NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

COM Outlook

College of Osteopathic Medicine

Fall 2008

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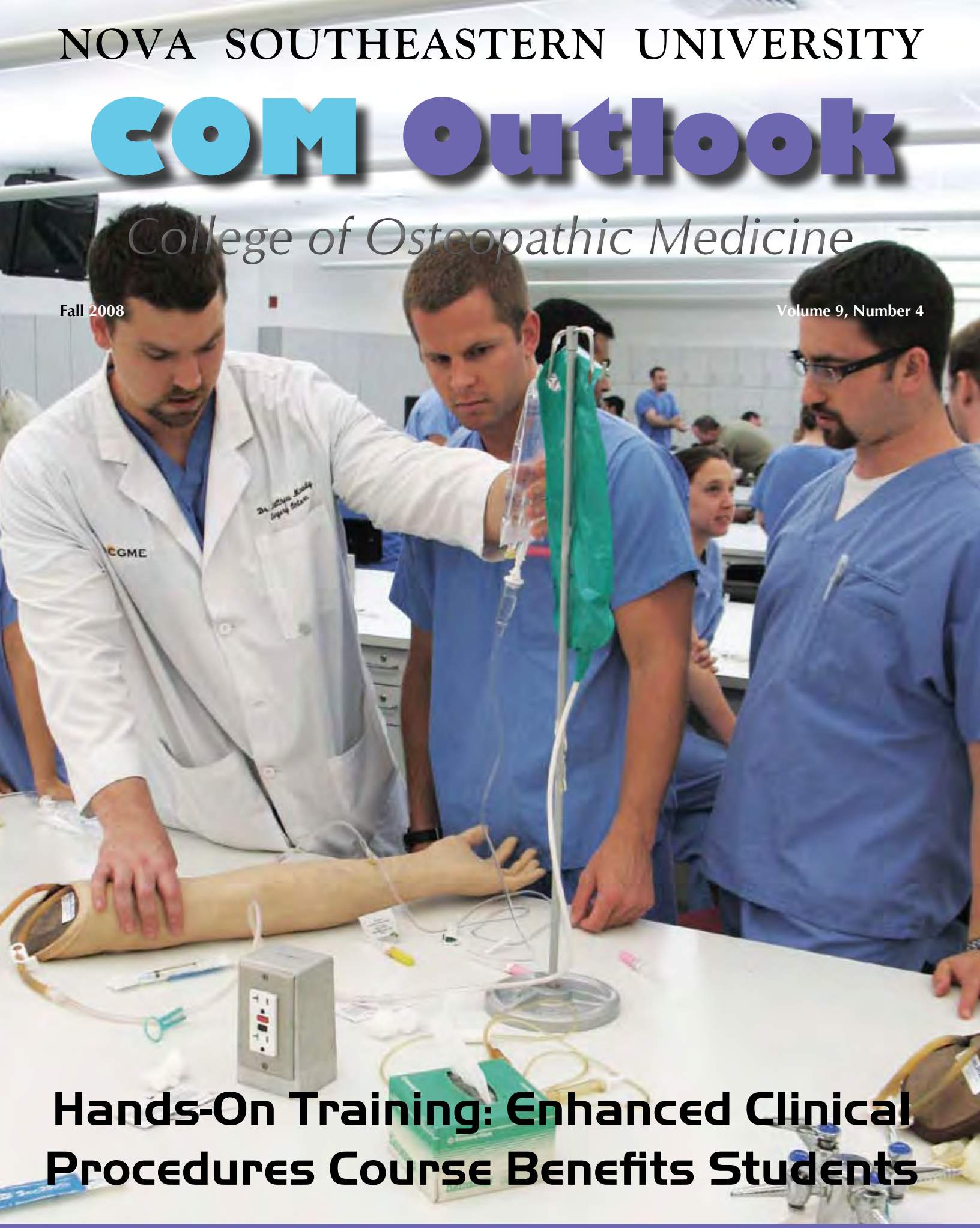


Hands-On Training: Enhanced Clinical Procedures Course Benefits Students

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE..Profiles of Drs. Pablo Calzada and Bridget Bellingar...International Medical Outreach...Student and Alumni News

Dean's Message

Anthony J. Silvagni, D.O., Pharm.D.

In the June 2008 issue of *The DO*, which is an American Osteopathic Association (AOA) publication, an article I submitted was published regarding the D.O. designation for our doctor of osteopathic medicine degree. In the article, I suggested that the profession consider changing this designation and recommended that O.M.D. (doctor of osteopathic medicine) would be a better representation of who we are today.

The idea of changing a degree or its designation to better represent a profession is certainly not new or unique. Professions that have changed the degree or designation of their profession to show the public the transformations in their scope of responsibility and their depth of education include dentistry, law, pharmacy, and podiatry. As a result, these professions have enhanced the public's ability to better identify the scope of practice and education of their practitioners.

The D.O. degree, or doctor of osteopathy as it was called in the early days of the profession, was selected by Andrew Taylor Still, M.D., at a time when osteopaths were not as fully educated as they are today. It's also important to note that it was a few years after the first college of osteopathy was opened that physiology was allowed to be taught in the curriculum. In fact, Dr. Still was opposed to physiology, pharmacology, and the blending of medicine with osteopathy. It wasn't until 1929 that pharmacology, also known as *materia medica*, was required to be included in the osteopathic curriculum and opened the door for D.O.s to pursue full practice rights as physicians.

This pivotal change was incorporated almost 80 years ago, and continued modifications have been made within the profession, such as our colleges granting a doctorate in osteopathic medicine instead of osteopathy. However, the designation of D.O. for our degree remained the same even though we have significantly enhanced our education and expanded our scope of practice. This is important because a degree designation is a statement by a profession that allows each practitioner to let the public know what he or she does or who he or she is.

As I mentioned earlier, many professions have made the decision to change their designation. Examples are dentistry, which is changing from a doctor of dental surgery (D.D.S.) to a doctor of dental medicine (D.M.D.), podiatry, which has gone from a doctor of surgical chiropody (D.S.C.) to a doctor of podiatric medicine (D.P.M), and pharmacy, which has evolved from a bachelor of science to a doctor of pharmacy (Pharm.D.). Veterinary medicine is currently considering changing its degree from a D.V.M. to a V.M.D.

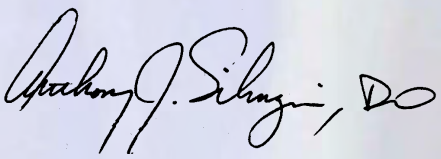
Most applicable to me, however, is law, which phased out the bachelor of law (L.L.B.) degree in the late 1960s in favor of the juris doctorate (J.D.) The profession implemented this change to better illustrate the fact that attorneys have professional graduate degrees and to better define lawyers' expertise and the complexity of their profession. Because their curricula did not change, all lawyers with an L.L.B. degree were able to modify it to J.D, thus preventing a two-caste system. I would suggest that if our profession ever decides to change its degree designation, we make a similar adjustment, as law did, since this would not be a curricular change but only a change in the designation to better reflect who and what we are. The D.O. degree has been around for over 100 years and is still misunderstood, as shown by recent polls taken by the AOA and other organizations.

The reason many of these changes have been made in other medical professions is that M.D. is the universally understood designation for a physician. Therefore, dentistry, veterinary medicine, and allopathic medicine utilize M.D. within their designation. That is why I am suggesting the osteopathic medical profession consider incorporating a similar adaptation by having our degree—the doctor of osteopathic medicine or doctor of osteopathy—be reflected by a change to the O.M.D. designation, which I believe will help the public understand who we are and what we represent philosophically in the practice of medicine.

Because D.O. is also the designation of thousands of graduates from international schools of osteopathy who are not full-practice physicians and are licensed in their countries to practice only osteopathic manipulative medicine, confusion abounds. The number of international D.O.s is growing, and some of these practitioners are immigrating to the United States, creating even greater confusion regarding whether or not a D.O. is actually a physician. However, it becomes an even larger problem when graduates of AOA-accredited schools of osteopathic medicine go to other countries and try to explain that they are full-practice physicians as opposed to the D.O.s of that country who are not.

At its House of Delegates meeting in July 2008, the AOA recognized this problem. And while the AOA reaffirmed its decision to have D.O. remain the sole designation for graduates of AOA-accredited schools of osteopathic medicine in the United States, it further stated that different designations could be used in other countries, if so directed by the respective country, to avoid such confusion. Therefore, in other countries, a graduate of an AOA-accredited school of osteopathic medicine may utilize a different degree designation if so decreed by that country.

I believe we still need to consider changing our designation in the United States. But the profession has spoken and D.O. remains our designation in this country. In time, we may see that changing our designation will not mean surrendering our history but reaffirming our present and future for the practice and survival of osteopathic medicine.



Fred Lippman, R.Ph., Ed.D.

