



Sending Off the Class of 2024 in Style

The class of 2024 celebrated Commencement at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts on May 9. The traditional ceremony recognized a graduating class in which nearly half of its students entered the College of Medicine under nontraditional circumstances: remotely and at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

An audience of family, friends, Drexel leadership, special guests, faculty, alumni and professional staff gathered to mark the next step in the careers of 528 MD, MS, PhD and dual degree program graduates.

Before the students received their degrees and donned their hoods, Walter H. and Leonore Annenberg Dean and Senior Vice President of Medical Affairs Charles B. Cairns, MD, addressed the graduates. "The College of Medicine and the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences and Professional Studies have done their best to prepare you with knowledge, but also with the skills you'll need to succeed as innovators, seekers and healers: curiosity, humility, adaptability and open-mindedness," Cairns said. "We are seeing you off today confident that you are equipped to make the world a better place."



Her pioneering research on the control of gene expression in plants and animals has garnered numerous awards.

"Your career struggles will be easier if you are guided by a dream and a passion for what you are driven to accomplish," Chandler advised.

The ceremony was livestreamed for those who could not attend in person and is now archived online at bit.ly/DrexelCommencement2024.

Drexel University President John Fry praised graduates' achievements and wished them future success. "Drexel graduates: Whether you're treating patients directly, shaping health policies, conducting research, or educating future innovators and healers, I hope you will always uphold the highest standards of your profession," Fry said. "Always seek to be a force for good in the lives of all you meet and treat. And in your most rewarding yet grueling of pursuits, please remember to be good to yourselves."

Graduates and Commencement attendees heard an address from honorary degree recipient Vicki L. Chandler, PhD, one of the foremost geneticists in the world and chief academic officer and provost at Minerva University.



Explore & Serve Day celebrates students' innovation and service



MD students behold their futures at successful Match Day



MD/MS program fosters spirit of inquiry and investigation

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pulse

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Celebrating Successes, Embracing New Beginnings

Summer is upon us, and as always, we have much to be proud of and grateful for. We sent more than 500 medical and graduate students off to the next stages of their career journeys at our College of Medicine Commencement ceremony on May 9. It was an honor to share the stage with so many of our accomplished faculty and leaders while celebrating the achievements of the class of 2024.



Charles B. Cairns, MD

We welcomed new clinical partners this spring. Bayhealth Medical Center in Delaware, a longtime affiliate of the College of Medicine, is now a regional medical campus, meaning our students can choose to complete the entirety of their third- and fourth-year rotations there. In addition, AtlantiCare in Atlantic City, New Jersey, has joined us as a new academic campus where students can complete elective clerkships. I am grateful to all of our clinical training sites for the robust education they provide our MD students.

I'm pleased to announce that Annette Gadegbeku, MD, has been appointed senior associate dean of the Office of Community Health & Inclusive Excellence. Dr. Gadegbeku has had great success in her role as associate dean of community health and health equity. In this expanded role, she will continue her work in community health and health equity, and also foster inclusion and belonging at the College of Medicine through policies, recruitment efforts and promotion of research focused on community health, wellness and barriers to care. Dr. Gadegbeku has also been named the assistant director of diversity, equity and inclusion at the Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Research Consortium.

This spring, Itzhak Fischer, PhD, announced that he will step down as chair of the Department of Neurobiology & Anatomy on July 1, after a distinguished 33-year career at the College of Medicine, including 25 years as chair. During his tenure, the department has grown and thrived; research expenditures have grown by 34% in just the last four years. I would like to thank Dr. Fischer, who will stay on as a tenured professor in the department, for his years of dedication and leadership. I'm happy to share that Rodrigo España, PhD, has been appointed interim chair of the department. Dr. España's wealth of experience, years as an educator, service on professional committees, mentorship of students and colleagues, and national and international renown as a researcher will serve the department and College well.

Finally, I'm honored to announce that Cecilia Smith, DO, interim academic chair of medicine, has assumed the role of associate dean of the College of Medicine at Tower Health. Her longstanding leadership at Reading Hospital, coupled with her leadership at Drexel, make her ideally suited to helm the West Reading Campus. Karen Restifo, MD, JD, who ably served as regional vice dean of the campus since its founding in 2021, accepted a role at the Burnett School of Medicine at Texas Christian University. I am grateful to Dr. Restifo for her years of leadership, and to Dr. Smith for ensuring a smooth transition for the campus's faculty, professional staff and students.

In this time of transitions, I am thankful for the many contributions of our faculty, professional staff and students, and proud to serve as your dean.

Charles B. Cairns, MD

Walter H. and Leonore Annenberg Dean
Senior Vice President of Medical Affairs

New and Notable

Gadegbeku Assumes Community Health & Inclusive Excellence Leadership Role

Annette Gadegbeku, MD, has been appointed senior associate dean in the Office of Community Health and Inclusive Excellence at Drexel University College of Medicine. In 2022, Gadegbeku was appointed associate dean in the College's Office of Community Health & Health Equity, where she expertly led strategic initiatives to connect community clinicians and organizations, both internal and external to Drexel.



The Office of Community Health and Inclusive Excellence builds upon the College's mission to advance community service, education, clinical care and research, while addressing the needs and health disparities of our local neighborhoods. The new office incorporates the functions of the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and the former

Office of Community Health & Health Equity, to better align and strengthen the College's resources to address inclusivity across missions.

Gadegbeku will continue to successfully support and bolster relationships, partnerships, collaborations and programs within the University and among Philadelphia community sites and stakeholders to achieve the best health outcomes through the promotion of health and wellness. She will also continue to promote urban health equity and advance curricular support, research and training in community health and inclusive excellence. She will focus on strengthening curricula to address the care of marginalized, underserved and at-risk populations and support instruction in anti-racism, microaggressions, bias and trauma-informed care in Drexel's preclinical and clinical environments including at affiliate sites.

Gadegbeku is charged with fostering inclusion and belonging by developing policies, procedures and processes. She will collaborate with the Office of Faculty to implement best practices for recruitment, retention and promotion of faculty from groups historically underrepresented in medicine, as well as working with the Office of Admissions to implement best practices for the recruitment and support of students from underrepresented groups in medicine and biomedical sciences. Gadegbeku will oversee existing pathway programs and establish new ones to increase the representation of individuals who have been personally impacted by health care disparities, socioeconomic or educational barriers.

She will centralize community-based

participatory research and foster University-wide collaboration in alignment with both Drexel's strategic plan and the goals of Drexel Health to improve health outcomes. She will promote faculty and trainee research focused on community health, wellness and barriers to care, with the aim of impacting the health professional workforce and health policy in our communities.

Gadegbeku is an associate professor and chief of the Division of Community Health in the Department of Family, Community & Preventive Medicine and faculty director for Healing Hurt People, a hospital and community-linked violence intervention program at the Center for Nonviolence and Social Justice in the Dornsife School of Public Health. Gadegbeku also serves as assistant director of diversity, equity and inclusion at the Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center, where she supports the consortium between Jefferson and Drexel and its inclusive efforts in cancer-related community outreach, academic training and research.

Batts Health Equity and Inclusive Excellence Dinner

On May 7, College of Medicine students, alumni, faculty and staff gathered at the Germantown Cricket Club for the annual Batts Health Equity and Inclusive Excellence Dinner. The event celebrates the achievements of the graduating students who have been personally impacted by health care disparities, socioeconomic or educational barriers, and raises funds for the Dr. James A. Batts Student Fund to support students with their education expenses, conference fees, test preparation materials and tuition.

