

# THE PULSE

Vol. 4, Issue 2  
Summer Issue 2013

## Kids Learning About The Brain!

Sonia Gasparini, Ph.D. (Cell Biology and Anatomy)

On March 9th, faculty, postdoctoral researchers, and students from the LSUHSC and Tulane Neuroscience Programs volunteered their time to unravel the mysteries of brain functions at the event "Your Sensational Brain" held at the Children Resource Center (913 Napoleon Ave). This is an annual outreach program held to celebrate Brain Awareness Week, a global campaign to increase awareness about the benefits of brain and nervous system research. About 40 children, parents, and teachers enjoyed the interactive activities and asked several questions during the two-hour event, which was free and open to the public and geared to children 5 – 12 years of age. The activities, coordinated by Dr. Sonia Gasparini of the Neuroscience Center and sponsored by the Greater New Orleans chapter of the Society for Neuroscience included:

- Show and tell of real brains and brain and neuron models
- Show and tell of brain slices and stained neurons under a microscope
- Demonstration of the knee jerk reflex, with children "behaving like neurons"
- Coloring of brain templates
- Using play-doh to make models of brains and neurons
- Demonstrations of optical illusions
- Be on the lookout and bring your children to next year's event



Photo by Leslie Capo

## LSU Takes to the Streets of the Treme to Raise Awareness!

Members of the School of Medicine, along with others in LSUHSC, took to the streets of the Treme on March 9 as part of the Red Umbrella HIV/AIDS Awareness Second Line. The march of hundreds was lead by local musicians The Lady Black Jumpers and the Dumaine Street Gang. In addition, residents from the School of Medicine staffed an educational booth at the associated Health and Wellness Fair in Congo Square recognizing National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day. The event, which was organized and coordinated by Michael Hickerson, MSW, RSW, and Tyra Valteau-Sorapuru, LCSW, is to draw attention to the disproportionately rising rate of HIV infection among African Americans in the New Orleans area and to educate the community about the disease and resources that are available to prevent, detect early, treat and live with the disease.



Photo by Leslie Capo

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's HIV Surveillance Report, Volume 22, Louisiana Ranked as the 4th highest state in the nation in AIDS case rates. Baton Rouge ranked 1st and New Orleans ranked 5th in the country in AIDS cases. In the NOLA region, 63% of people living with HIV are African American and 83% of all women living with HIV are also African American.

Involvement in this event was spearheaded by Daniel Puneky (L2 and President of LGBT and allies Organization for Cultural Understanding in the health Sciences [LOCUS]), Ashlea Winfield (L2 and President of ETHIKOS), Lisa Moreno-Walton, M.D. (Emergency Medicine), and Andrew Hollenbach, Ph.D. (Genetics) and through the help of Dereck Rovaris, Ph.D. (Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic & Multicultural Affairs) were able to make LSUHSC an official sponsor of this event and to make us a prominent presence at both the second line and the wellness fair.

## Editor's Pen

Andrew D. Hollenbach, Ph.D.

It's been awhile since I sat down at my computer to write this piece... in fact way too long. I've heard the question several times; "Why don't you publish The Pulse more frequently? That way you can make it shorter (since who has time to read 15 – 17 pages?)" Well, sure, I could do that; but then I wouldn't have any time left to do the job I am paid to do, which is research and teach/mentor our students! Also, I say that if you can read 70 – 80 pages of People magazine or Entertainment Weekly or your favorite magazine or book, why not 15 – 16 pages of the accomplishments of your colleagues and issues that affect you as a member of the School of Medicine? The Pulse is my brainchild and it is something that I am passionate about and is a labor of love for me. However, there is only so much that I can do and sometimes, life just gets in the way. At those times it's difficult to simply do what is required, let alone the extra things that you love. Even at a shorter length, a more frequent release would simply occupy too much of my time, time that is in short supply and getting shorter!

Here's a little primer on exactly what is involved to put together the issue you have in front of you. Throughout the year I collect story ideas. You, the members of the SOM or Leslie Capo through her media releases, send these ideas to me. Roughly in early March and early October I organize these stories along with our recurring stories and convene a meeting of the editors. At this meeting we discuss the stories I have and think of others that may be of interest to the SOM, may be whimsical and fun, or may be informative and educational. We then divide the workload and set a deadline for submitting stories for about two-weeks later. We each individually contact people to write the stories (about 10 – 15 people are contacted for each issue), who submit the stories... rarely by the deadline since we are ALL busy. Once the stories are submitted and turned in to me, I format the stories, edit for space, or write some of the stories myself (add about one to two more weeks for this process). After all of the stories are compiled, I decide which stories go on which page and send it to Gina LaBorde, my amazing graphic designer. After about two to three weeks (remember... this is not her day job, either) and several back and forth editing, it's finished. I send it to the administration for approval and about a week or so later the administration sends it out. So you see, from beginning to finished product takes about 2 months!

Okay... as change occurs everywhere, so, too, behind the scenes at The Pulse. I say goodbye to three of my editors! Stacey Holman, M.D. (OB/GYN) has stepped down because of increasing responsibilities in her clinical practice and academics. Lauren Hayes has also rotated off as the Medical Student Editor as she, too, transitions to her third year and the increased level of responsibilities. And finally, Aditi Iyengar, Ph.D., my Graduate Student Editor has defended her thesis and leaves us in early July to take up her postdoctoral position at Harvard University. Thank you, all three of you, for your hard work on The Pulse and your commitment to the SOM! It is greatly appreciated and you will be missed! In turn, I would like to welcome Diana Thien, M.D. who steps in as our Clinical Editor and Claude Pirtle (L2) our new Medical Student Editor. They have both done a wonderful job on this issue and I look forward to working with them in the future! As always, I hope you enjoy this issue and I promise.... The next issue WILL be back to its normal schedule!

## Researching the Researchers

### Nicholas (Nick) W. Gilpin, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Physiology

#### Background

I am originally from Texas, where I completed my undergraduate training in Psychology and Spanish Language at the University of Texas at Austin. After spending some time living in Argentina, I returned to the U.S. for graduate studies, and eventually received my Ph.D. in Psychobiology from the Purdue University School of Science, located in Indianapolis (the IUPUI campus). My graduate training centered on the use of selectively bred rat lines to understand the neurobiological underpinnings of excessive alcohol drinking. In 2005, I moved to San Diego and started a post-doctoral fellowship at The Scripps Research Institute in La Jolla, first in the neuropharmacology lab of Dr. George Koob, and eventually in the electrophysiology lab of Dr. Marisa Roberto. My post-doctoral training utilized rodent models to examine the neurobiological mechanisms of excessive drinking associated with alcohol dependence.

#### What do you want to tell people about your research?

I currently remain very interested in questions of addiction. Globally, our lab explores neural circuits that may account for differences between individuals in the propensity to consume (excessive quantities of) alcohol and drugs.

Currently, my lab has two major foci: the first is to explore how alcohol drinking is associated with and impacted by differential stress reactivity profiles in

rodents. Data from our lab show that rats with high stress reactivity exhibit long-term increases in alcohol drinking following stress exposure and also differential activation profiles of cortico-amygdalar circuits when exposed to a reminder cue associated with the initial stress. Findings from these studies may have relevance in the clinic for individuals diagnosed with co-morbid post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and alcohol use disorders. The second major focus of the lab is to explore the neural intersection of alcohol misuse with chronic exposure to and/or dependence on other drugs of abuse, in particular nicotine. Surprisingly, despite the high co-morbidity rates of alcohol and nicotine abuse in humans, very little is known about the collective impact of alcohol and nicotine on the brain.

To execute these studies, we utilize behavioral, pharmacological, and molecular biology approaches, and we collaborate with labs that use electrophysiological approaches. To induce alcohol and nicotine dependence, we use a vapor inhalation system capable of delivering highly controllable doses of alcohol and nicotine to rats over long periods of time. We are currently equipping the lab with the technology necessary to execute optogenetics experiments.



*To learn more about who we are and what we do, please visit us at [www.gilpin-lab.com](http://www.gilpin-lab.com)*



**Fred Cerise, M.D.** was appointed Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs for LSU School of Medicine in February 2013. In this capacity, Dr. Cerise will advise Dean Nelson to facilitate interactions between the school and external hospitals and clinics to promote and insure the best educational experiences and opportunities for our medical trainees in their rotations, internships, residencies, and clinical fellowships. Dr. Cerise completed his undergraduate training at Notre Dame University in 1984 and his medical training here at LSU New Orleans in 1988. After completing his residency in Internal Medicine at the University of Alabama, Birmingham in 1991 he worked at LSU Earl K. Long in Baton Rouge from 1991 – 2004, at which point he was appointed Secretary for Health for the state of Louisiana ('04 – '07). During this time he received a Masters in Public Health from Harvard University. Before his present appointment Dr. Cerise served as the LSU SOM Vice President for Health Affairs ('07 – '13).

## In Memoriam

The Department of Biochemistry regretfully reports the recent passing of two former professors of the department, Herb Dessauer and John W. Haycock.



Herb was a longtime faculty member of the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. Many of you may not know Herb, since he retired soon after

Katrina, choosing to free up his position in hopes of saving those of the younger faculty. Herb was a popular and effective teacher as well as a dependable colleague. His research centered on the biochemistry and molecular biology of reptiles and was among the very first attempts to reconstruct molecular phylogenetic relationships across Anolis. Along with Dan Shochat and George Gorman, he provided the foundation for modern molecular genetic studies of anoles.

