



MCW

PHARMACY SCHOOL

MCW School of Pharmacy

2025-2026

Academic Year in Review



A message from the founding Dean

This past academic year began in July 2025 with our largest cohort of student pharmacists, numbering over 60. Such success was due to the leadership of the Office of Student Affairs and the collective engagement of School of Pharmacy faculty, staff and students. The following stories highlight the continuing successes of our “pharmily” of students and faculty.

The Medical College of Wisconsin’s PharmD program has continued to progress since its launch in 2016, graduating its inaugural class in 2020. Reflecting on these accomplishments across our four missions – learn, innovate, engage and advocate – highlights the profound organizational and cultural transformations that have taken place within the school that collectively contribute to the ongoing evolution of the institution as a whole.



GEORGE E. MACKINNON III,
PhD, MS, RPh, FASHP, FNAP
Founding Dean, School of Pharmacy

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Class of 2026

7th Consecutive MCW Graduate Wins National Excellence in Public Health Pharmacy Award

Captain Monica Micoliczyk, graduate of the PharmD Class of 2026, is the MCW School of Pharmacy’s 7th consecutive recipient of the U.S. Public Health Service’s Excellence in Public Health Pharmacy Award! Each year, about 90 student pharmacists from around the country are nominated for the award, and only 10 are selected as recipients. Capt. Micoliczyk placed the needs of her fellow soldiers in the U.S. Army ahead of her own when she put her PharmD education on hold for an overseas deployment. She served a nine-month mission providing comprehensive behavioral health services and resources to soldiers serving in the Middle East.



2026 MCW PharmD Graduate Wins National Outstanding Professional Development Award

The MCW School of Pharmacy is one of 17 programs nationwide to receive the Outstanding Professional Development Award from the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP). MCW’s ASHP student chapter developed a residency preparation program, delivering comprehensive training in key areas, including writing CVs and cover letters, strategies for securing strong letters of recommendation and guidance on best practices for the match process. The 2024-2025 president of MCW’s ASHP student chapter and 2026 PharmD graduate, Maura Keenan, led the project, compiling professional development resources and creating an organized timeline that listed progress checkpoints leading up to residency application and interview season.

Class of 2027

MCW Pharmacy Students Launch Industry Pharmacists Organization Chapter, Student Completes National Internship

In 2025, students and faculty lead Dr. Abhay Chauhan established MCW’s chapter of the Industry Pharmacists Organization (IPhO) to explore career opportunities, network and obtain resources for applying to post-graduate fellowship positions.

“I have never been prouder to serve my community in a way that demystifies the pathway to a dream career for myself and for the PharmD colleagues who will follow,” said Zinzi Sitshebo, 2027 PharmD candidate and IPhO chapter president.



Kori Kruegel (left), IPhO chapter member and Zinzi Sitshebo (right), IPhO chapter president



“Being in the Midwest, there are not as many immediate pharmaceutical industry resources for MCW students, so we try to bring in speakers from across the country,” explained Kori Kruegel, chapter member and 2027 PharmD candidate. “The IPhO chapter is a great resource for students to make connections and learn about the career opportunities they may have never known existed.”

Kruegel is the first MCW student to complete a national internship with IPhO. The Virtual Flex-Time Internship program allows students to gain real-world experience working with pharmaceutical industry leaders and fellows nationwide.

AACP Pharm4Me Student Ambassador

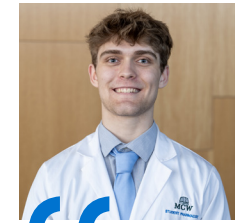
Zinzi Sitshebo, 2027 PharmD candidate, was selected to participate in the inaugural Pharm4Me Student Ambassador Program. The American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy selected her and 42 other students nationwide. Zinzi will work with this cohort to inspire interest in pharmacy education and careers.

Class of 2028

Students Participate in Personalized
Pharmacogenomics Testing

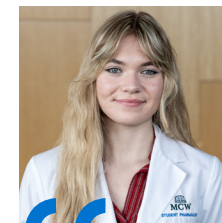
First-year MCW PharmD students have the rare opportunity to engage in personalized pharmacogenomics testing. In their principles of drug action and pharmacogenomics course, they complete a buccal sample by swabbing the insides of their cheeks. Weeks later, after learning the foundational concepts to interpret the results, students then explore how their genes may affect their respective responses to certain medications.

