

The Annual Check-Up

2010-11 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

Welcome to the annual newsletter. The Premedical Program has had an excellent year, continuing to expand clinical opportunities for prehealth students and implementing new programs to help students obtain information about research and clinical studies. As of the writing of this letter in early July, 30 program alums were accepted into medical schools around the country, with an 88% acceptance rate for qualified students. In addition, two program alums have been accepted dental school, two to graduate school to become physician assistants, and one to podiatry school. All in all, our students have had tremendous success in the application process, and we wish them well in their new programs this fall.

The Premedical Program continues to develop and change, helping students to prepare to enter the health professions. The annual PreHealth Awards and Recognition Banquet was again a success, allowing students to chat with alumni and area physicians. This summer saw the beginning of a new program, the Summer Enhancement Program for Undergraduates in Science Research, which introduced undergrads on campus to the ethics associated with the use of animals and human subjects in research, as well as tips on how to apply to graduate or medical school and how to apply for grants, fellowships, and scholarships. New clinical opportunities arose this year, as students flocked to a new volunteer program in the emergency department at Washington Hospital Center or began working part-time as medical scribes in the ED at Sibley Hospital, down the street from the AU campus.

As I continue to advise students on classes, internships, clinical volunteer positions, and the arduous med school application process, I feel very lucky to work with such talented, committed individuals. I wish you all the best.

Please enjoy this newsletter, and please let us hear from you. If you are an alumnus, please let us know how school is going, where you're doing a residency, if you've started a practice. For more news and information, please visit our Web site at <http://www.american.edu/cas/premed/>.

Regards,

Lynne Arneson
Premedical Programs Coordinator



Lynne Arneson, PhD

Premed Program Welcomes New Faculty

This fall, there will be a few new faces on the science faculty, as two professors join the chemistry department, and one joins the Department of Psychology.

Chemistry professor Matthew Hartings earned his PhD from Northwestern University and is working on developing new uses for metals in biological systems. One of his projects will entail designing metal-based anti-cancer drugs. His second project will involve creating artificial photosynthetic proteins that are able to transform harmful greenhouse gases, such as methane and carbon dioxide, into useful chemicals. Hartings will be



Matthew Hartings

teaching General Chemistry I this fall.

Chemistry professor Abigail Miller earned her PhD from the University of California, Berkeley. She is interested in single-molecule based



Catherine Stoodley

quantitative bioassays that are capable of measuring the amount of reactants and product between target and probe molecules. Miller is teaching Instrumental Analysis this fall.

Psychology professor Catherine Stoodley earned her PhD in neuroscience at the University of Oxford.



Abigail Miller

She is interested in the role of the cerebellum in learning and skill acquisition. She uses neuroimaging and behavioral studies to investigate the functional anatomy of the cerebellum and the type of processing that the cerebellum performs. Stoodley is teaching a topics class on Developmental Psychology this fall.

Grads Shed Light on Med School Application Process

At a panel discussion on February 8, 2010, Lt. Jeremy Bernot and Lt. Evan Ewers, graduates of the AU Premedical Program and current students at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS), had some informed advice for undergraduates applying to medical school: get good grades now, apply early, and follow the premedical program.

"I don't have a crystal ball or anything that tells me what all schools are looking for," says Bernot, "but that was what worked for me. Those are all the things medical schools are generally looking for."

The panel was an informal Q&A session for premedical undergraduates considering applying to medical school. Audience members posed questions and Ewers and Bernot answered based on their personal experiences at USUHS.

Many questions were about the application process itself: admonitions to apply early, follow up with admissions officials, and be prepared for interviews. "You're not going to talk about what [academic] experience you have because you're going to put that on your CV anyway," says Bernot. "They're trying to figure out what kind of a person you are, to see if you're going to fit into their school more than anything."

(Pillow) Fight for the Cure



What better way to spend a beautiful fall day than having a pillow fight? The PreHealth Society teamed up with the AU Shenanigans Society to organize the first officially sanctioned pillow fight on campus, on a sunny Saturday in October. Over 25 students participated, including a prospective student who was passing by. Over \$350 was raised for research to help fight breast cancer. Pictured are Rob Grell, president of the Prehealth Society, and Nate Bronstein, president of the Shenanigans Society.

Internships: Getting Off Campus



Postbaccalaureate graduate Zach Skaggs

AU premedical students have been working up a storm this summer, both in the DC area and elsewhere. Many students are busy in clinics, where they are gaining important experience in the health fields. Other students are working at the bench, performing research on health related topics.

Lauren Lee, a rising junior at AU, is working as a medical scribe at Sibley Hospital. Medical scribes work side-by-side with emergency room physicians, recording the details of a patient's visit, as dictated by the physician, a job that facilitates learning a wide variety of medical terms and procedures.

Zach Skaggs, a post-baccalaureate premedical student, is working as an ophthalmic technician while he applies to medical school. His primary duty is to screen patients for visual acuity, peripheral vision, eye muscle motility, papillary reflex, and intra-ocular pressure before they see the physician. In addition to screening patients, Zach assists in various procedures, including laser treatments which can be used to "pin down" a retinal tear to prevent retinal detachment.