John, whose career saw him on the faculties at UC Irvine, University of Texas Houston, Rockefeller University, LSU Medical Center, and the University of Colorado, was mentored from

1983 – 1986 by Dr. Paul Greengard, Nobel Laureate in 2000 for studies of protein phosphorylation. John was internationally recognized for his groundbreaking work of the regulation of the enzymes that effect dopamine biosynthesis. After Hurricane Katrina devastated his labs at LSU SOM, John retired from LSU and moved to Colorado to co-found a biotech start-up PhosphoSolutions LLC, a state-of-the-art facility for the production of phospho-specific antibodies.



Arthur L. Haas, Ph.D.,

Roland Coulson

Professor and Chairman

Biochemistry and Molecular Biology



## Dream Come True!

In the last issue of The Pulse we brought you the story of Karen Williams and her husband Theodore. They were taking part in the BCMC Build program in which Habitat for Humanity built them a brand new home. Well, happy to say, they were able to celebrate Christmas and bring in the New Year in their new home! For pictures of the build and the finished product visit this link: [www.bcmcbuild.com/photogallery.php](http://www.bcmcbuild.com/photogallery.php)

## who DAT! Christopher Vidrine



### Position:

Director of External Relations

### Years of service:

7

### Favorite part of your job:

The privilege of representing the state's flagship medical institution at the legislature.

### Least favorite part of your job:

Having to "eat crow" from legislators and other government officials and always doing so with a smile on my face.

### Hobbies/likes/dislikes:

I enjoy spending time with my family, college sports (GEAUX TIGERS), being outdoors, cooking, going to festivals and last but not least, French and Zydeco music. I dislike the University of Alabama, the far left and the far right, and being told no.

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

My background is in healthcare industry, equally split between the business and policy arenas. My passion is healthcare and politics. I am committed to our mission and making sure that lawmakers, government officials, and advocacy groups are aware of the tremendous work that takes place in our institution.

- interview by Andrew D. Hollenbach, Ph.D.  
(Department of Genetics)



If you know of someone who you feel should be featured in the who DAT! section, please contact us.

# LSUHSC- NO Legislative Priorities

## 2013 Legislative Session

*Below is a highlight of the issues that went before the Louisiana Legislature that affect us at the School of Medicine:*

### Changes in LSUHSC-NO Budget:

\$2 million reduction in State General Funds (SGF) due to the mid-year budget cut becoming permanent.  
A projected \$1.8 million reduction in tobacco tax proceeds dedicated to fund cancer research/prevention efforts [i.e. Louisiana Cancer Research Consortium (LCRC)].  
\$4.8 million funds received from tuition increases due to corresponding SGF reductions.  
The most significant change is that only 42% (\$24 million) of our SGF is provided from a recurring, dedicated source of revenue. The remaining 68% (roughly \$46 million) comes from the Statutory Dedication fund called the Over-collections Fund, which is a contingency and/or one-time funding source such as property sales and fund sweeps such as the NOLA Convention Center. Should any of these funds fail to materialize, corresponding cuts will be made to Higher Education's budget.

### Tuition:

Currently, Louisiana is the only state that requires a 2/3's vote of the legislature to increase tuition and fees. The Board of Regents is pursuing legislation that would allow institutions via the management boards approval the authority to increase tuition up to the Southern Regional Average. The legislation would also allow institutions to charge differential tuition based upon the cost of a particular program and allow tuition on a per credit hour basis.

### Public Private Partnerships:

**Due to a reduction in the Federal match percentage rate for the Medicaid program, the LSU Health System's budget was reduced by a total of \$329.2 million.**

In order to preserve access to health care as well as the residency training programs, LSU, DHH and private hospital partners have devised a plan whereby the public hospitals and clinics will be leased to local partner hospitals through Cooperative Endeavor Agreements (CEA's).

Advanced lease payments from the partner will be paid to the state through LSU for the hospitals and clinics. These funds will be used to partially fund HCSD hospitals and clinics through this fiscal year and higher education in FY 14.

This will preserve access to health care and improve our residency programs by increasing exposure to more patient volume.

### Breast & Cervical Screening Program (BCP):

The BCP program, administered by the CDC via a grant to LSUHSC, provides breast and cervical cancer screenings to uninsured women across the state of Louisiana. The program requires a baseline level of funding (\$700,000), historically funded by the Health Care Services Division (HCSD), which is matched with approximately \$2.1 million by the CDC.

Due to the budget reductions associated with the change in FMAP, HCSD eliminated the program's funding. In order to preserve the program, the Chancellor of the Health Sciences Center provided \$250,000 for the remaining fiscal year from the school of medicine's budget.

Absent a state appropriation providing the baseline funding, the BCP program will be discontinued July 1, 2013 resulting in 14,000 fewer women being screened for breast and cervical cancer.

### Dual Employment Prohibition:

Current laws prohibit state employees from being dually employed, which prevents LSU physicians from working at the VA hospital. The VA would like to discontinue this practice and employ doctors without having an exemption.

Think Your Technology Is  
Marketable?  
Want Your Ideas To Bring You Money?  
A Patent?

Me? Really? How?!?!

OTM CAN HELP!!!!

If you think your ideas and novel techniques are worth marketing, and even if you don't, contact the Office of Technology Management (OTM) and find out!

[www.lsuhsc.edu/administration/academic/otm](http://www.lsuhsc.edu/administration/academic/otm)

Patrick Reed (Director) – [preed2@lsuhsc.edu](mailto:preed2@lsuhsc.edu)  
Kevin Dietz, Ph.D. (Licensing Assistant) – [kdietz@lsuhsc.edu](mailto:kdietz@lsuhsc.edu)

### A Gracious Gift Helps Pathology Residents

The Department of Pathology would like to express its humble and sincere gratitude to Mrs. Ann Deshotels and the entire Deshotels family for their generous donation to the residency program. In loving memory of program alum, Dr. Seldon J. Deshotels, Jr., the family has created the Pathology Residency Support Fund with the LSU Foundation. With this generous gift, the residency program has been able to order twelve new Olympus microscopes for the Pathology residents.

# The LSU Health Science Center Foundation relaunches the Tiger Health Caucus website

## What is the Tiger Health Caucus?

The Tiger Health Caucus was created by the LSU Health Sciences Center Foundation as a service to help keep our alumni, faculty, staff, and supporters in communities across Louisiana and throughout the United States informed on legislative activities that affect LSUHSC.

## Why should I become a member?

Membership in the caucus provides access to timely information on state and federal legislation that affect our core mission of education, research, and public service. The website includes tools to search for bills, identify your House and Senate members, and access other pertinent policy documents. In addition, the The Tiger Health Caucus gives you the opportunity to support LSUHSC-NO through your contacts in the state Legislature and in Congress to strengthen LSUHSC's local identity.

## What can I really do to have an impact on legislation that affects LSUHSC-NO?

Elected leaders have a tremendous impact on the future of LSUHSC as they contemplate higher education, healthcare, and workforce issues in a challenging economic environment. By joining the Tiger Health Caucus, you can become educated on the current legislation, stay updated as bills progress through the Legislature, and contact your representatives to ensure your voice is heard.

It is our hope that we can rely on you, our circle of friends, to carry the torch on our behalf to enhance LSUHSC-NO's ability to educate and train the healthcare workers our state so desperately needs, continue the important research done on this campus, and provide the public service that is the foundation of LSUHSC – NO.

## How do I join the Tiger Health Caucus?

Go to [www.ciclt.net/lshscf](http://www.ciclt.net/lshscf). Click the link to join. **Please note: LSUHSC faculty, staff and students must use their personal email accounts when joining the Tiger Health Caucus.** Do not use your lsuhsc.edu email.

# What to Know When You Talk About LSUHSC-NO!

*There are several misconceptions around the state of Louisiana, particularly in the Legislature, regarding LSU Health Sciences Center. Too often, LSUHSC is lumped into the same category as all state universities, subject to criticisms and legislative actions that do not apply to this campus. In an effort to better communicate how we are different and the overall importance of LSUHSC-NO, here are some general misconceptions and the facts to know when talking to your friends, family, neighbors, and legislators.*

## The state universities have poor performance and low graduation rates.

Because the Health Sciences Centers educate students seeking professional degrees (M.D., Ph.D., D.D.S., R.N., M.P.H., etc.), the students enrolled have impeccable academic credentials and are highly motivated and dedicated to earning these degrees. The Health Sciences Centers have exceedingly high graduation rates, with more than 95% of all matriculated students earning their degrees and licensure passage rates of 95% across all programs.

## Research is the answer to budget reductions; research should focus on the particular needs of the citizens of Louisiana.

Research costs money. Researchers are highly mobile and look for a university to provide the best equipment, facilities and opportunity for success. Therefore, we have to offer a package that meets their needs. Over the past 5 years, funding from the Board of Regents has not included a research component. In spite of this, LSUHSC has consistently garnered research dollars in the \$50-60 million range, putting this campus second in the state in research. Nearly all of the research being conducted at LSUHSC is funded by external funds, such as the National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation, Department of Defense, and numerous private foundations, and therefore does not use state tax dollars. Further, research ongoing at these institutions addresses many health-related issues important to the state of Louisiana, such as cancer, obesity, post-traumatic stress after Katrina, genetic diseases prevalent in the Acadian population, and health disparities in minority populations, among others. If we truly value research, then funding for research must be prioritized.

