Welcome!

We are proud to present our Winter Issue. In this issue, we have interviews from RAP and PREP alumni, an exploration of endocrinology, a description of a student’s medical volunteer trip to Honduras and two opportunities to gain extensive clinical experience through Care Extenders and ScribeAmerica. In our Book Club, we reviewed two interesting books, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down* and *Freakonomics*.

We hope you enjoy this issue!

- Editorial Staff

Did you know?

- UCLA is ranked as the number one undergraduate institution in the country in producing the most Mexican-American medical school applicants.

- In the United States there are 5 states without a medical school (Alaska, Delaware, Idaho, Montana and Wyoming).

- Last year, the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA received 6,029 applications for only 121 seats.

- Demographic studies show that the United States will face a serious shortage of doctors in the next 20 years as our population increases.
**Student/Alumni Spotlight: Jermaine Augustus, MSI**

By Lance Mixon

Jermaine Augustus is a first year medical student at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA.

He participated in UCLA’s Re-Applicant Program (RAP) in 2005, and also completed his undergraduate studies at UCLA.

Born and raised in Los Angeles, Jermaine Augustus always had an affinity for his surroundings and had quite rewarding, he yearned for something even more rewarding. While an undergraduate at UCLA, with an extensive science background and having completed the pre-medical requirements, a career change was inevitable. In 2005, Augustus decided to apply to medical school. However, the outcome was not in his favor. He received a few interviews, but did not garner any all about helping others.” After acceptances. As the application cycle was about to end, Augustus applied to the Re-Applicant Program at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA (RAP) to improve his application and gain more experiences. Augustus recalls, “I did not have too much clinical experience when I first applied to medical school. In addition, I did not study for the MCAT.” While in RAP, Augustus significantly improved both his MCAT score and GPA and gained more clinical experiences. Once Augustus strengthened his application, he re-applied to medical school with great success. Augustus is now a medical student at UCLA. He explains, “Everything that has happened to me has been very rewarding and it is completely worth it to be where I am today.”

Augustus constantly finds himself giving advice to students who plan to apply to medical school. He says, “I know I can do it.”

“I know I can do it.”

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“Everything that has happened has been very rewarding, and is completely worth it to be where I am at today.”

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on pursuing medicine. He strongly suggests to those who plan to apply to follow two steps, “First you have to be confident enough in yourself to know that you can make it. You have to constantly tell yourself, ‘I know I can do it.’ Second, apply as early as possible because that is a huge advantage.” He further explains, “The secondary applications are also very important. You have to answer the essay questions correctly and thoroughly.”

Augustus’ strong interest in science and personal experiences motivate his career path in medicine. He states, “I plan to specialize in primary care, but also want to focus on nephrology and urology, since so many African-American men have prostate cancer. I have a few family members who unfortunately have this serious disease. Because of this, I have a vested interest in treating prostate cancer and related illnesses.” Augustus is also extremely focused on healthcare disparities and he plans to work with his community to level those disparities.

Aside from studying, Jermaine is still very active in the Los Angeles community. Augustus states, “Giving back to the community that has provided me with the opportunities that I have been given is very important to me.” In addition, Augustus found Capoeira, his favorite hobby, to help him balance his life. Capoeira is an Afro-Brazilian form of martial arts and dance, which provided Augustus with an outlet to relieve his stress. Augustus also enjoys listening to music to relax, “My favorite genre is Calypso, which is a type of Afro-Caribbean music. I grew up with Calypso. It has a lively beat and the lyrics can vary from being socially conscious to purely party-driven. It’s always energizing. How could I not love this music?” Augustus also enjoys to read, “My favorite genre is science fiction because I like to see how writers use their imaginations to influence the future...Think of it as the Jules Verne Effect.”

Throughout his life, Augustus had to overcome many obstacles. His greatest is “...being able to keep my perspective that I am the master of my own destiny. Specifically, I had to learn not to make excuses for my failures. Success requires effort from everyone. The poor usually have to strive harder than the rich, but that’s just life. It is not fair and will not change in this regard in the near future. I had to not allow my socioeconomic status to detract me from my ambitions and goals. My advice to students is to create goals, work extremely hard to reach them and settle for nothing less than success.”