This opportunity is available thanks to a partnership with RPRD Diagnostics, located close to the MCW-Milwaukee campus and founded by Ulrich Broeckel, MD, MCW professor of pediatrics and pharmacy. Pharmacogenomics testing can inform proper medication dosing, showing whether a patient is a poor metabolizer and thus needs a low dose to prevent adverse side effects, or if they are a fast metabolizer and needs to start at a higher dose for the treatment to be effective.



“I’m a normal metabolizer, but another part of the pharmacogenomics test regarding the immune system showed an abnormality. If I were to ever get HIV, the first-line medication would cause a severe allergic reaction. Also, for a particular antibiotic, I would have an increased risk of getting a severe cutaneous adverse reaction. These results help me be more informed and safer, if I were to need these medications in the future.

— ALEX SCHNEIDER, PY1 STUDENT



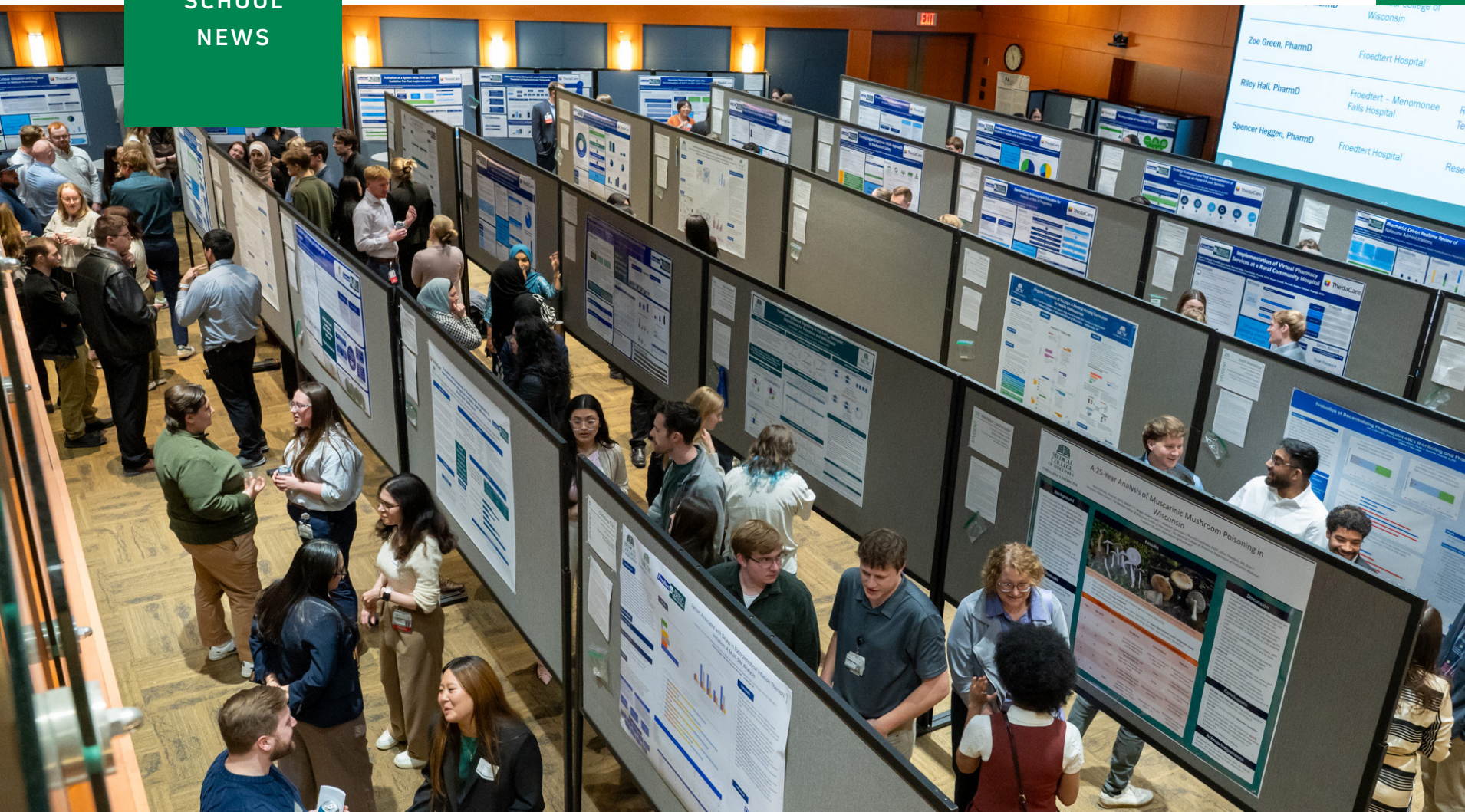
“Pharmacogenomics testing is going to be crucial in the future when it comes to individualizing therapy. From my test, I found out that I’m a poor metabolizer of a medication I had taken a few years ago, so my body doesn’t break it down into the inactive form and get rid of it as fast as someone else would be able to. This explains why I had such bad side effects and had to discontinue the medication.

