25th Anniversary Celebration

KGI celebrated its 25th anniversary at a remarkable Founder’s Day event on Friday, October 7, 2022, with a speaker series and gala dinner.

STUDENT STORIES

KGI students are at the core of our Institute. Whether conducting research, winning awards, or finding ways to impact patient health, KGI’s students are change makers.

EVOLVING WITH THE INSTITUTE

Dr. Angelika Niemz Named Associate Dean of Faculty

PHARMD GOES GLOBAL

KGI’s Doctor of Pharmacy program is now opening enrollment to international students

ALUMNI SUCCESS

Once KGI students graduate, they thrive. From giving back to those around them and striving to make the world a better place, KGI alumni are making a real impact in the world.

CORPORATE CORNER

KGI’s Team Master’s Project program is a great way to identify future talent and accomplish meaningful work.

NEW FACES AT THE HELM

The unique structure of KGI provides faculty members with opportunities to collaborate on interdisciplinary research projects within the healthcare and biotech spaces.

FACULTY FEATURES

A Q&A with some of KGI’s standout faculty

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

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There is no better symbol of our bright future than the opportunity to follow the gala and celebration with our annual White Coat Ceremony, where we welcomed two brand-new programs into the fold. KGI Doctor of Pharmacy students were joined by the first cohorts of our Occupational Therapy Doctorate (OTD) and Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies (MSPA) programs. The students who are in these three programs will work not only with each other but with the students in our Henry E. Riggs School of Applied Life Sciences and School of Community Medicine to bring the advances of our science to both the patient and the community. It is a fitting testimony to our 25 years of growth and innovation.

As 2023 begins, I hope you’ll join us to continue our 25th Anniversary celebration with three additional speaker series events in the spring. These leaders will discuss the future of healthcare and the sciences, and you won’t want to miss it! Check the dates on page 21 or visit 25.kgi.edu for more details.

Welcome to the second edition of Innovation Insider, our new magazine featuring stories, events, and resources for the entire KGI community. I hope you enjoyed reading our inaugural issue this past fall, and I know that this second edition is filled with more impact stories from our community.

To assure our programs’ success and guide our programmatic development, I am excited to announce new leadership at the helm of some of our degree programs, including our two newest programs. Dr. Vikas Sharma and Dr. Christy Eskes lead the OTD and MSPA programs, respectively, while Emily Quinn took over our Master of Science in Human Genetics and Genetic Counseling program. Each of these individuals has continued to guide and teach our students, and I encourage you to learn more about each of these leaders on pages 22–23.

While all of these new developments are exciting and worthy of celebration, we also have some sad news to announce. The accolades don’t stop there. I am pleased that Dr. Angelika Niemz, a faculty member who has taught every cohort at KGI and was recently named one of our Most Influential Honorees, was promoted to Associate Dean for the Henry E. Riggs School of Applied Life Sciences. Angelika’s passion for the life sciences and her dedication to our students and the Institute are apparent in her daily contributions. Read more about Angelika on pages 8–9.

The past few years have been turbulent and challenging for all of society and especially for higher education, but we have progressed because of our devoted faculty and staff—all of whom deserve thanks. Our spirit of innovation and dedication to our students and community will guide us during the next 25 years! We especially want to thank our donors, who helped us finish 2022 on a high note, raising more than $132,000 during our Fall Giving Season. From the bottom of my heart, thank you to all of our alumni, faculty, staff, parents, and friends who donated to support our students and campus.

As 2023 begins, I hope you’ll join us to continue our 25th Anniversary celebration with three additional speaker series events in the spring. These leaders will discuss the future of healthcare and the sciences, and you won’t want to miss it! Check the dates on page 21 or visit 25.kgi.edu for more details.

Thank you for being part of our community and for your support. We hope to see you very soon as you join us on campus or online!
Alcoholism is one of the major contributing factors to liver and pancreatic diseases and a risk factor for neurological conditions such as Alzheimer’s disease (AD). The potential of alcohol in damaging the blood-brain barrier to promote Alzheimer’s disease was the subject of KGI Doctor of Pharmacy student Dharam Amin’s summer research project in KGI Associate Professor of Biopharmaceutical Sciences Dr. Derick Han’s lab as part of the Lee Summer Student Fellowship program. Amin, PharmD ’25, along with 13 other students across Southern California, received this fellowship from the Southern California Research Center for Alcoholic Liver and Pancreatic Diseases (ALPD) and Cirrhosis. Amin built upon prior research conducted in Han’s lab for the fellowship, culminating in a presentation titled “Impact of alcohol or alcohol metabolites on the Blood Brain Barrier” at the center’s bi-annual meeting in August.