James A. Batts Jr. joined the staff at the Medical College of Pennsylvania in 1979 and retired as senior attending physician and professor emeritus in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology. Batts had an interest in increasing the number of underrepresented medical students and regularly recruited and mentored aspiring doctors. Each year, he hosted a party at his own expense for underrepresented students and faculty at MCP. We are proud to return to the tradition of naming the Health Equity & Inclusive Excellence Dinner in his honor.

Photos of the event are available at bit.ly/Batts2024.







More Commencement content is available on our social media channels.

Facebook album:

Instagram video:



Compassion, Leadership and Teaching Excellence Celebrated With Honor Society Inductions

The College of Medicine inducted the newest members into the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society and Gold Humanism Honor Society during a ceremony and banquet on March 20, 2024, at the Hilton Philadelphia City Avenue.

During the ceremony, 41 students, five residents and fellows, and four faculty members were inducted into the Gold Humanism Honor Society, which champions humanism in health care through compassion, collaboration and scientific excellence. The society “empowers experts, learners and leaders to together create systems and cultures that support humanistic care for all.”

Drexel’s chapter of Alpha Omega Alpha, the Delta Zeta chapter, welcomed 54 students, ten faculty members, nine residents and three alumni to the society. AOA holds the belief that the medical profession can improve care for everyone by “recognizing high educational achievement, honoring gifted teaching, encouraging the development of leaders in academia and the community, supporting the ideals of humanism and promoting service to others.”

Mary Lynn Sealey, MD, regional assistant dean of clinical education for Allegheny Health Network, gave the keynote address. She described the soon-to-be MD graduates as her inspiration for the speech: “I decided that you are our inspiration and should be a source of inspiration for each other.” She marveled at the effort it had taken them to get to where they are today and acknowledged the impact of each person’s “village,” their support networks who stood by them along the way.

Before closing with congratulations, Sealey offered the attendees two rules she lives by: Be kind, even when it isn’t easy to do so, and be yourself, “your own unique person with your personality, your talents, your strengths and your weaknesses.”

A full list of honor society inductees is available at bit.ly/3Jx8iMd.



Rodrigo España Appointed Interim Chair, Neurobiology & Anatomy

Rodrigo A. España, PhD, has been appointed interim chair of the Department of Neurobiology & Anatomy. España is a tenured professor of neurobiology and anatomy and former director of the Center for Systems and Behavioral Neuroscience. He came to the College of Medicine from Wake Forest University in 2011 as an assistant professor and rose through the ranks with a record of outstanding scholarship, service and mentorship. His lab’s research, supported by several awards from the NIH/National Institute on Drug Abuse, focuses on monoaminergic and hypocretinergic modulation of arousal-related processes including motivated behavior, substance



use disorders, stress and sleep/wake function.

España has received numerous recognitions from the College of Medicine for his research, including the International Travel Award, the Young Investigator Award, the Mid-Career Basic Science Investigator Award and the Julian Marsh Faculty Scholar Award. He is a member of the Society for Neuroscience

and serves as an officer in the society’s Philadelphia chapter. He is also a member of the National Institute of Health’s Board of Scientific Counselors and the Neurobiology of Motivated Behavior Study Section.

España is a review editor for a number of highly regarded journals, including *Neuropsychopharmacology*, *Biological Psychiatry*, *Journal of Neuroscience*, *Addiction Biology* and *Sleep*. He is the author of more than 80 publications and has been invited to speak locally, nationally and internationally about his research.

New and Expanded Clinical Education Opportunities

The College of Medicine recently secured exciting opportunities for the clinical education of Drexel medical students.

The College’s longstanding academic medical campus affiliation with Bayhealth Medical Center in Delaware has been expanded. Bayhealth will serve as a regional medical campus for the College of Medicine beginning at the start of this academic year. Drexel and Bayhealth

signed the affiliation agreement in March 2024, following a review by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education.

Bayhealth, which was established in 1925 and is central and southern Delaware’s largest health care system, provides high-quality care to its local communities and the surrounding region. With this new regional designation, Drexel medical students can select Bayhealth as their primary campus for comprehensive training, completing all their required core clinical rotations there during their third- and/or fourth-year clerkships. The health system includes two hospital locations in Kent and Sussex County,

West Reading Campus Welcomes Cecilia Smith as Associate Dean

Cecilia M. Smith, DO, professor and interim academic chair, Department of Medicine, has been named associate dean, Tower Health Regional Campus effective April 10, 2024.

Smith previously served as chair of the Department of Medicine at Reading Hospital, Tower Health from 2004-2022. She graduated from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine in 1976 and completed the Internal Medicine Residency program at Hahnemann Medical College and Hospital of Philadelphia. She then spent one year in a pulmonary medicine fellowship at the Tufts University program at Faulkner Hospital. She subsequently completed a clinical and research fellowship in pulmonary and critical care medicine at the University of California, San Diego. She joined the faculty of UCSD School of Medicine as an assistant professor, advancing to professor of



medicine by the time of her relocation to Reading Hospital.

Smith has held numerous leadership positions within state and national professional pulmonary societies. Her clinical focus is pulmonary arterial hypertension and interstitial lung diseases. During her tenure as chair of medicine at Reading Hospital, the department grew in several key ways. New hires of physicians and division chiefs allowed the hospital to meet the needs of a growing patient population. The graduate medical education programming expanded to include cardiology, pulmonary/critical care, hematology/oncology, gastroenterology and endocrinology fellowships, and the existing Internal Medicine Residency program grew from six to 15 trainees per year. The department also experienced improved safety and quality outcomes under Smith's leadership, resulting in national recognitions for the hospital in the areas of cardiovascular disease, heart failure, stroke and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.



Diversity Week

The College of Medicine hosted Diversity Week April 29 through May 3, 2024. The week's events spanned the Philadelphia and West Reading Campuses and included a range of fun, informative and service-focused activities intended to celebrate diversity at Drexel.

Activities included flag painting, Dabke dancing, trivia and board game night, double-dutch on the Health Sciences Building lawn, and an Around the World event. Educational sessions included topics like health literacy, care of Muslim patients, and navigating equity in professional spaces. The event also included a Diversity Symposium with Aspiring Physician Executives and the Black Doctors Network, and a service opportunity to assemble donated items for parents with infants and toddlers.

and one freestanding emergency room in Smyrna.

In addition, AtlantiCare signed an agreement to become a new academic medical campus for the College of Medicine. Third- and fourth-year medical students may elect required clerkship training at its large health system based in Egg Harbor Township, N.J. AtlantiCare has a team of more than 6,500 health professionals who serve the community in the health system's many locations in Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May and Ocean counties in southern New Jersey.

These new affiliations will not affect existing relationships,

including the College of Medicine's regional medical campuses at Allegheny Health Network, Crozer-Chester Medical Center, Kaiser Permanente-Bay Area, UPMC Harrisburg and WellSpan York Hospital, or Drexel's four-year regional campus at Tower Health – Reading Hospital.

The College of Medicine's relationships with regional and affiliate campuses are key to the success of the MD program. These collaborations strengthen the clinical medical education opportunities for Drexel medical students and expand the geographic footprint of the College of Medicine.

Recent Thesis Defenses

We congratulate the following master's and PhD students from the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences and Professional Studies on the successful defense of their theses.