— CAMERON KORDT, PY1 STUDENT



“My pharmacogenomics test results can be used in a predictive manner – and provide important information for my family. I learned I have a slight genetic variation that enhances vitamin K activation of coagulation naturally, which means my blood can clot faster. My dad is being monitored for some heart conditions, so in the unhelpful event he had to be placed on warfarin, we’ll know he is likely similar to me and needs to be placed on a higher dose to start.

— STEPHAN NOONAN, PY1 STUDENT



2026 Research & Scholarship Forum Showcases the Expanding Role of Pharmacists in Interprofessional Research

The MCW School of Pharmacy's 2026 Research & Scholarship Forum exhibited the work of students, residents, fellows, preceptors, faculty and affiliated partners across the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center. The poster showcase featured the findings of 59 projects, highlighting the interdisciplinary scope of research in which pharmacists play a vital role.

Best Poster Awards

BEST STUDENT POSTER

Kori Kruegel – 2027 PharmD Candidate,
Academic Concentration in Research

"Investigating Tolerance and Withdrawal
Mechanisms of Antipsychotics and
Antidepressants at the 5-HT_{2A} Receptor"

BEST RESIDENT POSTER

Kathleen Soter, PharmD – PGY1 Acute Care
Pharmacy Resident, Froedtert Hospital

"Multivariable Analysis of Risk Factors
Associated with Naloxone Administration
for Opioid Reversal in Hospitalized Patients"

BEST OVERALL CLINICAL IMPACT

Kyle Rehrauer, PharmD – PGY1 Acute Care
Pharmacy Resident, Froedtert Hospital

"Adenosine versus Metoprolol
versus Diltiazem for the Treatment of
Supraventricular Tachycardia"

Honorable Mentions

CHEYENNE MICHELSEN

PharmD Candidate 2027,
Academic Concentration in Research

"Methylation Inhibition Reverses
Resistance to Temozolomide in
Human Glioblastoma Cells"

ZINZI SITSHEBO

PharmD Candidate 2027
Academic Concentration in Research

"Dendrimer-Based Formulations
for Improved Retinol Stability"



The inaugural Excellence in Research Mentorship Award was presented to Kajua Lor, PharmD, BCACP, professor and founding chair of the MCW School of Pharmacy's Department of Clinical Sciences. "Dr. Lor has taught me how to navigate research design, think critically and apply culturally responsive approaches," wrote Mai Vang, 2027 PharmD candidate, in her nomination statement.



MCW School of Pharmacy Receives NACDS Foundation Award

The MCW School of Pharmacy has been selected as a recipient of a NACDS Foundation's Inspiring Interest & Opportunities Award. The funded proposal will support the development of a one-credit, fully asynchronous pharmacy exploration course designed to reach high school and undergraduate students nationwide. This course will increase awareness of pharmacy career pathways, build professional and leadership skills and create a pathway into community-based, patient-centered healthcare careers. The flexible online format will expand access for students regardless of geography, including those in rural and underserved communities.

Record Number of Applicants for Third Year of MCW Pre- Pharmacy Scholars Program

The MCW School of Pharmacy's third annual Pre-Pharmacy Scholars Program has expanded to include both high school and college participants. The program saw a record number of 124 applicants this year, with 25 scholars accepted.

Tamya Jackson, a sophomore at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, was among the first cohort of college students to join the program. She has been a pharmacy technician for five years, beginning in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"As a person who has struggled with mental health, I feel it's important for patients to interact with someone who looks like them," explained Jackson. "I love learning about medications and how they work in the body, so becoming a psychiatric pharmacist excites me."



MCW PharmD Students Learn Specialized Pediatrics Skills from Practicing Pharmacists at Children's Wisconsin

Since its founding in 2016, leaders at the MCW School of Pharmacy and Children's Wisconsin have cultivated opportunities for students to learn from experts about the pediatric pharmacy specialty. The pharmacy school and children's hospital are adjacent to each other on the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center campus and connected via a skywalk.

The MCW-Children's partnership has evolved over time; the latest edition is the establishment of a new pediatrics elective course. It covers how drug therapy differs when dealing with pediatric versus adult patients and focuses on disease states specific to the pediatric population.