KGI’s partnership with biotech company ATUM has continued to develop in fruitful directions. Last year, the KGI ATUM Bioprocessing Scholars program gifted two-year scholarships to two Master of Engineering in Biopharmaceutical Processing (MEng) students to diversify the biotech workforce. Since then, ATUM has donated an industrial high titer cell lines to the MEng lab and will continue to contribute additional cell lines and engage with KGI staff to develop relevant curriculum.

“From documentation to regulatory to sales and marketing to accounting to running reactors to supply chain management, there’s really a diverse set of career opportunities within biotech,” Beske said. “It’s a big, dynamic space, and it’s a very mission-driven space. We’re all here to promote global health and wellness.” By talking to these students now, he is planting the seed.

“These students are early in their academic careers, and a master’s degree may seem far away, but if we get them excited about it now or at least inform them on the pathway where they can get these degrees, perhaps they’ll end up at a school like KGI or a company like ATUM,” Beske said. Beske’s mission naturally led to his decision to partner with KGI to offer two MEng scholarships for underrepresented minorities.

Dr. Oren Beske, ATUM’s Amalgamator of Business and Biology, has long been dedicated to promoting diversity in the workplace and providing opportunities for underrepresented minorities. Part of his efforts has involved connecting with junior colleges and other academic institutions in the San Francisco Bay Area, illustrating how bioprocessing and the biotech ecosystem at large is an exciting industry requiring a broad range of skill sets. "We are excited to be working with Dr. Oren Beske at ATUM," said Dr. Sue Behrens, George B. and Joy Rathmann Professor in Bioprocessing and Director of the Amgen Bioprocessing Center. "The ATUM scholarships and internship made it possible for two talented students to attend KGI to obtain the MEng degree and transform their career direction to contribute to the bioprocessing industry."

KGI student Alexander Senturia, MSPA ’24, is the second author of a “Notes from the Field” paper that the American Journal of Public Health recently accepted. The report, “A COVID-19 vaccination program to promote uptake and equity for unhoused people in Los Angeles County,” stemmed from Senturia’s work with the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

KGI student Samantha Kuong, PPC ‘23, has long been passionate about women’s health—specifically, guiding women through pre and postnatal treatment. Due to past experiences, she has decided to pursue a medical career to learn more about endometriosis and help uncover better ways to diagnose the condition and more effective treatments. Additionally, she wants to guide women struggling with infertility and work with pregnant women, aiding in the child’s delivery and the mother’s postnatal care.

After completing her Postbaccalaureate Premedical Certificate at KGI this spring, her next goal is to complete the MCAT and attend medical school to become an OB-GYN.

More than 22 KGI PharmD students collaborated with healthcare professionals at a Brown Bag Event on October 15, 2022, at Mt. San Antonio Gardens, a nursing and retirement home. At the event, which was held for the first time since 2019, first-, second-, and third-year PharmD students interacted with residents who came for medication review and reconciliation. Students engaged in counseling and provided recommendations, ensuring that the residents understood their medications and how to take them appropriately.

Third-year PharmD students Kristian Marc Refuerzo, Rizza Anabelle De Luna, and Steven Doan were the main student facilitators of the event.
Evolving with the Institute

Dr. Angelika Niemz Named Associate Dean of Faculty

Written by Kate Findley

Dr. Angelika Niemz was promoted to Associate Dean of Faculty for the Henry E. Riggs School of Applied Life Sciences (Riggs School) in October of 2022. She will supervise all KGI faculty and adjunct faculty of that school while helping implement strategic initiatives. Additionally, Niemz was named one of KGI’s Most Influential Individuals for the Institute’s 25th anniversary. The 33 honorees comprise former and current KGI faculty, staff, board of trustees, advisory board members, and founding community members who have had a significant impact on KGI’s development over the last 25 years. Nominations were submitted by the KGI community last February. Niemz has been with KGI for 20 years, teaching the school’s first cohort who graduated in 2002 from KGI’s flagship program—the Master of Business and Science program.

