr. Izabela Collier, clinical assistant professor of pharmacy practice, ambulatory care, along with College of Pharmacy learners performed blood pressure screenings and consulted attendees on high blood pressure prevention and treatment. The event was a great success for community residents and College of Pharmacy learners.

## **Team Up Pressure Down Health Fair Educates Alumni at Homecoming**

The College of Pharmacy held a Team Up Pressure Down health fair event during Western New England University Homecoming Weekend 2012. The event was made possible due to a grant awarded to the College of Pharmacy from the National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS) Foundation as part of the Million Hearts initiative. The focus of this national initiative is on the coordination and enhancement of cardiovascular disease prevention activities across the public and private sectors. Its goal is to prevent one million heart attacks and strokes over five years.

The fair focused on blood pressure awareness. Thirteen learners from the Class of 2016 used their skills in evaluating the blood pressure of 91 attendees at Homecoming. They used their counseling skills to advise patients on healthy diets, exercise, and medication adherence.

Reaction from the alumni patients was positive as well. "I think this is a great idea that really promotes what the students are learning at the College of Pharmacy," said University alumna Sharon Smith G'99.



## Donor Focus: Norman and Minna Halperin

Norman Halperin was a pharmacist for more than 60 years, working until he was 85. “He loved the connection with people, the interaction with people in being a pharmacist,” says his widow, Minna. “Norm loved to schmooze.”

Norman graduated from UConn at just 20 years old, but had to wait until he was 21 to be licensed in both Connecticut and Massachusetts. He realized his life's dream in 1955, when, with Minna's help, he opened Norman's Pharmacy in Springfield, MA.

The pharmacy quickly became a social hub of the city's East Forest Park neighborhood. “It was really like a general store; it had that atmosphere,” says the couple's son, Robert (Bob) Russman-Halperin.

Selling everything from greeting cards to hard liquor, the pharmacy was an official Post Office site, early Massachusetts' Lottery retailer, and offered an old-time soda fountain and counter that generated more conversation than revenue. “People would buy one cup of coffee and sit and talk for two hours,” laughs Minna.



Minna, the daughter of an immigrant pharmacist, was integral to the drugstore's success. She worked behind the scenes doing bookkeeping and by Norman's side on the busy sales floor, all the while raising their sons, Robert and Douglas.

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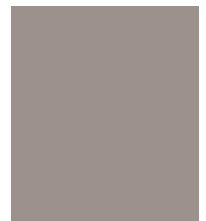
Norman was creative and entrepreneurial in developing innovative ways to serve his patients. He carefully crafted his own advertising and offered home prescription delivery with a car he dubbed The Pill Wagon. On the front end he painted, "Here comes Norman" and on the rear it read, "There goes Norman."

One of his biggest publicity ventures was hiring a Santa Claus to arrive by helicopter in the store's parking lot to drum up holiday business. "They sold everything; people even did their Christmas shopping at the store," says Bob's wife, Wendy Russman-Halperin.

Norman also enjoyed the role of mentor; he supervised dozens of pharmacy students through the years and fundraised for scholarships. His love of people also made him an avid volunteer. He served as treasurer for the Western Massachusetts Pharmacy Association for 40 years and was also treasurer of the local Cub Scouts. Along with Minna, he was a dedicated volunteer for the Shriners Hospitals for Children.

Norman would do anything for Shriners, from filling in for security at the front desk at 6:00 a.m. to smashing up used plaster casts to recycle parts. Today, Minna remains an active Shriners' volunteer.

