From USU Uintah Basin Alum to Nuclear Pharmacist: The Path of Eric Funk

USU-Uintah Basin

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After earning his associate degree from Utah State University (USU) Uintah Basin and then his pharmacy prerequisites, Eric Funk moved to Las Vegas to begin pharmacy school. Today, he’s a nuclear pharmacist at PETNET Solutions Inc., a Siemens Healthineers Company where he manufactures various imaging agents. He is responsible for the manufacturing and dispensing of various radiopharmaceuticals, the majority of which are used in imaging studies to look at the physiological pathways and disease states of the body.

“We take a radioactive isotope and attach it to a drug that is specific to the area of the body or disease we want to see,” said Funk. “There are special cameras that can image the radioactivity and display the information. The most common radiopharmaceutical I deal with helps in imaging and evaluating the treatment success or spread of cancer. The information these tools provide allow physicians to determine the best course of action for patients.”

Funk’s work provides physicians with products that help give more information about their patients. Recently, he was involved with submitting a new Alzheimer’s imaging agent to the FDA for commercial use. If approved, the imaging agent will be easily accessible to public and private health practices, helping physicians provide more targeted care for their patients.

While at USU Uintah Basin, Funk built a solid groundwork he could rely on while in pharmacy school. “I regularly referred back to my notes from my time at USU, especially from my chemistry and biology classes, in studying and helping other classmates understand complicated concepts.” His success in graduate school opened up the opportunity to enter the field in which he currently operates.

One of the major benefits in attending USU Uintah Basin for Funk was the class sizes. He was able to get to know his professors and get additional help outside of class if necessary. To this day, he’s been able to keep in touch with some of them thanks to their friendship while he was earning his associate degree. Another factor for his early educational success was the convenience he had to schedule courses when he wanted and needed them.

“USU Uintah Basin provided a good variety of courses during the week and weekend that allowed me to choose classes that worked with my schedule,” said Funk. “Adaptable schedules, a convenient location, and great professors were the core of my success during my associate degree.”

For now, Funk is done with school and is able to do impactful work that helps individuals on a large scale receive better care. With a solid career in hand, he is able to focus on his family and hobbies, like going to the lake, taking his kids to the park, and doing home improvements. His is a common story amongst USU graduates who grind to receive a good education and reap the rewards both during school and later with a rewarding career.
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