**There are too many institutions of higher education in the state of Louisiana for the needs of the people.**  
Whether Louisiana has too many universities is a question for the Legislature to address, but the HSCs should not be part of this discussion as the current demand for healthcare professionals justifies the need for these schools. Although they are a part of the flagship institution of LSU, the HSCs are inherently different than other state universities. Unlike the traditional four-year state universities, the Health Sciences Centers offer specialized degree programs focused on training health-care providers, they do not enroll first-time, freshman-level students, do not offer general education courses, and train a majority of post-graduate students. With the HSCs the number of Health Sciences Centers in Louisiana is appropriate for the demand for health-care providers in our state.

## The education provided by state universities does not meet the workforce needs of the state of Louisiana.

The professionals trained at the HSCs are high-paying careers in high-demand industries in our state. In addition, nearly 95% of all students in the Schools of Medicine, Dentistry, and Nursing are residents of the state of Louisiana. The in-state retention of these graduates is among the top in the country, which results in our graduates serving the medical, dental, and nursing needs of our citizens. Given the shortages in the healthcare workforce of the state, the aging of the current healthcare providers, and the increasing age of the population, the demand for health-care providers in our state is great and not expected to subside. The education provided by the HSCs directly answers these needs and prepares students for high-paying careers that contribute to the health of Louisiana's economy.

## Meet The People Who Make It Happen!

### Patrick E. Reed

Director, Office of Technology Management

In the position for just about one year, Patrick brings over 12 years of experience in technology transfer after working for the Georgia Tech Research Corporation and the LSU AgCenter. He holds a Master's degree in biotechnology from the Kellogg Center for Biotechnology at Northwestern University and a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from the University of Tennessee at Martin. He loves meeting the innovative researchers at the Health Sciences Center and learning about their new discoveries. "I very much enjoy what I do for a living. Having a hand in bringing cutting edge research to the marketplace is very satisfying."



### Kevin Dietz, Ph.D.

Licensing Assistant, Office of Technology Management

Newly hired, Kevin returns home to LSU after three years as a postdoctoral researcher at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, MA. Kevin received his Ph.D. from LSU Department of Genetics in 2012. Kevin loves interacting with LSU scientists and using his doctoral degree to help translate their novel findings and technologies into a patent application. "As a native New Orleanian and an LSUHSC graduate, I am excited to be able to give back to a community that has given me so much!"



## Who, and What, is the Office of Technology Management?

Patrick Reed, Director of the Office of Technology Management

In June 2012, the Office of Technology Management (OTM), formerly the Office of Technology Development, got a facelift. What has emerged is a group dedicated to bringing this university's innovative research to the marketplace. We have a commitment to our clients- the university research community- to be transparent in our decision making, to involve inventors in every step of the process, and to make timely and well-informed decisions. OTM is a service unit of the university; the inventors' buy-in to the commercialization path we develop is integral to the success of our projects.

Patrick Reed, the new Director of OTM, has extensive commercialization experience from time spent at another LSU campus, the LSU AgCenter, and at Georgia Tech, a world leader in technology transfer. In February of this year he hired Dr. Kevin Dietz as Licensing Assistant. Kevin's extensive knowledge of the life sciences will be invaluable as OTM moves through this period of transition into a period of increased commercialization activity.

You're encouraged to explore OTM's new website found at [www.lsuhsc.edu/administration/academic/otm](http://www.lsuhsc.edu/administration/academic/otm). There you'll find an Inventor's Guide that covers frequently asked questions related to technology transfer and commercialization, a section for forms and templates, and links to relevant university policies.

OTM welcomes the opportunity to visit both with individual investigators as well as larger groups.

## Think you have no impact?

Don't know what political issues in Baton Rouge affect you?  
Think you can't do anything?

**YOU CAN!**

STAY INFORMED!

Tiger Health Caucus can help....

[http://www.ciclt.net/sn/adm/editpage.aspx?ClientCode=lsuhscf&FileName=home\\_page.txt](http://www.ciclt.net/sn/adm/editpage.aspx?ClientCode=lsuhscf&FileName=home_page.txt)

Sign up with your PERSONAL E-MAIL and stay informed and get involved!

## The Diversity Report

Derek Rovaris, Ph.D., Vice Chancellor for Academic and Multicultural Affairs

The Office of the Associate Vice Chancellor for Multicultural and Academic Affairs has been quite busy over the last few months. A Campus Climate Survey was rolled out in December. This initial survey was designed to anonymously assess the entire campus' perception of diversity. Among the questions addressed were, how are members from diverse backgrounds perceived and treated; how does the campus feel about diversity; and is diversity important for the institution. Following a few rough patches at start-up, the survey has proceeded nicely with completion rates (as of March 15) of over 72% for faculty and staff and over 82% for students. Data has not yet been fully analyzed but cursory observation suggests that it will provide valuable insight and direction.

The second LSUHSC Campuswide Book Club culminated last fall with a panel presentation on Nine Lives. This book chronicled the lives of nine very diverse New Orleanians and their subsequent struggles, triumphs, and intersections following

hurricanes Betsy and Katrina. One of those characters joined us for an informative panel discussion along with one of the singer/actors from the local stage production that was based on the book.

The annual Recruitment Caravan again brought LSUHSC faculty and students to Dillard and Xavier Universities in the Fall. About 120 undergraduates were exposed to the variety of academic programs offered in our six graduate and professional schools.

The campus electronic message boards have been buzzing with month long celebrations of culture including Hispanic Heritage Month, Black History Month and Women's History Month. Each month featured rotating easels with several pioneers and exemplary leaders celebrated during their respective months.



# LSUHSC medical and graduate students, faculty, and staff teach Science to 4th graders

Fern Tsien, Ph.D., Director of the LSUHSC/New Orleans Schools Science Partnership Program

Photo by Leslie Capo



New Orleans 4th graders from three partnering schools, Banneker Elementary, Langston Hughes Academy, and St. Peter Claver Elementary School, receive hands-on science training by LSUHSC volunteers. The goals of the LSUHSC/New Orleans Schools Science Partnership Program are to improve 4th graders' performance in the science state standardized exams, expose them to diverse role models in the sciences, making science easy to understand and less intimidating, improve science academic achievements, and increasing awareness of science as a future career. Instructors from the LSUHSC Schools of Medicine, Graduate Studies, Public Health, and Allied Health Professions bring curriculum-based experiments every two weeks to the three schools. A campus wide-book drive was held from April 11th to May 11th for the 4th graders at the partnering schools. The books were to the children during their field trip to LSUHSC on May 20th.

## LGBT + Allies Organization for Cultural Understanding in the Health Sciences (LOCUS)

Andrew D. Hollenbach, Ph.D., Primary Faculty Advisor LOCUS (Genetics)

LOCUS held our first official meeting as a fully recognized LSUHSC student organization in November. Since that time we have been busy. Daniel Puneky (L2, President of LOCUS) and Andrew Hollenbach, along with Ashlea Winfield (L2, President of ETHIKOS) and Lisa Moreno-Walton, M.D. (Emergency Medicine) spearheaded the involvement and sponsorship of LSUHSC in the Red Umbrella Second Line, an event organized to raise awareness and education of HIV/AIDS prevalence in the NOLA African American Community. We also had an educational dinner meeting on March 27th at which Dr. Pedro L. Gonzalez (former LSU SOM Infectious Diseases Clinical Fellow) presented an incredible, informative,

and interactive seminar on HIV/AIDS treatment, including discussions of both ART and PREP therapy. We were joined by our sister organization from Tulane Medical School, TOGA, for the event. Finally, we hosted a seminar on April 16th by Dr. Brandy Penunti, an Endocrinologist from Ochsner. She spoke about the care of transgender patients with a focus on endocrine management of these patients. We have several other exciting events and projects coming down the road, so keep your eye out for them! Again, if you are interested as a member of the LGBT community or as a straight ally and want to get involved, contact Andrew D. Hollenbach (aholle@lsuhsc.edu) or Daniel Puneky (dpunek@lsuhsc.edu) for more information.

## Dr. Jaime Becnel wins the Jack D. Hines, III Memorial Award

Fern Tsien, Ph.D., Director, LSUHSC/New Orleans Schools Science Partnership Program

Dr. Jaime Becnel, a post-doctoral fellow working for Dr. Charles Nichols, won the prestigious award, which was established in honor of Jack D. Hines, III, who passed away last year. This award is presented to an individual who has demonstrated outstanding dedication to the Graduate School. Dr. Becnel has worked with the LSUHSC/N.O. Schools Science Partnership Program since 2008. She coordinated lessons with 4th grade school teachers and volunteers, and taught at the classroom almost every week. Jaime co-authored an activity book describing these science lessons, and organized the yearly LSUHSC Field Day. Jaime organized an educational program for Sarah T. Reed High School, and teaches Pharmacology at the Nursing and Dental Schools. She is the outgoing president of the Post-doc Association, the postdoc/grad student representative for the Association of Women in Science (AWIS), and for the Multicultural and Diversity Committee. She is moving to San Antonio, TX where she will continue with her teaching and community outreach activities.



Dr. Becnel accepts the award from Dr. Joseph Moerschbaecher III and Dr. Kathleen McDonough.