# Meet the Faculty





Department of Pharmaceutical and Administrative Sciences



Shabnam Sani, PhD, PharmD  
Assistant Professor of Pharmaceutics



Natalia Shcherbakova, PhD  
Assistant Professor of Pharmacoeconomics



Rodney Siwale, PhD  
Assistant Professor of Pharmaceutics



Kathleen Bielecki-Wilken  
Laboratory Manager



Patricia Bernier  
Staff Assistant

Department of Pharmacy Practice



Anthony Zimmermann, PharmD  
Chair and Professor



Kam Capoccia, PharmD, BCPS  
Clinical Associate Professor of Community Care



Izabela Collier, PharmD, CDE  
Clinical Assistant Professor of Ambulatory Care



Courtney Doyle-Campbell, PharmD  
Clinical Assistant Professor of Ambulatory Care



Gregory Herman, PharmD, MBA  
Clinical Assistant Professor of Ambulatory Care



Mark Klee, PharmD, BCPS  
Clinical Assistant Professor of Internal Medicine



Maya Leiva, PharmD  
Clinical Assistant Professor of Acute Care



Melissa Mattison, PharmD  
Clinical Assistant Professor of Community Care



Yoonsun Mo, PharmD, BCPS  
Clinical Assistant Professor of Acute Care



Eric Nemec II, PharmD  
Clinical Assistant Professor of Informatics



Jared Ostroff, PharmD  
Clinical Assistant Professor of Ambulatory Care



Katelyn Parsons, PharmD  
Clinical Assistant Professor of Ambulatory Care



Lucia Rosé, PharmD, BCPS  
Clinical Assistant Professor of Infectious Disease



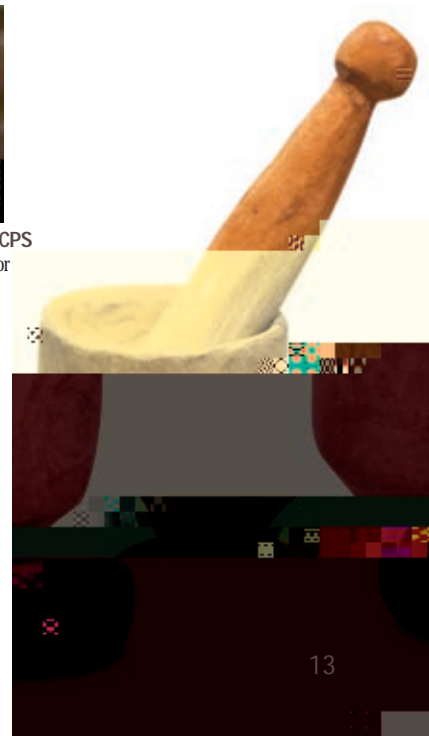
Corey Scheer, PharmD  
Clinical Assistant Professor of Acute Care



Shusen Sun, PharmD  
Clinical Assistant Professor of Emergency Medicine



Kim Gallo  
Staff Assistant







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## Faculty Focus: Dr. Izabela Collier

Dr. Izabela Collier, clinical assistant professor of pharmacy practice, ambulatory care, is ardent about the field of pharmacy—as a practitioner helping patients with diabetes, a professor passing her knowledge and experience on to learners, and a researcher helping people.

***“She has a passion, a dedication, and a drive to really be the best for the learners both in the classroom and out,”*** says Clinical Associate Professor Kam Capoccia. “Her inner strength just inspires and motivates. I couldn’t do my job the way I do without her.”

Dr. Collier emphasizes and demonstrates the value of empathy, says Class of 2015 learner Melissa Putnam. “She has always supported me in my pharmacy career,” Melissa says. “Her hard work and own success, as well as her ability to make one feel comfortable, make for a great mentor.”

Her enthusiasm stems from having a role in the development of the brand-new College of Pharmacy, Dr. Collier says. “I’m thrilled to be here. It’s a ton of work starting everything from scratch. But at the end of the day I’m really, really happy.”

This isn’t the first time Dr. Collier has been a part of Western New England. She came to this country from Poland in 1993 at age 17. She finished her senior year at nearby Chicopee High School and enrolled at Western New England, which she loved. It gave her skills and friends, along with gaining confidence. Pharmacy was a surprise suggestion from her advisor, a history professor. “It was an excellent fit,” she says.