One of the interesting facets of watching the new classes enter our various colleges at the Health Professions Division each year is having the opportunity to meet the incoming students as well as their families and significant others. This year, one statistic that interested me in regard to the College of Osteopathic Medicine was the changing demographics of the students comprising the class of 2012. I'm not referring to ethnic and cultural diversity, which have been hallmarks of the college as well as the other Health Professions Division programs for years. What I've taken significant note of is the depth and breadth of our students, who come from many regions of the United States.

Traditionally, College of Osteopathic Medicine classes were dominated by Florida residents as well as students from the Northeast. However, over the past few years, a shift has been occurring that includes more and more applicants from other parts of the country. Based on my observations, it's very clear that the college's quality, mode of education, and reputation of its graduates have enhanced its positioning in regard to people making decisions as to where they want to go to obtain their medical education.

We're seeing a large number of students coming from midwestern and western states such as, Oregon, Utah, California, Michigan, and Illinois as well as areas of the Southwest and other southeastern states. What this does not only for future physicians that graduate from NSU's College of Osteopathic Medicine but for Nova Southeastern University reputation-wise is bring back to the community at large a representation of talent and mentorship that stems from our faculty. Our graduates bring these admirable qualities back into their various communities, which helps attest to the talent and reputation of the college. I'm very pleased by this, and it's a testament to the quality of the faculty, the curriculum, and the institution as a whole.

The unique aspect regarding the founding of the Health Professions Division by Dr. Morton Terry is our interdisciplinary paradigm. There are many colleagues in the field of health and academics that surround the student doctors as they learn. It certainly broadens a medical student's educational horizons to work alongside other health professionals they come in contact with in academic or community outreach settings, whether they be from the College of Dental Medicine, College of Pharmacy, College of Optometry, or College of Allied Health and Nursing.

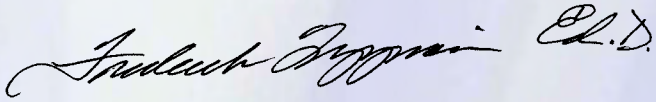
Some examples that illustrate this point are our small-group teaching modules and simulation labs. In many of these venues, there's a significant amount of interaction between the student professionals from the various HPD disciplines as they attend grand rounds sessions, group meetings, and other activities. Consequently, this provides the students with an in-depth look at the interdisciplinary and holistic approach, which is really the paradigm of osteopathic medicine.

I also think the technological advances we've incorporated throughout the Health Professions Division have boosted our reputation considerably. The way we've added technology to our presentation of lectures as well as the availability of huge volumes of information from our library databases are very significant resources in the life of a student. We've gone out of our way to spend a great deal of time and money to make sure the newest and most up-to-date technological opportunities are available to the students while also providing the necessary tools for both our teaching and clinical faculty to utilize the highest forms of technology.

We are also converting to completely electronic medical records (EMR) in our clinical environment throughout our health centers here at NSU. This technological upgrade provides our clinicians with a method to provide certain data that has historically been handwritten but now offers a more-efficient method for review and evaluation. In my opinion, this will add to the students' professional expertise since it prevents medical error, misjudgments, and miscalculations.

I truly believe our accomplishments filter back to student and professional organizations as well to various college campuses nationwide where you have premed counselors who understand that the most-advanced forms of technology combined with the newest teaching methods have a profound and positive effect on the reputation of an institution.

Based on the diversity and geographic scope of our current student body, we're clearly succeeding in getting the word out that NSU's College of Osteopathic Medicine is at the forefront of medical and technological advancement.



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Dr. Barry Gibney Shares Internship Experience
In this insightful Q&A, 2007 NSU-COM alumnus Dr. Barry Gibney, who recently completed his internship year at Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center in Pennsylvania and is now beginning his general surgery residency training, chronicles his transition from medical school to internship.

Clinical Procedures Course Helps Students Maximize Skills
In the winter-spring 2008 semester, the Procedures in Clinical Medicine course for second-year students underwent a fundamental makeover that incorporated more hands-on experiences, de-emphasized didactic lectures, and underscored a more-collaborative approach to teaching and learning.

Dr. Pablo Calzada Achieves American Dream
As a child growing up in a small village in Cuba, Dr. Pablo Calzada always knew he wanted to pursue a career in the medical field. What he didn't know, however, was how passionately resolute he would be when it came to making his dream become a reality.

Eye-Opening Experiences in Ecuador
For 41 students from NSU-COM and the College of Allied Health and Nursing's Physician Assistant Program, the morning of Friday, March 14 was filled with excitement as they embarked on a 10-day humanitarian excursion to assist medically underserved communities in Ecuador.

Altruism, Compassion on Display in Jamaica
Over 160 volunteers, medical students, and faculty members from NSU's Health Professions Division attended to more than 5,000 local residents during the college's annual medical outreach trip to Jamaica, which took place over a 10-day period in June.

Dr. Bridget Bellingar Turns Heartbreak into Action
Life has a tendency to toss unexpected curveballs at all of us during various points in our lives. But when 1986 NSU-COM alumnae Dr. Bridget Bellingar's father died at the age of 29 following open-heart surgery, it led her to search for answers by pursuing a career in the medical field.

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Notice of Accreditation/Nondiscrimination
Nova Southeastern University admits students of any age, race, color, sexual orientation, pregnancy status, religion or creed, nondisqualifying disability, and national or ethnic origin. Nova Southeastern University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia, 30033-4097; telephone number: 404-679-4501) to award associate's, bachelor's, master's, educational specialist, and doctoral degrees.

In July, OMS-III Mark Newberry was awarded the American Osteopathic Foundation's (AOF) Burnett Osteopathic Student Research Award, which is presented annually to one osteopathic medical student for the most outstanding concept paper pertaining to an osteopathic-oriented research proposal. Newberry will receive his award, which is accompanied by a $2,000 cash prize, at the AOF Honors Celebration in Las Vegas, Nevada, on October 28.

Rita Silverman, M.P.S., who served as NSU-COM's director of clinical research since 1999, recently left the college to accept the position of administrative director in the newly formed Office of Clinical Research, which is a component of NSU's Office of Research Technology and Transfer. The Office of Clinical Research will serve as the focal point for services, tools, and communication for clinical research university wide. By providing support services to NSU faculty members, the office will promote continued growth in clinical research.

COMmunications

■ **Nova Southeastern University** ranked number one in the nation in 2007 in terms of awarding doctoral degrees to Hispanics and African Americans. For the second time in three years, NSU ranked first for the number of doctoral degrees awarded to Hispanics (50) and second for master's degrees (719) from July 2006 to June 2007 according to figures compiled by *The Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education* magazine for its 2008 edition of Top 100 Colleges for Hispanics. NSU also earned the top spot for the 12th consecutive year in regard to awarding doctoral degrees (207) to African Americans according to the trade publication *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*.

■ The **College of Osteopathic Medicine** was recently awarded reaccreditation for a three-year period by the American Osteopathic Association continuing medical education program. The documentation surveyed in December of 2007 was given a perfect score of 100 points.

■ Earlier this year, **Largo Medical Center, Inc.** completed the purchase of **Sun Coast Hospital**, which is a member of the NSU-COM Consortium for Excellence in Medical Education. "We are very excited to welcome the Sun Coast Hospital staff to our team," said Ricky Satcher, chief executive officer of Largo Medical Center. "Sun Coast has a rich tradition of providing excellent health care services to the community and graduate medical educational programs to new physicians.

■ In July, members of the **Hispanic Osteopathic Medical Student Association** visited Light of the World Clinic to provide physicals and immunizations for underserved school-age children.

2008-09 OPP Fellows

Six students were selected to participate in the 2008-09 predoctoral clinical and teaching fellowship in osteopathic principles and practice. Pictured (from left) are OMS-II students Anthony Esposito, Katiera Rivera, Michelle Covili, Alex Kendig, Alean Frawley, and Ingrid Rachinski.

Class of 2012 Joins Osteopathic Family at White Coat Ceremony

On August 10, the class of 2012 was officially welcomed into the osteopathic profession at the 28th Annual White Coat Ceremony, which was held at NSU's University Center. For the 231 students comprising the class of 2012, the White Coat Ceremony served as an auspicious experience that officially marked their entry into the medical profession. In the presence of family, guests, and faculty members, the students were welcomed into the medical community by leaders of the osteopathic profession and ceremonially "cloaked" with their white coats. By establishing this meaningful ritual at the beginning of medical school, the intent is to make students aware of their responsibilities from the first day of training and convey the message that doctors should "care" as well as "cure."

Three Students Receive Welch Scholars Grants

Christina Bergeron

Berry Pierre

Candace White

Three OMS-II students—Christina Bergeron, Berry Pierre, and Candace White—were awarded Welch Scholars Grants from the American Osteopathic Foundation Board of Directors. The grants, which are accompanied by $2,000 cash awards, are presented annually to students who were selected by their college and approved by the American Osteopathic Foundation. Students are chosen based on their financial need, academic achievement, participation in extracurricular activities, and commitment to osteopathic medicine. Pierre was a double AOF awardee as he also received the Russell C. McCaughan, D.O., Education Scholarship, which comes with a $400 prize and is awarded to one osteopathic medical student from each AOA-approved college/school of osteopathic medicine. Recipients of this scholarship must be committed to osteopathic medicine, excel academically, and demonstrate financial need to cover the cost of their osteopathic education.