# Louisiana high school and college students learn about science careers at LSUHSC

Fern Tsien, Ph.D., Director of the LSUHSC/Patrick F. Taylor Science and Workshop Program

Local undergraduates and high school students are exposed to the variety of careers at LSUHSC through a grant awarded to Dr. Fern Tsien, Department of Genetics, LSU School of Medicine and Dr. Mona Bakeer, Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences, School of Allied Health Professions by the Patrick F. Taylor Foundation. The main goal of this project is to improve Louisiana college retention through early science career choice: having early-defined career goals can increase motivation towards higher grades and graduation in the sciences. Through LSUHSC/Patrick F. Taylor Science and Career Workshop Program, which began in 2009, more than 1000 Louisiana students from rural and urban schools and various socioeconomic backgrounds have been exposed to science education career programs offered at

LSUHSC. Faculty, staff, graduate students, and medical students serve as instructors and role models to the participants as they assist with the tours, experiments, and human organ demonstrations. Mr. Daryl Lofaso instructs the highly interactive Human Simulation Laboratory in the Learning Center. Participating 2012-2013 schools include: New Orleans Charter Science and Mathematics HS, Benjamin Franklin HS, Sacred Heart HS, Patrick F. Taylor Science and Technology Academy, St. Martin's Episcopal School, Dillard University, and Xavier University. The workshops also serve to promote the LSUSOM in making the public aware of the high quality of learning opportunities that exist in our institution.



Tracy Dodd, Ph.D. (Physiology) teaches a fourth grade student how to analyze DNA.

## Education –Changing with the Times

Richard DiCarlo, M.D., Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Education

The Curriculum Oversight Committee has been quiet for the past several months. That will soon change, as we are about to undertake two related initiatives. The first will be the conduct of a comprehensive review of our educational program, which is periodically required by the LCME. The faculty conducted a review of our clerkship curriculum and made significant changes between 2009 and 2011. The last major changes to the pre-clerkship curriculum were made between 2001 and 2003. It is time to take another comprehensive look at what we teach and how we teach it.

The Dean appointed an ad hoc steering committee to begin this process and to make some preliminary recommendations. This committee conducted a curriculum survey (of faculty and students) in the fall. Survey responses were reviewed and organized into questions about pedagogical methods, coordination of courses and clerkships, integration of clinical and basic science teaching, content deficiencies, and elective opportunities.

Members of the steering committee then asked these questions to small groups of interested faculty and students in a series of focus group discussions held during January and February. The steering committee will recommend some overall goals for curriculum change based on these discussions. For instance, the school should consider additional ways to enhance integration of clinical and basic science teaching, decrease our dependency on lecture, clarify learning objectives for the students, and increase opportunities for active learning. The steering committee will also recommend changes to the curriculum committee structure so that it can conduct a more detailed review, formally develop new curriculum goals, propose curriculum changes to the faculty at large, and begin work on curriculum revisions.

The second initiative involves an LCME requirement that we have a searchable database to monitor all curriculum content, which is related to a new AAMC initiative to create a national database of

curriculum content, the Curriculum Inventory Portal (CIP). Multiple vendors have worked with the AAMC to create database platforms for medical schools that will interface with and populate the CIP. We have selected to use the New Innovations database platform, given that we already use this vendor for residency evaluations and clerkship student evaluations. The Office of Medical Education has begun cataloging our interdisciplinary courses (SPM 100, SPM 200, and Critical Concepts) in the database, and will work with all courses and clerkships to enter their course data. We will need to upload our content into the CIP by September 2013. Once we do this, we will be able to compare many aspects of our curriculum to regional and national norms. Comparison of our content and pedagogy to national norms will help guide our comprehensive curriculum review, thus these two initiatives are interrelated.



## An update from the SOM Faculty Assembly:

The Assembly is comprised of 30 Delegates elected by full-time SOM faculty to serve as a collective voice to the administration. The Assembly also elects eight Senators to represent the SOM faculty on the Faculty Senate. We encourage all faculty members to participate in the organization's activities by attending meetings or identifying issues of interest to the SOM faculty either in person or via a delegate. The Assembly delegate list can be found on the Faculty Assembly website; meetings are open to all faculty of the SOM and approved minutes are posted on this website. Of the 30 delegates, 18 come from clinical science departments and 12 come from basic science departments. At least one clinical delegate comes from each of our affiliate campuses - Earl K. Long Hospital in Baton Rouge and University Medical Center in Lafayette.

*This year, the Faculty Assembly has been working on a number of initiatives including:*

- Voicing the faculty's enthusiastic support for the retention of Dr. Nelson as our Dean
- Raising awareness of the importance of the public hospital system in the teaching and recruitment of our students and house-officers
- Collaborating with IT on updating CM-42 which addresses information security, to maximize user privacy while securing the LSUHSC network
- Providing feedback to the Healthcare Network on operational successes and challenges in the clinical enterprise
- Reiterating the need for effective and cutting-edge Core Labs for our researchers
- Fostering enhanced communication between the Assembly and the clinical and basic science departments
- Development of tools for Department Head and Center Chair evaluation by faculty

As in previous years, we recognize outstanding faculty at our school through the Faculty Assembly Awards for Outstanding Service to the Institution, Outstanding Service to the Community, Outstanding Accomplishment by a Young Faculty Member, and Outstanding Mentor.

We are proud to serve the SOM faculty as their voice to the administration and welcome participation by all faculty members. We hope to hear from you about your ideas. Please continue to visit our webpage for updates on the Assembly's work. We can also be reached at somfa@lsuhsc.edu.

Murtuza "Zee" Ali, President, Faculty Assembly 2012-2013

**Congratulations**  
are to be extended to the SOM recipients of the  
**Allen A. Copping Excellence in Teaching Award:**

**Robin McGoey, M.D.,**  
Department of Pathology  
(award in Medicine – Clinical)

**Paula Gregory, Ph.D.,**  
Department of Genetics  
(award in Medicine – Basic Science)

Awarded each year at graduation to recognize teaching excellence, recipients are nominated by fellow faculty, students, and residents and the awards are presented each year to members of the LSU Health Sciences Center  
New Orleans in Allied Health, Nursing, Dentistry, Medicine Clinical, Medicine, Basic Sciences, and Public Health.

The annual Commencement Ceremonies for LSUHSC were held Thursday, May 16th, 2012 at the New Orleans Lakefront Arena.

During the proceedings nearly 200 Medical students and 27 Basic Science graduate students from the School of Medicine (SOM) received their degrees.

E. Gordon Gee, J.D., Ed.D., resident of The Ohio State University delivered the Commencement address.

*Congratulations to all of our graduates!!!!*



## Faculty Assembly Awards

Congratulations to this year's winners of the Faculty Assembly Awards!

### Outstanding Service To The Institution

Jeffrey D. Green, MA, PhD  
Department of Cell Biology and Anatomy

### Outstanding Mentor

Hamid Boulares, PhD  
Department of Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics

### Outstanding Accomplishments By A Young Faculty Member

Lesley A. Saketoo, MD, MPH  
Department of Rheumatology

### Outstanding Service To The Community

Rebekah Gee, MD, MPH, MS  
Department of OB/GYN

## Seen in the Papers

### Dr. Jesus Lovera,

Department of Neurology, found that the herbal supplement, Ginkgo biloba does not improve cognitive function in patients with

Multiple Sclerosis (MS), which most commonly affects their processing speed, memory, and executive skills. (Lovera, J, et al., "Ginkgo biloba does not improve cognitive function in MS: a randomized placebo-controlled trial" *Neurology*, 2012 Sep 18;79(12):1278-84.)



### Molecular Biology,

described how the Her2 cancer gene promotes the progression and spread of breast cancer cells in a recent report. The report details that one of the potential mechanisms by which Her2 achieves this is by inactivation of the tumor suppressor Nischarin, providing a new therapeutic target for treatment of breast cancer. (Jin, L. et al. "Pro-oncogenic factors miR-23b- and miR-27b are regulated by Her2/Neu, EGF, and TNF $\alpha$  in breast cancer," *Cancer Res* 73(9):1-13, 2013.



**Dr. Russell Russo**, a resident in the Department of Orthopedics, published the recommendation that orthopedists should have a high

index of suspicion for necrotizing fasciitis, or flesh-eating bacterial infection, in every patient with pain or other symptoms out of proportion to the initial diagnosis. Dr. Russo says X-rays, CT scans, etc. may not detect the disease, therefore necessitating a hands-on physical examination for proper diagnosis. These recommendations were published in the September 2012 issue of *Orthopedics Today*.

### Dr. Chu Chen,

Neuroscience Center of Excellence, identified an enzyme, monoacylglycerol lipase (MAGL) as a potential therapeutic target



to treat or prevent Alzheimer's Disease. They found that inactivation of MAGL, reduced the production and accumulation of beta amyloid plaques, a pathological hallmark of the disease. (Chen, R., et al., "Monoacylglycerol lipase is a therapeutic target for Alzheimer's disease," *Cell Rep*. 2012 Nov 29;2(5):1329-39)

### Dr. Suresh Alahari, Biochemistry and

### Dr. Jennifer Lentz,

Otorhinolaryngology and Biocommunications, reported that hearing and balance can be rescued by a new therapy in a mouse model of Usher syndrome. These results provide the first evidence that congenital deafness can be effectively overcome by treatment early in development to correct gene expression. (Lentz, J, et al. "Rescue of hearing and vestibular function by antisense oligonucleotides in a mouse model of human deafness" *Nat Med*. 2013 Mar;19(3):345-50)



### Dr. Minghao Jin, Ophthalmology and Neuroscience,

identified a protein that protects retinal photoreceptor cells from degeneration cause by light damage. This result

may provide a new therapeutic target for both an inherited retinal degenerative disease and age-related macular degeneration. (Li, S, et al., "Fatty Acid Transport Protein 4 (FATP4) Prevents Light-Induced Degeneration of Cone and Rod Photoreceptors by Inhibiting RPE65 Isomerase" *J Neurosci*. 2013 Feb 13;33(7):3178-89)

## The Inside Scope

**Question:** A recurring issue that arises is why does LSU SOM or LSUHSC not have child daycare services for their employees? It seems that these services would be a great benefit for the recruitment and retention of faculty, residents, and staff.