She got her degree and worked at Baystate Medical Center, where she became a certified diabetes educator. She also cofounded a private diabetes clinic for people with language barriers; Dr. Collier speaks four languages. Hearing that Western New England was starting a College of Pharmacy, she called up the founding dean, Evan Robinson. Impressed by his vision, she asked to be kept on the list for when they started hiring faculty; she started at the College of Pharmacy on July 1, 2010, a year before the first class entered the program.



Her practice site is at the VA Hospital in Leeds, MA where she founded a diabetes clinic. At the College, her courses include Health Care Communications, a course in the endocrine, reproductive, and genitourinary system, and women’s health.

“Teachers made a difference in my life,” she says. “That’s why I took the position. I want to see the learners succeeding, achieving wonderful things. We want to give them the skills and the stamina, just like what was given to me.”

Her research centers around diabetes education and insulin protocols. Currently Dr. Collier has two papers in press, one for the *Ambulatory Care Survival Guide* (3rd ed.), from the American College of Clinical Pharmacy, and the other in the *American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy*. She recently spoke at an American Association of Diabetes Educators conference.

“When you look back at where I was when I came to this country and where I am now,” she says, “I’m really thrilled. As a faculty member, your work can be more visible and you can forge the way for pharmacy and make the world a little bit better.”





## Staff Spotlight: Dr. Quan Wei

You won't find her teaching an Immunology class or doing research in the Pharmaceuticals lab, but Quan Wei plays an essential role in the educational process at the College of Pharmacy. That's because pharmacy education has gone high-tech today, putting the access to unprecedented resources directly into the hands of professors. Dr. Wei, the College's instructional designer, helps the faculty effectively combine the use of technology and pedagogy.

She was the inaugural recipient of the College of Pharmacy Staff Award last May. "My job," says Dr. Wei, "is to help faculty use technology in the classroom to improve their teaching and ultimately help their learners."

Creating a learning environment on the cutting edge of classroom instruction was a top priority when the Center for the Sciences and Pharmacy was designed. Each of its three 80-seat stadium style classrooms features a specialized PC podium that incorporates SMART Technology. Every pharmacy learner is provided with a tablet computer for use in the classroom, labs, experiential practice settings, doing research, writing papers, or taking exams.

A native of China where she earned her bachelor's degree in physics, Wei earned a master's degree in instructional technology from Wright State University and her PhD in the discipline from Utah State University. She joined the Western New England University College of Pharmacy in 2011.

Wei's options were wide open when she began looking for a full-time position in higher education two years ago. "As an instructional designer or technician, you can work any place, in any field," she says, "because you are not a subject expert, but a technology expert. We look at how we can combine the technology and pedagogy and use it to stimulate learning."

Dr. Wei felt the opportunity to work at the new College of Pharmacy was the perfect match for her background. She was excited to help faculty incorporate such tools as SMART Technology and Turning Point clickers that learners use to electronically answer questions.

