

# Student



# Spotlights

UCSF School of Pharmacy

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## ***A note from the Editors:***

The *Therapeutic Window* editors bring you a new ASSP feature, *Student Spotlights*. With over 400 students in the School of Pharmacy, it can get difficult to know all of our amazing peers. P1s are the new kids on the block, P2s rule the school, P3s are the elusive unicorns, and P4s are just out of reach at rotations. We hope that this quarterly feature will serve as a way for you to get to know your fellow School of Pharmacy classmates. 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.



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By Evelyn Coria & Annie Chang

# P1 Spotlight: Amanda Hanks

## **Q: Demographics (year in pharmacy school/ hometown/undergrad)**

"I'm from Sterling Heights, Michigan, which is a suburb of Detroit, and I went to undergrad at Grand Valley State University, which is on the west side of Michigan."

## **Q: Why did you choose pharmacy? Why UCSF?**

"I loved chemistry, and I tried to do something a little more translational and patient centered in graduate school. I worked with drug resistance, so I was still really involved with drugs because that was my interest. Once I started following

clinicians and shadowed some surgeons and oncologists, I fell in with some pharmacists, and it was just like 'where has this been all my life?' They were inpatient and outpatient in the cancer clinic, and I really saw their interactions with the patients and their involvement in looking at all of their medication lists. The doctors really respected their recommendations. I always thought pharmacy was Walgreens, and it was appealing to see them in the clinic and really being respected health professionals."

## **Q: Do you think you'll do hospital pharmacy in the future or do you want to explore more in different areas?**

"Right now I think I want to do hospital pharmacy, specifically oncology since that has been a huge part of my training so far. It's a nice impact on patients, but at the same time, industry sounds cool. For now, I'm sticking with hospital though."

## **Q: What hobbies/interests/passions do you have outside of pharmacy? Tell us about one of them!**

"I have three dogs and like taking them on walks. I like cooking from scratch too if I have time on the weekends. I also like to watch Netflix. I feel guilty and feel that I should be studying though. When I sit and make something, I think 'I should be studying.'"

## **Q: What do you like to cook?**

"I am obsessed with spaghetti squash right now. It's this big yellow squash that you cut in half, add some olive oil and spices, and roast it. You take a fork and shred it, and it looks like spaghetti. It has a lot of structural integrity too. Also, it's soft when

you put stuff in, so you can throw in veggies and pasta sauce in. I just made some spaghetti squash chow mein the other day, which I really like. I'm not a big meat eater so I try to cook vegetable dishes, and I bake too. I try to bake from scratch, like muffins and banana or zucchini bread, but if it's a cake, then I need a mix. I don't know what it is, but I just need a mix for cake even though muffins and breads are okay."

## **Q: What did you do before coming to pharmacy school?**

"I took a few gap years. I was in Houston for several years in a graduate program, and then I moved here a year and a half ago. I've been in the Bay Area for a while and knew I

really wanted to go to UCSF for pharmacy school. I was in a PhD program at University of Texas in the cancer center, working on my PhD in cancer biology for 4.5 years, but I really didn't enjoy sitting at a bench full time. It was so far from affecting patients, and I started shadowing some clinicians around there and wound up shadowing some pharmacists. It just snowballed from



A trip to Napa Valley with Nelson, the stylish beagle

there once I saw their involvement with research. I just had no idea what I wanted to do when I graduated, and they paid you to go to school. Finally, when I came here I started doing clinical research coordination at the UCSF cancer center with breast cancer trials and got a lot more patient involvement. I got to work with the investigational drug services pharmacists and learn more about their roles.”

**Q: Did you move to the Bay Area once you decided you wanted to go to pharmacy school and UCSF?**

“Yes. I’m still interested in research, and I can see UCSF being so interested in research and integrating that with the pharmacy programs. As I looked at other programs, I realized that I didn’t want to go anywhere else.”

**Q: You did that in Texas and then came to do more breast cancer research here. Was that while you were applying to UCSF or did you work for a bit and then go through the application process?**

“I had looked up the application two years ago while I was still at graduate school and ended up waiting a year because I had some prerequisites I still had to take. That’s when I decided it was time to cut ties there and move to SF to focus on my application, and I worked all through that while taking classes. It was fairly manageable because I just took one class at a time. I only had three classes to take, so it worked out really perfectly. The application was just more sitting down and doing it, so it wasn’t too bad.”

**Q: If you weren’t pursuing pharmacy, what would you be doing?**

“I really like crafts. I think I would start an Etsy shop and sell crafts that I make. I like knit-

ting, and I’ve made hand painted ceramic mugs.”