**Answer:**

The administration recognizes the importance of these services for the recruitment and retention of employees. The development and establishment of daycare services had been discussed pre-Katrina. However, the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, combined with the consistent budget cuts from Baton Rouge that have unfortunately made the costs associated with these important services prohibitive at the present time. The administration has not forgotten this issue and may re-examine the situation in the future.



## Student Run Clinics Win Brees Foundation Funding

The LSUHSC student run homeless clinics were awarded \$2000 from the Brees Dream Foundation and Companies with a Mission during the Super Service Challenge in the run up to the Super Bowl XLVII. They were also awarded an additional \$2000 for being the People's Choice Award winners. Last year the clinics, where LSU medical students examine patients under supervision of an LSUHSC staff physician, provided medical care to more than 700 individuals that would otherwise not have.

Congratulations and keep up the great work!

# When Budgets Give You Lemons...These People Made Lemonade!

Congratulations are in order for the following SOM people who successfully obtained external funding since July 1, 2012:

NIH P60 Comprehensive Center Research Program Grant:

**Steve Nelson, M.D.**  
(Dean of the SOM, Internal Medicine)

NIH P30 Centers Program – Research Core Grant:

**Nicolas Bazan, M.D., Ph.D.**  
(Neuroscience Center of Excellence)

NIH U01 Cooperative Agreement:  
**Patricia Molina, M.D., Ph.D.** (Physiology)

NIH U58 Cooperative Agreement:  
**Donna Williams, MPH, DrPH**  
(Stanley S. Scott Cancer Center)

HRSA U77 Area Health Education Centers Point of Service Maintenanceand Enhancement Grant:

**Charles Hilton, M.D.** (Internal Medicine)

NIH R01 Research Grant:  
**Stephanie Cormier, Ph.D.**

(Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics)  
**Mairi Novarr, Ph.D.**  
(Microbiology, Immunology, and Parasitology)

**Chris Parsons, M.D.** (Stanley S. Scott Cancer Center)

NIH R00 Pathway to Independence Award:  
**Imran Mungrue, Ph.D.**

(Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics)

NIH R21 Research Grant:  
**Elizabeth Fontham, Ph.D.** (Stanley S. Scott Cancer Center)

NIH R24 Resource Grant:  
**John Estrada, M.D.** (Stanley S. Scott Cancer Center)

NIH R41 Small Business Technology Transfer Grant (STTR):  
**Judd Shellito, M.D.** (Internal Medicine)

NIH R43 Small Business Innovation Research Grant (SBIR):  
**James Hill, Ph.D.** (Ophthalmology)

NIH R44 Small Business Innovation Research Grant (SBIR):  
**Paul Fidel, Jr., Ph.D.** (Microbiology, Immunology, and Parasitology)

NIH R56 High Priority, Short Term Project Award:  
**Paul Fidel, Jr., Ph.D.** (Microbiology, Immunology, and Parasitology)

**Glen Palmer, Ph.D.** (Microbiology, Immunology, and Parasitology)

**Li Shen, M.D., Ph.D.** (Microbiology, Immunology, and Parasitology)

NIH Ruth L. Kirschstein F30 M.D./Ph.D. Training Grant:  
**Myles Ketchum** (Physiology)

Louisiana Board of Regents:

**Andrew Catling, Ph.D.**  
(Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics)  
**Nicholas Gilpin, Ph.D.** (Physiology)  
**Bahram Khoobehi, Ph.D.** (Ophthalmology)

American Heart Association:

**Daniel Kapusta, Ph.D.**  
(Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics)

American Lung Association:

**Kyle Happel, M.D.** (Internal Medicine)

Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals:  
**Jameel Ahmed, M.D.** (Internal Medicine)  
**Brian Boulmay, M.D.** (Internal Medicine)  
**Richard Tejedor, M.D.** (Internal Medicine)  
Children's Hospital:

**Michael J. Ferris, Ph.D.**

(Microbiology, Immunology, and Parasitology)  
**Paulo Rodriguez, Ph.D.** (Microbiology, Immunology, and Parasitology)

Pennington Biomedical Research Center:

**Michael Hagensee, M.D., Ph.D.**  
(Microbiology, Immunology, and Parasitology)  
**Steve Nelson, M.D.** (Internal Medicine)  
**Jayne Weiss, M.D.** (Ophthalmology)

Tulane University:

**David Martin, M.D.** (Microbiology, Immunology, and Parasitology)  
**Stephanie Taylor, M.D.** (Microbiology, Immunology, and Parasitology)

University of Alabama:

**John Estrada, M.D.** (Stanley S. Scott Cancer Center)  
**Christopher Parson, M.D.** (Stanley S. Scott Cancer Center)

Independent Grants and Foundation Grants:

**Jameel Ahmed, M.D.** (Internal Medicine)

Brigham & Women's Hospital  
**Laura Bell** (Director, Continuing Medical Education)  
Merck & Co., Inc  
Teleflex Medical

**Hamid Boulares, Ph.D.**

(Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics)  
Canadian Bureau for International Education

**Rebecca Clark, M.D., Ph.D.** (Internal Medicine)  
Gilead Sciences, Inc.

**Harry Gould, M.D., Ph.D.** (Anesthesiology)  
Depomed, Inc.

**Kyle Happel, M.D.** (Internal Medicine)  
Astra Zeneca Pharmaceuticals

**James Hill, Ph.D.** (Ophthalmology)  
Peregrine Pharmaceuticals

**John Hunt, M.D., MPH** (Surgery)  
Trius Therapeutics, Inc.

**Jean Jacob, Ph.D.** (Ophthalmology)  
Johnson & Johnson

**Matthew Lammi, M.D.** (Internal Medicine)  
Temple University Health System

**Stephen Landreneau, M.D.** (Gastroenterology)  
Cook Medical  
Boston Scientific Corp.  
Olympus

**Paul LeLorier, M.D.** (Internal Medicine)  
Covance  
Duke University  
Medtronic

**Michael Levitzky, Ph.D.** (Physiology)  
University of South Florida

**Jesus Lovera, M.D.** (Neurology)  
National MS Society

**Christopher Marrero, M.D.** (Orthopedics)  
Endo Pharmaceuticals, Inc.

**David Martin, M.D.**

(Microbiology, Immunology, and Parasitology)  
Cempra Pharmaceuticals

**Charles Nichols, Ph.D.**

(Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics)  
Heffter Research Institute

**Udai Pandey, Ph.D.** (Genetics)

Henry M. Jackson Foundation

**Daniel Raines, M.D.** (Gastroenterology)

University of Colorado

**Efrain Reisin, M.D.** (Internal Medicine)

KERYX Biopharma  
Icon Clinical Research, Inc.

**Thomas Reske, M.D., Ph.D.** (Internal Medicine)

Emmes Corp.

**Krzysztof Reiss, Ph.D.** (Stanley S. Scott Cancer Center)

Ochsner Clinic Foundation

**Lesley Saketkoo, M.D., MPH** (Rheumatology)

Georgetown University  
PNA Center for Neurological Research

**Frank Smart, M.D.** (Internal Medicine)

Paragon Biomedical, Inc.  
St. Jude Medical

**Durga Sure, M.D.** (Neurosurgery)

NuVasive, Inc.  
DePuy Mitek, Inc.

**Stephanie Taylor, M.D.**

(Microbiology, Immunology, and Parasitology)  
Becton Dickinson, Corp.  
Gen Probe Incorporated

**Gabriel Tender, M.D.** (Neurosurgery)

Trans1, Inc.

**Mark Townsend, M.D.** (Psychology)

INC Research, Inc.

**Fern Tsien, Ph.D.** (Genetics)

Patrick F. Taylor Foundation

**Richard Vander Heide, M.D., Ph.D.** (Pathology)

Wake Forest University HSC  
Henry J. Werner Bequest

**Guoshun Wang, DVM** (Microbiology, Immunology, and Parasitology)

ACRES

**Eugene Woltering, M.D.** (Surgery)

Lexicon Pharmaceuticals, Inc.

**Xiao Cheng Wu, M.D., MPH** (Stanley S. Scott Cancer Center)

Research Triangle Institute

## Aesculapian Society Awards

The votes are in and the following faculty members and residents have been recognized by the Aesculapian Society, voted on by the medical students, for the Excellence in Teaching Award:

L1 Fall Professor

**William Swartz, Ph.D.**

(Cell Biology and Anatomy)

L1 Spring Professor

**Hamilton Farris, Ph.D.**

(Neuroscience Center of Excellence)

L2 Fall Professor

**Guido DeJesus, M.D.**

(Medicine)

L2 Spring Professor

**Daniel Kapusta, Ph.D.**

(Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics)

L3 Favorite Intern

**Julie Gallois, M.D.**

(Pediatrics)

L3 Favorite Resident

**Kelly Kempe, M.D.**

(Surgery)

L4 Favorite Intern

**Carl Giffin, M.D.**

(Internal Medicine)

L4 Favorite Resident

**Casey Carlisle, M.D.**

(Internal Medicine)

L4 Favorite Attending

**Angela Johnson, M.D.**

(Internal Medicine)

Junior Faculty Award

**Lisa Campeau, Ph.D.**

(Cell Biology and Anatomy)

## Making the List of the Top Docs!

One hundred and seventy three physicians associated with LSU Health Sciences Center New Orleans appear on the Best Doctors in America list for 2013. Only five percent of doctors in America earn this prestigious honor, which is decided by impartial peer review. The highly regarded list assembled by Best Doctors, Inc., results from exhaustive polling of over 45,000 physicians in the US. Doctors in over 40 specialties and 400 subspecialties of medicine appear on this year's list. For a complete listing visit Best Doctors at <http://www.bestdoctors.com>.