Andrey Borisyuk, MS

Neuroscience PhD Program
Title: Impacts of Epidural Spatial Stimulation Types on the Recovery of Function in Combined Bionic and Biological SCI Therapies
Advisor: Simon Giszter, PhD



Xuan Luo

Pharmacology & Physiology PhD Program
Title: Immune Regulation by Macrophage-Derived Small Extracellular Vesicles in Attenuating Inflammatory Pain
Advisor: Seena K. Ajit, PhD



Gina Cusimano, MS

Microbiology & Immunology PhD Program
Title: Exploring Adenosine Deaminase 1 (ADA-1) as a Novel Molecular Vaccine Adjuvant
Advisor: Michele Kutzler, PhD



Karen Malanda

Microbiology & Immunology MS Program
Title: Characterization of the ADP/ATP Carrier Protein (PF3D7_1004800) in *Plasmodium falciparum*
Advisor: Hangjun Ke, PhD



Elijah Davis

Microbiology & Immunology PhD Program
Title: The Good, The Bad, The Ugly: Lipopolysaccharide's Antiviral and Proinflammatory Influence on Microglia During Neurotropic Betacoronavirus Infection
Advisor: Sonia Navas-Martin, PhD



Victoria Mischley

Molecular & Cell Biology & Genetics PhD Program
Title: Rational Design of Molecular Glue Degraders via Computational Prediction of E3 Ligase Interactions
Advisor: John Karanicolas, PhD



Casey DeAngelis

Molecular & Cell Biology & Genetics MS Program
Title: Hyperglycemic Conditions May Promote Senescence & DNA Damage in TIMELESS Depleted Human Cardiac Fibroblasts
Advisor: Eishi Noguchi, PhD



Swaksha Rachuri

Microbiology & Immunology PhD Program
Title: Mutational Analysis of an Antimalarial Drug Target, PfATP4
Advisor: Akhil B. Vaidya, PhD



Ana Dumitrescu

Biochemistry of Health and Disease MS Program
Title: Development of Novel Fungal Arp2/3 Complex Inhibitors
Advisor: Shae Padrick, PhD



Photis Rotsides

Biochemistry PhD Program
Title: The Antibiotic Sensing Mechanism of VanS From Type-B Vancomycin-Resistant Enterococci
Advisor: Patrick Loll, PhD



Benjamin Haslund-Gourley

Microbiology & Immunology PhD Program
Title: Glycosylation of Immunoglobins: Characterizing Functional Responses to Bacterial and Viral Infections in Humans
Advisor: Mary Ann Comunale, EdD, MS



John Robert Walker, MS

Neuroscience PhD Program
Title: The Role of Mechanosensitive, IB4-Positive Nociceptive Afferent Input in Forelimb Motor Function and Rehabilitation After Spinal Cord Injury
Advisor: Megan Detloff, PhD



Julie Joseph

Microbiology & Immunology PhD Program
Title: Regulating Immunity via Exosomes by the Retroviral b-Zip Protein, HBZ, in HTLV Associated Neuroinflammation
Advisor: Pooja Jain, PhD



Fuyu Yang

Pharmacology & Physiology MS Program
Title: Characterizing Novel Allosteric Modulators for Human Dopamine Transporter
Advisor: Ole V. Mortensen, PhD



Explore & Serve Day

The Division of Pre-medical and Pre-health Programs in the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences and Professional Studies held its seventh annual Explore & Serve Day on April 9, 2024, in the Health Sciences Building. Explore & Serve is dedicated to recognizing graduate students' outstanding contributions to either biomedical science research or community service endeavors.

This year's theme focused on mental health and wellness, especially for health care providers. Via oral and poster presentations, students heard the ways in which their classmates use their research and community service endeavors to benefit society. They

decompressed by interacting with one of Drexel's therapy dogs and learned how therapy dogs can positively impact patient care and quality of life.

Michelle Rattigan, MA, ATR-BC, NCC, LPC, LPAT, a board-certified art therapist and associate clinical professor in the College of Nursing and Health Professions, gave the keynote address, which focused on the importance of self-compassion for health care professionals. Students learned from a panel of art therapy graduate students about the ways in which dance, music and art therapy can be used in patient care. Attendees also participated in group movement activities and honed their creativity by contributing to a community art mural.



Wellness Takes Center Stage at 2024 Leadership Summit

The Women in Medicine and Science Committee hosted their 2024 Leadership Summit virtually on April 5, 2024. The summit is an immersive, interactive leadership development opportunity focused on strategies for gender equity in medicine, science and leadership. The annual event is open to current and aspiring leaders of all genders, and the people who mentor them.

The event opened with the presentation of the 2024 WMC/MCP Phyllis Marciano, MD, WMC '60, Woman in Medicine Award to Cheryl Hanau, MD, professor and Richard Shuman, MD, Chair of Pathology & Laboratory Medicine (see Spring 2024 *Pulse*).

This year's summit featured presentations and discussions on individual wellness, group connectedness and systems-levels resources. Sessions included:

- Drexel Wellness Incentive Program, presented by Kaitlyn Bishop, senior wellness program consultant, Health Advocate

- Self-Care and Quality Time Panel, with Donna Sudak, MD, professor and vice chair for education, Department of Psychiatry, Drexel University College of Medicine, and Consuelo C. Cagande, MD, associate professor of psychiatry, Perelman School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania
 - Wellness in One's "Community" Panel, with Jessica Gold, MD, MS, associate professor of psychiatry, University of Tennessee Health Science Center, and Paul Gondek, PhD, adjunct teaching professor of psychology, Drexel University; emeritus member, Drexel University Alumni Board of Governors
 - Fostering a Supportive Environment at Your Institution Panel, with Seema Sidhu, MD, assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology and regional associate dean, Kaiser Permanente, Bay Area Campus, Drexel University College of Medicine, and Leslie Ashburn-Nardo, PhD, vice provost for diversity, equity and inclusion, Drexel University
- The event was recorded, and all sessions can be viewed online at bit.ly/WIMSCsummit.

Graduate School Celebrates Student and Faculty Excellence

On May 8, 2024, the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences and Professional Studies celebrated the class of 2024 and faculty members during its annual awards ceremony.

Student Awards

The Amedeo Bondi, PhD Endowed Graduate Award

Giang Le Minh, PhD, Biochemistry
 Advisor: Mauricio Reginato, PhD
 Thesis: "Understanding Mechanisms of OGT/O-GlcNAc Regulation of Breast Cancer Stem Cells"

Mitchell Isaac Parker, MD, PhD, Molecular & Cell Biology & Genetics
 Advisors: Roland Dunbrack, PhD; Erica Golemis, PhD; Joshua Meyer, MD
 Thesis: "A Comprehensive Structural Classification of RAS Conformations"

Excellence in Student Mentoring Award

Nima Sarfaraz, MS, PhD candidate in Molecular & Cell Biology & Genetics

Excellence in Student Teaching Assistance Award

Kendra Case and Andrew Lockhart, Neuroscience PhD candidates

Dr. Jane Clifford Best PhD Dissertation Thesis Award

Photis Rotsides, PhD, Biochemistry
 Advisor: Patrick J. Loll, PhD
 Thesis: "The Antibiotic Sensing Mechanism of VanS from Type-B VRE"

Dr. Jane Clifford Best Master's Thesis Award

Ana Dumitrescu, MS, Biochemistry of Health and Disease
 Advisor: Shae Padrick, PhD
 Thesis: "Development of Novel Fungal Arp2/3 Complex Inhibitors"