More Important Dates:

- March 28th and 29th— LMSA Statewide Conference, UC Davis
- April 2nd— Deadline to apply to UCSF First Time Applicant Program
- April 11th, 12th— Catch the Wave Conference Pre-health San Diego State University
- April 15th— Deadline to apply to UC Irvine Postbac Program
- April 17th— National Hispanic Medical Association Conference, Washington DC
- April 18th— Deadline to apply to UC Riverside Postbac Program (ONLY UC RIVERSIDE students are eligible)
- April 22nd— Deadline to apply to UCSF Re-applicant Postbac Program
Specializing in Medicine: Consider the Field of Endocrinology

By Jesus Torres

Whether it’s stress, insulin disorders, or the rush of hormones because of love, the endocrine system plays a vital role in one’s health, particularly as hormones influence virtually all organs of the body. Endocrinology is the study of the endocrine or hormonal system, and doctors who specialize in managing or treating diseases or disorders of the endocrine system are called endocrinologists. Endocrinologists are trained to manage and treat a host of diseases and conditions. For example, they provide care for patients with thyroid diseases, metabolic disorders, infertility, osteoporosis, menopause, cancers of the endocrine glands, hypertension, and diabetes, just to name a few. Some also conduct research and aid in the advancement of the field through the development of new treatments.

In most cases, to become an endocrinologist, one must first undergo residency training in Internal Medicine after medical school, and then complete a fellowship program. In total, one can expect to complete 3 - 4 years for the Internal Medicine residency, followed by a 2 - 3 year fellowship. One can also choose a more specialized fellowship, such as pediatric endocrinology. After the fellowship training, most endocrinologists opt to get certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM), which serves to demonstrate their ability and high level of skill in the field of endocrinology. Endocrinologists practice in various settings, including hospitals, clinics, research laboratories and private offices, with many enjoying decent working hours.

Many fellowship programs include subspecialty training in diabetes, hypertension and/or metabolism, which makes an endocrinologist an ideal physician to treat diseases that adversely affect our communities. According to the American Diabetes Association, 7% of the total U.S. population has diabetes, which includes 20.8 million people and approximately 54 million people who are pre-diabetic. The prevalence of diabetes is higher in Latino and African American populations, whereby Mexican Americans are 1.7 times as likely to have diabetes as non-Hispanic whites, and African Americans are 1.8 times as likely. As the number of diabetes cases continues to increase, the number of endocrinologists is declining. In 1999, the American Medical Association (AMA) estimated that 4,133 physicians were endocrinologists, whereby the number of new trainees entering the field has continuously declined from 200 in 1995 to 171 in 1999. The AMA estimates that the demand for endocrinologists will exceed supply far into the future. Although most people seek help for diabetes from a general practitioner, an endocrinologist is specifically trained to manage diabetes and is also needed when difficult diabetes cases arise. As the number of diabetes cases increases to pandemic proportions, they will surely be needed in the future. Moreover, as the aging population increases, diabetes is not the only disease in which qualified endocrinologists will be in high demand—hypertension and osteoporosis are just a few other important diseases that will increase with an aging population.

Endocrinology is a complex yet exciting field that is at the forefront of medicine, as it focuses on common diseases that affect so many of us. The future of endocrinology is promising, dynamic, and constantly evolving due to cutting edge research conducted on many of these diseases.

For more information, please visit:
www.hormone.org
www.diabetes.org
www.endo-society.org

“7% of the total U.S. population has diabetes, which includes 20.8 million people and approximately 54 million people who are pre-diabetic.”
Profiles of Success: PREP Alumnus Dr. Diego Gonzalez

By Alfonso Flores and Sergio Figueroa

Dr. Diego Gonzalez is an internal medicine physician at Saint Joseph's Hospital in Orange, CA. Dr. Gonzalez is a native of California, where he attended both college and medical school. He highlights the importance of his family, advice from others, and the impact of UCLA PREP on his education and his motivation for becoming a doctor.

Dr. Diego Gonzalez was born and raised in Compton, California by his parents and older siblings. Though neither one of his parents attended college, they always instilled in him and his siblings the importance of education. He acknowledges that his family’s encouragement of attaining an education was vital to his success. His parents always supported him by attending parent-teacher conferences and other school-related activities. Though many in his community did not view education as important, Dr. Gonzalez and all of his siblings attended college.

In high school, Dr. Gonzalez played sports and worked as a life guard. He was also a tutor and considered following in the footsteps of his older siblings by becoming a teacher. “I enjoyed teaching others and my older siblings were teachers,” Dr. Gonzalez recalls. However, he became interested in medicine when he took an anatomy class. His anatomy teacher approached him one day after an exam and asked him, “What do you want to do in life?” Dr. Gonzalez replied that he wanted to be a doctor, this was the first time that he had actually voiced his interest in becoming a doctor. Working as a lifeguard, he began to develop the idea of becoming a doctor because he wanted to help save the lives of patients.

