

STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS



UCSF School of Pharmacy

ASSP | FALL 2017



A Note From the Editor:



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I, the *Therapeutic Window* editor, present to you the 3rd issue of the ASSP feature, *Student Spotlights*. With over 400 students in the School of Pharmacy, it can get difficult to know all of our amazing peers.

This feature is intended to serve as a way for you to get to know your fellow School of Pharmacy classmates here at UCSF. Where are they from? What are their hobbies and interests? Why did they choose pharmacy? What is a fun fact most people do not know about them? Read on to find out! :)



— Nikki Oragwam

P1 Student Spotlight:

Rachel Siu



From left to right: Tiffany (Rachel's cousin), Rachel, and Ivan (Rachel's boyfriend) at the White Coat Ceremony

ABOUT RACHEL

Rachel Siu was born and raised in Honolulu, Hawaii. She first came to California during her undergraduate experience at UC Davis. Upon graduation, she moved up to the Bay Area with her boyfriend. Since then she's been working and interning these past 4 years. Rachel previously worked at a biotechnology company, BioMarin Pharmaceuticals, in manufacturing cell culture operations. She also interned at a non-profit organization, The Shanti Project, in which she provided peer support and resource navigation to HIV/AIDs and breast cancer clients in San Francisco. She also was a pharma-

cy technician at Target in Colma. Currently, she works at CVS in Colma and Feel Good Compounders Pharmacy in Pacifica.

Why PHARMACY?

Rachel's interest in pharmacy "sparked" when she got an allergic reaction to Septra. She was taking this antibiotic around midterm week at UC Davis and got a full body rash. It amazed her how this one pill could cause such an adverse reaction. This incident made her want to learn more about the field. She joined the pharmacy club at UC Davis and volunteered, but it wasn't until she moved to the Bay Area that she finally got experience as a pharmacy techni-

cian. Rachel realized that she loved the patient aspect of her work and really wanted to help people. Feeling limited as a technician, she pursued pharmacy in order to have more of a leadership role in helping others.

REFLECTIONS

Now that she's been in school for a while, pharmacy school is a bit like what Rachel expected. After having such a long break between undergraduate education to professional school, the transition back into studying has been challenging. However, she finds it very inspiring and exciting to be at an institution where the professors are pioneers in advancing the profession.

IF NOT PHARMACY...

When Rachel was in high school she wanted to be a dancer. She used to do ballet, contemporary, and hip-hop. However, while she's let go of that dream long ago, it's still something she loves. She also enjoys teaching. At UC Davis she taught dance classes to troubled youths. Rachel still tries to take workshop classes once in a while, but her muscles and flexibility aren't what they used to be.

FUN FACT

Rachel LOVES eating, talking about food, and trying new restaurants. She currently lives in

San Bruno and commutes to San Francisco. According to her, San Jose and Palo Alto are *the places* to go if you want to eat something. While she loves all kinds of food, her go to is ramen and rice dishes. She also enjoys Netflix, aside from school and work.

To My Classmates...

“I really enjoy getting to know everyone and meeting new people everyday. There are still some people I don’t know in my class. I feel really bad, but I love [learning] everyone’s stories, where they are coming from, and all their experiences. It’s so interesting to see other people who’ve taken different avenues and are in the same pharmacy school now. Everyone is so amazing! Everyone is such a go-getter and so passionate. It’s very inspiring and, at the same time, very motivating to be involved like them.”

— *Rachel Siu*



Rachel Siu enjoying a meal at Ame

P2 Student Spotlight: **Hosna Tabatabaifar**



Hosna taking a rest in the Cypress Tree Tunnel after a hike at Point Reyes.

ABOUT HOSNA

Hosna Tabatabaifar was born in Pennsylvania, but was raised in Iran. She first came to California during her sophomore year in high school and now considers Davis, CA home. She still has extended family in Iran and goes back once in a while to visit them. When her grandparents were still alive, she used to go every year, but now she only visits every 2-3 years. Her primary language is Farsi and she’s still fluent. Currently, she works at CVS.

