

## LSUHSC Science Partnership – Investing in our Future Scientists

by Jaime Becnel

In July of 2002, students in the School of Graduate Studies at LSUHSC initiated a community project and formed a science partnership with New Orleans Public Elementary Schools. In an effort to help failing public schools and boost LEAP test results, LSUHSC students, postdocs and faculty adopt local elementary schools and supplement teacher's lessons with weekly science demonstrations. The goal is to improve the 4th grader's performance on the LEAP exam in science and math and just show kids science can be fun.

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Click on the following link to cast your vote!

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for the name of the SOM Newsletter!

We'd like to thank all of you  
who submitted their ideas.



Human brain demonstration by MD/PhD student Alex Yang during Field day

Although Katrina closed some of the original schools, the Partnership now includes A.P. Tureaud, Benjamin Banneker and St. Peter Claver Elementary Schools. Volunteers go to the schools for 1 hour sessions weekly from September until April. They go into the classrooms and supplement the science lessons with simple demonstrations and hands on activities so the 4th graders can have a broader experience of science and have fun

with their lessons. The 4th graders make observations, form hypotheses, conduct experiments, collect data and form conclusions. In addition to these weekly lessons, volunteers assist the students with research for their quarterly poster projects and science fair projects in the spring. In March and April they review the year's material in preparation for the Leap Exam using tools such as Science Jeopardy developed by the volunteers.

cont. on pg. 2

## The Rural Scholars Track Program - a Student's Perspective

by Xian Li

I walked into my preceptor's clinic in Breaux Bridge one morning, prepped for another day's work. "Hold on," my preceptor said, "a patient brought us something good today." The two of us headed towards the kitchen where I found a box of homemade boudin sitting on the table. My preceptor and I sat at the table mulling over the boudin. "How often do you get these things?" I asked him. "Oh, just about everyday," he replied. "The farmers drop things off before heading out for work. One time, I treated a patient who couldn't afford to pay me. Instead, he delivered me a dozen eggs each day for an entire year." He went on to explain that he couldn't shop at Wal-Mart anymore because patients would stop him at every aisle to ask for medical advice or thank him for something he had done. Instead, he drove to the next town to do

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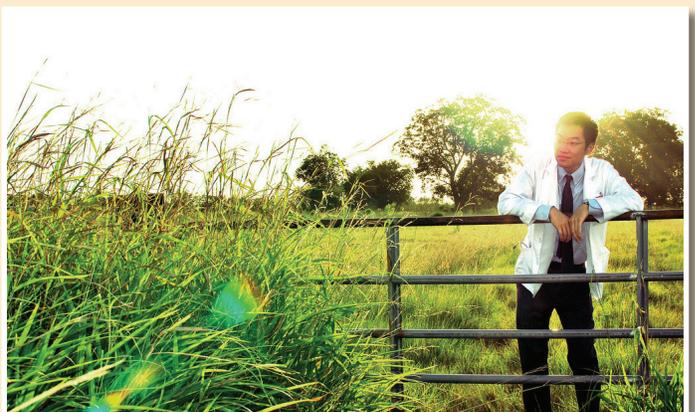


PHOTO BY XIAN LI



*Isolating DNA at MLK summer science camp*

After LEAP testing is done, volunteers host a field trip for the 4th graders at LSUHSC. Faculty from the basic science departments give brief laboratory demonstrations for the kids. Past demonstrations include using a microscope to look at mutant fruit flies and bacterial cultures, learning how infections can spread using glow in the dark hand lotion, isolating DNA from strawberries, using fatal vision glasses to experience impaired reflexes and learning about the nervous system with a demonstration of human brains. The field trip also includes a featured guest speaker. Past speakers include: a NASA scientist, an LSUHSC nutritionist and staff from the Audubon Zoomobile (with various unusual animals). This is a wonderful, educational way for the students to have fun with science and is a reward to the students for their hard work throughout the school year.

In addition to the weekly science lessons for the 4th graders the Science Partnership

also participates in a summer science camp for high school students at the Martin Luther King Charter School. This involves weekly visits in June to provide science demonstrations and hands on opportunities for 9th and 10th graders. This year, the Partnership is also organizing faculty demonstrations at Reed High School by LSUHSC scientists and is coordinating science and math tutoring for the Reed students. Faculty volunteers are needed to present “hands on” demonstrations for the Reed students and also present Biomedical Science career information. If you are interested in going to Reed please go to the following site to view topics and volunteer for a session:

<http://doodle.com/participation.html?pollId=s2kitu47ga4swd56>



*Dr. Jaime Becnel leading a session at Banneker*

In the fall of each school year The LSUHSC Science Partnership runs a school supply drive for the 4th graders to collect book bags, pencils, paper and other school items. The response to this drive has been outstanding and has provided items to the 4th graders they might otherwise have to do without.