**Q: Is pharmacy school like what you imagined? Why/why not?**

“There are a lot of different classes going on at the same time. It’s what I expected so far, and it’s not too intense yet. We have a week and a half until our first midterm, so maybe I’ll feel differently come a week and a half.”

**Q: What is your favorite book/movie/tv show?**

“I’m rewatching *Gilmore Girls*. One of my favorite shows is *The Office*. The *Gilmore Girls* is such a guilty pleasure. It’s so funny watching it years later because I understand it so much more now, especially the pop culture references.”

**Q: What do you like the most about being in the city?**

“I like that I don’t need a car, so my boyfriend and I sold our cars. We like walking everywhere. I’m a big fan of Napa and hiking in Marin. We love The Ferry Building as well. I love all the shops and just want to go around and sample everything, especially the olive oil place; they have a Napa spice that goes really well on eggs. It elevates your eggs to no other level. It’s just way better than salt and pepper. I love the little SF neighborhoods and how they all have their own vibes, like Hayes Valley, Alamo Square, etc. I

live just down the street from Pacific Heights. I don’t think I can afford the stores there, but I can eat there.”

**Q: What are you looking forward to this year?**

“I’ve never actually worked in a pharmacy, whereas a lot of people have. I really just want to get my hands on and start learning.”



Out for a stroll with our dogs plus one we were dog-sitting (yep, we love dogs!)

# P2 Spotlight: Josh Moises

**Q: Let's start with the basics.**

**Where did you go for your undergraduate degree, and where are you from?**

A: "I'm from Seaside in Monterey county and was a biochemistry major at UCLA."

**Q: Why did you choose pharmacy, and why UCSF?**

A: "I applied to most of the CA schools because I wanted to stay in CA [since] it's closer to home, and I also didn't want to take the PCAT. The reason why I picked SF was because when I came to interview day, we had that chat session with P2s, P3s, etc. One of the things that really caught my attention was how much input the students get; they would talk about things, such as, at the end of each quarter they would get feedback about things they liked, things they didn't like, or things they wanted to suggest. All of those suggestions got implemented for the next year.

I thought it was interesting how the curriculum is always changing and always pushing to evolve. That was one of the things that really interested me about SF. That and the fact that it's a lot closer to home. When I went to LA it was about 5 or 6 hours to travel if it was a drive, and here it's a lot closer and more convenient. A change of scenery would also be nice because I went to school in SoCal. I just thought it'd be interesting to move from one big city to another, from LA to SF. The last time I was here

in SF, I was 3 years old, which was a really long time ago."

**Q: What hobbies, passions, and interests do you have outside of pharmacy?**

A: "One is going to the gym because I started doing that in undergrad, and I've actually met a lot of people through going to the gym and exercising. Another one I like doing is playing the guitar or ukelele. I also started learning musical instruments around middle school. The first instrument I was



A music session during a class social with Josh playing the guitar, and Allen (P2) playing the cajón

formally taught was the violin, so I played that for about four years, and that's where I got all of my music theory. From there I just started learning other instruments, so I picked up the ukelele and eventually the guitar, and I would randomly learn other instruments throughout undergrad. I somewhat taught myself how to play the piano, and a couple of other random instruments I learned how to play were the taiko drums and the shinobue, which is a Japanese flute. One thing

I really want to learn how to play though is the drums. I've wanted to learn how to play that for a while now, but my mom wouldn't let me get one because it would be way too loud."

**Q: Following up with that, how did you get your hands on a Japanese flute?**

A: "The summer after my third year of undergrad I decided to join the taiko drumming group at my school, and one of my close friends was director that year. He had to

store all the drums and other instruments at my apartment, so there would be these huge taiko drums in my living room. One day he just pulled out this wooden flute, and I asked him what it was. He said it was a Japanese flute, and he taught me how to play it. Throughout that summer I would learn it here and there, and I tried to learn a few songs, one of which was *Teenage Dream*. There were

some traditional songs I learned, but then I would also look up popular songs and see if I could play those. This was actually the first wind instrument I learned how to play because the instruments I had learned how to play were string based."

**Q: You could teach someone how to play the ukelele in ten minutes?**

A: "I started playing the uke after high school and brought it to college. One of the reasons I like playing instruments is because I get to meet a lot of people through it and

have fun with them. I brought my uke during my freshman year into the dorms, and I'd just be in the lounge area, meeting a lot of people just playing it. We ended up having music sessions together, and I eventually taught people how to play their first song in ten minutes by teaching them some basic chords. In about ten minutes I would show them how to play *I'm Yours* by Jason Mraz. That was my little thing: Oh I can teach you how to play a song in 10 minutes."

