

The Annual Check-Up

2009-10 Premedical Program Newsletter, American University's College of Arts and Sciences

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Premedical Program
College of Arts & Sciences

Letter from the Premedical Programs Coordinator

It's my pleasure to present to you the first edition of the Premedical Program's newsletter. We've designed this annual newsletter to stay in contact with our alumni, encourage interaction between alumni and current students, and provide a summary of the previous year for current students.

This is a banner year for the Premedical Program, with more post-baccalaureate students than ever enrolling in classes, and a continued surge in intended science majors and premed freshmen beginning college at American University. This past year, 29 program alums were accepted into medical schools around the country, with an almost 85% acceptance rate for qualified students. In all, the program is currently preparing over 200 students to enter the health professions primarily as physicians, but also as vets, dentists, pharmacists, physician assistants, and physical therapists. With these successes, it is clear that the Premedical Program at American University is extremely strong.



Lynne Arneson, PhD

There have been a few changes in the Premedical Program, some of which are detailed in this newsletter. These include new faculty in the sciences, expanded opportunities for pre-vet students, and the institution of a new banquet to celebrate prehealth students and their mentors. One additional change has been the hiring of a full-time staff member to function as the coordinator. When Dr. Fred Carson retired from American University in December of 2007, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences decided that the prehealth program needed a full-time coordinator to provide services to students interested in a career in the health fields. This individual would also function as the coordinator of the Post-Baccalaureate Premedical Certificate Program. Since becoming the Premedical Program coordinator in June of 2008, I have been helping students work towards their career aspirations and loving every minute of it. As a professor in the biology department, I became familiar with the premedical requirements and what the premedical students need from our faculty and staff in order to be successful. This experience has served me well, allowing me to help students choose and schedule classes, find internships and clinical volunteer positions, and undergo the arduous process of applying to medical school.

Please enjoy this newsletter, and let us hear from you. For more news and information, please visit our Web site at <http://www.american.edu/cas/premed/>

Regards,

Lynne Arneson
Premedical Programs Coordinator

Premed Program Welcomes New Faculty

In the past year the pre-medical faculty has been pleased to welcome several new staff members to their ranks.

This fall, U.J. Sofia joined the Department of Physics as professor and chair. Sofia earned his PhD in astronomy with a physics concentration from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Sofia arrived at AU from Whitman College, where he served as the William K. and Diana R. Desselcher Chair and astronomy professor. His research focuses on interstellar particles and substances in space.

In fall 2008, Kathleen DeCicco-Skinner became an assistant professor with the Department of Biology. Her current research involves cancer biology and immunology. DeCicco-Skinner's laboratory uses a variety of molecular biology techniques to identify new genes and drug targets that have the potential to reverse inflammation in lung cancer patients.

David Angelini also joined the Department of Biology faculty in fall 2008 as an assistant professor. He received his PhD from Indiana University. Angelini teaches courses in developmental biology, molecular genetics, and evolutionary biology. His current research focuses on evolution of genetic patterning in the body plans and appendages of arthropods, particularly beetles and true bugs.

Kathryn Muratore joined the Department of Chemistry as an assistant professor in fall 2008. She earned a PhD in molecular and cell biology from Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. Her research interests include knowledge-based redesign of enzymes. Muratore has written a computer program that identifies potential covariation in protein sequences, and she plans to test the role of these covarying residues in enzyme function using mutagenesis and enzymatic assays.



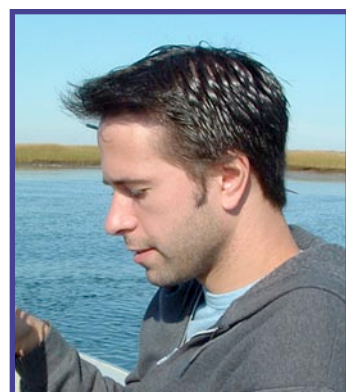
U.J. Sofia



Kathryn Muratore



Kathleen DiCicco-Skinner



David Angelini

Prehealth Awards and Recognition Banquet

A new tradition was formed in spring 2009, as students, faculty, alumni, and area health professionals gathered to celebrate the Premedical Program's students and mentors at the program's first annual Prehealth Awards and Recognition Banquet.

At the banquet, Dean Kay Mussell presented Grenya O'Malley '09 with the university's Hassa S. Shanker Premedical Achievement Prize. (See story, page 3.) She also presented Liliana Martinez '09, Meghan Edelman '09, and post-baccalaureate student Bryanna Mantilla with Josephine G. Gimble Scholarships. (See story, page 4).

Following the awards component of the evening, Priscilla Furth, M.D. gave a keynote speech. Dr. Furth is a professor of oncology and medicine at Georgetown

University's Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center. She conducts basic research in cancer biology and is a practicing physician in fitness and metabolism for cancer survivors. She and her research team explore the molecular etiology of the earliest stages of cancer, determine how they serve to promote cancer progression, and design strategies to reverse them. Her work is supported by the National Cancer Institute, the National Institutes of Health, the United States Department of Defense, and the Susan G. Komen Foundation.

The evening concluded with a special recognition of all the faculty, staff, and area health professionals and scientists who donate their time and energy to helping our students succeed.

Internships: Getting Off Campus

An important element of the PreHealth Program is the internship opportunities it facilitates for its students at high-profile regional and national organizations.

Many premed students choose to prepare for medical school by learning to perform research. The National Institutes of Health lure students up to Bethesda, Maryland, to work with world-class scientists and physicians. Dagny von Ahrens '10 spent the summer working with Dr. Elliot Levy in the National Institutes of Health Clinical Center Interventional Radiology Suite on a project examining peripherally inserted central catheter lines, using literature reviews and data from patient charts. Her work is expected to be submitted to the Journal of Vascular and Interventional Radiology.