The Partnership is coordinated by Dr. Judith Venuti from the Department of Cell Biology and Anatomy with assistance from postdoctoral fellow Dr. Jaime

Becnel and graduate student Lauren Brignac Huber from the Department of Pharmacology. Dr. Joseph Moerschbaecher supports the Science Partnership and provides funds for the annual Field Day. While the Science Partnership originated as a project conceived and directed by Dr. Rhoda Reddix, formerly of the Department of Pharmacology, together with graduate students from the School of Graduate Studies, the program has now expanded to include student volunteers from the LSUHSC School of Nursing and medical students from the LSUHSC School of Medicine. However, volunteers are needed to lead the weekly lessons.

We invite all students, post-docs and faculty to join our Partnership. It’s a fun and rewarding experience and a great way to help improve New Orleans schools. You can sign up on our Doodle site at:

<http://www.doodle.com/hc5tvd4xcz28ehdx>.

If you would like more information about our program, please visit our website at:

[http://graduatestudies.lsuhs.edu/New\\_Orleans\\_Science-Partnership.htm](http://graduatestudies.lsuhs.edu/New_Orleans_Science-Partnership.htm)



*Dr. Judith Venuti with 4th graders during a Field Day demonstration.*

## Rural Scholars cont. from pg. 1

his grocery shopping. It dawned on me that morning that the dynamics of a small town clinic are very different from what one would expect in a larger city.

I signed up for the Rural Scholars Track program with a desire to serve. I was distraught by the thought that there were small communities in our state without proper healthcare. In fact, there are towns that lack a physician altogether. I joined hoping that the Rural Track program could identify these areas and help me find

a location in which I would be of greatest use.

The Rural Track program provides medical students with a slightly altered curriculum, aimed towards primary health and rural medicine. While the 1st and 2nd years of medical school training are unchanged, the 3rd and 4th years are spent at UMC in Lafayette. In addition, students work with a rural physician outside of Lafayette once a week in order to increase exposure to rural practice. The program also offers

a four-year tuition exemption on the basis that students serve a rural site in Louisiana for 5 years following their residency.

Many students are turned off by the rural track because of this five-year commitment to serve a rural community and the obligation to practice primary care.

In actuality the program considers any city outside of New Orleans and Baton Rouge to be rural and students are able to choose their area of practice. I, too,

## Did you know...

LSU SOM medical students volunteer their time at New Orleans area homeless clinics through the LSU Student-Run Clinics program? Through this program, students serve the needs of the New Orleans area to provide quality health care to the underserved and the disadvantaged. Go to the following link for more information on this outreach service: <https://www.medschool.lsuhsoc.edu/hclinic/>



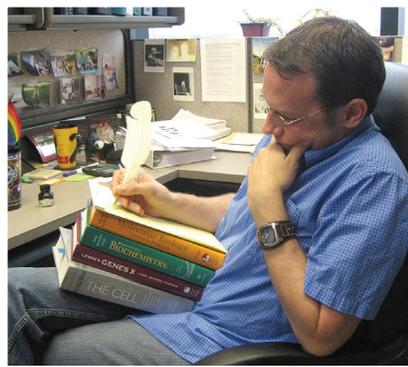
## Editor's Pen

Andrew Hollenbach, PhD

I'd like to thank you, on behalf of all of the editors, for your overwhelmingly positive reception of the inaugural issue of the SOM Newsletter. It really was gratifying, and humbling, to see such enthusiasm for the newsletter, which we plan to publish on a quarterly basis.

Since the first issue, we've had a few changes behind the scenes: I'd like to welcome Stacey Holman, M.D. (OB/Gyn) as the new Associate Editor of Clinical Affairs. I would also like to welcome Gina LaBorde (Biochemistry), who has volunteered her graphic design expertise in the assembly and design of the Newsletter, which she has done a wonderful job on the present issue! Thank you Gina! You've really made my life easier AND raised the Newsletter to a new level of professionalism!

I'd like to make special note of our new "Who Dat!" section in which we highlight people you see every day, whose work is indispensable for the smooth running of the school. This section gives these people the recognition that they deserve. Finally, we introduce "The Student's Forum". This section is run by and for the students at the SOM. They determine the content, write the stories, and take the pictures for this page.



## Rural Scholars cont. from pg. 2

was apprehensive about joining the Rural Track. Unlike some of the other members, I would not be returning to my hometown to practice. I have grown up in New Orleans my whole life and actually have no idea where I will end up. What I have found is that the individuals that I have had the pleasure to work with have been the kindest and most welcoming that I have ever met. They asked what I expected out of the program and have worked closely with me to find a location that fulfills what I believe rural practice

represents. My preceptorship is in Erath, a town small enough to not even have a restaurant. A single physician serves this town and its surrounding areas, and working with the people there has rapidly become the most satisfying day of my week. (Editor's note: *The LSU School of Medicine was awarded the 2010 Center of Excellence Award for Health Professions Student Training by the National Area Health Education Centers Organization. They recognized our accomplishments for our Rural Scholars Track program.*)

## Summer Research

This summer two programs provided an opportunity for high school, undergraduate, and medical students from all over the country to gain research experience with a variety of clinical and basic science mentors at LSU SOM. Seventy students took part in the Summer Research Internship Program, co-directed by Drs. Paula Gregory and Fern Tsien through the Department of Genetics, while twenty-one students enrolled in the Short-term Research Experiences in Cancer program directed by Dr. John Estrada through the Stanley S. Scott Cancer Center. Both programs culminated in poster sessions with the awarding of top honors to the following participants:



PHOTO BY LESLIE CAPO

Jillian Lemke presents her research at the poster session.