After graduating from high school, Dr. Gonzalez attended UC Santa Barbara where he majored in Biology. In college, he participated in study abroad programs in Costa Rica and the Amazon jungles. During this time, he conducted research projects that helped him develop a greater understanding of science. Following these trips, he was sponsored to continue his research on marine snails. Even though these experiences reinvigorated his interest in teaching and scientific research, he wanted to work with people in a health care environment. In college, he met other students that wanted to go to medical school, but only knew about the general requirements of getting into medical school, such as pre-medical classes and the MCAT. On a visit to his advisor’s office, his advisor discouraged him from going to medical school since he received a B in one of his classes, and was told that in order to get into medical school he had to earn only A’s. Regardless of his counselor’s advice, Dr. Gonzalez was not discouraged and he continued to work hard.

During the summer of 1998, he attended the UCLA Pre-medical/Pre-dental Enrichment Program (PREP). Through PREP, Dr. Gonzalez’s desire to become a doctor was solidified, particularly as he met with medical students and faculty members who guided him through the medical school process. “After attending PREP it became clear that not only did I want to become a doctor, but I also learned that I did not have to give up teaching since treating patients involves teaching,” Dr. Gonzalez stated. He applied to various medical schools and interviewed at several of them, including UCLA where he matriculated in 1999, after graduating from UCSB.

In his third year of medical school, Dr. Gonzalez had completed rotations in various specialties, where he became interested in pediatrics. However, it wasn’t until the last rotation of his third year that he decided what he

Continued on next page
wanted to specialize in. “Up until this point, I wanted to do pediatrics, but when I did my last rotation in internal medicine, I found that that is what I wanted to do,” Dr. Gonzalez recalled. In the following year, he did a sub-internship in internal medicine and soon after applied for an internship in internal medicine.

Dr. Gonzalez’s hard work in medical school paid off when he was accepted to the residency of his choice: Internal Medicine at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center. It was at Harbor-UCLA where Dr. Gonzalez faced his most demanding challenge yet. “[Residency] was the hardest; you’re always working. It’s physically and mentally tiring. I don’t think there’s anything like it,” recalled Dr. Gonzalez. Although looking back, it seemed like those three years went by fast, but going through them was a different story. “You sacrifice a lot. You think you sacrifice a lot during medical school, but it’s nothing like residency,” he stated. The biggest difference between medical school and residency is the heavy responsibility. “As a medical student, your job is to learn. In residency, your job is to learn, but you feel more ownership over your patient. And you have more patients,” he stated. However, he ended on an encouraging note by saying that finishing residency has been his biggest achievement thus far.

Almost a year after finishing residency, Dr. Diego Gonzalez is working at St. Joseph’s hospital in the city of Orange. To Dr. Gonzalez, practicing medicine is more than a job. He stated, “A lot of people kind of have their job and then have their life. But for me, [medicine] is my life.” As a practitioner, Dr. Gonzalez has to face new challenges, with one of the biggest challenges being his patients. He states that fulfilling patient expectations can be difficult, “It doesn’t happen often, but occasionally you get a patient that expects something unreasonable, which could be challenging because they have certain expectations of what a doctor can provide. Unfortunately you can’t do miracles. We’re still limited in a lot of ways, but you do what you can.” Yet when he talks about the most rewarding part about being a doctor he says, “It’s the patients.” For Dr. Gonzalez, being able to see a patient improve from a hospital bed to leaving the hospital is what he considers his greatest reward. Having that impact on people really sets Dr. Gonzalez’s career apart for him. He stated, “You can really affect peoples’ lives. And sometimes you can lose sight of that. There are not a lot of jobs that can do that.”

When he is not with patients, Dr. Gonzalez likes to spend his time running, swimming, scuba diving, and traveling. Throughout his life, Dr. Gonzalez has traveled to different places, including Costa Rica, Spain, Jamaica and various cities throughout Mexico. “I like to travel…you really get to know other cultures and different ways of thinking,” he stated.

In the future, Dr. Gonzalez would like to do more traveling, as he comments “There are a lot of places I haven’t been to--there’s a whole globe.” He would also like to return to mentoring, which he unfortunately stopped during residency, as well as finding new ways to contribute. He recently helped raise a few thousand dollars for a non-profit organization.