Dual-Degree / Early Assurance Program Welcomes Largest Cohort to Date, Adds Minnesota Partner School

In July 2025, the MCW School of Pharmacy welcomed its largest cohort to date for the Dual-Degree / Early Assurance Program. As they completed their PY1 year at MCW, the students earned their bachelor’s degree from their respective undergraduate institutions.

The MCW PharmD program has Dual-Degree / Early Assurance Program partnerships with a total of 14 undergraduate institutions, allowing students to earn their bachelor’s and PharmD in just six years total. This year, the program added its first partnership with a Minnesota institution, Concordia College.

APPE Rural Health Track Expands to Central Wisconsin, First Wausau Discovery Day

The Office of Experiential Education had its first student participate in the Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experience (APPE) Rural Health Track in Central Wisconsin. Rickie Yang, originally from Wausau, had a desire to return to his hometown to serve the patients of his community, which he was able to do throughout the APPE year. Yang made connections that helped him secure a PGY1 residency at the Tomah VA Medical Center in West-Central Wisconsin. In addition to providing opportunities to students, the expansion strengthened the School of Pharmacy’s relationships with partners in the area. For example, Aspirus Health in Wausau hosted the school’s first Central Wisconsin Discovery Day event for prospective students to learn about MCW’s PharmD program.



Faculty Achievements



10
AWARDS & HONORS

20

POSTERS/ABSTRACTS

20

TOTAL PUBLICATIONS

- 3 Publications with PharmD Students



49

TOTAL PRESENTATIONS

- 11 Local
- 15 Regional
- 18 National
- 5 International



21
TOTAL RESEARCH GRANTS & PROJECTS

- 14 Active Grants
- 5 Submitted Grants
- 2 Projects



Sarah Schmidt, PharmD, Manager, Walgreens Specialty Pharmacy and Walgreens-MCW Shared Faculty (left) and Rocky LaDien, Retired Area Healthcare Supervisor, Walgreens (right)

MCW Demonstrates National Leadership in Walgreens Support Initiatives for Aspiring Pharmacists

The MCW School of Pharmacy is one of 21 institutions nationwide to launch the Walgreens Community Practice Shared Faculty Program, which places experienced pharmacists and pharmacy managers in mentorship roles on college campuses once per week. According to Walgreens, the mission is “to bridge academic learning with real-world experience, helping students gain insight into the evolving role of community pharmacists and the impact they can make every day in patient care.”

Sarah Schmidt, PharmD, manager at Walgreens Specialty Pharmacy in Wauwatosa, is a member of the program’s inaugural class and started her role on the MCW campus in mid-November 2025.

How MCW School of Pharmacy Faculty Gamify Learning

At the MCW Innovations in Healthcare Education Research (IHER) Conference in September 2025, pharmacy faculty presented the workshop “Transforming Pharmacy Education: Designing and Implementing Serious Learning Games.” Games in healthcare education support the development of critical thinking, decision-making and clinical reasoning skills through collaboration with peers and measurable learning outcomes. Rachel Kavanaugh, PharmD, BCACP, director of professional laboratories – year 2, incorporates an escape room game into patient care lab, a fun way for students to cooperate and test their knowledge on diabetes. Another game is a murder mystery interprofessional education activity with MCW pharmacy students and nursing students from the Milwaukee School of Engineering.



FACULTY NEWS



Pharmacy School Associate Professor Publishes Toxic Mushroom Card Game, Children’s Book

To make teaching mushroom toxicology more engaging and fun for learners, Ryan Feldman, PharmD, BCPS, DABAT, associate professor, developed a card game called GOTTA PICCEM. The name is a mnemonic device for the 15 different toxic mushroom classes, organized by the timeframe when symptoms appear. He created a rhyming presentation to help keep his students engaged while learning mushroom anatomy, then transformed that into a children’s book called “Poisonous Fungus Amongus.” Dr. Feldman is also an emergency medicine pharmacist at Froedtert Hospital and a clinical toxicologist and certified poison specialist with the Wisconsin Poison Center.

2026 Instructors of the Year

Congratulations to our 2026 Instructors of the Year! This honor is awarded to faculty members who made the most significant impact on student learning during the first and second years of instruction.