### Summer Research Internship Program

#### High School Category

First Place (tie)

Jamie Winfield (mentor Drs. Derek Pociask and Jay Kolls)

Jordana Williams (mentor Dr. Eboni Price-Haywood)

Second place

Nina Abon (mentor Dr. Rodolfo Begue)

Third place

Tova Weiss (mentor Dr. Radhika Pochampally)

#### Undergraduate Category

First place (tie)

Ryan Gupta (mentor Dr. Oliver Wessely)

Tuyet-Trinh Nguyen

(mentors Drs. Eric Lazartigues and Juijing Xia)

Second place

Patrici Cherry (mentor Dr. Joy Sturtevant)

Third place

Lauren Slakey (mentor Dr. Steve Hill)

#### Medical School Category

First place

Hannah King (mentor Dr. Udai Pandey)

Second place

Alexander Ramos (mentor Dr. Jesus Lovera)

#### Short-term Research Experience in Cancer

Overall First Place winner

Ryan Rebowe (mentor Dr. Wanguo Liu)

First place (Medical and Masters student category)

David Impastato (mentor Dr. Krzysztof Reiss)

First place (Undergraduate and High School category)

Diego Aviles (mentor Dr. Michael Hagensee)

# Raking in the Dollars!

Since June 1, 2010, twenty-five SOM researchers have brought in over \$8.0 million in external funding from federal and independent sources. Congratulations go out to the following:

## NIH R01/R01 renewal/R01 supplements:

Nicolas Bazan, M.D., Ph.D. (Neuroscience Center)  
Ludmilla Belayev, M.D. (Neuroscience Center)  
Carmen Canavier, Ph.D. (Neuroscience Center)  
Tadahide Izumi, Ph.D. (ENT/Cancer Center)  
Jay Kolls, M.D. (Genetics)  
Shahriar Koochekpour, M.D., Ph.D. (Microbiology)  
Eric Lazartigues, Ph.D. (Pharmacology)  
Patricia Molina, M.D., Ph.D. (Physiology)  
Alistair Ramsay, Ph.D. (Microbiology/Gene Therapy)  
Ping Zhang, M.D., Ph.D. (Medicine/Alcohol Research Center).

## NIH U10 Cooperative Clinical Research:

Robert Veith, M.D. (Medicine/Cancer Center)

## NIH Centers of Biomedical Research Excellence (P20) Renewal:

Augusto Ochoa, M.D. (Medicine/Cancer Center)

## NIH R21:

Eric Lazartigues, Ph.D. (Pharmacology)  
Charles Nichols, Ph.D. (Pharmacology)

## Department of Defense (DoD):

Patricia Molina, M.D., Ph.D. (Physiology)

## Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA):

Carlos Choucino, M.D. (Medicine/Infectious Disease)  
Ronald Wilcox, M.D. (Medicine/Infectious Disease)

## Independent Foundations:

Howard Osofsky, M.D., Ph.D. (Psychiatry)  
– Baptist Community Ministries  
Erich Richter, M.D. (Neurology)  
– Joe W. and Dorothy Dorsett Brown Foundation  
Daniel Romaker (Cell Biology and Anatomy)  
– Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft  
German Research Foundation  
Annie Whitaker (Physiology)  
– American Physiological Society

## NIH Student Fellowships (F30/F31):

Jesse Sulzer (Physiology)  
Amber Washington (Microbiology)  
Mary Worrel (Pharmacology)



## The Inside Scope

In this new recurring section of the Newsletter we'd like to answer your questions concerning issues at LSU SOM.

One question each issue will be chosen by the Editors. We will then try to find the person to answer it. Send your questions to any of the Editors at the e-mail addresses listed in the contacts section. We'd also like to recognize Laura Roan (SOM Medical Student, Class of 2013) for the title of this section. We felt that the originality and wit of this title, submitted for our "Name This Newsletter" contest, was perfect for this section. Thank you Laura!

### Question:

**Can you tell us why the first floors of some buildings are still closed 5 years after Katrina?**

### Answer

**(Dean Nelson):**

"The Health Sciences Center continues to undergo numerous construction projects of which the first floors of many of our buildings are affected. For example, renovations of the Resource Building should be completed by the end of this calendar year. Major renovations that will be occurring in the CSRB include the air handling system and the animal care addition, which will, in all likelihood, prevent the use of the first floor for at least 2 more years. The movement of the Student Learning Center to the sixth floor of the Lions building fulfilled FEMA's obligation and it is estimated that renovations to the first floor would cost close to \$2 million. Given the current fiscal realities it is unlikely that this renovation would occur during the next 1-2 years. I would ask that our students and faculty continue to exercise patience as we are about to begin a large number of capital improvements involving the Health Sciences Center that will most likely disrupt certain of our everyday activities but will result in significant improvements to our campus."