Christine Dolendo, a rising junior, has been taking summer classes while doing research at the Children's National Medical Center's Center for Molecular Physiology. There, she is investigating the role of Dopamine D1 and D5 receptors and their specific G-proteins in regulating hypertension. Christine is also volunteering at the Emergency Room in the Washington Hospital Center, located next to Children's Hospital.

Rising junior Rob Grell has also been working at Children's National Medical Center. He is participating in several research studies for the Pediatric Emergency Care Applied Research Network, part of the Emergency Department at Children's. He is also shadowing physicians in the emergency department.

Some jobs start out as volunteer experiences. Rising sophomore Nila Kiani shadowed the dentists at Blue Bell Periodontics for a day and was offered a job on the spot. She has been working as a receptionist and dental assistant, assisting in various surgical procedures.

News Briefs

Halloween Kits for Children's Hospital

This year the PreHealth Society could not host their yearly Halloween party for the kids at Children's Hospital due to the H1N1 flu epidemic. Instead, the club members gathered for their own party, listening to Halloween music while they assembled over 60 kits to donate to the kids at Children's Hospital.

The kits contained components to make ghosts of cheesecloth and cotton balls, masks from paper plates, Halloween scenes with precut Halloween figures (ghosts, pumpkins, cats, moons, etc.), and small pumpkins with stickers.

Alumni News

Erica Adams (BS Biology, 2003) graduated from Georgetown University School of Medicine in May and has begun her residency in Emergency Medicine at Drexel University School of Medicine/Hahnemann University Hospital in Philadelphia.

Michael Brogan (Post-Bacc, 2004) is continuing his residency in Neurology at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. Brogan graduated from the University of Rochester School of Medicine in May of 2009.

Hamid Kargbo (Post-Bacc, 2004) is continuing his residency in Internal Medicine at Johns Hopkins. Kargbo graduated from Washington University in St. Louis School of Medicine in May 2009, and plans to eventually specialize in Interventional Cardiology.

Melanie Sion (BS Biology, 2004) graduated from Georgetown University School of Medicine this May and has begun her residency in General Surgery at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia. She will be featured in the fall issue of Connections, the College of Arts and Sciences' magazine.



Melanie Sion '04 (center) with medical staff in Sudan.

Moving Forward

Join us in congratulating the '10 Premedical Program graduates who were accepted to medical school this fall.

Sara Bahraini
Virginia Tech

Daniel Omire-Mayor
Lincoln Memorial University

Tim Beck
Drexel University

Kathleen Ostapkovich
George Washington Univ.

Ruth Burley
UMDNJ – Robert Wood
Johnson

Cherie Richards
University of Maryland

Charles Caffrey
St. Louis University

Kendra Richardson
Meharry University

Karen Clark
New York Medical College

Daniel Schupack
Western University of
Health Sciences

Jessie Entwistle
Kansas City University

Jeremy Silver
University of Maryland

Jennifer Fantasia
Massachusetts

Kristin Simmons
Virginia Commonwealth
University

Alexandra Green
Temple University

David Suster
Tulane University

Dominic Harris
University of Chicago

Dagny von Ahrens
Temple University

Anand Jagannath
Tufts University

Kayana Ward
Howard University

Sarah Lichtenstein
Temple University

Podiatry School

Bryanna Mantilla
University of Illinois

Stephen Lazaroff

Dental School

Jorel Martinez
Rush University

Michael Kerins
Victoria Parver

Paul Massey
University of Pennsylvania

Physician's Asst. Program

Amanda Montgomery
Oklahoma University

Stephanie Leen
Ingrid Deming

Student Honorees

Mobola Oyefule, BS biology '11, is the 2010 winner of AU's Hassa S. Shanker Premedical Achievement Award. The prize is presented each year to one undergraduate premed student who shows the most promise. Oyefule, a 2009 winner of AU's Gloria Likins Scholarship for excellence in biological studies with a 3.86 overall GPA and a 3.88 GPA in the sciences, was a natural choice.

For Oyefule, participating in AU's Premedical Program has provided her unique learning opportunities. "It's small so you get personalized attention," she says. "The professors really look out for you."

She adds, "I like that I wasn't thrown into [traditional] pre-med craziness. AU gives you a balance."

It was a visit to New Orleans through AU's Alternative Break Program that honed her focus. Seeing people dealing with circumstances comparable to those in developing countries brought the greater global crisis in focus for her. "I said to myself, you have to think of the socioeconomic factors that predispose people to infectious diseases," she says. "Health is holistic. You're looking at a whole web of factors that could easily expose people to illness."

She plans to enter medical school after graduation, where she will study infectious diseases from a global development perspective. Ultimately, she hopes to return to her native Nigeria, where she can work to combat many of the health problems there. "There are so many diseases plaguing us [in Nigeria] with our subpar healthcare system that we can prevent and people don't have to die from," she says.

The prize is given annually at the Prehealth Awards and Recognition Banquet. At this year's banquet, Jessica Streit, BS health promotion '10, and Nicole Wheatley, BS health promotion '11, were also presented with Josephine J. Gimble Scholarships. The scholarship is given yearly to one senior and one junior who are majoring in health sciences and plan to pursue related careers.

—adapted from CAS Web site article, "Biology Student Wins Shanker Award," by Ian Nyanin.

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.