YEAR 1
Biopharmaceutical Sciences

EHAB A. ABOURASHED, PhD, MS, BPharm
Assistant Dean for Academic and Curricular Affairs, Professor

YEAR 2
Biopharmaceutical Sciences

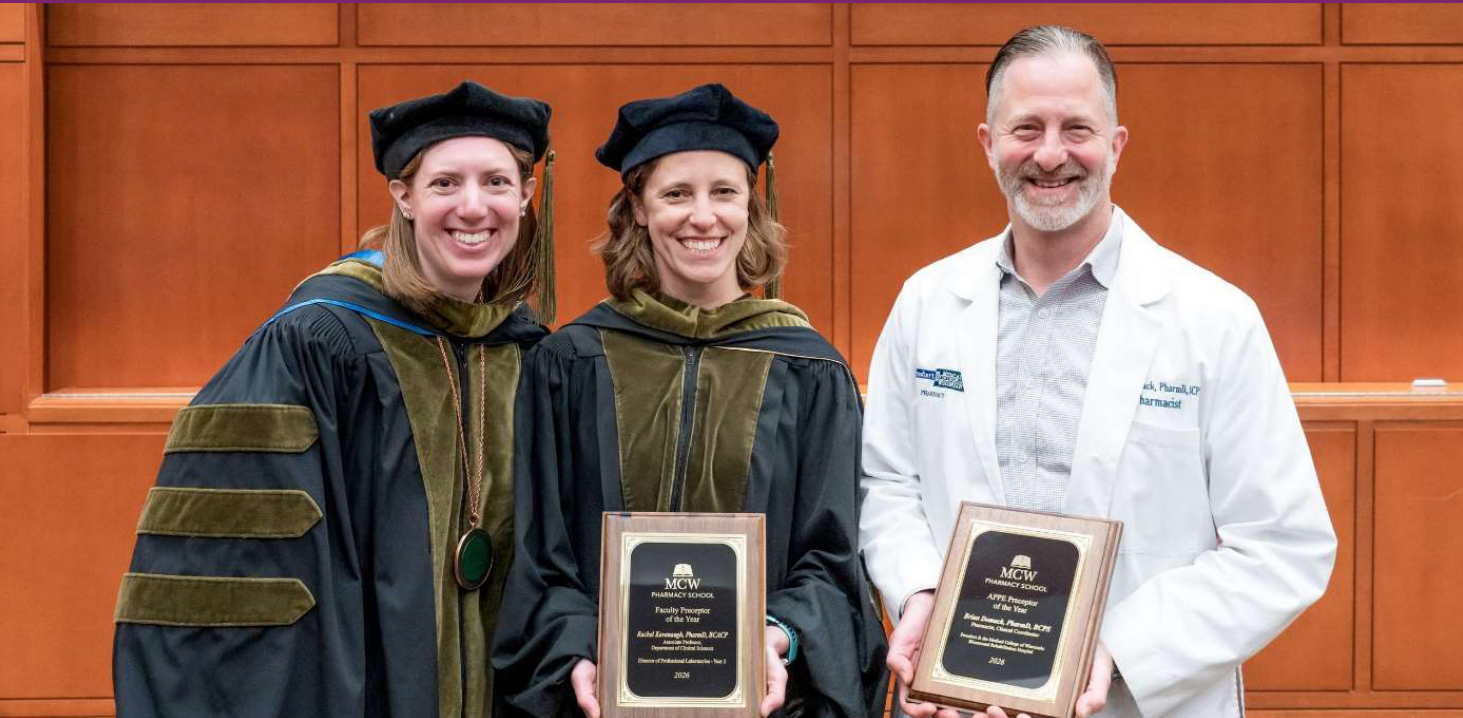
ABIR T. EL-ALFY, PhD, MS
Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, Professor

YEAR 1
Clinical Sciences

MICHAEL DEBISSCHOP, PharmD
Professor

YEAR 2
Clinical Sciences

AMEER H. EL-AFANDI, PharmD
Assistant Professor



2026 Preceptors of the Year

**ADVANCED PHARMACY
PRACTICE EXPERIENCE (APPE)
PRECEPTOR OF THE YEAR**

BRIAN DOMACK, PHARMD, BCPS
Pharmacist, Clinical Coordinator
Froedtert Bluemound Rehabilitation Center

FACULTY PRECEPTOR OF THE YEAR

RACHEL KAVANAUGH, PHARMD, BCACP
Associate Professor, Director of Professional Labs – Year 2
MCW School of Pharmacy

**INTRODUCTORY PHARMACY
PRACTICE EXPERIENCE (IPPE)
PRECEPTOR OF THE YEAR**

GRACE MORTRUDE, PHARMD, BCIDP
Infectious Diseases Clinical Pharmacy Specialist
Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center