Outstanding Achievement Awards, Interdisciplinary and Career-Oriented Programs

Brianna Achenbach, MS, Drug Discovery and Development
 Keziah Adjei, MS, Molecular Medicine
 Sabrina Aronis, MS, Immunology
 Kyle DePlancke, MS, Infectious Disease
 Hannah Dunnous, MS, Biomedicine and Business
 Olubukola Jimoh, MS, Biomedicine and Entrepreneurship
 Giovanna Kinahan, MS, Clinical Research Organization and Management
 Madeline Montero, MS, Biomedicine and Digital Media
 Ariel Napoles, MS, Drug Discovery and Development
 Rebecca Pouey, MS, Clinical Research Organization and Management
 Hannah E. Shaw, MS, Laboratory Animal Science
 Zaira Sylvain, MS, Molecular Medicine
 Carla Triolo, MS, Biomedicine and Law
 Rachel Wainwright, MS, Pathologists' Assistant
 Christine Whitehead, MS, Clinical Research Organization and Management
 Nicholas Wilson, MS, Drug Discovery and Development

Outstanding Achievement Awards, Pre-medical and Pre-health Programs

Trevor DeSilva, MS, Interdisciplinary Health Sciences
 Kelem Mengesha, MS, Drexel Pathway to Medical School
 Tasnim Mujir, MS, Drexel Pathway to Medical School
 Cedrick Ofori, MS, Intensive Medical Sciences
 Janel Sewell, MS, Biomedical Studies
 Pastora Quarless, Drexel Pathway to Medical School

Excellence in Teaching Assistance

Trevor DeSilva, MS, Interdisciplinary Health Sciences

Common Good Award

Jyothii Kulasingam, MS, Interdisciplinary Health Sciences

Faculty Awards

Best Professor

Joanne Mathiasen, PhD – Division of Biomedical Sciences
 Paul McGonigle, PhD – Division of Interdisciplinary and Career-Oriented Programs
 Kirsten Larson, PhD – Division of Pre-medical and Pre-health Programs

Best Mentor

Seena Ajit, PhD – Division of Biomedical Sciences
 Mary Ann Comunale, EdD, MS – Division of Interdisciplinary and Career-Oriented Programs
 Monika Jost, PhD – Division of Pre-medical and Pre-health Programs

Best Adjunct Professor

Bradford Jameson, PhD – Division of Pre-medical and Pre-health Programs
 Colleen Lyons, PhD, MBE – Division of Interdisciplinary and Career-Oriented Programs

Best Student Advocate

Jed Shumsky, PhD – Division of Biomedical Sciences



MD Class of 2024 Celebrates Successful Matches

On May 15, 2024, proud faculty, friends and family joined fourth-year College of Medicine MD students to celebrate Match Day, when the students learn where they will complete their residency training. After a countdown to noon, students opened envelopes and reacted to their Match Day results with cheers, hugs and even some tears.

Primary care was the most chosen specialty by the graduating class, with around one-third of them going into internal medicine, family medicine and pediatrics. About 40% of the graduates matched at residencies in Pennsylvania and New York. California, the third most popular state for Drexel students, will welcome 25 graduates to training programs.



The Spirit of Inquiry: MD/MS Program Cultivates Future Clinician-Researchers

Bridging medicine and research, physician-scientists play a vital role in academic medicine and the private sector. Such contributions are more urgently needed than ever before, yet there is currently a shortage of qualified individuals to heed the call. Thankfully, medical education is responding: According to recent research, a greater number of medical students are being exposed to research opportunities today, with an increase of more than 20% between 2011 and 2020.¹

In 2017, Drexel recognized the need to expand its research offerings for medical students. The dual MD/MS program not only allows students to expand their skill set and earn a second degree, but it also gives them a competitive edge in applying for residency programs. An added benefit is that the program has been structured so that students are eligible for financial aid for the MS component of the program.

“We saw that our students needed to be able to go up against other residency applicants from institutions with built-in research programs, and they needed support to do so,” says Chava Hurley, PhD, director of the dual degree program.

Five students are currently enrolled in the MD/MS program — on average it has accommodated between three and five students a year. That number, says Hurley, is driven by student interest and the mentors available to guide their research projects. The yearlong program is quite rigorous and research intensive in order to keep students on track to produce a thesis within 12 months.

“By design we wanted the program to be supportive and collaborative, where students really leave feeling committed to their future path and well-prepared for their residency,” Hurley says.

The Right Fit

Students typically self-identify during their third year, based on their interests and aspirations, and work with Hurley to determine whether the program will be a good fit for them. They then select a mentor and develop a 10-page project proposal. The proposal is intended to outline a discrete and manageable set of research questions to explore. However, many students also participate in additional research with their mentor outside of their own thesis project, which gives them access to more ideas, as well as opportunities to author publications, present talks and gain additional hands-on professional experience that can shape their career path.

Hurley cites the experience of program graduate Alfredo Munoz, MD, MS '22, who came to the College of Medicine through the Drexel Pathway to Medical School program. As a third-year, he enrolled in the MD/MS program, where he conducted a study on inequalities in stroke care. He published this work and completed his degrees at Drexel, and he is now training to be a neurosurgeon at Wayne State University.

“He’s a great example of someone who refined his

interests during the program and built a foundation for his career,” Hurley says.

Expanding the Reach

Seven years in, the program has started to attract students outside of Drexel. Katie Mullen was in her third year at Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine when she decided she wanted to pursue a career in otolaryngology/head and neck surgery. “In my first two years of medical school, I hadn’t planned to pursue a specialty that required research as a core component of the residency application,” she says. “When I chose otolaryngology as a specialty, I knew that I needed to work on this part of my application.”

In what Mullen calls a “delightful happenstance,” her mentor heard about the Drexel program and specifically that Robert Sataloff, MD, DMA, professor and chair of the Department of Otolaryngology – Head & Neck Surgery, had research fellowships available.

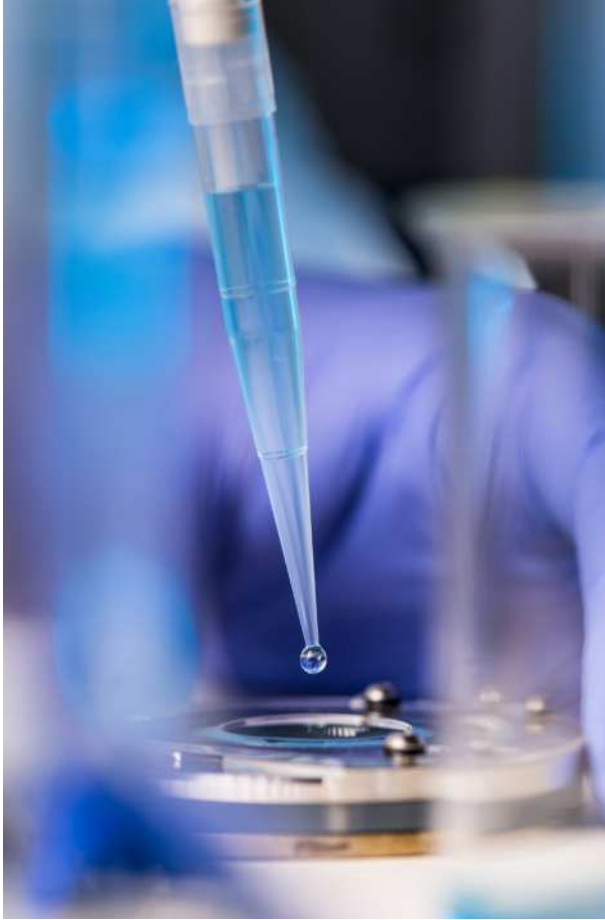
“We were very excited that it was an opportunity we could offer to students at other schools,” says Hurley. “It requires creating a curriculum map for the applicant to make sure that their coursework aligns with our requirements for entering the program, but in Katie’s case we were able to successfully implement that and transition her for one year of graduate study here at Drexel, and then she will transfer back to her home medical school to complete her MD. This program fosters that wonderful inter-institutional collaboration that Drexel is so famous for.” Mullen says it was a bit of a challenge to get her thesis project up and running while she started to matriculate and navigate daily life at a new medical school, but the opportunity has been invaluable.