## Send Us Your Stories!

*Do you have a story or an idea for a story that you think is appropriate for the Newsletter?*

*Do you have a question for "The Inside Scope"? If so, let us know!*

Contact any of the editors with your story idea or questions:

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## Movin' on Up!

Beginning July 1, 2010, thirty-one SOM faculty members achieved promotion to a new rank. Our congratulations go out to the following people for recognition of their hard work and dedication to the SOM:

### Professor of Clinical:

Marie D. Acierno (Ophthalmology)  
Stewart Gordon (Pediatrics)  
Michael Marble (Pediatrics)  
Alan B. Marr (Surgery)

### Professor with Tenure:

Piotr W. Olejniczak (Neurology)  
Yi-Zarn Wang (Surgery)

### Associate Professor with Tenure:

Mary Bresling (Pediatrics)  
Jeffrey Hobden (Microbiology)  
Andrew Hollenbach (Genetics)  
Tadahide Izumi (Otorhinolaryngology)  
Charles Nichols (Pharmacology)  
Malachi G. Sheahan, III (Surgery)

### Tenure only:

Ashok Aiyar (Microbiology)  
Richard DiCarlo (Medicine)  
Pamela Kozlowski (Microbiology)  
Ping Zheng (Medicine)

### Associate Professor of Clinical:

James Campbell (Family Medicine)  
Staci Olinger (Pediatrics)  
John T. Paige (Surgery)

### Associate Professor of Research:

Mingquan Zheng (Genetics)

### Clinical Professor:

Bradley Chastant (Otorhinolaryngology)  
Trevor Mills (Medicine)

### Clinical Associate Professor:

Sean M. Collins (Urology)  
Jay Jaikishen (Medicine)  
Lisa Walton (Medicine)

### Clinical Assistant Professor:

Maria Mohan (Medicine)

### Assistant Professor of Clinical:

Tracy A. Dewenter (Pathology)  
Kurt R. Eeg (Urology)  
Diana McDermott (Medicine)  
Paul Thien (Medicine)  
Briana M. Truehill (OB/Gyn)

## Intern/Resident of the Year



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL PALUMBO

The Intern and Resident of the Year Ceremony was begun in 1978 to recognize those House Officers who best exemplify the ideal, outstanding and model patient care provider at the Medical Center of Louisiana. This year's recipients from the LSU SOM, pictured here with Charles Hilton, M.D., Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, are: **Resident of the Year** – Kimberly Lavigne, M.D., Psychiatry (left) and **Intern of the Year** – Elizabeth Bollinger, M.D., Internal Medicine (right). Congratulations on a job well done!



## Upcoming Gala

The LSU Medical Alumni Association will be hosting the 5th Annual Purple and Gold Gala on Friday, October 29 at the New Orleans Sheraton from 7 pm till 11 pm.

The event, "A Night with the Stars", has a Hollywood theme and will feature live music from The Wise Guys along with silent and live auctions, and a cocktail buffet. Dress is black tie optional and includes an open bar, great New Orleans food, and over 100 terrific silent and live auction items. Live auction items include a live puppy, a beautifully framed Blue Dog

print, a month stay at a condo on the big island of Hawaii located Oceanside on a golf course, a cruise on the Chancellor's boat, and a Saints package. Individual tickets are \$150 and can be obtained by contacting the Alumni Office at 568-4029 or [Roar@lsuhsc.edu](mailto:Roar@lsuhsc.edu). It should be a night to remember!



## Did you know...

that fifty-three of the SOM or Health Care Network doctors were listed as regional Top Doctors across all fields in the August issue of New Orleans Magazine?

Go to the following link for the complete listing

<http://www.myneworleans.com/New-Orleans-Magazine/August-2010/Top-Doctors-2010/>

If you chair a SOM committee and have information that you'd like to share with the SOM community, then we'd like to hear from you!  
The Newsletter is an open forum for you to report on your committee's activities.  
Just e-mail one of the editors and we'll make space for you to keep us informed!

## LSUHSC Faculty Initiate New Chapter of AWIS



The new South Louisiana Chapter of the Association for Women in Science (SL AWIS) was initiated in the spring of 2010 by faculty in the SOM. The following individuals were elected officers: Stephanica Cormier, President; Joy Sturtevant, Vice-President; Judy Crabtree, Treasurer; Judith Venuti, Secretary and Nicole LeCapitaine, Postdoc Representative. The goal of the Chapter is to encourage networking, mentoring and outreach amongst all faculty, postdocs and students in the SOM. Meetings are held at Noon on the second Friday of each month in the LSUHSC Rosenthal Library, Room 3B2, Lions Building, 2020 Gravier Street. All are welcome. In lieu of our regular meeting in November, there will be a special Junior Faculty Development Seminar on November 5 at 11:00 AM in the Microbiology Seminar Room on the 6th floor of the MEB – “Navigating the Yellow Brick Road (or how to find your way in academia)”. For more information about AWIS please go to [www.AWIS.org](http://www.AWIS.org) or contact one of the officers.