**INTERDISCIPLINARY
COLLEAGUE OF THE YEAR**

TAMARA AHMAD, RN, ADN
Community Nursing Senior Manager
Hayat Pharmacy



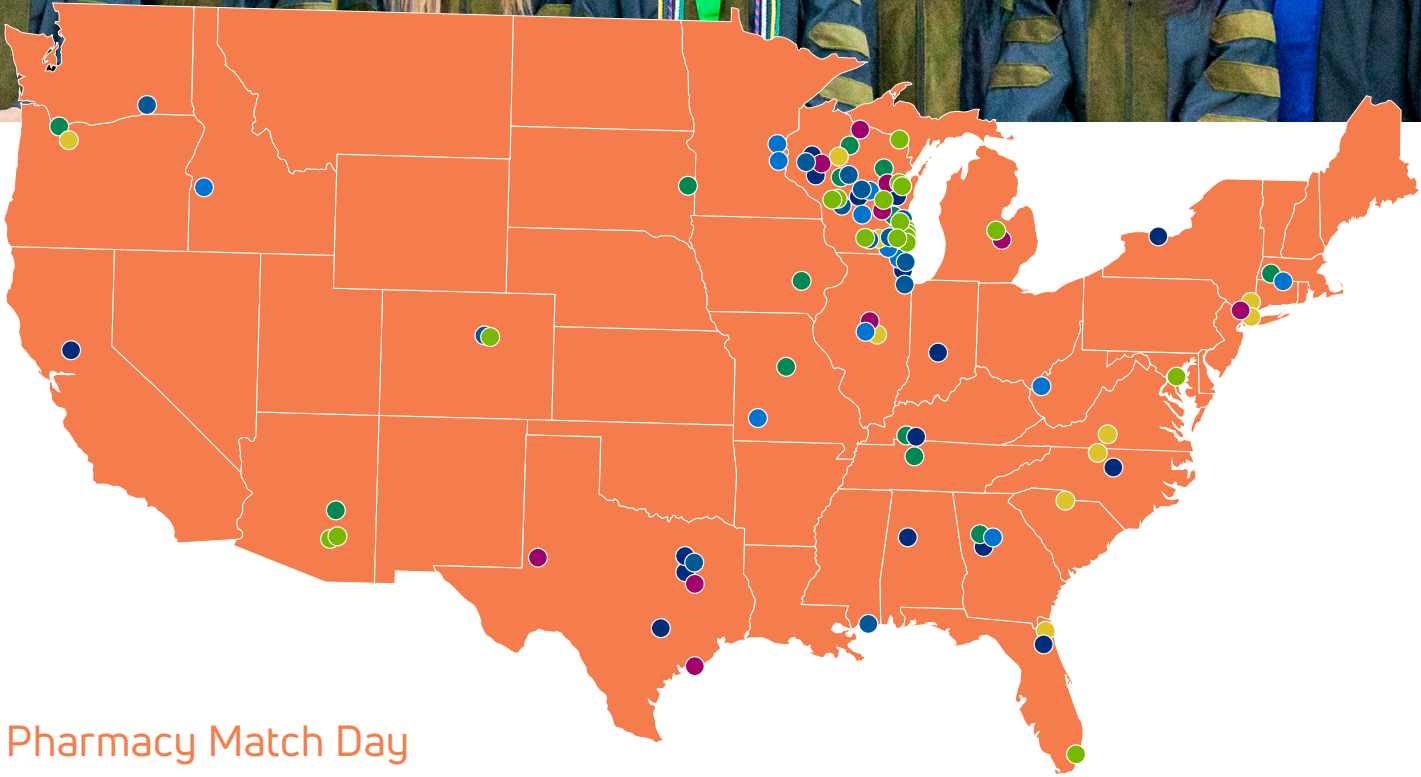
In mid-May, the MCW School of Pharmacy conferred the Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) degree on 35 students in the Class of 2026.

PGY1 Residency Placements

More than half of graduates are continuing their education through residencies. Following the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) Match, 21 of 24 participating students obtained post-graduate year one (PGY1) positions, yielding an 88 percent PGY1 residency match rate, exceeding the national match rate of 84 percent. Overall, 76 percent of these graduates are continuing their training in Wisconsin.

Direct-to-Career Path

A number of students have chosen the direct-to-career pathway. A handful secured employment prior to graduation, with practice settings including community pharmacy, assisted living and the Medical Services Corps in the U.S. Army.

