

## PharmForum 2009 Gives Regional Scientists Platform to Share Research Results

Contributed by Erin Parsons  
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Harsha Vinnakota, chair of the UM student chapter of AAPS and student coordinator of PharmForum, talks to attendees during the opening session. UM photo by Erin Parsons.

OXFORD, Miss. - Pharmacy researchers and graduate students from four states are gathered in Oxford this week for the annual PharmForum conference at the University of Mississippi.

Hosted by the UM student chapter of the American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists, the conference is a regional scientific meeting in collaboration with the Southern Regional Discussion Group. SRDG comprises pharmaceutical science graduate students, post-doctoral fellows and faculty from the universities of Mississippi, Tennessee and Louisiana-Monroe, and the Arkansas Medical Center.

PharmForum, which opened Wednesday and runs through Thursday in the Gertrude C. Ford Ballroom at the Inn at Ole Miss, gives SRDG scientists an opportunity to collaborate with other regional scientists. Most importantly, the conference provides a forum for the scientists to share the results of their latest research, said Bonnie Avery, UM associate professor of pharmaceuticals and co-chair of AAPS-Southern Regional Discussion Group.

"PharmForum gives these scientists a venue to present in front of their peers," Avery said. "It also gives them a little bit of practice before they go to the national meetings."

"This is a particularly important opportunity for graduate students who may not have the financial support to travel to national scientific meetings," said Harsha Vinnakota, AAPS-UM student chapter chair and student coordinator of PharmForum.

The conference began with opening remarks from Alice Clark, UM vice chancellor for research and sponsored programs. "This is such an important activity," Clark said. "It's a great opportunity to share ideas locally."

Throughout the conference, scientists will be giving both podium and poster presentations about the research projects. An award will be given to the best presentation in both categories.

The conference also features guest speakers from pharmaceutical industry and academia. Keynote speaker John Lisack Jr., CAE, executive director of AAPS, will present the speech, "Getting Your Foot in the Door: How to Find a Job and Market Yourself in a Down Economy." As executive director, Lisack develops and establishes programs, policy and strategies that support the AAPS mission and vision, and oversees AAPS' finances, personnel, materials, and information resources. A Certified Association Executive, Lisack has worked in the association management profession

for over 25 years.

Avery believes it is imperative to continue to hold conferences such as PharmForum.

"In educating pharmaceutical scientists, it is so important to bring together all the different areas of research, so we can start thinking and working together," Avery said.

To learn more about pharmacy education and research at UM, go to <http://www.pharmacy.olemiss.edu> .