“What’s been great is that Dr. Sataloff subspecializes in both laryngology and neurotology, so he sees both of these patient populations in his practice. Within his laryngology practice he sees professional voice users and is a leading researcher on this population of patients. There are a number of research fellowships that are either paid or unpaid that don’t necessarily come with an academic degree,” Mullen says. “So, to be able to come away from this with a master’s is an incredible opportunity.”

Mullen homed in on the topic of laryngeal myasthenia gravis, an autoimmune condition that is not well characterized in current medical literature. In this vocal manifestation of myasthenia gravis, people experience voice fatigue. In her thesis project, Mullen is looking at the serological markers specific to the laryngeal form that will help providers diagnose the condition.

Mullen is one of two students working with Sataloff, who is passionate about mentorship as an essential thread of a career in academic medicine. He wholeheartedly lends his time to MD/MS students on a number of fronts.

“Preparation, including literature review, review of study design, consultation with a statistician and other preparatory activities, are not often taught in traditional medical



education, either in medical school or in residency. And they are essential to efficient research,” he says. “I read and correct every word they write and meet with them regularly for counseling sessions before they start any research projects. I train the students to conduct their own research and teach research skills to others. So, in addition to publishing — on average about ten papers during their research year with me, including their thesis — they assist other medical students and residents in coordinating research.”

Broadening Horizons

Some Drexel students have gone farther afield to conduct their research. Bela Delvadia is working at Tulane University School of Medicine under Associate Professor of Orthopedic Surgery Dr. William Sherman.

“My goal was to dive deeper into the research and the specialty that I plan to spend my life practicing. I wanted to get a flavor of what it would be like to be in academic medicine,” she says. “The MD/MS program was an ideal way to do that.”

Delvadia’s work to date has included retrospective reviews of cases in a national claims database — for example, one such project was looking at how smokeless tobacco impacted patient outcomes for orthopedic procedures. The experience has solidified her love of research and her vision for her career.

Delvadia has already presented to the National Medical Association and published her work in *Arthroplasty Today*.

She attended the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons meeting in February 2024.

Benjamin Sherman, meanwhile, is working with Dr. Vivek Buch at Stanford University School of Medicine on a project titled “Human Intra-thalamic Electrophysiologic Synchrony During Cognition.” Sherman, who has always been fascinated by brain computer interfaces (BCI), embraced the chance to focus on the subject for a year in California.

“Dr. Buch and our lab take a unique look at BCI as a kind of network interaction,” Sherman says. “The typical approach is based on our knowledge that very specific regions of the brain do very specific things and we read electrophysiologic data from those regions. In our work right now, we are looking at multiple regions, and how activity is synchronized under different cognitive circumstances, such as temporal expectancy, which is when you expect something to happen and how quickly you can react to it. Of particular interest to us is thalamic activity due to the critical role that the thalamus plays in inter-region connectivity, and the fact that it has not been mapped electrophysiologically in humans before.”

Sherman has hypothesized that it will also be the case for other cognitive areas that, when someone is performing well on a reaction time task, there will be a co-activation in specific frequency bands of certain networks.

“The other thing that we’re looking at as a lab is the pre-task period — what network state exists in the brain before a task,” he says. “We want to know whether those indicators can be used to predict whether someone will perform well on that task or poorly.”

Sherman says he feels supported by Drexel as part of a structured program at home while he works in a lab across the country. He is applying for neurosurgery residency this year and he believes that both the research experience and Buch’s mentorship have laid a crucial foundation for his career.

Sustainable Growth

Hurley says she expects the program to grow in the coming years but at a pace that is sustainable and continues to foster intensive student-mentor relationships. “I think there’s potential for growth here, and I would love to see the program expand, but I think that’ll happen organically as more students and mentors learn about it and get involved.”

For right now, she says, she’s enjoying watching students achieve their objectives. Over 90% of MD/MS graduates have been accepted into the residency of their choice.

“These are amazing students who are making incredible contributions to their chosen fields. The purpose of the program has always been to provide opportunities for our students to leverage these experiences into achieving their professional goals — it’s working exactly as it was intended.”

— *Elisa Ludwig*

Reference:

1. Garrison, HH and Ley, TJ (May 2022) “Physician-Scientists in the United States at 2020: Trends and Concerns.” *FASEB J*: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9314812/>

WHAT WE'RE DOING



Buck



Xie

Lauren A. Buck, MS, research assistant, **Qiaowei Xie**, Pharmacology & Physiology PhD student, **Michelle Willis, MD '23**, **Christine M. Side**, research assistant,



Giacometti



Gaskill

Laura Giacometti, PhD, postdoctoral scholar, **Peter J. Gaskill, PhD**, associate professor of pharmacology and physiology, **Jacqueline Barker, PhD**, associate professor of pharmacology



Barker

and physiology, and colleagues at the University of Pennsylvania and University of Nebraska are the authors of "Impaired Extinction of Cocaine Seeking in HIV-Infected Mice Is Accompanied by Peripheral and Central Immune Dysregulation." The paper was published in *Communications Biology* on March 30, 2024.

Giacometti also earned a pilot grant from the Temple/Drexel Comprehensive NeuroHIV Center Developmental Research and Mentoring Core to support her project "Top-Down Mechanisms of Estrous Cycle Dysregulation in EcoHIV Infection."

Denia Cai Shi, PhD, instructor in the Department of Psychiatry and a fellow in the Janssen-Drexel Psychiatric Drug Development program, received the New Investigator Award from the International Society of CNS Clinical Trials and Methodology, and her poster won one of only three Distinguished Poster awards at the society's annual conference.



Cairns



Haddad

Charles B. Cairns, MD, the Walter H. and Leonore Annenberg Dean of the College of Medicine and senior vice president of medical affairs at Drexel University, was named a

fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Cairns and **Elias K. El Haddad, PhD**, professor, Departments of Medicine and Microbiology & Immunology, were among the authors of two papers: "Integrated Longitudinal Multiomics Study Identifies Immune Programs Associated With Acute COVID-19 Severity and Mortality," which appeared in the May 1, 2024, issue of the *Journal of Clinical Investigation*, and

Drexel University College of Medicine hosted the 2024 annual meeting of the Philadelphia chapter of the Society for Neuroscience on April 19.

Simran Gill and **Tofunmi Oteju**, Pharmacology & Physiology PhD candidates, were chosen to give oral presentations at the meeting. **Geena John**, also a Pharmacology & Physiology PhD candidate, won the event's Best Graduate Student Poster Award.

"Host-Microbe Multiomic Profiling Reveals Age-Dependent Immune Dysregulation Associated With COVID-19 Immunopathology," which was published in *Science Translational Medicine* on April 17, 2024.

Christina Curran-Alfaro, MS, Neuroscience PhD candidate, presented a poster, "Sex Differences in the Effects of Chronic Low-Dose Ethanol Exposure on Behavioral Response to Changes in Reward Value," at the Gordon Research Conference (Alcohol & Nervous System) 2024 in Galveston, Texas. Curran-Alfaro earned a Graduate Student Poster Award for this work.