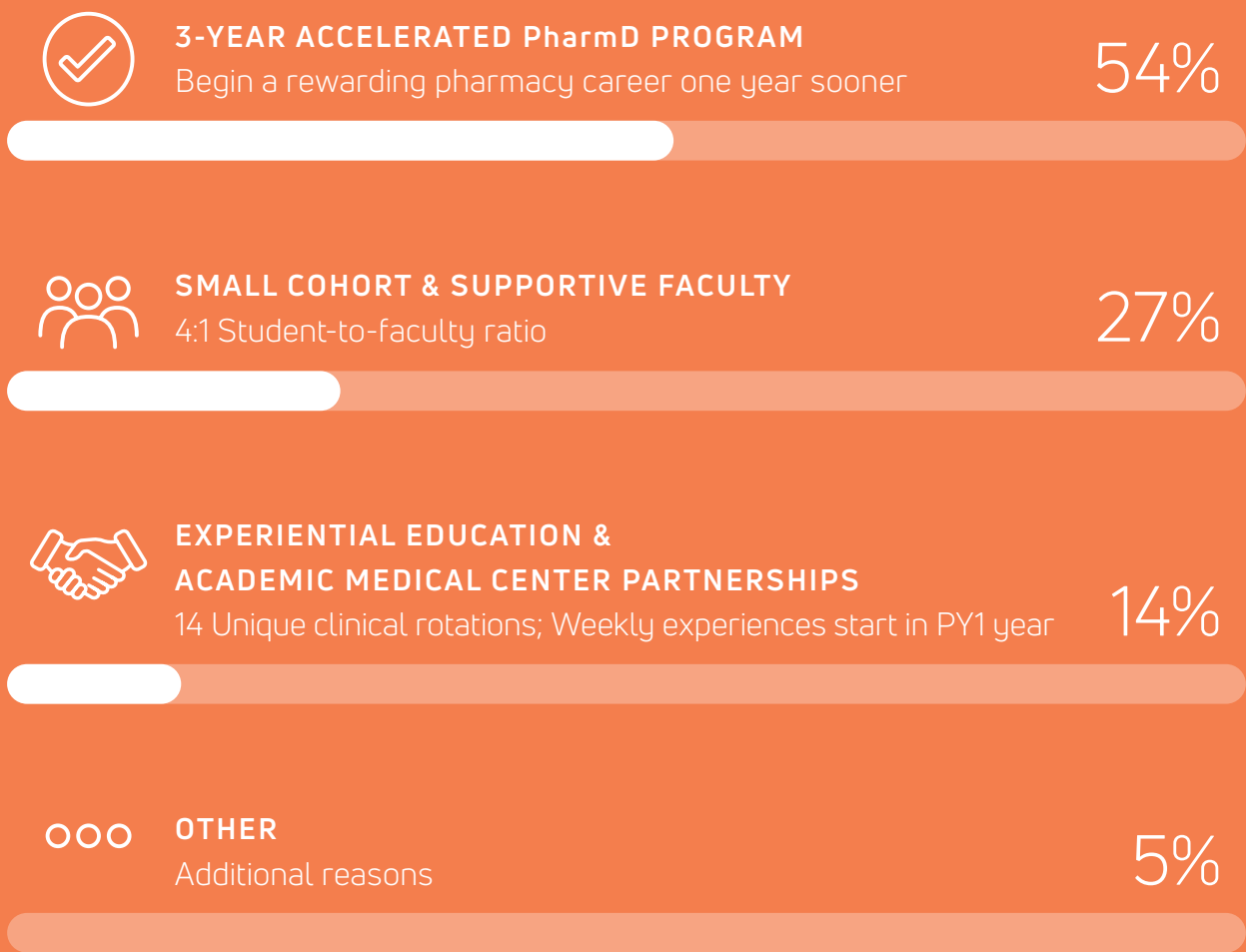


Pharmacy Match Day
Results by State

2020	●	2024	●
2021	●	2025	●
2022	●	2026	●
2023	●		

Top Reasons to attend the MCW School of Pharmacy

According to a Survey of Class of 2026 Graduates



3-YEAR ACCELERATED PharmD PROGRAM

“ The #1 reason you should attend the MCW School of Pharmacy over other pharmacy programs is because it is an accelerated program that has high expectations of its students, therefore it challenges you not only as a student, but as a professional.

SMALL COHORT & SUPPORTIVE FACULTY

“ The support system is designed for students to succeed.

EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION & ACADEMIC MEDICAL CENTER PARTNERSHIPS

“ Nowhere else would you get this many hands-on experiences in so many different areas of pharmacy!