Why **PHARMACY?**

Hosna was always interested in chemistry since her jr. high years back in Iran. She

loved watching and observing her teachers perform experiments, since there wasn't enough resources for everyone to do their own lab. She was further drawn to the subject when she came to California during high school and could actually do labwork herself. Since she found chemistry so interesting, she went on to major in pharmaceutical chemistry at UC Davis. She found the curriculum fascinating and wanted to learn more about drugs. She saw firsthand in her immediate family the effects of medication and how it improved their lifestyle. Seeing the importance of medication in her family's life, Hosna wanted to be an advocate for it and its safe use. She did research during her undergraduate education, but wanted more interaction with patients as a healthcare advocate. For some time she considered becoming a physician's assistant, but volunteering in pharmacies confirmed the current path she's chosen. The experience showed her that pharmacists get plenty of patient interaction and play an important role in improving patient's lives. Being so close to her family, Hosna didn't want to end up too far away when applying to pharmacy schools. So although she applied to most CA schools, she really only considered her options to be UCSF, Touro, and UOP. Since she used to visit San Francisco often with her family, she was super excited to have an opportunity to live in a city she loves upon acceptance at UCSF.

REFLECTIONS

Looking back on her first year,

pharmacy school was more of a transition than she expected. Even though it was Hosna's first time moving away from her family, she thought it would be alright since she wasn't too far away from home. However, she found herself missing the Iranian communities back home she had frequent contact with. She didn't expect school to be so busy either and thought she would have more time to explore San Francisco. However, since she missed her family, she would go home every chance she could.

HOBBIES / INTERESTS

Once in a while on weekends, Friays, or random afternoons, you can find Hosna biking in the city. She enjoys hiking and traveling as well. Some places she's visited include: Malaysia, Japan, England, Italy, France and Taiwan, where she studied abroad. She used to speak Japanese as a kid, but now only knows a couple words. She can also read Arabic, but doesn't speak nor understand much of it either.

BRAVEST THING

The bravest thing Hosna has done was traveling by herself this past summer. At first her parents were ok with it, but as her departure date got closer they became increasingly apprehensive. Her brother also voiced doubts about how traveling alone is less fun. But despite all that, she was still determined to have the experience. She had

moments where she was concerned about thefts and pickpocketers, but made sure to be very aware of her surroundings. Armed with pepper spray, she prepared herself for what would be a very rewarding experience.

FUN FACT

Hosna used to do gymnastics back in Iran as an after school program. However, she had to stop because her mom heard that doing gymnastics as a kid stunts your growth.

To My Classmates..

"If you guys have any questions about anything, I won't take offense. Please, feel free to ask about my culture, religion, anything."

— Hosna Tabatabaifur



Hosna in Paris on Love-Lock Bridge, where many couples hang a lock to symbolize their love.

P3 Student Spotlight:

Daniel Keroles



Daniel Keroles, P3 student

ABOUT DANIEL

Daniel Keroles was born and raised in southern California. His family currently lives in Palos Verdes, a small beach city in LA county. He currently works in inpatient at a Kaiser in Oakland. While it is a lot of work, he's learned that the more time you spend in that environment, the more exposure you get and the more you learn. Being busy at works gives him a thrill and sense of importance.

IF NOT PHARMACY...

Growing up, there were many things Daniel wanted to be. For example, he wanted to be a firefighter. He liked

the heroic aspect of the career, and how it involved such an active lifestyle of being a first-responder in cases of emergencies. He was drawn to the adrenaline rush of the danger and the reward of helping others in time of need.

Why PHARMACY?

Daniel had an uncle on his dad's side of the family who went to UCSF for pharmacy school and opened an independent pharmacy store back in San Pedro, a community in LA. Since his uncle was one of the more successful members in his family, Daniel looked up to him as a role model. When he was in high school, Daniel would look up information about the pharmacy profession. While taking chemistry classes during his sophomore year, he decided pharmacy

was the career for him and has stuck with it ever since. He chose USC for his undergraduate education because he liked their Pre-Pharmacy program. When he got accepted to UCSF, he was really shocked and ending up choosing this school based on the "vibe" he felt during interviews. What he finds interesting about the city of San Francisco is that is divided up into districts that are completely different from each other. He finds it exciting to walk around and have the environment completely change from one ambiance/culture to another. His favorite spot in San Francisco is Ina Coolbrith Park on Russian Hill. He discovered it on Instagram and loves how it overlooks the downtown area of the city. He would rent out scoots with friends to scoot around the city and end up at that destination for the spectacular view.

