Alumni Spotlight: Allen Chao (PhD 1973, HDR 2000)

Allen Chao is the co-founder of Watson Pharmaceuticals. In 2001, he and his wife, Lee-Hwa (BS 1973), made a $5 million gift to fund The Chao Center for Industrial Pharmacy and Contract Manufacturing in the Purdue Research Park. The center opened its doors in 2005 with the mission to provide a means to educate students in current good manufacturing practices (cGMP), offer services to the pharmaceutical industry, and allow faculty members from all areas of Purdue University to conduct research in a cGMP facility. In December 2016, the center began operating under its newly incorporated name of the Purdue GMP Center LLC. The contract manufacturing organization remains focused on providing pharmaceutical based solutions that involve formulation development, clinical-scale cGMP manufacturing, and small-scale commercial cGMP manufacturing to clients. Read more about the Purdue GMP Center LLC here.

Interview with Allen Chao

Why did you choose to attend Purdue University? Purdue has one of the best industrial pharmacy schools; that's why I chose the Purdue College of Pharmacy to get my doctoral degree.
What first motivated you to start your own company, Watson Pharmaceuticals? I had the training and practical experience in the pharmaceutical field, and in 1984 when the U.S. Congress passed the Hatch-Waxman Act, I realized there was an opportunity to produce quality and affordable medicine, with family support, to found Watson Pharmaceuticals. I am proud of being able to start a company to create jobs and to contribute to the lowering cost of medicine which can help patients and healthcare providers.

What first motivated you to launch the Chao Center for Industrial Pharmacy and Contract Manufacturing, now the Purdue GMP Center, and what are your goals for the center moving forward? As a Purdue Pharmacy alumnus, I think it is an opportunity to give back to the College and to help students and graduates gain experience at the facility if they choose. My goal is to fully utilize the Purdue GMP Center for other pharmaceutical lines and facilitate a wonderful growth opportunity for the center by expanding into compound development.

Why is it important for you to stay connected with the Purdue College of Pharmacy? I received tremendous theory and practice of the industrial pharmacy education from Purdue which made part of my success of my career. I want to contribute to the College so that other students and faculty members can have the opportunity to achieve their higher goals.