“I’ve been able to contribute in several ways through teaching, research, and service,” Niemz said. She started as an Assistant Professor, eventually becoming an Associate Professor. In 2009, she became the Director of Research.

“I was happy to pursue this opportunity because it enabled me to directly influence how the Institute pursued its mission,” Niemz said. “I like bringing people together and forming a sense of community. When you’re making important decisions, particularly on contentious topics, you need to make sure you involve all the stakeholders. This way, no matter what solution you come up with, you have a better chance of reaching a consensus because people feel like they have a say.”

In March 2021, Niemz was named Chair of the Department of Biological Engineering and Management for the Riggs School.

“That role enabled me to work more closely with the faculty—with whom I see as my peers—and address their concerns while facilitating success for everyone,” Niemz said. During that time, KGI underwent a reorganization to accommodate the school’s growth. Over the years, the student body has grown from 28 in the first graduating cohort to more than 600 today.

Additionally, the number of faculty and programs offered has also significantly expanded. "We had too many faculty for one dean to handle everything, so we decided to put a department structure in place," Niemz said. "But the challenge with departments is that KGI is very interdisciplinary. It’s harder to draw distinct lines than in a traditional university. We do have subgroups, but we all work together, and we don’t want to form silos.” Subsequently, KGI eliminated the department structure in the Riggs School. The role of Associate Dean of Faculty was then created, which Niemz has taken on.

In addition to overseeing all KGI faculty, Niemz will help facilitate new initiatives considering the changing academic landscape, shifting from targeting recent college graduates to more outreach geared toward working professionals looking to gain new skills or change their careers. Part of this adjustment involves offering more online learning opportunities.

"At the same time, I will be looking out for the interests of faculty because changing how we’re teaching impacts the faculty," Niemz said. "We need to make sure that in the end, it’s a win-win for all parties involved.”

She acknowledges that in light of these changes, it’s important that KGI remains true to its mission.

"We want to honor our values and those qualities that have always differentiated us, but we also need to adjust and adapt to the times," Niemz said.

In addition to being Associate Dean, Niemz is still carrying on her role as Professor—one she finds deeply rewarding.

"Our students have reached an interesting junction in their lives, where they have an opportunity to reflect and make conscious decisions about where they’re headed, rather than blindly going down an alley," Niemz said. She encourages them to get clear on their goals, values, and how they can create the best path moving forward—one that aligns their goals and their values.

"I see teaching as much more than simply showing up in the classroom and giving lectures and exams," Niemz said. "It’s the interactions outside of the classroom—getting to know the students as people—that motivates me to get out of bed in the morning. And I feel that also makes an impact in the lives of the students.”
The article, “Modulation of hepatic amyloid precursor protein and lipoprotein receptor-related protein 1 by chronic alcohol intake: Potential link between liver steatosis and amyloid-β,” published September 15 in Frontiers in Physiology, suggests that liver damage caused by alcohol changes critical proteins in the liver that may promote AD.

Dr. Joon Kim, EdD, was named President-Elect of the National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions, an organization he has been with since 2012. As Senior Director and Instructor of KGI’s Postbaccalaureate Premedical and Postbaccalaureate Pre-PA Certificate programs, Kim is committed to excellence in education and mentorship.

Dr. Barbara Bailus, Assistant Professor of Genetics, received a distinguished New Investigator Grant from the Foundation for Angelman Syndrome Therapeutics (FAST) of $500,000 over two years. This grant will support a research project titled “Targeting Angelman Syndrome Therapeutics to the Brain Utilizing Novel Cell-Penetrating Peptides.”

Q. What are three words you would use to describe yourself?
A. Energetic, positive, dedicated

Q. Do you prefer texting or talking?
A. Talking

Q. Where did you go on your last vacation?
A. Cabo

Q. Describe your style in one word?
A. Flexible

Q. What are three words you would use to describe yourself?
A. Adventurous, driven, interdisciplinary

Q. What’s the better coast, west or east?
A. West

Q. If we turned on the radio in your car, what would you be listening to?
A. Oldies

Q. What are three words you would use to describe yourself?
A. Curiosity, entrepreneurial, reflective

Q. What’s the better coast, west or east?
A. West

Q. If we turned on the radio in your car, what would you be listening to?
A. Podcasts about synaptic vesicles or scientific topics