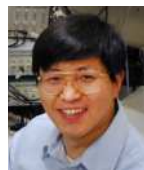
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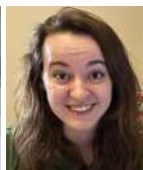
Kortagere

Brenna Duffy, Microbiology & Immunology PhD student, **Kirsten King, PhD neuroscience '19**, **Binod Nepal, PhD**, postdoctoral researcher, and **Michael Nonnemacher, PhD**,

and **Sandhya Kortagere, PhD**, both professors of microbiology and immunology, published "Acute Administration of HIV-1 Tat Protein Drives Glutamatergic Alterations in a Rodent Model of HIV-Associated Neurocognitive Disorders" in the March 22, 2024, issue of *Molecular Neurobiology*.



Gao



Flynn

Wen Jun Gao, MD, PhD, professor of neurobiology and anatomy, **Nancy Mack, PhD neuroscience '22**, and **Nadia Bouras, BS biological sciences '24**, were the authors of



Migovich

"Prefrontal Regulation of Social Behavior and Related Deficits: Insights From Rodent Studies," which was published in *Biological Psychiatry* on March 13, 2024. **L. Taylor Flynn**, an MD/PhD student in the Neuroscience program, Bouras, Neuroscience PhD students **Volodar Migovich** and **Jake Clarin**, and Gao authored "The 'Psychiatric' Neuron: The Psychic Neuron of the Cerebral Cortex, Revisited." The paper was published in *Frontiers of Human Neuroscience* on March 18, 2024.



Nephrology on April 3, 2024.

Meera Nair Harhay, MD, MSCE, professor of medicine, and colleagues at numerous institutions around the globe, authored "Chronic Kidney Disease and the Global Public Health Agenda: An International Consensus." The paper appeared in *Nature Reviews*



Edward Hartsough, PhD, assistant professor of pharmacology and physiology, earned a \$476,587 R01 award from the National Cancer Institute for his project "Exploiting Oxidative Stress Response in Uveal Melanoma Liver Metastasis."



Jennifer Hope, PhD, assistant professor of microbiology and immunology, received the Bristol Myers Squibb-MRA Young Investigator Award for her project "Overcoming Resistance to Immune Checkpoint Blockade Therapy With PSGL-1."



Hans Kersten, MD, professor of pediatrics, authored an article, "Improving Resiliency and Literacy" in the Winter 2024 issue of *The Pharos*, a publication of the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society.



J. Yasha Kresh, MB, PhD, professor emeritus of cardiothoracic surgery, medicine and biomedical engineering, showcased his sculptures at Penn: Visions of Complexity – Combining Science and Art at the Arts League in Philadelphia March 7-29, 2024. Kresh creates his art by "taking common-found objects (e.g., cast-iron tools/metal forms) and assembling them into an aesthetic universal expression (3-D hieroglyphic memes) that evokes emotional memory and response, giving them a purposefully extended life, resilience and boundless oneness."



Margaret Larkins-Pettigrew, MD, MEd, MPPM, professor and academic chair of obstetrics and gynecology, was included in the "Clinical Leadership/Diversity and Health Equity" section of Becker's Hospital Review's list of 231+ Black Healthcare Leaders to Know.



Malloy



Côté

Dillon Malloy, PhD neuroscience '22, a postdoctoral researcher, and **Marie-Pascale Côté, PhD**, associate professor, Department of Neurobiology & Anatomy, published

"Multi-session Transcutaneous Spinal Cord Stimulation Prevents Chloride Homeostasis Imbalance and the Development of Hyperreflexia After Spinal Cord Injury in Rat" in the March 16, 2024, issue of *Experimental Neurology*.



Victor C. Ogbolu, Neuroscience MS student, presented a poster for his project "Vascularized Brain Assembloids With Enhanced Cellular Complexity Provided Insights Into the Cellular Deficits of Tauopathy" at the Tau2024 Global Conference, which was held March 25-26 in Washington, D.C. Ogbolu also received the conference's travel award.

Calendar

July

27 **Microbes & Alzheimer's: Bridging Silos to Accelerate Innovation**
8 a.m.-7 p.m.
4170 City Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19131
Learn more: alzpi.org/symposium-2024

August

9 **White Coat Ceremony**
The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts
300 S. Broad St., Philadelphia, PA 19102
Contact: DUCOMMilestones@drexel.edu

September

2 **Labor Day**

October

14 **Indigenous Peoples Day**

18-20 **2024 Student-Run Free Clinics Conference**
Drexel University Campus
Contact: research@studentrunfreeclinics.org

Save the Date

Discovery Day

November 7, 2024
Pennsylvania Convention Center
Information: drexel.edu/medicine/discoveryday
Contact: discoveryday@drexel.edu

Immune Modulation and Engineering Symposium

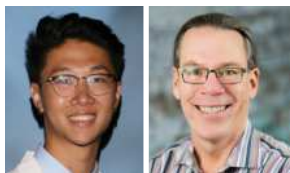
November 13-15, 2024
Drexel University Campus

Ongoing

\$10 Tuesdays: Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University
1900 Benjamin Franklin Parkway
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Full calendar: All College of Medicine events are available at drexel.edu/medicine/news-events/events.

Alumni: For information about alumni events, please call toll-free 888.DUGRADS (888.384.7237), email medical.alumni@drexel.edu or visit drexel.edu/medicine/alumni/events.

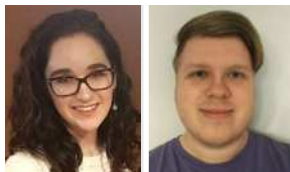


Park

Loll

Jee Hoon Park, MD '25, Rachel Reviello, MS infectious disease '22, and Patrick J. Loll, PhD, professor of biochemistry and molecular biology, authored "Crystal Structure

of Vancomycin Bound to the Resistance Determinant D-alanine-D-serine," which was published in the *International Union of Crystallography Journal* on March 1, 2024.



Pirino

Carpenter

Breanne E. Pirino, PhD neuroscience '24, postdoctoral researcher, **Brody A. Carpenter,** Neuroscience master's student, **Pelagia G. Candelas, MD '25,**



Candelas

Barson

Andrew T. Gargiulo, PhD neuroscience '19, Genevieve R. Curtis, PhD neuroscience '22, Annie Hawks, research assistant, **Jessica R. Barson, PhD,** associate professor of

neurobiology and anatomy, and a colleague at Binghamton University authored "Kappa-Opioid Receptor Stimulation in the Nucleus Accumbens Shell and Ethanol Drinking: Differential Effects by Rostro-Caudal Location and Level of Drinking," which was published in the journal *Neuropsychopharmacology* on March 25, 2024.



Liang Oscar Qiang, MD, PhD, assistant professor, Department of Neurobiology & Anatomy, was awarded a three-year, \$200,000 Alzheimer's Association Research Grant for the project "Bi-phasic Microtubule-Based Mechanisms and Therapies for Tauopathies."



Deepa Reddy, Pharmacology & Physiology PhD student, received the Robert E. Davies Travel Award from the Association of Women in Science Philadelphia chapter. The award supports attendance at national or international scientific meetings for female graduate students

in the Philadelphia region.



Gabriele Romano, PhD, assistant professor of pharmacology and physiology, received the Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center Research Consortium's Up & Coming Rising Star Award during the consortium's annual retreat in February 2024. Romano received a research grant

from the W.W. Smith Charitable Trust in support of his project "Boosting the T-Cell Response Against Melanoma in People Living With HIV." He was also selected to receive a pilot grant from the Temple/Drexel Comprehensive NeuroHIV Center Developmental Research and Mentoring Core for his project "Immunologic Functions of Myeloid-Derived Suppressor Cells in Cancer and HIV Co-morbidity."

College of Medicine Well Represented at AACR

A number of College of Medicine faculty members and students presented at the American Association for Cancer Research 2024 annual meeting.