## Among the People To Watch in New Orleans!



**Suresh Alahari, Ph.D.**

(Biochemistry and Molecular Biology) was named one of New Orleans Magazine's 2012 people to watch! Each year New Orleans Magazine highlights thirty people from the Metro area who are doing noteworthy activities. Dr. Alahari was chosen for his work in determining the role the protein Nischarin plays in breast cancer development and treatment. *Congratulations!*

## Two Faculty Members Receive National Awards

**Ann Henderson Tilton, M.D.,**

Clinical Professor of Neurology was awarded the 2012 Hower Award at the 41st Annual Child Neurological Society Meeting in November. This award is given to one child neurologist each year and honors an outstanding teacher and scholar whose contributions to the specialty have been recognized at national and international levels.

**Kim Edward LeBlanc, M.D., Ph.D.,**

Professor and Head of Family Medicine, was one of ten recipients of the 2012 Robert Raszkowski Hero Award presented by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME). This award recognizes volunteers who have provided exemplary and long-term service to the ACCME through service on the Board of Directors, the Accreditation Review Committee, the Committee for Review and Recognition and the Monitoring Committee.

## Two LSU SOM Faculty Receive Special Invitations

Two LSU SOM faculty members received, and accepted invitations from Kathleen Sebelius, Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, appointing them to Advisory Panels that set National policy.

Patricia Molina, M.D., Ph.D., Professor and Chair of Physiology, is one of 15 members appointed to the National Advisory Council on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, with her term having begun November 19, 2012. This Advisory Council advises and makes recommendations to the Secretary of HHS, the Director of the NIH, and the Director of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) on research program and policy matters in the field of alcohol abuse and alcoholism.

Jayne Weiss, M.D., Professor and Chair of Ophthalmology, will serve as one of 12 members on the National Advisory Eye Council, effective January 2013 and serving for a four-year term. The Council advises, assists, consults with, and makes recommendations to the Secretary of HHS and the Director of the National Eye Institute (NEI) on matters related to the activities carried out by and through NEI and the policies respecting these activities.

## 40 Under 40!



Every year, Gambit, a New Orleans free weekly newspaper, honors 40 people under the age of 40 for their accomplishments and the contributions they've made to New Orleans.

Among this year's list?

**Murtuza "Zee" Ali,**

Associate program director, Interventional Cardiology Fellowship program, Department of Medicine and present Faculty Assembly President. Congrats Zee!!

# What's Going On in YOUR Neck of the Woods!

## Anesthesiology

**Alan Kaye, M.D.**, was selected to serve along with approximately half a dozen experts on the FDA Advisory Committee on Anesthetics and Analgesics. He will serve a three year term.

## Genetics

**Paula Gregory, Ph.D.**, was awarded the American Heart Association award to support summer student stipends as part of the Summer Internship Program. Dr. Gregory also organized the 2nd Annual Medical Student Research Day on October 12, 2012 and hosted the School of Medicine New Faculty Orientation in October 2012 and March 2013.

In addition, Dr. Gregory spoke at the Second Century Speaker series where she spoke to high school students about her role in research and as a woman in science. One important message she presented was the importance of writing in the field of science, among other discussions of research.

**Anasheh Halabi**, recent Genetics graduate, won first place for her oral presentation at Graduate Research Day in Fall 2012. Dr. Halabi was also the recipient of a travel award to present her work at the Ataxia Research conference in London, England.

**Andrew Hollenbach, Ph.D.**, was issued his second US Patent, for "Phospho-Specific Anti-Pax3 Antibodies."

**Aditi Iyengar**, recent Genetics graduate, published an article in the ASBMB Today for their essay series "Derailed but not Deterred". According to the editor of the magazine her article was the most accessed article of the issue and series. Dr. Iyengar has since been invited to serve as a contributing author to this publication.

**Diptasri Mandal, Ph.D.**, received funding as a site P.I. on an R01 grant awarded to the International Consortium of Prostate Cancer Genetics, which consists of 17 different research groups located at 22 institutions in North America, Europe, and Australia.

**Udai Pandey, Ph.D.**, was awarded \$50,000 as part of the Centers of Biomedical Research Excellence Phase III Neuroscience Research Pilot Program.

## Ophthalmology

**Marie Acierno, M.D.**, presented a poster entitled "Thyroid eye disease – pilot study" at the annual North American Neuro-Ophthalmology Society Meeting in Salt Lake City, UT, in February 2013. At this meeting Dr. Acierno was named the Vice Chair of the North American Neuro-Ophthalmology Society CME. She also serves on the Program Committee for the 62nd Annual New Orleans Academy of Ophthalmology.

**Jayne Weiss, M.D.**, presented her work entitled "Cornea update and grand rounds corneal dystrophies" and "Refractive surgery in ocular and systemic disease" to the New Orleans Contact Lens Society in March 2013.

## Biochemistry

**Shyamal Desai, Ph.D.**, is a featured researcher in the AT Children's Project newsletter. Read the full story here: <http://www.atcp.org/document.doc?id=403>

**Daniel Edwards, M.D./Ph.D.** student, placed third in the Graduate Student Oral Presentations on Graduate Research Day for his talk "The secreted effector IpaH9.8 of *Shigella flexneri* catalyzes the formation of polyubiquitin chains using a cooperative allosteric mechanism."

**Jing Liu**, Graduate Student, was selected to receive a Graduate Student/Postdoctoral Fellow travel award to attend the 2013 ASBMB Annual Meeting in Boston.

**Jessica Richard**, Graduate Student, was selected to give an oral presentation for the ASBMB platform session this April in Boston on "Plasticity of the kinesin-microtubule interaction is encoded by the motor domain beta sheet."

## Otolaryngology

**Moises Arriaga, M.D.**, was elected to the Best Doctors in America 2013 database. Dr. Arriaga is the director of the LSU Hearing and Balance Center at Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center and the Celicchia Neurological Clinic at West Jefferson Medical Center.

**Anita Jeyakumar, M.D.**, received a prestigious appointment to serve as a member of the American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery's Core Otolaryngology and Practice Management Education Committee effective October 2012 for a two-year term.

**George Lyons, M.D.**, received the Otolaryngology Alumnus of the Year Award for 2012, presented at the Otolaryngology Didactic Day Conference on March 5, 2013.

**Rohan Walvekar, M.D.**, with contributions from Celeste Gary, M.D., and medical student Jonathan Sorrel completed a chapter, which is accepted, on TORS Radical Tonsillectomy for the ENT Video Atlas.

**Meghan Wilson, M.D.**, fourth year resident, had two abstracts accepted for the American Society of Pediatric Otolaryngology Meeting entitled "Balloon dilation in the treatment of choanal atresia" and "Does Monopolar cautery adversely affect cochlear implants."

On November 9, 2012, the department hosted a Resident Audiology and Vestibular Course. The department has hosted three successful Temporal Bone Dissection Course on October 27, 2012, December 7/8, 2012, and January 25, 2013. The courses were open to LSU Otolaryngology and neurosurgery residents, Tulane Otolaryngology residents, and local Otolaryngology physicians.

## Gastroenterology

The Section of Gastroenterology had a great success with its 4th annual Crescent City ERCP Conference and CME Course on January 25 – 26, 2013. The conference and course is designed for gastroenterologists, surgeons, and healthcare professionals engaged in the comprehensive management of patients with pancreatobiliary disease. Topics discussed included Informed Consent, Biliary Stricture Management, Managing Difficult Cannulation, Basic and Advanced Sphincterotomy Technique, Bile Duct Stone Management, Pancreatic Stones and Strictures, and Complications – Recognition and Management.

## Pathology

**James Barbeau, M.D.**, and **John DePaolo, M.D./Ph.D.** student, published an article "Enhanced tracking of tissue for transplantation" in the February 2013 issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association.

Congratulations to **James Barbeau, M.D.**, **Angie Duong, M.D.**, **Giovanni Lorusso, M.D.**, and **Richard Vander Heide, M.D., Ph.D.**, for being nominated for the Faculty Excellence in Teaching Award through the Aesculapian Society.

**Ritu Bhalla, M.D.**, will present a poster entitled "Novel RNA in situ hybridization method for the detection of ETV1, ETV4 and ETV5 in prostate cancer" at the American Association for Cancer Research meeting in Washington, DC in April. Dr. Bhalla also published two articles: "Novel dual-color immunohistochemical methods for detecting ERG-PTEN and ERG-SINK1 status in prostate carcinoma" (January 2013 Modern Pathology) and "Accuracy of determining small renal mass management with risk stratified biopsies: confirmation by final pathology" (February 2013 Journal of Urology).

**Fred Brazda, M.D.**, published an article entitled "Hemoglobin SO-Arab and alpha-thalassemia diagnosed in an adult: a case-based review of the hemoglobinopathies" in the December 2012 issue of the American Journal of the Medical Sciences.

**Matthew Stark, M.D.**, and Randall Craver, M.D., presented a poster entitled "Histologic differences in placentas of eclamptic/preeclamptic gestations by birth weight, placental weight, and time of onset" at the Society for Pediatric Pathology spring meeting held in Baltimore, MD. Dr. Craver also presented a poster entitled "Infections in a children's hospital autopsy population" at the USCAP annual meeting in March, 2013.