**Q: What is a fun fact most students do not know about you?**

A: "The fun fact I always use, but I think a lot of people in our class know now is that I cut my own hair. Not too long ago I cut a girl's hair for the first time, Amy Liu's hair. I cut her hair one time randomly, about a month ago, and it took me a really long time because it was so different than cutting guys' hair. I did a lot of research leading up to it, watched a lot of YouTube videos, and Googled how to cut girls' hair and layered hair. I put on a movie and made her watch it because it took that long, and the entire time I was super terrified, thinking 'is this working?' Myranda and Danielle somehow found out after, and Danielle wants me to possibly cut her hair. I was like 'okay I could try later'. It's a new thing that I might get into, and hopefully I get better at cutting girls' hair."

**Q: You've been keeping count right? How many people's hair have you cut?**

A: "Since starting pharmacy school I've done a total of 60 haircuts. One thing I was thinking of doing



Josh gives Dario (P2) a haircut during the week of their white coat ceremony last year. On that week, a total of 10 haircuts were given!

either at my 50th or the 100th cut is to have someone else cut my hair because it has been a long time since I did that. If I were to do that I'd want someone who has never cut hair before because I used to do that back in undergrad since I didn't start learning to cut my own hair until the second year of college. Before that I'd just ask my floormates in my dorm to cut my hair, and a lot of them had never cut hair before. I've had people give me fauxhawks, which was interesting. For the 100th cut, there are two people I was thinking of, either Brian Ngo or Peter Nguyen. I cut both of their hairs regularly and remember talking to some people and saying 'I think Peter should cut my hair', and they were saying no. I feel like that'd be really interesting though."

**Q: Is pharmacy school like what**

**you imagined? Why or why not?**

A: "In terms of what I imagine, I would have expected it to be hard and rigorous and that you have to keep up and not fall behind. All the other things that surprised me that I probably wouldn't expect at pharmacy school are how much fun I would have and all the people I would meet. For one thing we're a small class, and we see each other everyday, so I thought it was surprising how close we would get and how easy it is to get to know other people in our class and in other classes. Another thing that surprised me which I probably should have known is that we often overlook the kind of place that we go to and the kind of institution that we're in. A defining moment for me was when I randomly went into one of the lunch seminars. It was a two hour lecture seminar, and I was just sitting there in the corner eating my food and listening. At one point I realized I was sitting in a room with some of the greatest minds in the world, and they were talking about their research and advances they were coming up with. That's when I realized that UCSF is a really amazing place, and I'm fortunate enough to be a part of it. That's one of the things that surprised me about UCSF with its amazing people, and even in our class what I found is that all of us are successful in different ways, and hearing everyone's stories is really amazing. It's really cool to see how all of us got here for more or less the same goal. We all come from different backgrounds, but it's really cool to see all of us here together."

# P3 Spotlight: Elmira Zamanpour

## **Q: Demographics (year in pharmacy school/home-town/undergrad)**

A: “I am from Fresno, in Central California, but I lived in SoCal mostly. I went to UCLA and majored in PhySci, which is basically Anatomy, Physiology, and Neurology. I also minored in Eastern studies. It was an intense curriculum, but it was actually a lot of fun! I love UCLA—always a Bruin. In fact, on all exam days, midterms and finals, I always wear my UCLA sweatshirts—it is my good luck charm, along with a necklace that I got from Mexico made from a special stone. I will not leave the house without a UCLA sweatshirt if I have a test.”

## **Q: Did you have a lucky charm at UCLA, or did this start at UCSF?**

“Back at UCLA I had a lucky pencil that I used to take exams with. Now I’m not particular about the pen, but I wear my sweatshirt, my necklace, and I always sit in the exact same spot—I actually had to ask someone to move one time. Everyone that sits around me agreed with me and said, ‘she always sits there.’ The lucky charms have worked out so far, so I’m going to continue. Now, I don’t know if that’s the reason it has worked, but let’s not fix what’s not broken.”

## **Q: Why did you choose pharmacy? Why UCSF?**

“I only applied to schools in California because my main goal was to go to UCSF—it was a very far fetched idea to me at the time. UCSF was pretty good at giving me good news. I actually got my interview invitation on Christmas Eve, and I thought it was the best gift that I could get. I could not believe it. I kept rereading it over and over again to make sure that I wasn’t reading it wrong. I also got my acceptance letter a couple of days before my birthday, and I knew I wanted to come here because I liked the vision of the school and wanted to further my education. What better place than UCSF?”