REFLECTIONS

While pharmacy school isn't what Daniel expected it to be, he didn't have many expectations going in. Since he chose pharmacy so long ago, when he finally started P1 year, Daniel found it difficult to discover what he wanted to do and lacked passion for the current courses he was taking. He believes that what helped him stick with pharmacy was the inspiring friends he's made along the way. Although he learns a lot in school, he learns from those around him as well. Initially, he was drawn to aspects of the career, such as the the stability of the hours and not having to deal with blood. However, he feels like that doesn't apply to him anymore. Now that he's learned and seen so much while completing two years of pharmacy school, Daniel realized that in order to have an exciting job you have to be willing to make sacrifices. For example, a pharmacist working in a critical care unit at the hospital

may receive a patient transferred to the ICU late at night. This requires working after hours in order to be there for the patient. Or in emergency situations where the pharmacist is available, such as when a patient is having cardiac arrest, he/she would have to get their hands dirty and do what is necessary to assist the patient.

HOBBIES / INTERESTS

Daniel has really gotten into hiking this past summer. He's explored many hiking spots in the Bay Area that his friends would tell him. One place he really likes is the Fire Trails in Berkeley because on a clear day you can enjoy the beautiful view of the city. He also likes that at the end of the hike, there are so many restaurants near UC Berkeley to go eat and hang out at. He's taken many friends to this hiking trail and has always had a good time. He also likes Alamere Falls in Point Reyes, because you get a breathtaking view of a waterfall that flows on a beach. He feels that although school takes up a lot of time, we should take advantage of what the Bay Area has to offer while we're here in San Francisco. Like many southern California natives, he prefers home to the Bay Area. However, he admits that hiking is better up here since there is a lot more greenery. In addition to hiking, Daniel enjoys playing basketball and used to play with his church. Now he participates in intramural basketball every week with his class team here at UCSF. The activity has its ups and downs, but Daniel has a lot of fun playing and feels it has brought him closer to his classmates. He also enjoys biking and used to bike near the beach back home before pharmacy school. When he first moved to San

Francisco, he would bike everywhere since he didn't have a car. Once he brought his car up here for work, he didn't bike for a while. However, now that he moved from Mission Bay to the outer sunset, he bikes to school in the mornings. Daniel loves exercise and frequents the gym as a form of stress relief. Last summer, Daniel took a trip to Peru and Colombia with some fellow P3s to hike, relax, and explore the culture. He tried many different foods there and is excited to attempt to recreate some of his favorite dishes. Some Peruvian cuisine he particularly enjoyed include "loma saltado", a rice dish, and "tacu tacu", a bean and rice dish. Daniel has heard Lima, Peru be referred to as "the food heaven of South America" (and he agrees). Since coming back to the U.S. was a struggle because of hurricane Irma, he suggests always having a back-up plan to get home when traveling.



From left to right: Amir Ali (P3), Daniel, a shaman, and Amir Rakei (P3) in Peru. The shaman blessed the students and let them pet and feed his llamas.

FUN FACT

In his senior year of high school, Daniel pole vaulted competitively. He regrets starting so late and wishes this was something he did all 4 years of high school. He found launching himself up in the air, clearing the crossbar, and landing on a fat pillow so much fun. It wasn't easy at the beginning, but he stuck with it and kept practicing. The highest Daniel has ever cleared was 10 and a half feet (roughly the height of a basketball hoop). Albeit other competitors from opposing schools cleared as high as 13-14 feet, Daniel loved the experience. He was also a spirit leader and lead chants through a megaphone during games at USC.

To My Classmates...

"We are all here together. We should definitely enjoy the rest of the time we have with each other, because who knows what will happen when we go off into APPE rotations. After that, it's basically graduation. So let's try not to forget that, because I'm sure a lot of us will move out of the city once [we graduate] to find work. I've asked some of the pharmacists I work with at my internship if they keep in touch with their classmates and they say just with whoever is around. Even for the P2s and P1s, try to enjoy what you have right now. Obviously nothing is ever perfect. The school curriculum could be better or anything could happen that upset others, but just be positive and make the most out of what you got. We're here now, but it's not forever."

— Daniel Keroles