OMS-IV Heather Mikes received first place for her photo entitled "Unity" (pictured left) in the 14th Annual Creative Arts contest sponsored by the American Medical Students Association magazine *The New Physician*. Mikes, founder of the NSU-HPD Student Government Association Arts in Health Care Committee, firmly believes in the healing and connecting power of art. She is dedicated to sharing her artistic passions with patients and the NSU-HPD community and hopes she has inspired others to embrace their creativity in both their personal and professional pursuits.

In July, OMS-IV Roger Alvarez was named as the recipient of the American Osteopathic Association Presidential Memorial Leadership Award, which is presented annually to a second-, third-, or fourth-year osteopathic medical student who has outstanding academic achievements, strong leadership skills, and is committed to the osteopathic profession. As the recipient of this year's Presidential Memorial Leadership Award, Alvarez also received a check for $3,000.

Dateline Health Wins Awards

In June 2008, *Dateline Health*—NSU's public service TV program hosted by HPD Chancellor Dr. Fred Lippman—was the recipient of two Bronze Telly Awards at the 29th Annual Telly Awards, which honors excellence in the educational video/film category. The Telly Awards is an international competition that receives over 14,000 entries annually from all 50 states and various foreign countries and honors the top local, regional, and cable television commercials and programs, as well as the finest video and film productions created for the Web.

One of the award-winning *Dateline Health* episodes addressed the topic of pet therapy and featured Humane Society volunteers who brought several pets to the taping, while the other focused on gamma knife neurosurgery innovations featuring prominent South Florida surgeons.

Dateline Health is a 30-minute service program dedicated to promoting the community's overall health and wellbeing, covering a wide range of contemporary health care issues through interviews with health care experts, researchers, and policymakers. The show airs throughout the tri-county area seven days a week on BECON and Comcast cable channels, reaching over five million viewers in the community. Rita Silverman, M.P.S., serves as executive producer of *Dateline Health*, which is produced by the HPD and taped at NSU's main campus studio under the production and technical expertise of the Office of Information Technologies and Digital Media.

■ Seven medical residents from NSU-COM—Francisco Delgado, D.O., Thierry Jacquemin, D.O., Israel Henriquez, D.O., Dana Kleinman-Allen, D.O., Christopher Leon, D.O., Kimberly Leu, D.O., and Camilo Ruiz, D.O.—are members of the Palmetto General Hospital Internal Medicine Residency's inaugural class. This three-year program, which began on July 1, 2008, is accredited by the American Osteopathic Association and the American College of Osteopathic Internists. Upon completion, these physicians will be board eligible in internal medicine and be able to practice in primary care settings or subspecialize in any of the 14 internal medicine subspecialties such as cardiology.

M.S.B.I. Program Becomes AMIA 10 x 10 Partner

In July, NSU-COM's Master of Science in Biomedical Informatics (M.S.B.I.) Program earned a prestigious tribute when it became only the fifth academic institution in the nation to be granted a partnership with the American Medical Informatics Association (AMIA) 10 x 10 Certificate Program.

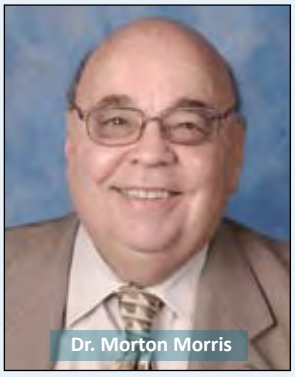
The AMIA 10 x 10 Program's goal is to train 10,000 health care professionals in applied health and medical informatics by the year 2010. NSU-COM's M.S.B.I. Program, which currently boasts about 50 students, now joins the ranks of the following medical informatics programs in the country that currently partner with the AMIA: Stanford University Medical School, University of Alabama at Birmingham, Oregon Health and Science University, and the University of Illinois at Chicago.

"Through this partnership, participants from all over the country will be able to take the certificate program through our M.S.B.I. Program distance learning system and earn a 10 x 10 certificate from the American Medical Informatics Association," said Jennie Q. Lou, M.D., M.Sc., who serves as professor of public health and internal medicine and director of the Biomedical Informatics Program. "The AMIA will be helping us market our program, so this collaboration will allow us to make it a nationally known product."

■ According to data published by the college's Office of Clinical Education, the number of NSU-COM graduates choosing internal medicine as a residency program has more than doubled over the past few years from 27 in 2005 to 60 in 2008. Robert Hasty, D.O., FACOI, who serves as assistant professor of internal medicine and program director of the Palmetto General Hospital Internal Medicine Residency attributes this increase to several factors, including enhanced mentorship, growth of the college's Student Osteopathic Internal Medicine Association, and the establishment of internal medicine residencies at Broward General Medical Center in Fort Lauderdale and Palmetto General Hospital in Hialeah.

AOA Names Drs. Melnick, Morris, and Neer Great Pioneers in Osteopathic Medicine

Dr. Arnold Melnick


Dr. Morton Morris

Dr. Howard Neer

On July 18, the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) Bureau of Osteopathic History and Identity honored a number of illustrious individuals who have made pioneering differences in osteopathic medicine, including three who have played a significant role at NSU's College of Osteopathic Medicine. They are Arnold Melnick, D.O., FACOP, the late Morton Morris, D.O., J.D., FAOAO, who passed away in May 2008, and Howard Neer, D.O., FACOFP. The honorees were inducted during the AOA's House of Delegates meeting in Chicago, Illinois.

Dr. Melnick was the founding dean of the college and executive vice chancellor and provost of the NSU Health Professions Division, while Dr. Morris served as executive dean for professional affairs at the Health Professions Division. Dr. Neer, who is a past president of the AOA, is the college's associate dean of alumni affairs.

All living AOA presidents were inducted into this select group of Great Pioneers of Osteopathic Medicine, including several who serve on the Health Professions Division Board of Governors and have affiliations with NSU-COM: Marcelino Olivia, D.O., who serves as an ombudsman for the college, and Phillip Shettle, D.O., who has been a clinical assistant professor of ophthalmology for many years.

As part of the AOA's Greatness Campaign, members of the AOA family were asked to nominate deserving individuals who have made significant contributions to the profession and met a number of criteria to earn selection as one of the Great Pioneers in Osteopathic Medicine. After reviewing the nominees, the AOA's Bureau of Osteopathic History and Identity selected the inductees during a meeting held in December 2007. To be eligible for consideration, nominees had to

- be living members of the profession who have made significant contributions to the profession
- be able to share a historical perspective of the profession and have been involved with the profession for at least 25 years
- have made a difference in the profession and helped move osteopathic medicine to where it is today
- be the first to accomplish some feat
- be directly responsible for the growth of osteopathic medicine
- be AOA members or have been AOA members for the majority of their careers

NSU-COM Joins Forces with BCOMA to Provide CME to Broward County Physicians

At the heart of patient care in Broward County are the physician members of the Broward County Osteopathic Medical Association (BCOMA), who cover all facets of patient care from the office visit to hospitalization. Because one of the cornerstones of excellent patient care is continuing medical education (CME), a unique partnership has emerged between the BCOMA and NSU's College of Osteopathic Medicine.

"It has been one of my most important wishes this year as president of the BCOMA to obtain just this kind of connection between the College of Osteopathic Medicine at NSU and the BCOMA, not only because the BCOMA represents all the osteopathic physicians at the college and in the community, but because there are tremendous synergistic opportunities in education for both organizations," said Jorge D. Luna, D.O., who serves as BCOMA president.

Several NSU-COM faculty and staff members serve on the BCOMA Executive Committee. They are: Joseph De Gaetano, D.O., M.S.Ed., FAAFP, FACOFP (vice president); Kenneth Johnson, D.O., FACOOG (treasurer); and David Gensure (ex officio), who is the college's director of continuing medical education.

Dr. Luna praises the efforts of the college's dean, Dr. Anthony J. Silvagni, for making this partnership a reality. "The dean's decision to consider the college's resources not just for undergraduate medical education but for graduate and postgraduate education resonates with the practicing physicians in the community," Dr. Luna said. "For the college, I see the benefit of having faculty members of various departments preparing lectures for and interacting with the community physicians, as a way to extend the scope of educational opportunities to the practicing community physicians, which can then add value to the undergraduate and graduate programs. For the community physicians, the benefit of having great educators provide relevant lectures that address their current needs means they can take advantage of a great local resource."

SNMA Bridges Gap for MAPS Members

On August 29, the Multicultural Association of Pre-Health Students (MAPS) made its inaugural mark at Sharkapalooza, which is an event meant to welcome freshman undergraduate students to NSU. This year, the NSU-COM Student National Medical Association (SNMA), which is MAPS' parent organization, will be embarking on its mission to bridge the gap between the graduate and undergraduate health students. The thought of establishing such an organization had been a top priority for the SNMA, which recognized the lack of communication and support for the undergraduates here at NSU.