## **Q: What area of pharmacy interests you? Why?**

“One of the things that I would like to pursue in the future in the field of pharmacy is teaching. I do not know what I would like to teach, but I will be seeing the P2s this quarter when I lecture in one of the physiology classes. I am really looking forward to that and am definitely open to seeing more options of what the



**Charlie's first time in the snow.**

world of pharmacy has to offer. In my IPPE rotations I was able to see an investigational pharmacist, and that was amazing. I will probably do some clinical pharmacy as well as some teaching.”

## **Q: What hobbies/interests/passions do you have outside of pharmacy?**

“My biggest interest is my dog, Charlie. If I am not at school I’m spending time with him. I also love spending time with my friends, exploring the city, and going to parks. I love a lot of the hikes around here; Muir Woods is one of my favorite places to hike. It is such a peaceful place to be because you hear nature and smell the trees and leaves. We have such a great opportunity to live in such an amazing city like San Francisco, and I love exploring the options that we have.”

## **Q: If you were not pursuing pharmacy, what would you be doing?**

“I would probably be expanding my parents’ business. They own a Persian-Armenian restaurant. I have talked to my parents about expanding to San Francisco. Whenever I go home there’s always a list of requests

for me to bring back to my friends. I would probably deal with the business aspect though—I know the recipes, but I do not cook Persian food. I can cook other dishes, just not Persian food. It is so hard and so time consuming to cook. I remember growing up, my grandma would start cooking at 6am. I would tell her, ‘Grandma, it’s 6am. What are you doing? Everyone is sleeping.’ It is very time consuming to make but really good food.”

**Q: What is your favorite book/movie/tv show?**

“Game of Thrones, number one. House of Cards, How to Get Away With Murder. I watched it even during midterm season because I just had to watch it. I love South Park,

American Dad. As for books, I’m actually reading a book called *The Girl and the Ice*; it’s a pretty interesting book.”

**Q: What do you like the most about being in the city?**

“My favorite part would have to be the culture — the people. I love the people that live here. Everyone is so different from one another, and everyone does just fine living in a 7mi x 7mi space. You drive a few blocks from inner sunset, and suddenly it’s sunny. That’s probably why people are a little happier.”

**Q: By now we’ve all heard the saying “P2s rule the school.” What leadership positions did you have as a P2 at UCSF?**

“I was the project coordinator for Project Nutrition and working on that was a great opportunity for me.

I was able to work with med students, putting the Nutrition elective class together. We always talk about the work between doctors, pharmacists, nurses, and physical therapists, and being able to start that early on is a good thing. I really enjoyed that aspect of the position. I also got to meet a lot of people at health fairs where I was able to answer their questions. At the last health fair I attended, someone actually came up to me and asked about her diet. The patient had



Charlie and Elmira on a spontaneous drive.

diabetes, hypertension, and hyperlipidemia which was the material we had just learned in therapeutics. It was fun to be able to answer questions and feel confident that I knew the informa-

tion and could talk to her about it. She pulled out her medication list and had me go over it with her. It was a great experience.

I was also treasurer for AMCP. Through this organization, I was able to explore different areas of pharmacy by going to different events as well as explore a side of pharmacy that is different from what we learn in a classroom setting. We learn a lot of the clinical knowledge in the classroom, but being able to learn from others in the club, students, guest speakers, and pharmacists at site visits, I learned so much more about what pharmacy has to offer outside of the clinical setting. One of the reasons that I came to UCSF was because I saw that they had such a strong managed care program.”

# P4 Spotlight: Kerry Kuang

## Q: Demographics (year in pharmacy school/hometown/undergrad)

“I’m a P4 currently on rotations. I am originally from San Francisco, went to UC Davis for undergrad, and took prerequisite courses at Berkeley before starting pharmacy school. My goal is to apply to residencies. I’m not sure exactly what I want to practice, but I believe that everything will work out for the best.”

## Q: Why did you choose UCSF?

“When I had my interview at UCSF, it was the first year that they implemented the MMI, and I was in the first interview group. I had no idea what to expect, but at the same time it was really low pressure because it was my last interview, and I had already been accepted to at least one other school. At my interview, I forgot my ID because I moved my wallet to a different purse, and I forgot that I had taken it out. I was freaking out, but because I am from San Francisco I was able to call my dad and have him rescue me and bring my ID. At that point I was very glad that I was in San Francisco, because my dad rescued me.

I actually felt like I had bombed my interview because I was cut off by one of my interviewers due to the time limits, and I bought ice cream after my interview and felt much better. When I got my acceptance I reflected on my interview day,

when I forgot my ID and my dad came to rescue me. My family had been so supportive of me throughout the years I took off after graduating to figure out what I wanted to do with my life as well as throughout the application and interview process. I realized how important it was for me to have family ties



Kerry and her boyfriend in Korea

as well as social ties. That is why I decided to stay in San Francisco. I believe that everything happens for a reason and that everything will work out eventually, and for me it has.”