## Pediatrics:

The Jeffrey Modell Center for Primary Immunodeficiencies in New Orleans hosted the 1st Annual JMC-LAPIN Symposium: Gene-Based Diagnosis and Therapy of Primary Immunodeficiencies on April 12 and 13. Ricardo Sorenson, M.D., hosted speakers from the NIH, Rockefeller University, Europe, Latin America, and LSI to discuss advances in molecular diagnosis and gene therapy for primary immunodeficiencies.

# Maximize Your Residency Potential, Reward Your Travel!

John Nicholas Melvan, M.D., Ph.D., and Tabitha M. Quebedeaux, Ph.D.

Many challenges face fourth year medical students during a potentially exhausting residency interview season.

One of the best ways to ensure stamina on the interview trail is to prepare in advance and maximize travel efficiency.

## #1. Scheduling.

Most programs invite applicants to interview in one of 2-4 interview sessions. The number of interviewees trends between 5-10% of applicants. Select programs in general surgery for instance may receive 1,000+ applications for 5-6 residency spots. Interview offers are scheduled on a first come – first serve basis, so it is best to communicate with the program coordinator as soon as possible. Scheduled interview days however can be modified in most cases. Synchronize your calendars, contacts, and emails to ensure that travel documents and communications do not slip through the cracks. Applications like iPhone Passbook, Trip It, and Dropbox can help keep this information organized and easily accessible.

## #2. Budgeting.

The applicant carries all costs associated with interviewing, so budget travel expenses in advance. Student loans are available for buffering this financial burden. Start by identifying the number of interviews that will provide the greatest opportunity for a successful match. Information regarding the average number of interviews per applicant in each specialty is published by the National Residency Match Program (<http://www.nrmp.org>). Many applicants budget between \$5,000 – \$10,000 for the interview season, depending on the number of interviews and regions of

travel. Costs associated with each interview can vary widely. When scheduling, it is wise to couple interviews by region or date because it can provide opportunities for one-way flights, ground transportation, and significant cost savings. Occasionally institutions may offer paid lodging or advertise discounted hotel rates (average ~\$100/night).

## #3. Rewarding Travel.

Numerous methods are available to increase travel efficiency. Nearly every airline and online travel engine offer free frequent flyer rewards programs. Sign up for them all. Miles and rewards also build faster when booking travel exclusively with one airline and/or maintaining a credit card associated with that program.

## #4. Check-In with Mentors.

Residency interview season is stressful. Frequently check-in with personal and professional mentors. Letter of recommendation writers, student affairs staff, inspiring clerkship professors, etc. are all willing to help find the residency program that best fits your needs. They can provide professional contacts and amazing insight. Clinical specialties are frequently comprised of small communities and one phone call of support can go a long way. Make the most of the professional networks already available.

## #5. Listen To Footsteps.

During 3 months of interviewing, you will find many of the same applicants interviewing at each program. Friendships with fellow applicants can endure throughout a career. Interviewees share their experiences with programs and can provide valuable information concerning their home institutions. However, take this information with a grain-of-salt and do not let it sway your decision-making. The NRMP also publishes rules for communication between applicants and programs. Be aware of these rules and decide early how to handle out-of-bounds questioning.

For medical students relying on restricted finances, residency interview season can be a stressful time comprised of high expense and intense unknowing. Planning ahead, actively implementing cost savings, and maximizing travel efficiency can significantly reduce stress, money spent, and energy wasted. Ultimately, a well-designed travel plan fosters an interview trail with fewer distractions and more time to focus on interview preparations and outcomes. Happy travels fellow applicant!



## That “Grown Up” Job – Moving from Residency to Practice

Noel Kemp, M.D. (3rd year resident Medicine)



I would like to set up a time to speak with you regarding your career interests and goals,” stated one prospective employer. My immediate thought was, “There are goals other than that of being employed after the completion of residency?”

As a first and second year medical student, the foremost goal is to get through the next test. Then, as a fourth year student, the focus shifts to getting into a residency

that is perceived to be most aligned with one’s educational goals. For residents, goals may entail making it through that ward month, or sometimes just making it through that call shift.

During most of one’s medical training up to this point, the goal has been singular in nature- making it to the next step. Thus, it was initially difficult to articulate just what exactly were my career interests other than the broad scope of hospital medicine.

Before you reach into the depths of your closet and dust off that neutral colored suit, however, there is the daunting task of applying for your state medical license. Starting the process early and staying organized is the smartest play- there is even a checklist buried somewhere among the many web pages of

instructions and tips. Copying all forms and supplemental documents is key as many of these will later be required for credentialing with future employers. What first seemed like a nightmare for a self-proclaimed procrastinator, turned out to be quite manageable with a good to do list.

Now, fast forward to the suit you have not worn since residency interviews. Speaking of things that may or may not need an update- take a critical look at your CV. Daily emails, and sometimes even daily phone calls, will come from recruiters all over the country. They will always end with the same request, “Send me your CV.” I still cringe remembering how I first forwarded along the CV that still listed every society I participated in during my undergraduate education (looking at you psychology club). Then, there are the interviews themselves, which proved to be not unlike interviews for residency. Instead of asking yourself where you will receive the best education, however, the question morphs into concerns regarding geographical area, academic versus private, opportunities for growth and leadership, etc. Just as you are looking to put your best face forward, employers are likewise trying to set themselves apart in efforts to sign the best-fit candidate. The process can be exciting, overwhelming, both- it is, after all, the next step.

# Postdoc ponderings: where to start!

Additi S. Iyengar, Ph.D. (Genetics)

You have set your thesis defense date and as you furiously type out the last page of your dissertation, you wonder, what next! For many of us, the natural course of action would be seeking a Post Doctoral Fellowship position in either academia or industry. But where and how do we start? There is no guidebook to follow or a check-list to pore over, however, here are some of the things I have discovered to be helpful while navigating through the decision making process:

## 1. Look for a position that excites and motivates you.

As a researcher, if the science does not stimulate you then nothing will. Choose your future area of work wisely because you will most likely spend the next few years, and potentially your entire career working in this field. Do your homework and read up on current literature, discuss the position with your advisor and try to get a balanced perspective on the future of research in that particular area. You don't want to be stuck doing something that bores you. Don't be intimidated by the idea of venturing into a new field. A post doc is a training opportunity that should maximize your versatility and marketability. Merely working on something that is an extension of your graduate work narrows the scope of your experience and knowledge.

**2. Choose a lab that fits your work ethic.** You could be in the most prestigious lab in the best of institutions and yet be miserable. It is of utmost importance that the work environment that you are going to surround yourself with will ensure maximum productivity. Some issues you might want to consider are: the size of the lab (small vs. big), location, climate, funding. Also important is the mentoring style of your potential employer (hands off or micromanager), approachability of colleagues and the presence of a collaborative or competitive atmosphere between coworkers.

## 3. Talk to everybody you think can give you sound advice:

This includes your mentor, previous graduate students, post docs, committee members and faculty in your department and outside. Don't be afraid to ask them about their experiences and their contacts. More often than not, it is networking with people that land you great opportunities, which might have been difficult to come across otherwise.

## 4. Manage your time

Start putting together your application package early: Give yourself at least a four-month (if not more) head start before your actual defense date. Get your CV ready, talk to your potential referees, line up your recommendation letters and construct a cover letter. This process takes more time than you think. So, it's best to have everything ready and complete before you get busy with your thesis work.

## 5. Apply to more than just one lab:

It is always a good idea to keep your options open and to look for more than one position. Even if you think you know where you want to go and what you want to do, always be prepared for unforeseen circumstances, one of them being the propensity to change one's mind.

**6. Spruce up your interview skills:** Prepare to talk about your graduate work as well as your short and long-term scientific goals. Make a list of your strengths and weaknesses. Make sure you know a little about the research that's being conducted in the lab you want to join and ask questions if you have to. Be polite but confident. And always follow up an interview with a thank you email that reiterates how interested you are in that position.

## 7. Be prepared for rejection:

You can do everything right and yet not get the job. Don't take it personally. You will have other opportunities as long as you persevere. Keep calm and carry on!

The notion of applying for research positions after graduate school can be daunting and overwhelming. However, the right amount of planning and a whole lot of determination will get where you want to be!

## Large money for community clinical study

Patricia Molina, M.D., Ph.D. (Professor and Chair of Physiology), has been awarded a \$2.7 million grant by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism to develop a behavioral approach to reduce alcohol use and disorders in people living with HIV/AIDS. A team of scientists led by Dr. Molina will work with LSUHSC physicians at the LSU HIV Outpatient Clinic as well as the LSUHSC School of Public Health. They will enroll 250 people living with HIV/AIDS in a clinical study examine intervention with a Holistic Health Recovery Program adapted for Alcohol Use Disorders for achieving or maintaining viral load suppression, reducing alcohol use and HIV risk behaviors, and improving anti-retroviral therapy adherence. It is hoped that this intervention and its future implementation will improve clinical outcomes by enhancing patients' awareness of the biomedical and psychosocial consequences of alcohol use in HIV/AIDS and by enhancing the knowledge, motivation and skills necessary to modify behaviors that promote HIV disease progression.

## Send Us Your Stories!

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# the students' forum

## Meet Leigh Smith-Vaniz

**L**eigh recently joined LSU and serves as the new Coordinator of Student Affairs for the School of Graduate Studies. She previously worked for three years as the Coordinator of Disability Services at Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond, LA. Leigh also has experience in Career Services, Judicial Affairs/Student Conduct, and Athletics. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology with a minor in Sociology as well as a Master of Arts degree in Higher Education/Student Personnel from the University of Mississippi in Oxford, MS. Her favorite part of the job is interacting with the students and the faculty and the variety that the job offers. "Interesting fact about myself: The “-Vaniz” part of my last name was made up by my family in the 1800s, so if you ever meet a “Smith-Vaniz”, they are definitely one of my relatives."