## LSUHSC Postdoctoral Association

The major goal of the newly formed LSUHSC Postdoctoral Association is to provide resources to postdoctoral fellows for career development, social and professional networking, and orient newly arrived postdoctoral researchers. Through several different committees the Postdoctoral Association will provide opportunities for career development, invite speakers to discuss topics such as grantsmanship, manuscript

writing, job searching, career planning, intellectual property, and translational research. The Postdoctoral Association will also work to identify issues important to both domestic and international postdocs and develop and maintain an informational website to provide resources for postdocs and inform them of upcoming events. Finally, social events will be planned surrounding invited speakers and holidays with occasional get-togethers. Currently,

Drs. Sonia Gasparini, Paula Gregory, Andrew Hollenbach, Nicole LeCapitaine and Kathleen McDonough serve as the faculty advisors. If you are a postdoc and have not received e-mails about our group, please contact Nicole LeCapitaine [nlecap@lsuhsc.edu](mailto:nlecap@lsuhsc.edu). The next meeting of the Postdoctoral Association will be held on Tuesday, November 9 in MEB Seminar Room #4 at 4:00 PM.

*-Dr. Nicole LaCapitaine*

## Multicultural and Diversity

Greetings from the Office of the Associate Vice Chancellor for Multicultural and Academic Affairs. In addition to assisting the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs with an array of academic matters ranging from accreditation to governmental affairs this unit is responsible for overseeing and evaluating multicultural affairs at the LSU Health Sciences Center. In addition to advocating for the success and development of students, faculty and staff from the entire range of racial, cultural

and ethnic backgrounds, we envision and develop strategic diversity initiatives that promote an institutional climate that equally welcomes, nurtures, and respects the culture and contributions of all members of the community. Additionally, the SOM has a diversity subcommittee chaired by Ms. Jane Parker to provide assistance and direction in these areas. Please let us know if we can assist you in any way, [drovar@lsuhsc.edu](mailto:drovar@lsuhsc.edu) or call 504-568-4804.

*-Dr. Derek Rovaris*

## Faculty Assembly Report

Dear Fellow Faculty,  
Communication is integral to the functioning of our institution, especially in these times. This newsletter represents the dedication of our faculty to ensuring that we remain informed of events. The Faculty Assembly (FA) also serves in the role of communication. The FA delegates provide representation to the Administrative Council of the SOM and the Senate of LSUHSC, as well as meet regularly with our Dean. At our monthly meetings, information from these, and other endeavors are presented and discussed in an open forum. All full-time faculty members are encouraged to attend and participate in these meetings (please visit the FA website for a list of scheduled meetings at

[http://www.medschool.lsuhschool.edu/faculty\\_assembly/](http://www.medschool.lsuhschool.edu/faculty_assembly/)

Of particular interest this year is the development of the FA Awards. We are presently accepting nominations for these awards (details regarding this process can be found at

[http://www.medschool.lsuhschool.edu/faculty\\_assembly/awards.aspx](http://www.medschool.lsuhschool.edu/faculty_assembly/awards.aspx)

I would like to express our gratitude to those responsible for this newsletter and look forward to representing our faculty.

Best wishes,

Stephen Brierre, M.D.  
*Faculty Assembly President*

### Did you know...

if you are an NIH grant holder you can request an administrative supplement to support a student or postdoctoral fellow from an underrepresented minority (i.e. – African American, Hispanic, Native American, Pacific Islander). Check with your Program Official for eligibility

# Welcome to the School of Medicine Family

## New Residents

The LSU School of Medicine employs over 600 house officers per year, including both residents and fellows. The SOM is home to 70 Graduate Medical Education programs, which welcomed 182 new doctors-in-training in July 2010. Approximately half of these new residents and fellows completed medical school within the state of Louisiana. Of those, interns just starting residency training made up 113 of the total

number. The LSU SOM graduating class of 2010 had 59% of the graduates remain in the state of Louisiana for training. Particularly for those students who chose to remain at LSU, 34% of the graduating class is currently training at the Interim LSU Hospital. The LSU School of Medicine is excited about the continued prospect of training Louisiana physicians and looks forward to a successful year. Welcome to the LSU Family!

Photo by Andrew Hollenbach



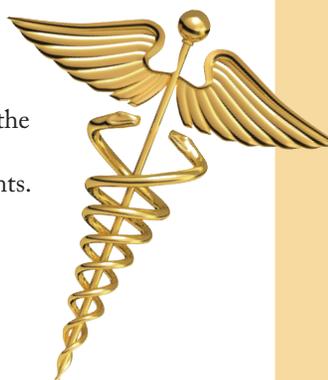
New basic science students eager to begin their Ph.D. training.