The Multicultural Association of Pre-Health Students is a broad pre-health organization that looks to encompass all the major health professions, including medical, dental, nursing, and pharmacy. The executive board has been hard at work over the summer preparing for its inaugural year and plans to work closely with many of the graduate student organizations throughout the coming months by hosting various workshops such as a radiology clinic and a potential health conference for undergraduates. *Pictured (clockwise starting from top left) are MAPS Executive Board members Sadrina Petit, Leslie Navarez, Supraja Koluri, Jessica Blanco, Charles Cevallos, Juliana Ospina, and Christie Rubio.*

Dermatology Experts Educate Residents

In May 2008, two renowned dermatologists—Jean Bolognia, M.D., and William James, M.D.—visited the NSU-COM campus to provide lectures to the residents participating in the NSU-COM/Broward General Medical Center Dermatology Residency as well as a range of NSU faculty members.

Dr. Bolognia, who is a professor of dermatology and director of the Pigmented Lesion Clinic at Yale University, provided an enlightening grand rounds session on May 30 regarding dermatologic basic science and presented an informative lecture on a specific subtype of autoimmune diseases entitled "The Many Faces of Lupus." Dr. Bolognia travels the globe lecturing on various dermatologic diseases and is one of the most highly respected speakers in the dermatology field.

On May 19-20, the dermatology residency training program was also fortunate to have Dr. James, the vice chairman of the Department of Dermatology at the University of Pennsylvania and the previous chief of dermatology at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., lecture on topics that included the history of dermatology and new and emerging dermatologic therapies. He also led an open discussion during lunch regarding clinical pearls and divisive dermatologic issues.

Stanley Skopit, D.O., Dr. Jean Bolognia, and Tracy Favreau, D.O.

Pictured (from left) are Brian Feinstein, D.O., Dr. William James, and Dr. Skopit.

Eye on AHEC

The college's Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) Program recently received extremely welcome news about its funding. As a result of the funding sources listed below, the program will continue to greatly expand its wide range of community-based training and service activities throughout its 19-county service area in Central and South Florida.

- State AHEC Contract with the Florida Department of Health for $2,272,444, which covers the project year July 1, 2008, through June 30, 2009.
- Additional contract for $2 million with the Florida Department of Health focusing on the AHEC Tobacco Cessation and Prevention Training Initiative for the current fiscal year ending June 30, 2009. Through this effort, the AHEC Program will continue to develop training programs on tobacco for health professions students and practitioners throughout its service area.
- Model State-Supported AHEC Projects Grant with the Health Resources and Services Administration for $164,221, which was awarded for the time period of September 2008 to August 2009.
- Total projected funding for the 2008-2009 project year is over $4.4 million.

In other news of note, the initial pilot year of the AHEC Tobacco Cessation and Prevention Training Initiative proved to be a major success, which is evidenced by the following figures:

- Over 2,900 medical, nursing, pharmacy, and other health professions students and community-based practitioners received AHEC tobacco training.
- AHEC tobacco training was incorporated into the curricula of 24 health professions education programs at 10 colleges and universities located in 12 counties and representing 7 disciplines.
- Nearly 20,000 schoolchildren from 86 schools in 17 counties received tobacco prevention education.
- Nearly 70 tobacco cessation specialists from 57 community organizations and agencies in 19 counties collaborated with the AHEC Program in providing tobacco cessation services during the year.

Health Care Policy Forum Enlightens Students

By OMS-II Samya Mohammad, Chair
SGA Student Professionalism and Ethics Committee

Health care policymaking in America at times is crafted by those far removed from the professions that are directly impacted by those very policies. In the upcoming presidential election, health care is one of the top issues of concern. The outcome of this election will have a fundamental impact on our health care system. Unfortunately, many health professional students cannot claim to be well-versed in those very policies that will directly influence the future of their professions. This lack of knowledge on the substantive issues of our profession and issues regarding our education handicaps us from the ability to appropriately discern "health care policies" presented by either national political party.

It was this vital concern that inspired the Student Professionalism and Ethics Committee (SPEC) to host a forum on Health Care and Politics in America on August 20 in the Morris Auditorium that was attended by over 70 students. The SPEC is a committee formed two years ago by NSU-COM's Student Government Association to address issues and increase awareness of professionalism and ethical behavior in our students. We were fortunate to have with us a diverse panel that included Stephen Abel, D.D.S., Stephen Bowen, M.D., M.P.H., Joseph De Gaetano D.O., M.S.Ed., Tracy Favreau, D.O., and Robert Hasty, D.O. The panelists shared issues they felt deserved our attention, which ranged from GME funding, physician shortages, the implications of oral health in Medicaid, and reimbursement rates.

In addition to these issues, the panel members elaborated on questions presented to them by the student moderators of the event (Samya Mohammad, Hara Rosen, and Vi Song Tring). Their answers helped the students obtain a basic understanding of the structure of our health care system and the various approaches supported by the presidential candidates. The panel members advocated to us not only the importance of these issues, but also our responsibility in becoming active participants in the political aspects of our profession and no longer just recipients of policies made for us, but rather policies shaped by us.

The SPEC, alongside the organizations that supported the event (SGA, SOMA, AMSA, SOAR, AMWA, class of 2011 SGA) hopes this event was the beginning of multiple events that will lead us to becoming better educated about the health care policies that shape our profession and bring to light the urgency of becoming better advocates for our profession.

Pictured at the health care forum (from left) are Samya Mohammad, Dr. Robert Hasty, Dr. Stephen Abel, Dr. Tracy Favreau, Dr. Joseph De Gaetano, Hara Rosen, and Vi Song Tring.

Memories of Cardiac Pioneer Dr. Michael DeBakey

By Howard Neer, D.O., FACOFP, Professor and Associate Dean of Alumni Affairs

When the renowned heart surgeon Michael DeBakey, M.D., passed away on July 11 at the age of 99, it triggered a cherished memory for Dr. Howard Neer, who had a chance to spend some time with the legendary surgeon in 1975. Dr. DeBakey is best known for his landmark cardiovascular surgeries, including the first successful implantation of an artificial heart in 1966.

As physicians, we expect to have interesting lives. We never know what lies ahead, but we anticipate that there will be opportunities and exciting events that will give us interesting memories. The recent passing of the famed pioneer cardiothoracic surgeon Dr. Michael DeBakey reminded me of just such an experience.

It was 1975, and I was being inaugurated as president of the Florida Osteopathic Medical Association at a hotel in Miami Beach. It was quite a coup that we were able to get Dr. DeBakey to speak at our convention. When he arrived around noon for his scheduled 1:00 p.m. appearance, I greeted him and suggested we have lunch. Time constraints didn't allow us to sit and order at a restaurant. But with his permission, I obtained a couple of box lunches from the hotel deli, and we went off to a quiet meeting room and had lunch by ourselves for about 40 minutes.

We exchanged pleasantries and eased into a very relaxed conversation about many different things. I had recently sent him two cases—a coronary bypass and a large thoracic aneurysm—which I briefly mentioned to him. Later that day, I received a pleasant surprise when Dr. DeBakey called me at home about 8:00 p.m. to inform me of the progress of each of the patients, whose surgeries had gone well. When he called, as it was his habit to do, he routinely started with, "Howard, this is Michael," and proceeded with his report.

Our lunch conversation soon drifted to many different things. He had been a widower, remarried, and now had a four-year-old daughter who he was very fond of and enjoyed speaking about. I recalled the fact that he had operated on the Shah of Iran, who then gave him a very expensive and exotic sports car, which I think was a Ferrari. I asked about it, and he said he still used it every day to go back and forth to work. Here I was with this medical icon, and even though we were total strangers that had just met, we were having a totally relaxed, casual visit while we ate our box lunches, just passing some time together.

This was truly one of those medical opportunities that will always be a pleasant—and unforgettable—experience.

NSU-COM Student Government Association Report

By Jessica Hilst, OMS-III and SGA President

Roger Alvarez (OMS-4), Lindsay LaCorte (OMS-2), Jessica Hilst, Matt Reynolds (OMS-2), Adams Phillips (OMS-3), Faraaz Mushtaq (OMS-3), and Vi Song Tring (OMS-2) at the National Osteopathic Student Caucus.

Members of the NSU-COM Student Government Association have been hard at work this fall not only with classes but with student issues and events.

In July, Vice President Lindsay LaCorte and I attended the AOA House of Delegates meeting in Chicago in conjunction with the Council of Osteopathic Student Government Presidents (COSGP) quarterly meeting. During the conference, we focused on issues important to osteopathic medical students on a national level, including board examinations, testing policies, school growth, and student debt. The COSGP also hosted the National Osteopathic Student Caucus, where AOA resolutions were debated and discussed among osteopathic students from all over the country.