Q. Do you prefer texting or talking?
A. Short answer, text; for more than one sentence, talking

Q. Where did you go on your last vacation?
A. Run the Alps in Switzerland

Q. Describe your style in one word?
A. Skeptical

Q. What are three words you would use to describe yourself?
A. Adventurous, driven, interdisciplinary

Q. What’s the better coast, west or east?
A. West

Q. If we turned on the radio in your car, what would you be listening to?
A. Holiday classical

Q. Do you prefer texting or talking?
A. Talking

Q. Where did you go on your last vacation?
A. Backpacking in the Sierra

Q. Describe your style in one word?
A. Professor-chic
PharmD Goes Global

KGI’s Doctor of Pharmacy program is now opening enrollment to international students

Written by Kate Findley

KGI’s Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) program is now opening enrollment to international students, marking a shift from its previous policy of only accepting domestic applicants. Such a change provides new opportunities for international students pursuing careers in pharmacy in the United States and enriches the field in multiple ways.

In 2003, the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy eliminated the eligibility for Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy (BS Pharm) graduates to practice pharmacy in the U.S. without a PharmD degree. “The bachelor’s in pharmacy used to be a very popular program internationally,” said Dr. Srikanth Kolluru, Interim Dean and Professor for KGI’s School of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (SPHS).

International students could take the Foreign Pharmacy Graduate Equivalency Examination Certification, which ensures their education meets comparable requirements to PharmD graduates from U.S. pharmacy schools and become eligible to practice pharmacy in the U.S. However, after the 2003 measure, many foreign citizens with only a BS Pharm were rendered ineligible.

“As a result, many countries started to form PharmD programs, but the pharmacy practice is quite different in other countries,” Kolluru said. “So even though they’re receiving the PharmD degree, they may not necessarily be able to practice in the U.S.”

Thus, many immigrants must complete a PharmD program at a U.S. school if they wish to practice pharmacy in the U.S.—even if they already obtained a PharmD in their native country.

“At a handful of U.S. pharmacy schools, foreign pharmacy graduates can get a one-year waiver, but that means they’re still required to complete three years of the program—after they already graduated from a pharmacy program in their home country,” Kolluru said.

KGI’s PharmD program has opened up a new pathway for international students, eliminating many obstacles. They do not have to complete a pharmacy program in their native country or earn a bachelor’s degree to be accepted into the KGI program.

After completing high school (through 12th grade), they only need two years of pre-pharmacy curriculum—including general chemistry and biology courses—to apply. This puts them on a level playing field with their U.S. classmates and saves them the time and expense of completing years of credits which they would likely have to redo any way.

One of KGI’s motivations for making this change is to foster a more inclusive admissions process, encouraging diversity at the national and global levels.

KGI is creating affiliation agreements and initiating conversations with multiple countries, including India, Vietnam, and Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia intends to send its students to pharmacy schools in the U.S. so they can return to their home country to practice pharmacy to change the pharmacy practice within Saudi Arabia.

“This is a win-win situation where these international students can receive a pharmacy education in the U.S., and, in turn, we can help change the way pharmacy is practiced in these other countries so that they are in line with the pharmacy practice in North America,” Kolluru said. “Many countries want to create this shift where pharmacists are trained to be healthcare providers who care for patients and not simply pill dispensers.”

Kolluru would also like to see this shift in his home country of India.

“When I went to pharmacy school in India, the only pathway I was aware of was becoming a medical representative to promote the marketing of drug products,” Kolluru said. “Even today, pharmacists do not typically interact with patients.”

The goal is to teach pharmacists on a global scale how to work as a member of a healthcare team, which includes making recommendations to improve patient outcomes. Kolluru believes that KGI’s PharmD program is uniquely positioned to help advance this goal.

In addition to offering a traditional pharmacy curriculum, the program offers courses and certificates in non-traditional healthcare fields, including informatics, healthcare management, medical and clinical affairs, and industry.

“We want to expose students to multiple pathways; this way, they can contribute in many areas, including pharmacy informatics, healthcare management, and medical and regulatory affairs,” Kolluru said. “A quarter of our students find jobs in the pharmaceutical industry, which is unique to KGI.”

Not only can opening admissions to international students enhance the pharmaceutical industry on a global scale, but it also brings much-needed diversity to the industry within the U.S.