As for aspiring future doctors, he encourages them to ask for help. He knows that there are many students who have questions, but may not feel comfortable asking them. He reminds them that, “Nobody has made it by themselves. There’s always somebody that’s willing to help out.” He also encourages pre-medical students to have weekly, yearly, and long term plans in place. If you’re applying to medical school soon, make sure to make contacts and have a financial plan in place. “Right now you can start planning about where you’re going to apply, and start making contacts so you can have a place to stay.” But perhaps one of the most important pieces of advice that he gives is about deciding about your future. He stated, “The important thing in medicine, or anything for that matter…is what that means to you."
Within minutes, the clinic had started like clockwork. I sat in triage and eagerly listened in on the conversation one of our fluent Spanish speakers was having with a grandmother who had brought nine children. All of them, including her, were having symptoms of a parasite infection, a common problem among the Honduran people because of the lack of clean drinking water. While triaging them, my partner took the temperature and pulse of each of the nine kids, while I estimated their weights by lifting them off the ground as they giggled. I was humbled by the general cheerfulness of these children and their grandmother despite each of them having to endure a 9 mile walk to the clinic with their pain and discomfort. During intake and triage, despite the limited time we spent with each patient, we were able to connect on a personal level with people from a world and culture very different from our own and aid them in getting the medical care they had waited months for.

For the first 4 hours of the clinic, my partner and I triaged about 100 people with various complaints and symptoms. After a short 15 minute lunch, we traded details and I began assisting Dr. Chris, a Family Medicine doctor we had recruited from Arizona, with tests and examinations in the consultation area of the clinic. Utilizing urine tests I helped Dr. Chris obtain, he diagnosed urinary tract infections and pregnancies among other things. We obtained a positive pregnancy test for a 15 year old female and reluctantly informed her of this finding to only discover that she was married and ecstatic about this news. A few patients later, the mother of a 7 year old boy with severe eye strabismus was given a referral to the Santa Rosa de Lima medical clinic in Nuevo Paraiso. Although the visit and all procedures would be paid for by Global Medical Brigades, many patients did not follow up on the referrals due to the clinic’s distance and their inability to take more time off from work.

The last hour of the clinic was spent speedily filling prescriptions from the many suitcases in the pharmacy. In my broken Spanish, I quickly explained directions on how to take cold medicines and antibiotics. This was probably the most difficult part of the clinic for me, as my Spanish fluency is minimal, making it tough to elaborate directions to patients for some of their medications.

At the end of the day, we had helped another 400 people and would be heading back to the United States in the morning. To say this experience was life-changing would be an understatement. I was not only able to improve my medical assessment skills in Spanish and increase my desire to practice medicine in underserved communities, but immersed myself in the Honduran culture and made the lives of so many warm-hearted Hondurans slightly better. Overall, I feel like the members of the first UCLA Global Medical Brigade made the first of many small impacts on the world.
The Santa Monica-UCLA Care Extenders Program: Unique First-hand Clinical Experience

By Hanh Huynh

The Care Extender Program is a unique volunteering opportunity for students interested in gaining first-hand clinical experience in the medical field. Care Extender Volunteers are considered an integral part of the patient care team at the Santa Monica-UCLA Hospital. As a result, volunteers gain a better understanding of hospital operations, are well respected by staff and patients and have unique medical experiences. There are opportunities to volunteer in every ward of the hospital including Labor and Delivery, Emergency Department, Surgery, Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and many others. The internship program is not only limited to premedical students, but caters towards other pre-health students as well, such as nursing and pharmacy. Pre-pharmacy students have the opportunity to volunteer in the pharmacy and gain valuable experience working side-by-side with pharmacists and other medical professionals.

Volunteers in the Emergency Department have performed CPR, learned EKGs, observed wound irrigations and minor surgeries. Volunteers in the Labor and Delivery Unit start their shifts by changing into scrubs and scrubbing their hands as they have the unique opportunity to observe live births and c-sections. Volunteers also participate in basic patient care tasks such as bathing, changing and feeding patients. The Care Extenders Program not only provides their volunteers with learning opportunities, but gives them a chance to have personal interaction with patients as well. Many volunteers consider the most valuable aspect of the program the opportunity to comfort patients. One of the most important parts of medical care is the patient experience.

Care Extenders are often needed to talk with patients, hold their hands during procedures, or give them a warm blanket.