In August, I had the privilege of speaking at the White Coat Ceremony to all the new first-year students and their families. We welcomed the new class to NSU and are currently in the process of electing the first class of 2012 student government. After the new students had a chance to settle into their classes, we hosted SGA's annual Club Week in August. Each of the 33 clubs shared information about community service and professional goals, gave away free items, and recruited new members. We have some amazing leaders this year, and that means there are going to be great programs and events in the year ahead.

As always, we are attending a lot of meetings. Not only do we have our monthly senate and council meetings with the class governments and club presidents, but we also have meetings with HPD-SGA and PAN-SGA. HPD-SGA includes all presidents of the Health Professions Division, and PAN-SGA includes presidents of all the programs at Nova Southeastern University.

Most recently, the SGA had a great turnout at its first Student Advocacy Series (SAS) event, which was a health care panel discussion hosted by our very own SGA Student Professionalism and Ethics Committee. We are planning more SAS events in the month leading up to the presidential elections to help our students become informed advocates for themselves and our profession.

The SGA is representing the student body and bringing attention to all the issues that come with being an osteopathic medical student both nationally and locally.

Medicare Victory and D.O. Day on the Hill

By Natasha Bray, D.O., Assistant Professor of Internal Medicine, and OMS-II Marlow Hernandez

Marlow Hernandez with Florida Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen at D.O. Day on the Hill.

For more than a year, the issue of Medicare cuts preoccupied physicians and patients throughout the United States. Over that time, both the AOA (American Osteopathic Association) and the AMA (American Medical Association) fought hard to prevent the scheduled 10.6 percent cuts, and thus preserve medical access for those covered under Medicare and TRICARE.

After months of debates, concessions, and promises, the United States House of Representatives passed the Medicare Improvements for Patient and Providers Act (H.R. 6331). However, in late June, the United States Senate failed to follow suit, and thus the scheduled cuts went into effect. At that time, some physicians (whether D.O. or M.D.) stopped taking Medicare patients, and many more got on the phone, wrote letters, and lobbied their congressional representatives to stop the cuts in order to have time to work on replacing the flawed physician payment formula (in addition to other flaws), while preserving patient access. Moreover, physicians reminded Congress that cost of treatment had outpaced reimbursements by over 30 percent over the last decade and that patients would truly be the ones affected.

In early July, the Senate approved H.R. 6331, and in mid-July, following a presidential veto, the House once again approved H.R. 6331—and the bill became law. For at least another 18 months, there will be no cuts in Medicare. Moreover, there will be a 1.1 percent payment update, as well as bonuses for those physicians working in rural areas, bonuses for quality reporting, increased funds for anesthesia programs, and a gradual decrease in co-pays for mental health services. On average, the legislation provides the average D.O. with $35,000-$40,000 that he or she would have otherwise lost. Further, it allows for bonuses up to two percent for those physicians who chose to e-prescribe.

In summarizing the events of 2008, it is sometimes easy to forget the work of thousands of individuals in achieving this temporary victory. Certainly, D.O. Day on the Hill, which was held April 24, 2008, played a significant role in shaping public policy. It was an event that featured over 850 osteopathic physicians and students, most of whom met with their congressional representatives.

In many cases, the meetings resembled the one Dr. Natasha Bray and OMS-II Marlow Hernandez had with Florida Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen. Dr. Bray and Hernandez articulated the AOA's position and gave a few examples of how the cuts would affect patients. The response they received from the congresswoman and her staff was very positive. A few months later, when H.R. 6331 came to the House floor, Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen was one of relatively few republicans that consistently joined democrats on this issue by voting "yes" on both occasions.

As AOA President Peter B. Ajluni, D.O., thanked Congress for approving H.R. 6331, he remarked, "What they've done is put…an 18-monthlong band-aid, and that gives us 18 months to look at the system and recognize the fact that the payment system is inequitable and denies access to care. This is a reminder of the work that is still ahead, and thus it is a reminder of the importance of future days like D.O. Day on the Hill. [1]"

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Dr. Natasha Bray shares her viewpoint during a D.O. Day on the Hill meeting.

Behavioral Health Promotion Program Maintains Vigorous Research Agenda

Presentations Made at International AIDS Conference

In August, Behavioral Health Promotion Program (BHPP) faculty members **M. Isabel Fernandez, Ph.D.**, director and professor of public health/preventive medicine, **G. Stephen Bowen, M.D., M.P.H.**, assistant director and professor of public health/preventive medicine, and **Robin J. Jacobs, Ph.D.**, assistant professor of public health/preventive medicine, presented three posters describing the program's HIV prevention research at the International AIDS Conference in Mexico City, Mexico. The posters were entitled "Drug Use and Hispanic Men Who Have Sex with Men in South Florida," "Differences in Correlates of Drug Use for Recent and Non-Recent Immigrants," and "Risks for Unprotected Anal Intercourse in Older Men Who Have Sex with Men." *(Note: Gabriel Suciu, Ph.D., M.S.P.H., and Jacob Warren, Ph.D., collaborated on one or more of the posters.)*

More than 25,000 scientists, policymakers, funders, government officials, people living with HIV/AIDS, and representatives of nongovernmental community organizations providing HIV-related services and advocacy met to plan the global future for prevention and treatment armed with new evidence of the effectiveness of diverse prevention interventions, treatment regimens, and treatment scale-up internationally. Attendees were encouraged by the news that, in many countries, deaths due to AIDS as well as new infection rates are declining.

BHPP Receives Collaborative CDC Grant

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently awarded the Behavioral Health Promotion Program, in collaboration with the Hektoen Institute for Medical Research in Chicago, Illinois, a four- year, $1,667,269 grant to develop and pilot test an HIV risk reduction and health promotion intervention for black men titled Project Power: A Health Promotion and HIV Risk Reduction Intervention for Black Men. The grant began in September 2008 and runs through September 2012. Dr. Fernandez will serve as principal investigator, while Dr. Sybil Hosek, a clinical psychologist at Kroger Hospital and an assistant professor at the Hektoen Institute, will be the co investigator and direct the project operations, which will take place in Chicago in collaboration with a community advisory committee at offices of community organizations. Interventions will be developed and piloted for delivery face-to-face and via the Internet. Dr. Jacobs will also serve as a co investigator on this project.

Dr. Robin Jacobs Joins BHPP Team

After working part time with the BHPP since April 2008, Dr. Jacobs became a full-time faculty member in August. Prior to joining the NSU-COM family, she served as assistant professor at Florida Atlantic University's Graduate School of Social Work and as a lecturer and visiting instructor at Florida International University's School of Social Work and Stempel School of Public Health. Dr. Jacobs, who received her Ph.D. degree in social welfare from Florida International University in 2006, is a welcome and highly valuable addition to the BHPP team and COM faculty because of her lifelong interest in Hispanics and health promotion, mental health, and HIV-related issues of diverse Hispanic populations.

Dr. Jacobs, who has lived and worked in Mexico, Guatemala, and Costa Rica, also brings to NSU her rich research and publication experience in the health and HIV issues of older men who have sex with men. In addition, she has amassed a large database of local and recently collected data from this population, which will help her to continue publishing and serve as the basis to obtain extramural grant funding to develop an HIV risk reduction intervention directed toward this population. She is also serving as co investigator and project director on several current BHPP studies:

- **Proyecto SOL –** a group intervention for Hispanic men who have sex with men (MSM))
- **Entre Culturas –** an individual intervention for young Hispanic MSM delivered face-to-face and via the Internet
- **Project Power –** a study of HIV prevention strategies for African American MSM
- **Adolescent Trials Network –** a study to examine the utility of an HIV treatment readiness assessment questionnaire for youth.

Dr. Jacobs' publications include scholarly articles and book chapters on cultural adaptation of HIV interventions, HIV prevention with Hispanics, evidence-based social work, and HIV and older populations. She also possesses substantial teaching experience in the social sciences at the graduate level both face to face and online. Prior to her academic career, Dr. Jacobs administered community organizations that provided substance abuse treatment and early intervention services for adolescents and young adults, mental health and psychiatric services, as well as domestic violence prevention programs.

GEC Symposium: Closing the Elder Care Gap

By Jessica De Leon, Ph.D.
Assistant Project Manager, GREAT GEC

On June 6-7, the Florida Coastal Geriatric Resources, Education, and Training Center (GREAT GEC) at Nova Southeastern University College of Osteopathic Medicine hosted its inaugural Interdisciplinary Geriatrics Symposium called Closing the Gap in Elder Care.

As the symposium's title suggests, the geriatric patient presents complex and unique health issues that require an interdisciplinary approach to care. To address this complexity, Closing the Gap in Elder Care brought together experts and professionals from different health professions, as well as government, commercial, and academic organizations, to educate and learn about geriatrics and discuss major health care issues among the elderly.

The 2008 symposium drew nearly 100 attendees from Florida and across the United States. The two-day event included an exciting combination of presentations by 23 speakers, who presented 15 oral and 11 poster presentations. Topics addressed were diverse and included dementia, depression, stroke, diabetes, weight management, falls, disaster preparedness, vision, hearing, oral health, pain management, hospice, Medicare/Medicaid, and environmental health.