## Following in a Humanitarian's Footsteps

Jarratt Pytell, a third year medical student, and Amir Shahien, a second-year medical student, were selected to be among the 2012-13 New Orleans class of Albert Schweitzer Fellows. They will spend the next year carrying out innovative service projects that address the social factors that impact health, developing lifelong leadership skills, and living famed physician-humanitarian Albert Schweitzer's message of service.

Jarratt Pytell will implement a sexual and reproductive health program focusing on access to health care, positive sexual behaviors, and disease and pregnancy prevention at the New Orleans Charter Science and Math Academy.

Amir Shahien will collaborate with a healthy foods vendor to implement a complementary, sustainable nutrition education series taught by medical student volunteers at elementary schools in New Orleans at the Batiste Cultural Arts Academy.

After completing their first year of service, they will become Schweitzer Fellows for Life. Congratulations!!!!

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

## Match Day

Match Day was a huge success for the Class of 2013! Our ceremony was held in the Bienville Club of the Mercedes-Benz Superdome, and there was a crawfish boil on campus following the event. Over 1,000 of our family and friends were in attendance to celebrate with us. Most students matched in their first choice for residency! This year, 55% (104/187) of the graduating class chose to stay in Louisiana for residency training. Of those staying in Louisiana, 65% (68/104) chose LSUHSC residency programs. Students who will be pursuing residency training outside of Louisiana matched with programs such as Duke, Wake Forest, UNC, Barnes-Jewish, Vanderbilt, Emory, and UCLA, among others. We would like to thank Katherine Diodene in the Dean's office as well as Student Affairs for their help in planning this memorable day!



Students are elated at yet another successful match

## AOA Inductees

Congratulations are in order for the following members recently inducted into the Alpha Omega Alpha (AOA) Honor Medical Society. These following people demonstrated excellence not only in academics, but also service, leadership, and research:

### October 2012:

#### *Senior Medical Students:*

Laura Anderson,  
Rachel Barry,  
Cara Bevinetto,  
James Brown,  
Nupur Dalal,  
Preston Eiswirth,  
Deniell Duhon,  
Tiffany Eady,  
Gregory Max Gosey,  
Lucas Harless,  
Stephen Hernandez,  
Amy Ingegniero,  
Susan Karam,  
India Mayo,  
John Benjamin McIntire,  
Melanie McIntosh,  
Ty Nichols,  
Megan Pynot,  
Matthew Rabito,  
Michael Rolfsen,  
Laura Shoemaker,  
Robert Steven Trainor,  
Benjamin Triche

#### *Senior Medical Students*

(elected as Juniors):  
Lauren Bergeron,  
Ahmad Jabbar,  
Daniel Kolinsky,  
Ben Niland,  
Ryan Rebowe,  
John Wilkinson,  
Jenny Zhang

### March 2013:

#### *Junior Medical Students:*

Aimee Coscarart,  
Ariane "CoCo" Fraiche,  
Nicholas Frank,  
Ryan Gravolet,  
Hong Van Le,  
Maverick Leblanc,  
Elizabeth Marston,  
Komal Mehta,  
Michael Modica,  
Adam Tosh,  
Nicholas Walker

#### *House Staff:*

Adrienne Arbour, M.D.,  
Casey Battaglia Carlisle, M.D.,  
Emily Harrison, M.D.

#### *Faculty:*

Harold Fuselier, Jr.,  
M.D., Brian Lee, M.D.

#### *Alumni:*

James Brown, III, M.D.



## Today's Youth, Tomorrow's Future!

On Monday, May 20th, nearly 150 fourth-grade students from New Orleans area schools descended on LSUHSC for a field trip to see and use sophisticated equipment and to foster and interest in science. During the school year, LSUHSC faculty and students teach these students in their classrooms as part of the LSUHSC/New Orleans Schools Science Partnership Program, directed by Dr. Fern Tsien, Ph.D. and Dr. Jaime Becnel, Ph.D. The annual field trip, associated with this program, allows students to get hands-on experience learning about genetics, physiology, anatomy, wound healing, and how caffeine, alcohol, and cigarette smoke affect the body. This event culminates the year of the program, the goals of which are to make science more interesting and easier to understand and to improve 4th grade science scores on the standardized Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP) test.



## India Fest

LSU students, faculty and staff enjoyed Indian cuisine, music, and dance at India Arts Circle's 2013 festival, which also features educational demonstrations, henna tattooing, children's activities, and a vendor bazaar.



# Postdoctoral Association Report

Michelle Kelly, Ph.D., Chair, Career Development Committee

SUHSC Postdoctoral Association

**L**SUHSC Postdoctoral Association (PDA) had another busy year. We held a career development seminar in the fall entitled "From Postdoc to New faculty: The Good, the Bad, and the Nitty Gritty". Thanks again to our faculty speakers, Glen Palmer, Doug Johnston (MIP, LSU), and Sarah Lindsey (Pharmacology, Tulane). The career development committee also held an Individual development-planning seminar, and they want to remind you: Don't forget to keep updating your individual development plan, and make sure you are still on track! If you don't have an IDP yet, here's a great place to start: [myidp.sciencecareers.org](http://myidp.sciencecareers.org). The social committee put together a great Rock-n- Bowl & sushi night- what a combination -we had a blast! The PDA also hit a couple parades during Mardi Gras- the Boulangerie is the place to be!

LSU Postdocs are spreading science into the New Orleans community: our President, Jaime Becnel (Pharmacology), has been working hard to bring science into the classroom with the LSUHSC- Public Schools Science Partnership. Michelle Kelly (Pulmonary Medicine) was a Judge for the third year in a row in the Greater New Orleans Science and Engineering Fair (GNOSF); they are also looking for volunteers Judges and to help optimize feedback process on projects. If interested, contact Michelle. Tracy Dodd from Physiology was recently appointed to represent the Post-doctoral fellows in the LSUHSC Graduate School Multicultural and Diversity Committee. Good luck in your new position, Tracy!

Our postdocs have also been making waves amongst the science community: multiple awards were given to the talented individuals in the Pharmacology Department: Jamie Becnel won the first Jack D. Hines III Graduate School Award. Juan Gao, Abhilash Ponnath, and Gin C. Chuang won 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place poster awards, respectively, at the Graduate School Research Day. Additionally, Gin was awarded the Postdoc Travel Award by the Cardiovascular Toxicology Specialty Section at the Society of Toxicology meeting in March.

## Fundraiser, Honors Inspirational Woman, Establishes a Fund

Chelsea's Radiant Smile Foundation, whose namesake Chelsea Umbach Yates, an avid scuba diver who died from complication of pulmonary hypertension, held a benefit April 7 at the Peristyle in City Park to raise awareness of research for pulmonary hypertension and LSUHSC New Orleans. Events included a walk/run through the park, a silent auction, and locally cooked food. The money raised from this event will be used to establish a memorial fund in Chelsea's memory dedicated for the LSUHSC Section of Pulmonary/Critical Care.

## M.D., Ph.D. Report

Kathleen McDonough, Ph.D.,

Director of the M.D., Ph.D. Program

We are very proud of our 5 graduates of the MD/PhD program and our 5 "soon to be graduates" of the PhD component of the program. Our MD/PhD graduates matched on March 15th – Tabitha Quebedeaux and Jesse Sulzer will be staying with us in Obstetrics and Gynecology and Surgery, respectively. David Stark will be going to Jules Stein Eye Institute at UCLA for the Ophthalmology residency, Nick Melvan will go to Emory for a Cardiothoracic Surgery residency and Tiffany Eady will be at Ochsner for one year and then Harvard for her Neurology residency. They are all excited to start the next phase of their training!

The 5 graduates returning to medical school are Jessica Shields, she will return from her year at NIH in the Medical Scholars clinical/research training program – she completed her PhD with Dr. Anne Foundas in Cell Biology and Anatomy; Monica Ertel completed her PhD with Dr. Donna Neumann in Pharmacology, Anasheh Halabi worked with Dr. Ed Grabczky in Genetics, Lori Hutcherson worked with Dr. Ted Weyand in Cell Biology and Anatomy and Daniel Edwards worked with Dr. Art Haas in the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. We wish them the best of luck in the going back to medical school. Soon-to-be new L4s Mary Beth Hulin, Ryan Craig and Sun Mi Choi will be able to help them with the transition.

We also have some significant changes for several other students. Our L2s will be joining Graduate School this summer after completing Step 1 of the USMLE. Dustin Todaro and Tomas Vanagunas will become Biochemistry graduate students; Spencer Robichaux and Hannah Albritton will join the Microbiology, Immunology and Parasitology; Natalie Halapin will join Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics; Michael Upchurch will become a Physiologist and Abdelrahim Abdel will join the Neuroscience Center.

Several students, Felix Nau, Anasheh Halabi and Michael Ripple, will be attending the American Physician Scientist Association (APSA) meeting in Chicago in April. All received travel awards to support some of the expenses in attending the meeting. Michael will also be presenting at the American Association for Cancer Research meeting in Washington D.C. in April.

Students have been making changes in their personal lives also – second year graduate student Adam Perricone married Kelly Davis in April.

All in all, this has been a good year for students in the MD/PhD program with our largest number of students completing either the PhD or the MD degree. We wish everyone great success in their future training.