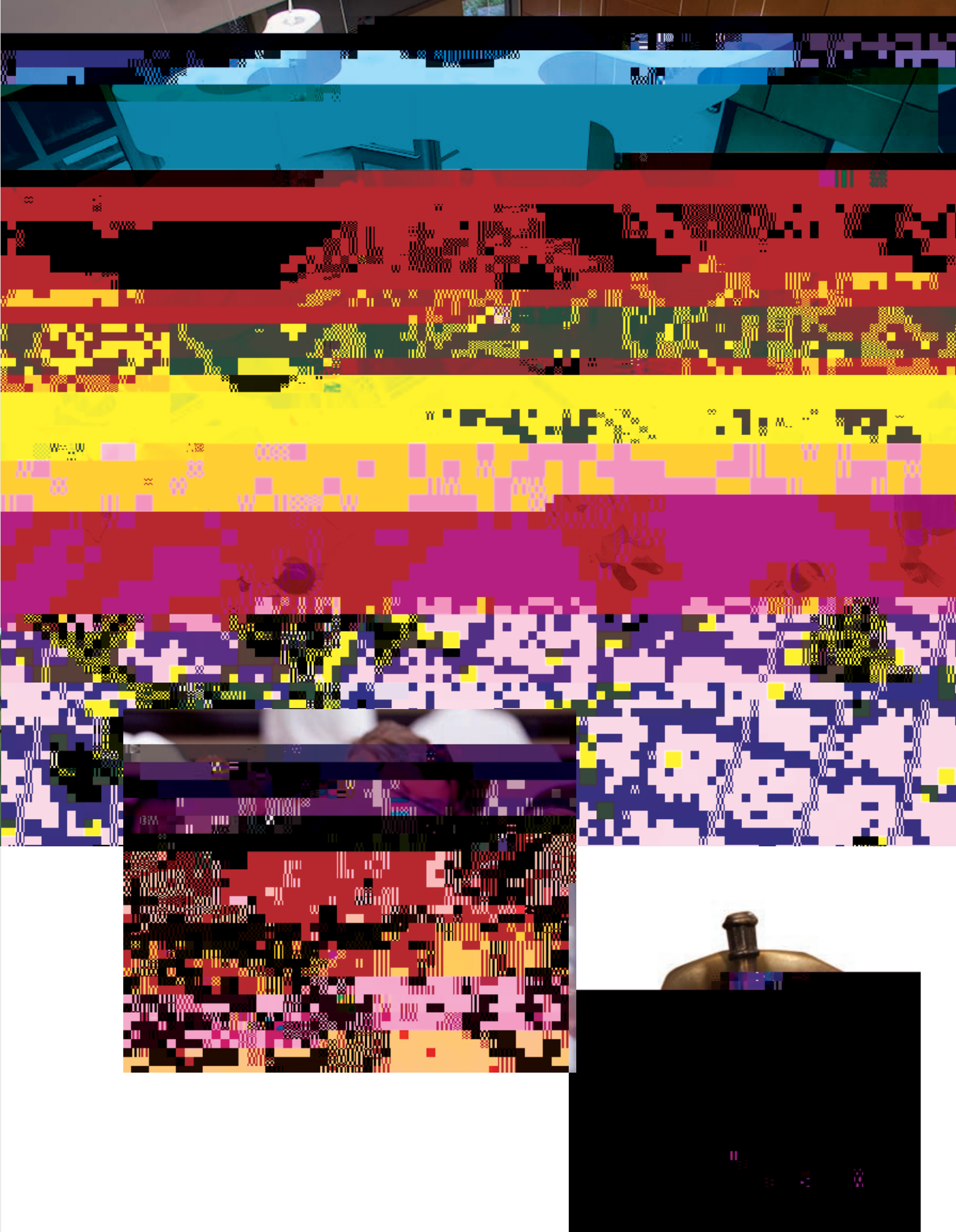
Today, she helps train new faculty and provides ongoing assistance to incorporate new tools into higher level classes as the inaugural class advances. "In the first week of each semester, I spend 10-15 minutes at the start of each class to make sure things are going smoothly," she says, "I don't want the faculty to ever feel panicked in front of their learners because the projector isn't working."

During orientation, she provides learners with a two-day training session on the technology they will be using throughout the semester. Dr. Wei is also a comforting presence to learners during online tests. "I tell them that my door is always open if they have questions and I am always there during tests to make sure no one gets stuck in the middle of an exam."



It is that commitment to customer service that makes Dr. Wei such a valued staff member.

"Quan has been instrumental in the adoption of a number of educational technologies within the College of Pharmacy," says her manager, Dr. Beth Welch, associate dean for pharmacy academic affairs. "She personally assists faculty, staff, and learners to create positive educational experiences which utilize technology to the fullest extent. She goes beyond expectations in providing these services. On a moment's notice she is there to assist. Quan is a wonderful colleague, always willing to help with a smile on her face."





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