Attendees also were able to interact with a number of exhibitors that lent their expertise, services, and products to this event. These included: Aging and Disability Resource Center of Broward County; Elderly and Veterans Services; Hospice Care of Southeast Florida; Imagine Therapy; League for the Hard of Hearing; Novartis; NSU-COM Center for Bioterrorism and All-Hazards Preparedness; NSU College of Optometry; NSU Lifelong Learning Institute; Senior Volunteer Services; and SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders).

An attendee evaluation of the symposium found significant increases in the self-assessed level of knowledge on all topics. Over 97 percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed the symposium provided them with practical knowledge; over 93 percent felt they will be able to apply the knowledge gained; and 91 percent felt the symposium will help them do their job better. One hundred percent of the respondents rated the symposium overall as either "good" or "excellent."

We would like to thank everyone who participated in the event and made the GREAT GEC's inaugural symposium a success, including the dean of NSU's College of Osteopathic Medicine, Dr. Anthony Silvagni, NSU administration and facilities, and all who were involved in the symposium organization and supported our efforts. In particular, we would like to thank members of the GREAT GEC, including Cecilia Rokusek, Ed.D., R.D., executive director, Sona Hromulak, M.Sc., M.B.A., administrative program manager, and Diane Sanders-Cepeda, D.O., assistant professor of geriatrics.

The Florida Coastal Geriatric Resources, Education, and Training Center (GREAT GEC) located within Nova Southeastern University is one of a national network of 46 Geriatric Education Centers in the United States. The GREAT GEC offers health professions educators, students, and community practitioners with opportunities to learn more about providing culturally appropriate health care to older adults and their families and is dedicated to improving the health care of Florida elders. The GREAT GEC represents a consortium comprising the Aging and Disability Resource Center of Broward County, the Southwest Focal Point Senior Center, and the West Palm Beach Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

Pictured (from left) are: Edward Aqua, D.Eng., director, Lifelong Learning Institute; Margaret "Peggy" Davis, M.S.N., R.N., assistant professor, Nursing Department; Sona Hromulak, M.Sc., M.B.A., administrative program manager, GREAT GEC; Cecilia Rokusek, Ed.D., R.D., executive director, GREAT GEC; Naushira Pandya, M.D., CMD, project director, GREAT GEC; Michelle Gagnon-Blodgett, Ph.D., coordinator, geriatric clinical services/clinical assistant professor, Department of Geriatrics; Jessica De Leon, Ph.D., assistant project manager, GREAT GEC; Diane Ede-Nichols, D.D.S., associate professor, College of Dental Medicine; and Debra Stern, D.B.A., PT, associate professor, Department of Physical Therapy.

Looking Back...at the Merger

Arnold Melnick, D.O., M.Sc.

From time to time, Mort Terry would worry—sometimes aloud—about what might happen to SECOM and Southeastern University of the Health Sciences once he and the then-current leaders were gone. Would others be as deeply involved? Would later-comers have the same passionate feelings about the institution? Would they have the same emotional commitment to the institution and the objectives that drove Mort and his colleagues?

To justify Mort's thinking, you must note that almost everyone involved with SECOM in the earliest days was committed emotionally—none were mere job seekers or leaders looking for higher positions elsewhere—not that there is anything wrong with that. But it troubled him. He established SECOM in 1979, fulfilling the dreams of many D.O.s in the area by creating the first osteopathic medical school in Florida. Subsequent additions—pharmacy and optometry—created Southeastern University of the Health Sciences (SUHS), with the same crusading spirit. Actually, we had very few "employees" but did have many pioneers with similar goals.

That is why there were a couple of trial balloons sent up with other institutions for cooperative arrangements or merger, with no positive results—actually, they resulted in complete rejection.

Then, one day, Mort was invited to the investiture of Dr. Steven Feldman as the new president of Nova University, representing Southeastern University of the Health Sciences (and its three schools). He sat with David Rush, a member of the board of trustees of both Nova University and Southeastern University of the Health Sciences. Midway through the ceremony, Mort scribbled a note on the program and passed it to Dave, suggesting they talk with Nova about possible merger. His thinking: Nova had no health professions schools (and could use them to be a complete institution) and a merger could make for a larger, stronger, more influential university.

Dave, belonging to both groups, set up a number of exploratory sessions and remained as the expediter throughout all negotiations. From the beginning, the feeling on both sides was that merger sounded great, even though a few board members on both sides had reservations. But the negotiations were always positive in tone.

Nova would gain a medical school, a pharmacy school, and an optometry school; that was obvious. However, SUHS negotiators had to have some stronger assurances. The ones included in the agreement were as follows:

- Southeastern University's schools would form the Health Professions Division of the new university.
- The name of the new institution would be Nova Southeastern University (NSU).
- The new division would maintain the structure and personnel of SUHS.
- Five SUHS representatives would go on the NSU Board of Trustees for a term of 10 years.
- SUHS's board would become the Health Professions Division Board of Governors.
- SUHS's treasury would be placed into a new foundation, controlled entirely by the SUHS Board of Governors.
- All SUHS employees would be accepted into the NSU pension plan, with their vested interest based on their years of employment with SUHS.

When all the details were agreed upon, the vote went before the SUHS board at a remote and neutral site. Overwhelmingly, the board approved. So did the Nova board, and the merger was signed in January 1994.

Dreams took on greater proportion—a new campus, new and expanded buildings and facilities, and a giant university. We were going forward.

Dr. Arnold Melnick is the founding dean of Southeastern College of Osteopathic Medicine (the precursor to NSU-COM). His pithy columns serve as a humorous and insightful bridge to the past—and remind us of how far our college has come in a relatively short period of time.

Anjali Bhasin, M.D., who joined the college's faculty in August, is the newest addition to the Department of Internal Medicine. She received her medical degree in India and completed her internal medicine residency at Long Island College Hospital in Brooklyn, New York. Dr. Bhasin, who is board certified in internal medicine and diagnostic radiology, was previously affiliated with Tenet Healthcare at Florida Medical Center and has been involved in several research projects.

Cyril Blavo, D.O., M.P.H, and **T.M., FACOP**, director of the Master of Public Health Program, made presentations entitled "International Health Initiatives" at the International Child Health Forum organized by the Institute of Child Health Policy and "Where Do We Go from Here?" at the Broward County Health Department Vaccination Symposium. He also received an award from the Teen Advocacy Coalition of Broward County for facilitating some initiatives on behalf of severely emotionally disturbed youth.

Raymond Ferrero III, J.D., associate professor of family medicine and public health, was sworn in as an elected member of the Broward County Bar Association Board of Directors at the organization's Annual Meeting and Installation Dinner in June at the Marriott Harbor Beach Resort and Spa. Ferrero was nominated and elected by members of the Broward County Bar Association to sit as one of three members of its board for a two-year term. In addition, although he will remain an NSU-COM faculty member, Ferrero was promoted to the position of HPD executive director for intramural health affairs. In this role, he will oversee and act in an administrative capacity for all NSU Health Professions Division students seeking accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Furthermore, he will be expanding the College of Osteopathic Medicine's current Impaired Students Program to all Health Professions Division colleges.

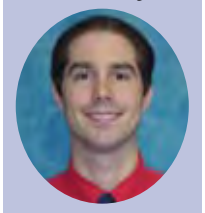
Jay M. Fleisher, Ph.D., associate professor of public health, was named to the University of Miami Center for Oceans and Human Health research personnel. Individuals must be invited to join this prestigious team, which is funded by the National Science Foundation and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. Invitation is only extended to experienced investigators who have contributed significantly to a field of study. He also was invited to give a talk on "State of the Art of Assessing Risk to Low Levels of Known or Suspected Carcinogens" at the First World Congress on Cancer, which will be held January 12-14, 2009, in Kottayam, Kerala, India.

Robert Hasty, D.O., FACOI, assistant professor of internal medicine and program director of the Palmetto General Hospital Internal Medicine Residency, presented a number of statewide and national lectures over the past several months. Topics he addressed included "Prevention of Medical Errors 2008" at the Atlantic Regional Osteopathic Convention, "How to Succeed on Rotations and in Residency" at New York College of Osteopathic Medicine, "Motivating Residents on Research" at the American College of Osteopathic Internists Annual Program Directors Meeting, "Pandemic Influenza for the Podiatric Physician" at the American Podiatric Medical Association Annual Scientific Convention," and "Patient Hand-offs and Transitions of Care" at the American College of Osteopathic Internists Summer Hospital Medicine Update.

Mr. Ferrero

Dr. Fleisher

Dr. Hasty


Dr. Kusienski

Dr. Ledbetter

Dr. Shamus

Dr. Tu

Dr. Zucker

James Howell, M.D., M.P.H., professor and chair of the Department of Rural Medicine, served on the Health, Education, and Public Health Reference Committee at the Florida Medical Association Annual Meeting held in Orlando, Florida, in early August and represented the Palm Beach County Medical Society as its FMA delegate.