“In recent times, there’s been so much immigration from so many countries, and the U.S. is now very multicultural,” Kolluru said. “One of the biggest challenges the pharmaceutical industry faces is finding patients from underrepresented communities for clinical trials because they’re not in the education system or the workforce.”

Additionally, pharmacists are not always well-equipped to meet the needs of these diverse communities—particularly recent immigrants. Although U.S. pharmacists might have different ethnic backgrounds, someone who comes directly from another country will likely have a more intimate knowledge of that country’s language, culture, and customs than someone who is a third or fourth-generation immigrant.

“For us to serve the immediate needs of the growing diversity in the U.S., we want to train pharmacists from these different countries so that we can have the workforce to represent our communities,” Kolluru said.

If there is enough demand, KGI is considering offering an English immersion program for non-native English-speaking students. Such a program will enable these students to thrive in their studies and pharmaceutical careers while bridging the gap between providers and non-English-speaking patients.

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Additionally, six PharmD alumni received industry fellowships, which prepare graduates for a career in the pharmaceutical industry by providing intensive, hands-on training in drug discovery, development, and commercialization. Only around 450 openings for fellowships are offered across the country, while about 15,000 students graduate from PharmD programs each year, making it a highly competitive process.

Vanessa Garcia, PPA ‘22, MS ‘23, had an unexpected introduction to the world of healthcare. When she was 10 years old, she was helping her family in the kitchen when her Abuelita cut her hand while chopping. “She turned to me calmly—with no fear in her eyes—and told me to get the sewing kit,” Garcia said. “It was second nature for her.”

After some hesitation, Garcia helped her grandmother sew up her cut. This experience fueled Garcia’s desire to work with Spanish-speaking communities. Now, in her second year in KGI’s MS program—where she is pursuing a concentration in Infectious Diseases—she is researching HIV as part of her thesis.

Born and raised in the Nigerian port city of Calabar, Abasi Ene-Obong, PPM ‘14, remembers the exact moment that changed his life’s direction. Sitting in an introductory genetics class at medical school, in 2003, he heard the professor say that African genetic samples comprised less than 3% of health data bases in the world, creating a stunning vacuum in its ability to detect diseases and develop effective treatments for hundreds of millions of people. The KGI alum and founder of 54gene was featured in Time in August.

For Jessica Ngoc Dao, PPC ‘22, MS ‘23, there is not one single factor that inspired her to pursue a career in medicine but rather a convergence of factors. One theme has stayed consistent, though, and that is the desire to help others. “I grew up in a single-parent, low-income household, so I know how tough it can be financially,” Dao said. “At the same time, we were fortunate enough to get Medi-Cal and Cal-Fresh, which has helped my family with food insecurity to this day.”

Thus, Dao knows firsthand how much of a difference a helping hand can make, and she is determined to pay it forward. Her plans after graduation include preparing for med school and becoming an EMT to gain more clinical experience.

For KGI alumna Alia Manetta, MBS ’19, science and the arts have always gone hand-in-hand. She believes these combined forces are especially powerful when applied to philanthropic endeavors. “I grew up in a family passionate about the arts, health, and philanthropy,” Manetta said. “When I was young, I spent many summers working on healthcare programs in Northeast India, in hospitals with limited technology and innovation. These experiences strengthened my mission and desire to make a difference in this world.” Since 2019, Manetta has started creating commemorative art pieces (commissioned art made in honor of an individual) where 100% of the proceeds are donated to funding cancer research grants.
KGI celebrated its 25th anniversary at a remarkable Founder’s Day event on Friday, October 7, 2022, with a speaker series and gala dinner.

The Speaker Series took place on KGI’s campus and was attended by more than 150 people. Bonnie Anderson moderated a panel discussion about the future of biotech with KGI Board of Trustee members Dr. Ross Grossman, Teresia Bost, and Dr. Lydia Villa-Komaroff.

Following the premiere of a tribute video to KGI’s 25th Anniversary by alumnus Lawrence Maddela, PPC 17, MBS ’18, Dr. David Lawrence, former dean of KGI’s School of Community Medicine, spoke about the future of healthcare.

Guests then traveled to Pomona College’s Smith Campus Center for a reception and dinner. During the cocktail hour, alumnus Thomas Treddenick, MBS ’10, hosted a beer tasting provided by La Verne Brewing Company.