## New Graduate Students

This past August fourteen new students started work towards their Ph.D. in the basic sciences in departments throughout the School of Medicine. These students joined the Interdisciplinary Program (IDP), which allows them to rotate among different SOM basic science departments, or directly joined different departmental programs. Pictured above are: (seated L to R) Yuan Zhou (Cell Biology and Anatomy), Jyothi Vijayaraghavan (Genetics), and Elaine Maggi (IDP); (standing L to R) Patrick Doring (IDP), Daviel Cardenes (IDP), Kyle Daigle (Pharmacology), and Peter Weed (IDP). Not pictured: Philip Calmes (IDP), Valerie Piet (Cell Biology and Anatomy), Patrick Raber (MIP) Michael Valentine (MIP), and Tyrous "David" Ward (Cell Biology and Anatomy).

## New Medical Students

This past August saw the matriculation of 201 new Medical Students into the School of Medicine. This class is comprised of nearly 97% Louisiana State Residents, demonstrating the SOM's commitment to the training of Louisiana's future health care leaders, with nearly 50% of these students being women and 22% being under represented minorities. This year's class has one of the higher average GPA and MCAT scores in recent history, which continues to reflect the upward trend in the quality of our students. Welcome to all!



## New Faculty

The last six months saw seventeen faculty members start new positions at the School of Medicine in both clinical and research positions. Please join us in welcoming the following people to the SOM family!

### Professor

Krzysztof Reiss  
(Med-Hematology and Oncology)

### Associate Professor:

Francesca Peruzzi (Medicine)  
William Risher (Surgery)  
Gabriel Uwaifo  
(Med-Endocrinology and Metabolism)  
Luis del Valle (Medicine)

### Assistant Professor Clinical:

Franca Acka (Pediatrics)  
Maanasi Burak (Radiology)  
Jaime Dorotan (Surgery)  
Laura Hetzler (Otorhinolaryngology)  
Paul LeLorier (Med-Cardiology)  
Bacel Nseir (UMC-Medicine)  
Prerana Patel (Orthopedics)  
Florencia Polite (Obstetrics and Gynecology)  
David Smith (Radiology)  
Aran Toshav (Radiology)

### Assistant Professor, Research:

Tracey Knaus (Neurology)  
Stefany Primeaux  
(Med-Endocrinology and Metabolism)  
Douglas Johnston (MIP)

### Clinical Assistant Professor:

Amy Voigt (Neurology)

Want more up to date information?



Follow us on twitter!

<http://twitter.com/LSUHSCHealth>

# the students' forum

## Guatemala: Beyond Medicine

by Maria D. Abascal-Ponciano

**W**e are here to serve. - This was our motto as we flew from New Orleans to Guatemala. We were fresh from the completion of our first year of medical school and were eager to start our 10-day mission trip to underserved areas of Guatemala. The mission trip was a project I had been hoping for since before the beginning of medical school and, with the help of my mother, I was able to bring it to life. Guatemala is the home country of my mother and I, so it was only right that the trip took a year of meticulous planning. The group was composed of 15 medical students, including myself, all sharing a passion for service, medicine and adventure. We were unaware, however, of how much of an adventure was in store for us.

We planned to use our weekend as an opportunity to rest and explore the natural beauty of Guatemala. It was on Thursday, May 27th that our plans, as well as Guatemala's history, were changed forever. Pacaya Volcano erupted and covered Guatemala City and its surroundings with volcanic ash and fumes. On Saturday, May 29th, as planned, we were on our way to visit Lake Atitlan, a tourist landmark known for its beauty. We were two hours into the drive when we saw mudslides on the road, rivers overflowing, and lots of flooding. Soon after, we found out that a tropical storm was heading straight to us. After numerous

hours we were able to find shelter in a hotel in Tecpan, a place that we stayed at earlier that week. We returned the next day to find a devastated Guatemala City in the aftermath of a tropical storm, a mere two days after the city was covered in volcanic ash and fumes. Airports were closed, and the group would not be able to return as scheduled on Tuesday. The people of Guatemala were hurting. Many had lost their homes and their loved ones. My mom, who was affectionately called "Madre" by the group, got in touch with the city, and we were able to participate in their relief efforts.

This was unlike any clinic experience we worked beforehand. The situation that our patients were thrust into was beyond what any of us had ever experienced. To some, it was reminiscent of Hurricane Katrina in 2005. I saw my home, now broken and in pain. The people were suffering, and we were called to aid them. Volcanic fumes caused respiratory problems. The storm caused the water to become polluted. Diarrhea was quickly spreading in the crowded shelters. Food and drinking water were scarce. This, in addition to the high heat, made dehydration an imminent threat.

Though our abilities were limited, we were able to work with the physicians and share the knowledge we acquired from first year. We

were often surprised at how little words were needed to convey thoughts and ideas. We were pressed to work fast and efficiently. Using some of the phrases we had acquired during the week as well as the use of simple body language, we were able to illicit medical complaints and ailments. The doctors were scarce, but the missionaries were not. We were able to work together with the people and relieve some of their pain and desperation. We were able to play with the children, who were now homeless, and embrace the woman who just lost her husband. With just a short amount of time, we provided hope in a time of need. We were able to provide beyond our perceived capabilities - beyond language, beyond race, and beyond medicine.