Andrew Kusienski, D.O., assistant professor of osteopathic principles and practice, has been named chair of the Department of Sports Medicine. The department, formerly known as the Division of Sports Medicine, has been upgraded due to the success of the Sports Medicine Clinic and the physicians involved with it.

Heidi Lane, Ed.D., assistant professor of internal medicine and director of patient-centered education, made a number of presentations at the Association of Standardized Patient Educators (ASPE) Annual Conference held in San Antonio, Texas, June 29-July 2. Dr. Lane co-presented on the topics "Results of Membership Survey on Current Practices," "The SPview: What Was Tried, What Worked, and What Caused Us to Fall Flat on Our Face," "Standards of Practice Committee: Round Table Discussion on Terminology," and "Beyond the Stethoscope: Unique Challenges Faced in the Development and Implementation of Standardized Client (SC) Sessions." Dr. Lane was also named chair elect of the ASPE Standards of Practice Committee.

Susan Ledbetter, D.O., assistant professor of geriatrics and program director of the family medicine residency at Palmetto General Hospital in Hialeah, and **Ralph Wood, D.O.**, chair of the Department of Family Medicine, were appointed to the Florida Society of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (FSACOFP) Board of Trustees at its annual convention held July 30-August 3 in Orlando. Aysen Gurrea, D.O., who currently serves as chief resident in the Palmetto family medicine residency, was appointed to serve as the resident representative to the Florida Society of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians Board of Trustees.

Jennie Q. Lou, M.D., M.Sc., professor of public health and internal medicine and director of biomedical informatics, was a quoted expert in an article entitled "Breakthroughs Offer Hope to MS Patients" that appeared in the July 6 edition of the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. She also was quoted in the *Washington Post* and on the Stanford University School of Medicine clinic Web site, where she provided her insight into the recent new gene discovery that might offer hope to people living with multiple sclerosis, which is an autoimmune disease that attacks the central nervous system.

Edward Packer, D.O., FAAP, FACOP, chair of the Department of Pediatrics, was recently promoted to the rank of full professor. He also received the Consumer Research Council of America's Top Pediatrician for 2008 Award and organized as well as participated in NSU's Back to School physicals event, which took place in August and provided physical evaluations for over 60 children. Dr. Packer and his colleagues, including **Rogerio Faillace, M.D.**, assistant professor of pediatrics, also signed up 12 children for Florida KidCare, which is the state's health insurance program for uninsured children under age 19.

Naushira Pandya, M.D., CMD, associate professor and chair of the Department of Geriatrics, presented a number of lectures statewide and nationally on topics such as "Understanding the Senior Moment," "Management of Thyroid Dysfunction in Older Adults," "Clinical Controversies: Amiodarone for the Treatment of Atrial Fibrillation," "Diabetes Management in Long-Term Care," and "Learning to Listen to Your Heart." She also coauthored several published articles, including "The Challenges and Opportunities of Managing Diabetes in Long-Term Care," which appeared in the May 2008 *Journal of the American Medical Directors Association*, and "Study of Anemia in Long-Term Care (SALT): Prevalence of Anemia and its Relationship with the Risk of Falls in Nursing Home Residents" that appeared in a recent issue of *Current Medical Research and Opinion*.

Alina Perez, J.D., M.P.H., assistant professor of public health, recently earned her master of public health degree from the University of South Florida.

Cecilia Rokusek, Ed.D., R.D., executive director of education, planning, and research and CBAP project manager, earned a significant honor in June when she was named honorary consul for Florida of the Slovak Republic at a ceremony held at the American Czech-Slovak Cultural Club in North Miami Beach. As an honorary consul, Dr. Rokusek will be responsible for a number of tasks that include promoting educational exchanges for students and faculty between the United States and the Slovak Republic, fostering business and trade opportunities, and expanding research opportunities. She will also promote cultural programs featuring Slovak artists, assist Slovakian travelers who encounter problems in the United States, and serve as a translator for those with language issues. *(Pictured with Dr. Rokusek is Rastislav Kacer, who is the Slovak ambassador to the United States.)*

Eric Shamus, Ph.D., associate professor of osteopathic principles and practice, coauthored an article entitled "Exercise and Mental Health: Psychological Benefits" that appeared in the July/August 2008 edition of the ACOFP's *Osteopathic Family Physician News*. Dr. Shamus coauthored the article with Stephen Russo, Ph.D., who serves as director of sports psychology at NSU's Sports Medicine Clinic and assistant professor at NSU's Center for Psychological Studies.

Khin Tu, M.D., associate professor of anatomy, traveled to Myanmar during the first two weeks in June with a team of surgeons from the United Kingdom and Singapore to assist victims of Cyclone Nargis. Dr. Tu visited a decimated town called Labutta where only 20 percent of the population survived. Because many of the survivors suffered from fractures, lacerations, and spinal injuries, Dr. Tu assisted with minor operations, which were performed in a makeshift operating room at the site where the town's hospital was located, while those needing major operations were transferred to the National Orthopedic Hospital where definitive operations were done using implants donated by the Deseret Foundation of Utah, of which Dr. Tu is a consultant.

Steven Zucker, D.M.D., M.Ed., associate dean for community affairs and AHEC program director, was reelected as president of the Florida AHEC Network for the 2008-09 fiscal year. Dr. Zucker, who is the founding president of the Florida AHEC Network, is serving his fifth term as the organization's leader.

FSACOFP Presentations

A number of full-time and clinical faculty members presented lectures at the 28th Annual Florida Society ACOFP Convention and National Family Practice Update held July 30-August 3 at the Hyatt Regency Grand Cypress Resort in Orlando, Florida:

Arthur Berman, D.O. – *"Hepatitis C"*

Kerry Chamberlain, D.O. – *"Anemia"*

Hilda De Gaetano, D.O. – *"Pediatric Vaccinations"*

Robert Hasty, D.O. – *"Reaching Your Goals for Your Diabetic Patient"*

Gregory James, D.O., M.P.H. – *"Alzheimer's Disease"*

Merrill Krolick, D.O. – *"Peripheral Vascular Disease: New Cardiovascular Options for Treatment"* and *"Use of Devices in Treatment of CHF and Cardiac Arrythmia"*

Joseph Namey, Jr., D.O. – *"Metabolic Syndrome: Controlling Blood Pressure, Sugar, and Lipids to Reduce Cardiovascular Risk"*

Rob Norman, D.O. – *"Update on Dermatology for the Family Physician"*

Anthony Ottaviani, D.O., M.P.H. – *"Obstructive Sleep Apnea"*

Sam Snyder, D.O. – *"Hypertension and its Role in Renal Disease"*

Joel Stein, D.O. – *"OMT Lecture and Workshop"*

Monica Warhaftig, D.O. – *"Florida Mandatory Lecture on Domestic Violence"*

Dr. Heidi Lane Receives HPD Grant

In July, **Heidi Lane, Ed.D.**, assistant professor of internal medicine and director of patient-centered education, was awarded a $4,980 NSU Health Professions Division grant to help fund the International Collaborative High Stakes Clinical Skills Examination: Nova Southeastern University/ Kazan State Medical University Project.

While she was a faculty member at East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina, Dr. Lane collaborated with Dr. Serguei Bulatov and colleagues in Kazan, Russia, to build the first-ever Clinical Skills Center in Russia at Kazan State Medical University (KSMU), which teaches all its medical school courses in English and has a large Indian population that attend the school. "These students will return to India and take a national licensure exam, in English, in order to be licensed physicians," Dr. Lane explained. "This exam is much like the COMLEX-PE and the USMLE Step 2 CS, which osteopathic and allopathic medical students take in the United States."

The HPD grant will allow continued collaboration with KSMU to provide senior medical students with a high-stakes clinical skills exam in order to provide formative assessment and feedback prior to their going to their native India to take the national exam. "It is our hypothesis that this assessment with feedback will improve the pass rate for these students as compared to the past students who have taken the licensure exam without having had a clinical skills exam at KSMU," she said.

Delegates from KSMU are scheduled to visit NSU-COM sometime in October to develop cases and exam implementation protocols as well as train their faculty to train standardized patients.

Dr. Melissa Overman Puts Her Education to Good Use

By Nancy C. Evans, Administrative Assistant
Preventive Medicine Residency Program

Since graduating from the NSU-COM Preventive Medicine/Public Health Residency Program at the Palm Beach County Health Department (PBCHD) in June 2006, Melissa Overman, D.O., M.P.H., has already established herself as a leader in the field of public health. Not only does she hold a position of responsibility as the center medical director for the PBCHD's Lantana/Lake Worth Health Center, she also serves as a member of the residency's Graduate Medical Education Committee and the regional OPTI called the Consortium for Excellence in Medical Education and is the medical chief at the Palm Beach County Special Care Unit during emergencies.

Dr. Overman received her master's degree in health education from East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina, in 1999. She also participated in special education projects for grade school children, assisted with the development of a community-based diabetes support group that still meets, and coordinated research on the impact of culture and various belief sets on health education and communication.