KGI Board Chair Jim Widergren opened the evening with welcoming remarks, followed by President Sheldon Schuster giving a brief overview of the Institute. Steve Keck from the W.M. Keck Foundation spoke about the founding gift to KGI in 1997, and guests enjoyed dinner after an invocation from The Claremont Colleges Chaplain, Father Joe Fenton.

A tribute video to KGI was shown as attendees finished eating. President Schuster then came back on stage to discuss KGI and its future. He also recognized KGI’s Most Influential Honorees, whose contributions to KGI significantly impacted the Institute’s history.

The Founder’s Day dinner also celebrated KGI’s inaugural class of Master of Business and Science students, who celebrated their 20-year reunion. Marc Doble, MBS ’02, spoke about the early years at KGI and toasted to the next 25.
Most Influential Honorees

In honor of KGI’s 25th Anniversary, KGI selected 33 individuals as most influential for service to the Institute during its first 25 years. The individuals were honored during an anniversary reception and dinner on Founder’s Day on October 7, 2022.

The most influential honorees comprise former and current KGI faculty, staff, board of trustees, advisory board members, and founding community members.

“Our honorees had a significant impact on KGI’s history,” said KGI President Dr. Sheldon Schuster. “Without them, the Institute would not be where it is today.”

Contributions from the most influential honorees include, but are not limited to, being involved with the founding of the Institute, planning the curriculum, achieving accreditation, philanthropic investment, and providing guidance and oversight to academic programs.

Scan QR code for details on each honoree.
KGI’s Call for Artwork Winners

- Best Collaboration
  Alia Manetta, MBS ’19 and Erik Whese, MBS ’21

- Best Non-printed Material
  Anna Capria, MSGDA ’23

- Best Printed Material
  Heather Anne Robles, PharmD ’24

- Best Artwork that Communicates “KGI The Next 25 Years”
  Heather Anne Robles, PharmD ’24

Founder’s Day jumpstarted a limited-edition Speaker Series focused on the future of healthcare and biotech. The series will run through May of 2023. Visit 25.kgi.edu to RSVP for the 2023 speakers.

FUTURE SPEAKERS

- MARCH 29, 2023
  DR. STEVEN GALSON
  Former Senior Vice President, Amgen, and acting Surgeon General of the United States, 2007-2009

- APRIL 20, 2023
  DR. JEREMY LEVIN
  Chairman and CEO, Ovid Therapeutics

- MAY 13, 2023
  DR. MARCIA MCNUTT
  President, National Academy of Sciences

PAST SPEAKERS

- October 7, 2022: Panel discussion with KGI Board of Trustee members Dr. Ross Grossman, Teresia Bost, and Dr. Lydia Villa-Komaroff; moderated by Bonnie Anderson.

- October 7, 2022: Dr. David Lawrence, former Dean of KGI’s School of Community Medicine

- November 1, 2022: Dr. Kiana Aran, KGI Associate Professor of Medical Diagnostics and Therapeutics; moderated by Dr. Paul Grint

- January 19, 2023: Dr. Stephen Kingsmore, President and CEO, Rady Children’s Institute for Genomic Medicine
Emily Quinn

Emily Quinn, MS, CGC, was named Program Director for KGI’s Master of Science in Human Genetics and Genetic Counseling (MSGC) program. Quinn has been with the MSGC program since its inception in 2018, serving as Associate Program Director and Assistant Professor for most of her tenure.

When the previous program director stepped down, it was clear that KGI students and faculty needed someone with a lot of intrinsic knowledge about the program and who had been around since its start to offer more stability. Given that Quinn fit that bill, it seemed natural for her to take on the position.

“It came from a strong desire to create change within our genetic counseling profession,” Quinn said. “One of the best ways to accomplish that is to be involved at the level of whom you’re admitting into a program and what type of outreach activities you’re doing to attract a more diverse group of applicants.”

Dr. Vikas Sharma

Dr. Vikas Sharma, OTD, OTR/L, was named Program Director for KGI’s Occupational Therapy Doctorate program. He has been an occupational therapist for more than 28 years. Sharma moved to the U.S. from India in 1996. Initially, in his career, he primarily worked as an occupational therapist and as a director of rehabilitation in skilled nursing facilities throughout Southern California.