OTHER

“ The #1 reason I would recommend MCW School of Pharmacy is its inclusive, diverse, and accelerated program, which allows students to grow quickly into practice-ready pharmacists while being supported by a collaborative community that values different backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences.



William Krombholz, PharmD '20 Specialty Infusion Pharmacist

As the inaugural PharmD Class of 2020 celebrated its five-year reunion, William Krombholz, PharmD received the 2025 Pharmacy School Alumnus or Alumna of the Year award from the MCW/Marquette Medical Alumni Association. Dr. Krombholz is a specialty infusion pharmacist at Froedtert & the Medical College of Wisconsin, part of a team of nurses and pharmacists who help patients receive infusion treatments from the comfort of their own home or at one of four infusion suites. He ensures medications are appropriate, monitors labs and works closely with physicians.

“Through collaborative practice agreements, we are managing some anemia and endocrine patients, so I enjoy having my own independent practice and patients I follow up with weekly and get to know pretty well. Seeing the gradual progression in either how the patient is feeling or how their labs are improving, with our help, is the most rewarding part of my job.



Megan Mills, PharmD '23 & Rachel Schneider, PharmD '23 Clinical Oncology Pharmacists

Friends and classmates Megan Mills, PharmD and Rachel Schneider, PharmD both graduated from the MCW School of Pharmacy in 2023, then completed PGY2 oncology residencies at Froedtert Hospital and were hired as clinical oncology pharmacists.

“For an oncology pharmacist in the clinic setting, you’re working with an interdisciplinary team including providers. The pharmacist takes the lead on oral chemotherapy, so what I love so much is getting lots of one-on-one interaction with patients – teaching them how the medication is used, monitoring their progress and following up. We’re really involved in their care and help put the patient at ease when they’re going through a really tough time.

— RACHEL SCHNEIDER, PharmD '23

“Froedtert has a precision medicine clinic for patients with rare cancer types who have gone through several lines of treatment and are ready to be treated with something more targeted. A pharmacist can complete a pharmacogenomics test for a patient to see how their genetic makeup impacts their response to certain treatments.

— MEGAN MILLS, PharmD '23



Bridget Nelson, PharmD '24 Headache Medicine Clinical Pharmacy Specialist

Dr. Nelson is a non-traditional student who earned a bachelor's in microbiology, master's in public health and worked for almost 15 years in lab positions before deciding to pursue a Doctor of Pharmacy degree. During her pharmacy school education, Dr. Nelson participated in the Longitudinal Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experiences (LAPPE) program, which allowed her extensive clinical rotation time at the Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center in Milwaukee. After earning her PharmD in 2024, she completed a post-graduate year one (PGY1) residency and post-graduate year two (PGY2) residency in internal medicine at the Milwaukee VA. In June 2026, she accepted a role as the headache medicine clinical pharmacy specialist at the Milwaukee VA. This new position funded by the National Headache Center of Excellence will support neurologists in the neurology/headache clinic.

“Veterans need specialized care. If there are mental health issues, like PTSD from being in combat, there may be some trust issues that providers need to work through and develop a positive dynamic.

— BRIDGET NELSON, PharmD '24

Kaitlin Larson, PharmD '25 Pediatric Pharmacist

After completing her residency with Children's Wisconsin in June 2026, Kaitlin Larson, PharmD '25 has accepted a full-time role as a pediatric pharmacist on the overnight shift. She says this practice setting, in which she will staff both the pediatric ICU and emergency departments, became her career goal due to the urgent need and various conditions that are seen – from ingestion or breathing emergencies, to motor vehicle crash injuries or gunshot wounds.

“I really love the rush of adrenaline when I'm preparing emergency medications. It's exciting for me to be able to contribute positively with medications, whether that's taking a child out of their seizure, helping with their breathing or whatever the case may be.



Follow the MCW School of Pharmacy

Get a sense of what it's like to be a Doctor of Pharmacy student at the Medical College of Wisconsin by following us on social media. We feature Student Social Media Club content, information for prospective PharmD students, plus student, faculty and alumni news.

INSTAGRAM: @mcwpharmacy

TIKTOK: @medicalcollegeofwi

FACEBOOK: MCW School of Pharmacy

LINKEDIN: Medical College of Wisconsin School of Pharmacy

Ready to Start Your PharmD Journey?



Complete this short form to express your interest. We'll send you information on MCW's 3-Year PharmD program and connect you with a staff member who can support you through the application process.

MCW.EDU/PHARMACY





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