Amirali Amirfallah, PharmD, a PhD student in the Pharmacology & Physiology program, presented a poster, "The Role of ST8SIA2 & ST8SIA4 in Melanoma Progression and Metastasis" during the Inflammation and Cancer in Metastasis session. The poster was coauthored by **Kayla Gallant,** research assistant, **Maria Cavallo,** Pharmacology & Physiology PhD student, **Zongguan Huang, MS drug discovery and development '20,** and **Edward Hartsough, PhD,** assistant professor of pharmacology and physiology.

Jennifer L. Hope, PhD, assistant professor of microbiology and immunology, presented a poster during the Immune Checkpoints and Inhibitory Molecules 1 session. The poster, "Rewiring CD8+T Cell Responses to PD-1 Immune Checkpoint Blockade in PDAC by Preventing Terminal Exhaustion via the Inhibitory Receptor PSGL-1," was coauthored by **Gabriele Romano, PhD,** assistant professor of pharmacology and physiology.

Gabriele Romano, PhD, presented a poster, "Leukocyte-Based Biomimetic Nanoparticles for Combined Targeted and Immunotherapy in Osteosarcoma," as part of the Combination Approaches session. Pharmacology & Physiology program PhD student **Binh Ha** was a coauthor on the poster.

Alyssa Sanders, a Molecular & Cell Biology & Genetics PhD student, presented "Exploiting the Selenoproteome in Uveal Melanoma" as part of the Cellular Stress Responses 2 session. The poster was coauthored by Molecular & Cell Biology & Genetics PhD student **Camille Cunanan** and **Hartsough.**

Shih-Chun Shen, a PhD student in the Molecular & Cell Biology & Genetics program, presented "IDO1 Inhibition Enables IFN-Elicited Responsiveness of Pulmonary Breast Cancer Metastases to Hypoxia-Directed Tumorocidal Agents" during the Tumor Microenvironment session.



Antonio Sanz-Clemente, PhD, associate professor, and **Andréia Mortensen, PhD**, assistant professor, both in the Department of Pharmacology & Physiology, received a grant from the W.W. Smith Charitable Trust for their project "Modulation of Extrasynaptic NMDA Receptor Content as a Novel Therapeutic Strategy in Stroke."

Sanz-Clemente **Mortensen**

Nima Sarfaraz, MS, a PhD student in the Molecular & Cell Biology & Genetics program, received first place in the Best Trainee Poster Presentation category at the December 2023 Sydney Kimmel Cancer Center-Drexel University Trainee Retreat.



Robert T. Sataloff, MD, DMA, professor and chair of otolaryngology – head and neck surgery, is coauthor of two upcoming textbooks, *Occupational Hearing Loss, Fourth Edition*, and *Hearing Loss, Fifth Edition*. Sataloff is also featured in "Thank You, Goodnight," the Hulu documentary series about Jon Bon Jovi.

Sataloff



Razmig Garabet, MD '25, **Omar Ramadan, MD**, instructor of otolaryngology – head and neck surgery, Sataloff and a colleague at Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine authored "Laryngeal Cancer Presenting as an Anterior Glottic Web," which was published in the March 17, 2024, issue of *Ear, Nose & Throat Journal*.

Garabet



Xiaohuan (Beanie) Sun, Neuroscience PhD student, delivered a poster presentation, "Antagonistic Roles of Tau and MAP6 in Regulating Microtubule Dynamics and Neuronal Development" at the Tau2024 Global Conference, held March 25-26, in Washington, D.C.



Julia Sutter, MS microbiology and immunology '22, now a PhD student; **Jascha Brettschneider, BS biology '17**, laboratory technician; Department of Microbiology

Wigdahl

Krebs



& Immunology faculty members **Brian Wigdahl, PhD**, professor and chair, **Fred Krebs, PhD**, associate professor, and **Vandana Miller, MD**, associate professor; and a colleague at the University of Minnesota published "Non-thermal Plasma Reduces HSV-1 Infection of and Replication in HaCaT Keratinocytes in Vitro" in the *International Journal of Molecular Sciences* on March 29, 2024.

Miller



Veronica Tom, PhD, professor, Department of Neurobiology & Anatomy, gave the Rick Hansen Keynote Lecture at the 2024 International Collaboration on Repair Discoveries' Annual Research Meeting in Vancouver, British Columbia, on March 6, 2024. She also gave the Gail F. Beach

Memorial Lecture at the University of Miami on February 7, 2024. Her talk was "Targeting a Silent Killer: Dysautonomia After Spinal Cord Injury." Tom presented "Stopping the Downhill Slide: Targeting Dysautonomia After Spinal Cord Injury" at the Winter Conference on Brain Research in Breckenridge, Colo., on January 30, 2024. She was also appointed section editor of the journal *Experimental Neurology*.



Kazuhito Toyooka, PhD, an associate professor of neurobiology and anatomy, received a one-year, \$227,250 National Institutes of Health grant for his project "Targeting the Pigment Epithelium-Derived Factor (PEDF) Signaling Pathway in Neurodevelopmental Disorders."



Akhil Vaidya, PhD, professor, Department of Microbiology & Immunology, received a Provost Award for Outstanding Scholarly Productivity – Career.

Emerging Scholars Honored

The Drexel Emerging Graduate Scholars Conference, which highlights Drexel's graduate student research, was held April 24-25, 2024. Several College of Medicine students were honored for their work:

President's Award for Best Three Minute Thesis (3MT®)

Zarrar Nashman, MD '27: "Brain Repair from Organoids Generated from iPSCs"

Second Place In-Person Oral Research Presentation

Katelyn Reeb, Pharmacology & Physiology PhD student: "EAATs for Stroke: To Modulate or Not to Modulate"

Second Place Virtual Oral Research Presentation

Ali Murad, MD '25: "Utilization of CT Perfusion to Optimize Selection of Elderly Patients for Thrombectomy: A Retrospective Analysis"

Dean's Award for Best Research Poster Presentation

Margot Bellon, MD '27: "Evaluating a Community Health Worker Training Program in Rural Guatemala: School of PowHER"

Kenneth Kim, Microbiology & Immunology PhD student: "Bioconjugated Injectable Granular Hydrogels for Regulatory T Cell Induction"



Rachel Van Duyne, PhD, research assistant professor, Department of Pharmacology & Physiology, received a developmental grant from the Temple/Drexel University Comprehensive NeuroHIV Center. The grant was awarded from the center's Developmental Research and Mentorship Core and will fund Van Duyne's project "Recapitulation of Myeloid Models of HIV-1 Infection in Cerebral Organoids."



Jeremy Weinberger, a Neuroscience PhD student, received an NIH F31 Predoctoral Fellowship for his project "Multisite Electrode Arrays to Optimize Epidural Stimulation for Spasticity Following Spinal Cord Injury."



Michael S. Weingarten, MD, MBA, professor of surgery and assistant dean, Scholars Program, completed his tenure as the president of the Philadelphia Academy of Surgery in March 2024.

Julia Wiafe-Jackson, an undergraduate International/Global Studies student in the Barker Lab, was awarded a Research Mini-Grant from Drexel's Undergraduate Research & Enrichment Programs. Wiafe-Jackson presented her project, "Corticostriatal Glial Cell Contributions to HIV-Induced Impairments in Reward Learning in a Novel Mouse Model," at Drexel's 2024 Week of Undergraduate Excellence Virtual Poster Session on May 22.