In 2013, he enrolled in Pennsylvania’s Chatham University, receiving his doctorate in occupational therapy. His motive was to pursue teaching to give back to the profession. He soon moved into academia, becoming a full-time professor at Irvine’s Stanbridge University in December 2015. There, he taught many clinical conditions, ethics, and leadership courses.

“There was always a leadership aspect in the back of my mind,” Sharma said. “It’s important to me to help others grow and achieve their professional goals.”

Dr. Christy Eskes

Dr. Christy Eskes, DHSc, MPA, PA-C, was named Program Director for KGI’s Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies (MSPA) program. Eskes previously served as the MSPA Director of Didactic Education before being promoted.

“I am thrilled and honored to be named Program Director for the MSPA program,” Eskes said. “Physician Assistant (PA) education is my passion, and I’m so excited to educate the next generation.”

Eskes, an Arizona native, earned a Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science from Northern Arizona University (NAU) before coming across the PA profession. Shortly after graduating from NAU, she enrolled in the PA program at Loma Linda University.

“The MSPA team we have built at KGI is collaborative and student-focused,” Eskes said. “We aim to link these students arm-in-arm with the faculty so we can walk with them on the journey to their new career.”
CORPORATE CORNER

Team Master’s Project

KGI’s Team Master’s Project program is a great way to identify future talent and accomplish meaningful work. KGI is currently seeking sponsors for a fall 2023 start. Learn more by visiting kgi.edu/tmp.

TEAM MASTER’S PROJECT SPONSOR

Heather Erickson, V.P. Supply Chain Management & Business Operations, Sangamo

Q: What makes KGI students unique when working on your TMP?
A: Having a KGI team work on the project was valuable because they asked questions that we didn’t think to ask because there were things that we took for granted or had been working on previous assumptions. There is value in both the quality of the work, but also the fresh eyes that they bring.

Q: What advice would you give a company starting out with a new TMP?
A: The most important thing is to have something well defined by a body of work so that you and the student team can feel a real sense of accomplishment at the end, and clear objectives always give a higher degree of success. The other part is a good project requires a good investment of time from all parties, particularly in the beginning.

TEAM MASTER’S PROJECT ALUMNUS

Thomas Tredennick, MBS ’10, Associate Director Supply Chain, ArsenalBio

Q: What is the Team Master’s Project?
A: A Team Master’s Project is the opportunity for students to get real-world applications of work that would happen at a company because it is contracted with a company and they give KGI students the scope of work that they’re looking for them to solve.

Q: What was your biggest takeaway from the TMP experience?
A: Learning to be comfortable and confident in my decision-making and our teams’ decision-making, knowing that it wasn’t a clear-cut, “just do that.”

KGI’S FALL GIVING SEASON RAISED $132,689.26

SUPPORT AREAS

STUDENT SUCCESS FUND
The KGI Student Success Fund ensures we can move roadblocks together and help get all KGI students across the commencement stage and on their way to rewarding careers.

STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS
Student scholarships reduce the financial burden of the rising costs of college education, providing students more time and energy to focus on studies rather than part-time work.

AREAS OF GREATEST NEED
These gifts provide KGI leadership with the flexibility to prioritize the needs of our students, award financial aid, take advantage of arising opportunities, and react to unforeseen challenges.

THANK YOU!
ABOUT KGI

In 1997, Founding President Henry E. Riggs conceived the idea of KGI, and through a generous $50 million grant from the W.M. Keck Foundation, KGI was born as a member of The Claremont Colleges. Since 2003, under the leadership of President Sheldon Schuster, KGI continues to grow both in terms of its number of enrolled students and in its reputation for excellence.

KGI offers innovative postgraduate degrees and certificates that integrate life and health sciences, business, engineering, pharmacy, and genetics. With a focus on team projects and hands-on industry experiences, KGI provides pathways for students to become leaders within healthcare and the applied life sciences.

KGI consists of three schools: Henry E. Riggs School of Applied Life Sciences, School of Community Medicine, and School of Pharmacy and Health Sciences.