To be a part of the Care Extenders Program, there is a competitive application process also involving an interview. Prospective volunteers must first attend a 2-hour orientation session and then fill out an application. Once applications are reviewed, students are invited for interviews, and then a select few are chosen for the program. After that, there is a 2-day training session which includes CPR, learning hospital operations and patient transport. Recruitment occurs every January, April, July and October. Volunteers are asked to commit a 4-hour shift once a week for one year. For more information visit: http://www.geocities.com/careextender/Overview3.htm

ScribeAmerica: An Opportunity to Explore Everything About the Emergency Room

By Shonte McKenzie

Are you looking for a part-time job that will allow you to earn extra money while gaining medical experience? Then ScribeAmerica is the perfect opportunity for you! ScribeAmerica is currently looking for individuals to serve as scribes to work side by side with physicians in the emergency room.

Scribes are hired undergraduate premedical students or recent college graduates who work alongside physicians to assist primarily with the administrative and non-medical functions of a busy emergency room. They shadow doctors as they see patients in the emergency room, using wireless tablet computers to record information given by the physicians. Theses tablets are part of the hospital’s electronic medical records system, which allow doctors and nurses to access patient records. Scribes can record information through various methods, including tapping the tablet’s touch sensitive screen, writing longhand with a light pen, or plugging the pad into a portable keyboard. The scribes also help doctors keep track of patients as they navigate their way through their hospital visit, letting them know when laboratory tests have been completed or when X-rays arrive. This supplemental aid allows doctors to spend more time with their patients and provides the students with real world clinical experience that they normally would not get until medical school.

Scribes are expected to work the same shifts as physicians, which ranges from eight to twelve hour days. ScribeAmerica is currently offering a competitive hourly rate starting at $10, with opportunities for an increase.

If you are interested in applying for a position as a scribe, please visit www.scribeamerica.com, and complete and e-mail the application and waiver to info@scribeamerica.com.
The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down
By Anne Fadiman

The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down by Anne Fadiman is a wonderful book that explores the complex subject of cultural competence in the U.S. health care system. The author writes about a heartbreaking story that describes the trials of a Hmong family dealing with their daughter's illness, the American doctors who try to help her and their cultural collisions. Anne Fadiman's book raises awareness for the urgent need for culturally competent healthcare providers in the United States. The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down is dramatic, heartbreaking and ultimately an enlightening true story.

Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything
By Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner

Freakonomics is an exploration of the world we live in through an economist's eyes. The decline in crime rates was due to the Roe vs. Wade decision! A swimming pool is more dangerous than a gun! Teachers cheat! These are the few connections Levitt, a renowned economist, makes. Levitt deconstructs everything around us, from naming babies and the organization of drug-dealing gangs. This is a great book with an interesting outlook on politics, education and society.

IMPACT Book Club
By Gonzalo Saavedra and David Tran

Every issue, recommendations that PREP/RAP students make about a great book they have read makes it into IMPACT's Book Club. Enjoy!
IMPACT is a newsletter by students, for students.

We also highly encourage everyone to become involved and contribute to IMPACT. IMPACT is a newsletter that relies heavily on the contributions and participation of former PREP/RAP students. If we, at IMPACT, wish to continue our mission to encourage, educate, and empower pre-medical students and the community we strongly need your support.

The Editorial Board meets once every month. Upcoming meetings will be announced. All are welcome to attend. To contribute to IMPACT or to join the Editorial Board, please contact Gonzalo at chalo_427@hotmail.com or David at ctdave@ucla.edu

Resources

The Resources column is a forum intended for the sharing of research and information relevant to pre-medical students gathered by PREP & RAP Alumni. If you have any interesting websites you would like to share, please let us know:

MCAT Information
Sign up for this year’s MCAT or get answers to FAQs, at aamc.org/students/mcat/start.htm

The Next Generation: An Introduction to Medicine www.nextgenmd.org

National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions www.naahp.org

AAMC’s Aspiring Doctors Website www.aspiringdocs.com

Association of American Medical Colleges
Essential basic information about applying to medical school www.aamc.org

American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine
www.aacom.org

Premedical Discussion Forums www.studentdoctor.net

MCAT Mnemonics
http://www.geocities.com/CollegePark/Union/5092/mnemMCAT.html

MDapplicants.com
A collaborative site created by the online community to serve as a guide to premedical students.
IMPACT
PREP/RAP ADVISORY NEWSLETTER
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David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA

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