## Q: What was your journey to pharmacy school like?

“After I graduated I knew that I wanted to do something in the healthcare field and somebody told me that an optometry office needed part time help. I started working there part time and then went on to work for them full time, going from an administrative assistant to being more involved in patient care activities. They knew that I was interested in the healthcare field, so they let me consult patients on how to clean their eyes, how

to clean their contact lenses when they got home, and what type of solutions they should use. I really enjoyed the interactions with the patients, so I knew that I wanted a career that involved patient care. I actually worked there for 2 years while I finished my prerequisites. A pre-optometry student in the office

suggested pharmacy to me. I had never thought of that before, so I went on Yelp and found the closest pharmacy. The first pharmacy that I called contacted me about shadowing. It was a small independent pharmacy that fills about 30 scripts a day. The day that I went in to shadow the pharmacist, he told me that his clerk had recently left

and offered me a part-time gig as a clerk, so it all worked out. I worked full-time at the optometry office, took night classes at Berkeley to finish my prerequisites, and worked part-time at the pharmacy. It was a really full schedule.

I had good exposure to pharmacy from my work in the independent pharmacy, and I knew patient care was what drove me to go to pharmacy school, so the summer before applying to pharmacy school I was on a missionary trip in the Phillipines for three weeks as part of the healthcare group. We went to a village that had very limited resources, and one of my goals was to appreciate and learn how the villagers lived and also to see things from their perspective—to see



what it means to live happily with the limited resources that you have. I was able to achieve my goal. We couldn't use the nutritional recommendations that we would use here in the US—some of these people could hardly afford the vegetables that could be grown in their back yards. From this experience, I realized that while I wanted to provide patient care, I really had to cater to the resources available to them. I knew then that I wanted to pursue a career in pharmacy that involved direct patient care at a one-on-one level."

**Q: Have you gone back to the Philippines, or explored other countries?**

"Being in the Philippines for 3 weeks made me realize how big the world is and so during pharmacy school one of my goals has been to use the school breaks to travel. I take it as an opportunity to appreciate what life is like outside of America. We have so many resources here, but how do other people live happily given their cultural influences and the resources that they have? I have taken advantage of that during my pharmacy school breaks. It is not about how much time I spend in a country but about the experiences.

During P2 year I was interning a lot, and working full-time. I took a week and a half off to go out of the country, which was enough time because seeing a little glimpse of what the culture is like and what life is like outside of America was more important to me than how long I could be there — quality over quantity."

**Q: What hobbies/interests/passions do you have outside of pharmacy?**

"Pharmacy school is stressful, but I always try to find ways to relieve stress. In my spare time I try to stay active, so when I have free time I attend a yoga class. One of the things that really helped me survive pharmacy school was having little goals. Finishing my first half marathon was one of them my P3 year. I trained with some of my classmates. While we didn't compete for the same one, finding classmates that were interested in running or wanted to go on a walk played a big role in getting me through pharmacy school. Throughout my P2 year, the way that I managed stress was through Thai Boxing. I loved it. The only reason I stopped was because I had a wrist injury. After my injury I had to find a new activity. I used to practice yoga but had not done it

regularly. I started doing restorative yoga, which is slower-paced and is used to restore your mind and body. Even though I can't do boxing anymore due to fear of further injury, another opportunity opened to allow me to practice yoga more regularly. One of my goals in the near future, in about 5 years, is to become a yoga instructor. In the meantime, I'm trying to work on my yoga poses. Right now during rotations it is a great stress reliever, so on weekends, I try to go different types of yoga classes to see what works best for me."

**Q: Why do you want to be a yoga instructor?**

"During my P3 year I was practicing yoga since I had injured my wrist in thai boxing. My mom wanted to come with me to one of my yoga classes, and I brought her with me. I told her, 'the instructor speaks English, so I don't think you'll understand;' but she said she would just try to model the poses. She was really stubborn about wanting to try yoga. Because she was only modeling the poses I felt that she was not getting the full benefits of yoga, and I was afraid that she would cause more injury than benefit from the experience. For instance, for some poses you have to do things a certain way to prevent back injuries, so at every session I would go over the main points and explain them to my mom. I realized that there are other people who, like my mom, want to gain the benefits from yoga, but due to language barriers they may not be able to, so my goal to become a yoga instructor in 5 years is hopefully so that I can give back through the YMCA in Chinatown or someplace to help Chinese communities, especially people who cannot afford yoga classes."



Kerry at the San Francisco Turkey Trot

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