ADMINISTRATION

• Sheldon M. Schuster, President
• Larry Grill, Dean of Research
• Cynthia Martinez, Dean of the School of Community Medicine
• Sofia Toro, Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid
• Srikanth Kolluru, Interim Dean of the School of Pharmacy and Health Sciences
• Megan Prosser, Dean of the Henry E. Riggs School of Applied Life Sciences
• Kelly Esperias, Chief Financial Officer and Chief Operating Officer
• Cheryl Merritt, Assistant Vice President of Institutional Development & Partnerships

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KGI STATISTICS

657 STUDENTS ENROLLED 2022–2023

ETNIC BREAKDOWN

- Asian 35%
- White 21%
- Hispanic / Latino 17%
- Non-resident Alien 8%
- Two or More Races 7%
- Black / African American 7%
- Unknown 3%
- American Indian / Native Alaskan 5%
- Pacific Islander 1%

GENDER BREAKDOWN

- Female 68.5%
- Male 31%
- Unknown 0.5%

AVERAGE AGE OF KGI STUDENTS

25.78

TOTAL NUMBER OF KGI ALUMNI

1,952 WITH 2,182 EARNED DEGREES

INSIDE KGI

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KGI PODCAST

JAN 11, 2023
#153 Dr. Barbara Fortini Discusses KGI’s One-of-a-Kind Genomic Data Analytics Program

JAN 4, 2023
#152 Dr. James Sterling on the PhD in Applied Life Sciences

DEC 7, 2022
#151 Dr. Joon Kim on KGI’s Postbac Programs

NOV 30, 2022
#150 Dr. Cynthia Martinez Discusses KGI’s Master of Science in Community Medicine Program

NOV 16, 2022
#149 Dr. Kiana Aran and Dr. Paul Grint: Journey to Freedom through Science

NOV 9, 2022
#148 25th Anniversary Oral History

NOV 2, 2022
#147 Dr. Carol Nacy Industry: Industry Talk

OCT 26, 2022
#146 25th Anniversary Speaker Series: The Future of Healthcare with Dr. David Lawrence

OCT 19, 2022
#145 25th Anniversary Speaker Series: Panel Discussion on the Future of Biotech and the Life Sciences

SEP 16, 2022
#144 Emily Quinn, New MSGC Program Director

AUG 1, 2022
#143 Dr. Cynthia Martinez Named School of Community Medicine Dean

CAMPUS EVENTS
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In Memory

Minh Dang
Assistant Dean for Experiential Education and Professor of Practice for Clinical Sciences
School of Pharmacy and Health Sciences
Assistant Dean for Experiential Education and Professor of Practice for Clinical Sciences, Minh Dang, passed away on September 6, 2022.

Dang served KGI well as the inaugural Assistant Dean for Experiential Education. She was hired by the Founding Dean, Dr. Kathy Webster, in February 2013 to set up the basic infrastructure of the department.

“We will keep Dean Dang’s family in our thoughts during this difficult time,” President Sheldon Schuster said. “Her amazing contributions to KGI, its students, and this community will never be forgotten.”

Robert Stein
Professor of Practice for Pharmacy Law & Ethics and Healthcare Information Technology
School of Pharmacy and Health Sciences
Dr. Robert Stein, Professor of Practice for Pharmacy Law & Ethics and Healthcare Information Technology, passed away on December 28, 2022.

“Bob was highly respected as a teacher and mentor to our students and a highly valued colleague to us all,” President Sheldon Schuster said. “I hope we remember Bob for his passion for the students, sharp wit, compassion, and dignity!”

Stein was a founding faculty member in KGI’s School of Pharmacy and Health Sciences and pioneered a unique program in Law and Ethics education.
INVESTING IN INNOVATORS

During the 2022 Fall Giving Season, KGI alumni, faculty, staff, parents, and friends from around the country tremendously impacted our students and campus through their philanthropy. A big thank you to those who participated and contributed more than $132,000 to support our talented KGI students.

Your generosity enables us to provide meaningful scholarships to students from diverse backgrounds and allows them to access and afford the innovative education at KGI. Every gift plays an integral part in the success of KGI. From student scholarships and leading-edge research to transformative healthcare education and meaningful programs, your generosity makes a difference in the lives of many KGI students who are training to become skilled scientists and healthcare leaders in our communities.

Learn how YOU can invest in innovators by visiting kgi.edu/give.

Save the Date

Join the KGI community on Thursday, April 6, for 2023 KGI Giving Day, a 24-hour online giving campaign. Through this annual tradition, you can support transforming the lives of the next generation of KGI innovators and leaders.