The team of medical school students eager to start their 10-day mission

## The Class of 2012 Mourns Loss of Classmate

by Kyle McMullen, L3 Class President

**T**he trip of a lifetime ended in tragedy this summer for a member of the Class of 2012. **Nicole Murphy** was enjoying the FIFA World Cup in South Africa with her family when on June 15th, she, her brother Brian, and sister Kellie were hit by a drunk driver killing Nicole and leaving Brian with a severe head injury.

Nicole was an integral member of her class. She not only excelled in the classroom, but was also heavily involved in campus extracurricular activities. As Vice-President of Community Service for the Women in Medicine group, she worked hard to promote awareness and stimulate discussion of current women's health issues and the issues facing women physicians. She lent a helping hand whenever she could,

working tirelessly behind the scenes for Camp Tiger, Tiger Run, the SCOOP, and the Note Taking Service. She also volunteered her time with Habitat for Humanity, St. Anna's Medical Mission, and Race for the Cure.

Nicole will also be remembered for her athletic gifts. She was an avid soccer player, which culminated in 2008, when she helped lead The University of Tampa Women's Soccer Team to a National Title. She took part in a wide variety of intramurals and enjoyed competing in triathlons. Nicole was a member of the United States Army, where she had aspirations of becoming an Army Physician.

She is survived by her father Daniel ('81, Shreveport), mother Charlene, and siblings Lucas, Lauren, Brian, Kellie, and Danielle.

A memorial service was held July 30th on campus. The MEB lecture hall filled to standing room only with classmates, family, friends, and supporters. In memory of her dedication to athletics and the University, the annual Tiger Run will be officially named the Nicole L. Murphy Tiger Run. Additionally, a bench outside the MEB has been dedicated in her name.



Nicole competes in a local road race.

The Students' Forum is a section of the Newsletter for and by medical and basic science students in the SOM. Please contact Kevin Gipson, the Students' Forum editor, if you have any story ideas.

### Student Publication Highlight



Lucas Harless is a native of Baton Rouge, LA. In 2002, he joined the Air Force, serving in Japan and Italy for 3 years. Upon returning to Louisiana, Lucas resumed his undergraduate education. Since starting medical school in 2009, he has worked on various research projects with Dr. Walvekar in the ENT Department. With Dr. Walvekar, Lucas was co-author on a paper in the journal *The Laryngoscope* entitled "Block Method of Human Temporal Bone Removal" <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/lary.21052/abstract> where they describe a novel method of harvesting complete temporal bone specimens from cadavers for the education of ENT residents.

### Class of 2013 White Coat Ceremony

by: Renford Cindass Jr.

At most medical schools, students are conferred their white coats at the beginning of their medical school careers. Things are done a little differently here at LSU where the white coats are earned after successful completion of the first year. The reception of the white coat symbolizes a student's dedication to the study of medicine and his/her willingness to deliver uncompromised patient care. The LSU School of Medicine Class of 2013 received their white coats on July 31st, 2010 in a ceremony held at Xavier University's ballroom. Faculty members conferring the white coats, chosen by students that have taught or made an impact on the students' education, included Dr. Green, Dr.



Levitzy, Dr. Mize, Dr. Molina, Dr. Swartz, Dr. Vedeckis, and Dr. Venuti. Ifrah Jamil, the winner of the Humanism in Medicine essay contest, was also present to read her award-winning essay.

### The Protégés are Back

by Elliot Hardy

Prior to Hurricane Katrina, the LSUHSC Mentors program thrived and was comprised of faculty volunteers willing to assist and guide students. This crucial service lay dormant until 2008, when then-SGA President Scott Nelson formed the Protégés – a group of elected students from each class tasked with revitalizing the LSUHSC Mentors. Since that time, the Protégés have recruited clinical and basic science faculty members to serve as Mentors to provide advice on issues both personal and professional. In addition, the Protégés have repopulated the Clinical Advisors database – a compendium of clinical faculty eager to counsel students about career

choices. To increase resident involvement, we have solicited participation from all graduating Seniors, thereby creating a growing registry of residents willing to aid students in areas such as fourth-year scheduling, away rotations, and Match planning. We are presently trying to encourage more faculty and resident involvement in the Mentors program. For more information, please visit [www.medschool.lsuhs.edu/mentors](http://www.medschool.lsuhs.edu/mentors). If you are interested in becoming a part of the Mentors or have questions or suggestions on how the program can best serve the LSU-SOM community, let us know at [mentors@lsuhsc.edu](mailto:mentors@lsuhsc.edu).