In addition to conducting clinical research, Dagny is also observing interventional radiology procedures and attending undiagnosed disease rounds at the NIH. "This internship has piqued my interest in clinical research," Dagny reports. "It has taught me that it is important to be creative and think 'outside the box' in diagnosis and treatment."

She adds, "Can you tell I'm having fun?"



For students with veterinary medicine as their goal, there are other unique internship opportunities. Last spring, the PreHealth Program teamed up with Friendship Hospital for Animals to start an internship program that would provide up close and personal training in the basics of veterinary medicine. Kathleen Kimball '12 was the first to participate in the 14-week internship, where she followed emergency vets, learned to take X-rays, and viewed surgical and dental procedures.

"The internship at Friendship was like having a dream come true," says Kimball. "Everybody was so excited to teach me new things, show me how different machines work, introduce me to specialty doctors, or even give me mini lectures on basic surgical procedure or important chemotherapy drugs."



Kathleen Kimball '12

Her experience at Friendship Hospital for Animals enabled Kimball to win an Animal Management internship at the Oakland Zoo in Oakland, California, over the summer. There she cared for eight types of animals in the Children's Zoo, feeding them, cleaning the exhibit and conducting basic weekly training. "It was a priceless experience for a pre-vet student like me to have, especially since there was such a wide array of creatures to care for, not to mention a one-of-a-kind outlook on each of their personalities, health histories, and contributions made to the education of children and families everywhere," she says.

Premedical Program Seminar Schedule Fall 2009

Aug 28: noon	Welcome Back BBQ! Sponsored by Department of Biology, between Hurst and SIS
Sept 9: 8:15 p.m.	Introduction to the Medical School Application Process, Beeghly 102
Sept 10: 7:30 p.m.	Introduction to the Premedical Program, Beeghly 102
Sept 15: 8 p.m.	Pre-Health Society meeting, Hurst 101
Oct 3: 1:30 p.m.	Pillow Fight for the Cure! Main Quad
Oct 7: 8 p.m.	Pre-Health Society meeting, Hurst 101: Health Professions panel
Oct 20: 4:30 p.m.	Public Health/Global Health Symposium, SIS Lounge
Nov 9: 8 p.m.	Pre-Health Society meeting, Hurst 101: Medical Students Panel
Nov 19: 8 p.m.	What should I Do This Summer? Applying for Internships and Fellowships

Moving Forward

Join us in congratulating the '09 Premedical Program graduates who were accepted to medical school this fall.

Kate Arata
University of Colorado

Nadia Ashai
University of Maryland

Shayna Bailey
George Washington Univ.

Alanna Balboni
Uniformed Services

Jeremy Bernot
Uniformed Services

Christina Bezon
Ohio State University

Rebecca Cohen
SUNY- Brooklyn

Jonathan de Olano
Emory University

Evan Ewers
Uniformed Services

John Francis
Rush Medical School

Xuan-Lan Griffith
George Washington Univ.

Julianne Hibbs
Western University of
Health Sciences

Jennie Hooper
George Washington Univ.

Glendon Alan Hyde
University of Tennessee

Rashid Kikhia
Virginia Comm. University

Burgundy Kimm
Lake Erie College of
Osteopathic Medicine

Lynn Mackovick
Touro University College of
Osteopathic Medicine

Grenye O'Malley
New York University

Pallavi Mandiga
A.T. Still University

Melissa Mausolf
Temple University

Ashley Miller
Drexel University

Alex Nestor
University of South Dakota

Jenna Noveau
University of Maryland

Joshua Parreco
University of Miami

Lindsay (Fuchs) Reilly
University of Wisconsin

Seth Reuter
Lake Erie College of
Osteopathic Medicine

Sara Suffis
Midwestern University
COM; Did not matriculate

Victoria Tang
Howard University

Aaron Trimble
New York Medical School

Student Honorees

The American University Hassa S. Shanker Premedical Achievement Prize is a cash prize of \$2000 awarded to the most outstanding undergraduate student intending to attend a health professional school.

This year's recipient is Grenya O'Malley '09. The biology major maintained a cumulative GPA of 3.95 and a science GPA of 4.0. She has shadowed physicians in Lima, Peru, and interned at the National Institutes of Health.

O'Malley was also vice-president and community service coordinator for Eco-Sense, an organization that promotes sustainability on campus, and a volunteer program intern at My Sister's Place, where she raised more than \$10,000 in donations for the shelter. She started medical school at New York University this fall.

The Josephine G. Gimble Scholarship is awarded to a junior or senior undergraduate or a post-baccalaureate student majoring in the health sciences who intends to pursue a career in the allied health fields, including nursing, public health, physician assistant, physical therapy, pharmacy, nutrition, or occupational therapy.

This year the Gimble Scholarship was awarded to Megan Edelman, Bryanna Mantilla, and Liliana Martinez. Each received a \$2000 scholarship.

Edelman, BS biology '09, served as the president of AU chapter of Alpha Epsilon Delta, the national premedical honors society. She began the University of Maryland Master's Nursing Program this fall.

Mantilla was awarded a premedical post-baccalaureate certificate in spring '09. She served as a teaching assistant and Research assistant in the chemistry department and has worked in the Emergency Department at Sibley Memorial Hospital. This fall, Bryanna began her Master's of Public Health at Nova Southeastern University in Florida.

Liliana Martinez, BS health promotion '09. She plans to continue her academic work in nutrition, but is taking a year off before attending graduate school. While at AU, she completed a number of internships, including working the community outreach program at Suburban Hospital and at the Capital Area Food Bank teaching residents about nutrition.

**Graduated from medical school? Set up a new practice?
Let us know how you're doing!**

Send updates to premed@american.edu to be included in the next newsletter.