Woodland



Roy

Mark Woodland, MS, MD, associate dean, advocacy and policy, and professor, Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology, was elected to another three-year term of the Board of Directors of the

Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB). Woodland chaired the FSMB Ethics and Professionalism Committee, leading the committee in its establishment of guidelines and recommendations for utilization of AI as it applies to medicine and medical regulation and legislation. Woodland presented a poster with **Udit Roy, MD '25**, on the process of developing these policies at the FSMB annual meeting.



Riley Young, a PhD student in the Molecular & Cell Biology & Genetics program, was selected to participate in the one-year Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center Consortium Community Engaged Research Training for Emerging Scientists program. Young will help develop,

implement and evaluate a novel community outreach initiative within the consortium's catchment area. She also received first prize for best trainee short talk at the Translational Cellular Oncology Program Retreat at the Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center in April 2024.



Tell your colleagues what you're doing.
Email CoM_Pulse@drexel.edu.

In Memoriam

Thomas Devlin, PhD, emeritus professor and former chair of biochemistry at Hahnemann Medical College, died on March 20, 2024. Devlin earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Pennsylvania and his PhD in biochemistry from Johns Hopkins University. He came to Hahnemann after a decade at Merck Institute. Devlin helped co-found the predecessor program to Drexel's Pathway to Medical School, and served as acting dean of the School of Allied Health Professions.

Devlin wrote and edited seven editions of the *Textbook of Biochemistry With Clinical Correlations*, which has been published in multiple languages. His research focused on cellular metabolism. He is survived by two sons, Steven [Bonnie] and Mark [Cathy] Devlin; grandchildren Kathryn [John], Matthew [Lauren], Ryan [Alexa] and Laura Devlin; great-grandchildren Thomas, Hannah, Beckett and Bailey Devlin; and numerous extended family members. He was predeceased by his wife, Marjorie.

Paul Glat, MD, professor of surgery and pediatrics, died on May 22, 2024, after a brief illness. Glat earned a bachelor's degree in biochemistry from Princeton University and his MD from New York University, where he also completed postgraduate training in general and plastic surgery. He received fellowship training in craniofacial surgery at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

Glat joined the Drexel faculty in 1998 as chief of plastic surgery and director of the Stuart J. Hulnick, MD Burn Center at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children. A prominent member of the burn and wound care community, he published more than 50 clinical research papers, presented nationally and internationally, and served as the executive director of the annual John A. Boswick Burn and Wound Care Symposium in Hawaii.

Glat is predeceased by his father, Jay. He is survived by his partner, Tom Horner; his children and their mother, Jenna [Matt] Feeney, and Andrew and Fran Glat; grandson, Jack Feeny; and his mother, Eleanor. To make a gift to the Burn Center in Glat's memory, please visit giving.drexel.edu/burncenter.

Aaron J. Ladman, PhD, professor emeritus of neurobiology and anatomy at Hahnemann University and Drexel, and former dean of Hahnemann's School of Allied Health Professions, died on November 7, 2023. He earned a bachelor's degree from New York University and his PhD from the University of Indiana. His research focused on the biology of reproduction, cancer and the retina. He also served as managing editor of the *Anatomical Record* for 30 years.

Ladman is survived by his wife, Patricia; three children, Peter, Susan and Thomas; and his grandchildren. He is predeceased by his first wife, a brother and a sister.

Get to Know...

What is your official title at Drexel?

Assistant Director, Clinical Education and Assessment Center & Standardized Patient Program

Explain what you do in under 50 words.

I oversee the recruitment, training and coordination of almost 80 standardized patients (SPs) from various backgrounds. They simulate medical conditions and act out cases to help students practice skills like taking a patient's medical history, performing a physical exam, or breaking difficult news to a patient's family.

Who do you interact with most on a daily basis?

More than half my time is spent interacting with our SPs, a diverse group of people dedicated to helping enrich our students' experience interacting with patients before they are practicing on their own with real patients. A lot of my time is spent training SPs on their script and the details of the case, and doing quality assurance checks so I know they are performing to the best of their ability. Along with our SPs, our team consists of many other valuable people who contribute their time to help our SP program serve as a fun and beneficial experience to our students.

What is your typical day like?

What I enjoy most about my position is that every day is not the same. It would be hard to define a "typical day," but my week can consist of facilitating an individual or group training with SPs for an upcoming program, proofreading cases to rule out any discrepancies before the start of a program, helping create online simulation programs with our SIMIQ software, collaborating with faculty and their coordinators to find ways to help improve on our programs from year to year, or making sure that students learn something new about themselves or their approach to patient interactions.

How do you see your work fitting into the big picture of the missions of the College?

The SP program is a vital part of the overall missions of the College of Medicine. SPs educate our students to handle a range of types of communication and challenging situations so they are prepared when they encounter a comparable situation in their own practice. Creating simulated scenarios helps prepare students to navigate these challenges. The experience that we offer with our SPs is not something students

can get from a book. In addition, our team networks with other neighboring SP programs and their faculty to brainstorm new research ideas and collaborate on projects that will best serve our students with new opportunities.

What are your favorite and least favorite tasks?

Training sessions with our SPs can be a lot of fun. Having a large and diverse SP pool has been beneficial when it comes to training. I am fortunate that I can count on them to work as a team and to make sure everyone is comfortable and on the same page. I do not think I have a least favorite task, but I will say the most challenging thing is when we have a long day ahead with back-to-back programs on campus, sitting in the control room where there are no windows, and the little interaction is through a computer monitor. These days can be tough since I am the type of person who likes to be moving around rather than seated for hours at a time.

What is your educational and previous work background? How did those prepare you for what you do now?

I have been in this position for a little over a year now. Before this I worked for seven years for Rutgers School of Dental Medicine, helping organize and schedule patients' dental treatment plans with students so their graduation requirements were met. While working there, I obtained my master's degree in adult and continuing education. My knowledge and experience

working in clinical education have led me to my role here at Drexel.

What's one unusual or unexpected item in your home or campus work space?

I do not have the best green thumb, nor do I have much knowledge in terms of proper light and water for plants. That said, I recently purchased and put together a handful of Lego succulent sets that are scattered around my desk.

What's one piece of Philly culture that you return to over and over again, and why?

When the weather is warm, I take long runs along Kelly Drive, and I will usually finish my run by running up the steps to the Art Museum, just like Rocky. There is something oddly satisfying about overlooking Center City from that focal point while trying to catch your breath.



Conor Sullivan, MS
Assistant Director,
Clinical Education and
Assessment Center &
Standardized Patient Program



DREXEL UNIVERSITY
College of
Medicine

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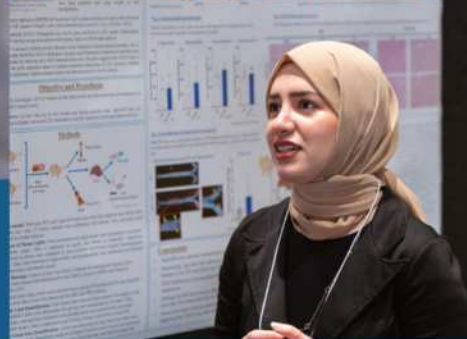
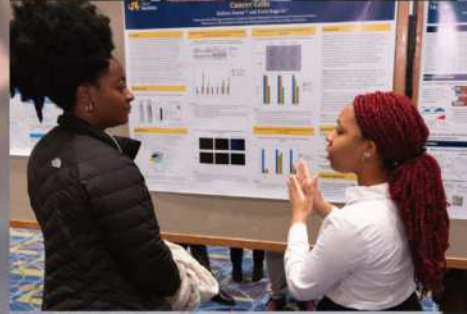
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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7

Pennsylvania Convention Center



DISCOVERY DAY 2024