### L1 Community Service Project

by Robert Amato, Aaron Gomez, and Joyce Muruthi

This year, LSU School of Medicine welcomed almost 200 new members in the Class of 2014. Orientation week culminated with a community service project at City Park on Monday, August 16th. The community service event, a tradition started

with last year's incoming class, allows the new medical school students to develop a sense of camaraderie as they get to know one another. This year, the Class of 2014 along with thirty members of the Class of 2013, worked on beautification projects throughout City Park. The students planted flowers, laid mulch and turf, cleared the walking trail around the park, and helped replant the propagation site that is used to repopulate the marshes and help prevent coastal erosion. Helping to beautify and maintain the park grounds serves as a great way for the Class of 2014 to give back to the city of New Orleans and its residents.



### Student Profile - Questions with Elliot Hardy

#### What are your plans for next year?

I plan to work hard, sleep little, and learn much. I look forward to planting roots wherever the Match takes me and starting a family.



#### Why did you choose ENT?

I was attracted to ENT by the variety of patients, precision of procedures, and cutting-edge tools offered by the field. I also found that my personality and career goals meshed well with others in the specialty.

#### What advice would you give to someone just starting medical school?

First, never forget those who helped you get where you are today. While the educational demands may often seem overwhelming, always make time for family. And second, reserve room in your busy schedule for fun.

#### What has your experience the past three years been like?

I have had the great fortune of forming indelible friendships with an extraordinary group of future doctors while gaining skills and knowledge from an outstanding assembly of faculty, staff, and residents.

#### Something about you not many people know?

I was a member of a performance cappella group in college.

# Who DAT!

Who is it that gets the job done, keeps the SOM running smoothly when we leave the labs, the bedsides, or our offices? We see them everyday, but who are they?. In our new, recurring feature we select a support person and give them the recognition they deserve! If you know of someone who you feel should be featured in the WHO DAT! section, please contact us.

## Loris Perkins

### Position:

Administrative Coordinator 3 responsible for scheduling surgery.

### Years of service:

28 years

### Favorite part of your job:

Lois enjoys meeting new people and it is one of her favorite parts of the job.

### Least favorite part of your job:

In fact, there isn't really a part of her job that she doesn't like!

### Hobbies/likes/dislikes:

Shopping, traveling, and even a trip to the casino.

### What would you like people to know about you:

She gets along well with everyone and is a pleasure to work with each day. Ms. Perkins coordinates the cases, ensures that booking sheets are done on time, and even reminds the staff what time to show up for surgery every single day! A phone call from Ms. Perkins means that residents have to be efficient and organized in managing the surgery schedule, and this applies to any service with privileges to operate.

- interview by Pam Lewis  
(LSU resident, OB/Gyn, H04)



## Kathleen Burgess

### Position:

Head Cafeteria Cashier

### Years of service:

10 years

### Favorite part of your job:

Greeting and interacting with people on a daily basis.

### Least favorite part of your job:

When people ask her question such as "Do you take credit or debit cards?" "Do you give senior citizen discounts?" "Do you have strawberry jam?"

### Hobbies/likes/dislikes:

Watching her favorite team, the New Orleans Saints (even though they give her a headache sometimes!), spending quality time with her four grandchildren, going to the casino, going out dancing with friends.

### What would you like people to know about you:

"I'm a very nice person who does her best to greet and treat everyone she meets the same way, regardless of their position or rank."

- interview by Andrew Hollenbach



## Bobbie Millet

### Position:

Student Affairs Coordinator

### Years of service:

42 years

### Favorite part of your job:

Meeting med students who have in their hearts to be Doctors of Medicine. To see them grow into fine physicians is such a joy. I have always felt I am at LSU because of students. Without them I would not be in such a great job.

### Least favorite part of your job:

My least favorite to do is to tell a student they failed a Shelf or Step Exam. I know these students study with their heart and soul. Some come so close. It is heartbreaking.

### Hobbies/likes/dislikes:

LSU Tigers and reading. I have always wanted to go to the Vatican.

### What would you like people to know about you:

"I am truly a blessed woman. For 42 years I have done something I so love. I will never forget my time and the wonderful friends I have met at LSU including STUDENTS, faculty and employees. I have worked for every Associate Dean of Students Affairs and they have supported me all 42 years. I have to say that Dr. D and Dr. Lopez are the best. Last but not least Dr. Karam has been a wonderful mentor to me and I thank him from the bottom of my heart."

- interview by Kevin Gipson



## James Watson

### Position:

Custodian 2

### Years of service:

19 years

### Favorite part of your job:

Getting to meet and intermingle with a lot of different people on a daily basis.

### Least favorite part of your job:

James doesn't really have a "least favorite part" of his job. He just goes through his day doing what people ask him to do.



### Hobbies/likes/dislikes:

When not at work, he likes going to church (Upper Room Bible Church) where he serves as an usher. He also enjoys going on family outings with his family.

### What would you like people to know about you:

"I'm a very friendly person, I'm always smiling." (This was stated as he said hello to about five different people in just a short period of time!) "I never have a bad day because I don't LET anybody give me a bad day."

- interview by Andrew Hollenbach