Dr. Overman, who graduated in 2003 from the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine in Lewisburg, West Virginia, is board certified in public health/community medicine and has been appointed as the interim director of medical education for the NSU-COM Preventive Medicine/Public Health Residency by the AOA Division of Postdoctoral Training.

In her role as DME, Dr. Overman discussed the topic "Vaccine Update 2008" at the American Osteopathic College of Occupational and Preventive Medicine Conference in Savannah, Georgia, and attended the Association of Osteopathic Directors and Medical Educators (AODME) Annual Meeting last April in St. Louis, Missouri. During the AODME conference, she participated in exploring the opportunities for medical education across the spectrum from medical school through postgraduate medical education.

"Dr. O," as she is commonly known in the clinic, currently holds two faculty positions at NSU-COM—clinical assistant professor in the Department of Preventive Medicine and adjunct assistant professor in the Master of Public Health Program.

Dr. Overman is the proud "parent" of a two-year-old standard poodle with the unusual name of Admiral Samsonjan Pudlekov, which is why he is more commonly known as "Samson."

Dr. Cecilia Rokusek Assesses Iowa Flood Damage

A local bank is protected from the cresting floodwaters by mounds of sandbags. More than 26,000 people were left homeless by the disaster.

Because disaster preparedness is what she preaches and teaches in her role as project manager for the college's Center for Bioterrorism and All-Hazards Preparedness (CBAP), Cecilia Rokusek, E.D., R.D., felt a sense of urgency to visit Cedar Rapids, Iowa, after deadly floodwaters wreaked havoc on the area last June and left more than 26,000 people homeless. Her mission: to assess the damage—especially the emotional and psychological effects—and see what lessons could be learned in regard to limiting the devastation caused by future disasters.

When Dr. Rokusek arrived in Cedar Rapids, the first thing she felt as she stepped out of her car was a feeling of emptiness and helplessness. However, once she recovered from her initial shock and began talking to and helping area residents, what she discovered surprised her, such as the fact that out of thousands of shelter beds available, only 472 had been used. "If I could compare it to Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, where people were waiting for the government to step in, the citizens here were caring for themselves," she said. "Neighbors were taking in neighbors, and people were living in tents and vans. In fact, people from unaffected communities shared their campers and vans with those who lost everything."

During her fact-finding mission, Dr. Rokusek, who serves as executive director of education, planning, and research and CBAP project manager, made it a point to visit an ethnic neighborhood in Cedar Rapids known as the Czech Village, which is where the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library is located. When she arrived at the museum, staffers were busy digging out the first floor, which had ceiling-high flooding and was filled with slimy silt that had soaked into books, destroyed valuable antiques, and flipped a grand piano.

After returning to South Florida with her latest batch of disaster research, Dr. Rokusek plans to study the situation, spread the word to her NSU students, and help with the healing by conducting follow-up research on community and individual disaster resiliency. "The time I spent in Cedar Rapids and the most severely affected flood areas in the Midwest was one of the most incredible times of my life," she explained. "I saw loss, grief, and personal pain, but in each and every person I met I saw hope and a vision for the future. One of the individuals I met had lost everything. She said, 'Okay, it could have been worse. I'm here, all my family is alive, and we will just be starting all over. It's still a new century, so it's okay to start all over, isn't it?'"

The raging flood that swept through Cedar Rapids was powerful enough to flip a grand piano at the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library.

Project CHOICES Team Wins CDC Award

Dr. Kenneth Johnson

The Project CHOICES team, which includes Kenneth Johnson, D.O., FACOOG, associate professor of obstetrics and gynecology and director of the NSU Women's Health Center, and Drs. Linda and Mark Sobell from NSU's Center for Psychological Studies, was awarded the Charles C. Shepard Award from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in June for its research on fetal alcohol syndrome. The Charles C. Shepard Award is the CDC's preeminent honor recognizing excellence in science.

Dr. Johnson and his NSU colleagues won the award in the prevention and control category for their research article entitled "Preventing Alcohol-Exposed Pregnancies: A Randomized Controlled Trial," which was published in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* in January 2007. Through its research, the Project CHOICES team discovered that brief motivational counseling sessions can help women reduce their risk for an alcohol-exposed pregnancy either by decreasing alcohol use, by use of more effective contraception, or both.

Class of 2007 Alumnus Dr. Barry Gibney Shares Internship Experience

There's no question that attending medical school is challenging, but it's just a tantalizing appetizer—a challenging precursor if you will—for what lies ahead when a student graduates and moves on to face the knee-quaking prospect of internship and residency training. In the following Q&A, 2007 NSU-COM alumnus Barry Gibney, D.O., who recently completed his internship year at Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center in Pennsylvania and has begun his general surgery residency training, chronicles his transition from medical school to internship.

Did you find making the transition from medical school to internship difficult? Yes and no. I feel the training I received in my third and fourth years prepared me as well as one could be prepared. However, there is never a time in medical school where you're actually responsible for your actions; the real difficulty of internship lies in actually being the primary caregiver for your patients. If a patient develops renal failure because you failed to respond to low urine output, the blame falls squarely on your shoulders.

Dr. Gibney at NSU-COM in 2003.

What were your expectations when you began your internship? Has the experience proven to be what you thought it would be? Has it been easier or more difficult than you expected? I expected to work hard—really hard. The personalities that pervade the surgical atmosphere are generally regarded as short-fused and demanding, so I certainly expected to be scolded on a daily basis. I would say that it has been hard, on par with what I expected. I did not, however, expect my attendings, chiefs, and ancillary staff to be so supportive in my growth as a future surgeon.

Describe an average day in your life as an intern. How many hours do you work daily and weekly? It is very rotation dependent. We rotate through a comprehensive list of general surgery and its various subspecialties (as an intern, this includes cardiothoracic, vascular, surgical oncology, pediatric surgery, transplant, colorectal, and trauma). Our program currently employs a night-float system for interns; when on night float my hours are a pretty standard 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. shift, Sunday through Friday. On night float we cross cover two services, responding to any "on-call" issues as well as all trauma activations. When I'm on the day schedule, I routinely find myself waking at 4:15 a.m. to get to the hospital at 5:15 for sign out and pre rounds. We round with the service chief/fellow from 6:00 until shortly after 7:00 and then break for a quick breakfast and either go to the operating room or handle floor work.

Floor work consists of implementing the plan for the day, calling consults, dealing with on-call issues, handling service consults, and post-op care on the service patients. This usually keeps us busy until 4:00 or 5:00 p.m. when we try to do evening rounds and finish in time to sign out to the night float. This of course is the ideal scenario, but many days don't end until 8:00, 9:00, or even 10:00 at night. Call for the day person is a 24-hour call on Saturday once a month and a 12-hour Sunday once a month. The ACGME and RRC have a mandated 80-hour workweek, averaged over a four-week block. I usually abut those 80 hours on a weekly basis. Having a "golden weekend" (both Saturday and Sunday off) usually results in a 65-hour week; I have, however, had 110 hour weeks as well when I am on the 24-hour Saturday call.

What has been the most enjoyable aspect of your internship training? I would say the most enjoyable thing is actually practicing medicine, and when I can sneak into the operating room and actually get to operate.

What has been the least enjoyable aspect of your internship training? The long hours, especially not seeing my wife nearly as much as I would like.

What has been the most interesting case you've encountered during your internship? Being a tertiary medical center, it is difficult to pick just one most interesting case. Each month provides us with an opportunity to care for people with some of the diseases that you always read about (and are always tested on the boards) but never think you will see. However, if you pressed me, I would have to say it was seeing a heart transplant performed in a patient who previously had an artificial heart in place.

What has been the most nerve-racking part of your internship experience? Doing primary survey on some of our "big" level-one traumas—the patient who hits our trauma bay in extremis and needs to be intubated, have chest tubes, and high-flow infusion lines.

What advice would you give to current NSU-COM students about coping with the stresses and challenges of internship? Just like medical school, you will get through internship. You can't really anticipate what internship is like until you live it. Every year thousands of interns graduate to become residents, and truthfully, in retrospect, if you worked hard during your time at NSU, you too will survive. It will be hard—no doubt about it—but you will enter with the tools necessary to be a competent, compassionate physician.

What do you plan to do career-wise once you complete your internship and residency training? I am presently undecided about pursuing private practice or an academic career. General surgery training is so long that it seems at times unfathomable to think of adding an additional one-to-three years of fellowship training. I am, however, interested in critical care and trauma surgery, keeping in mind to be open to all the experiences I will have in the next six years.

Enhanced Clinical Procedures Course Helps Students Maximize Their Practical Skills

By Scott Colton, Director of Medical Communications

Providing NSU-COM students with the most comprehensive and cutting-edge curriculum possible is a goal that is forever evolving in today's rapidly changing medical education environment. As a result, the college continually implements a range of programs that focus on enhancing each student's clinical skills.

In the winter-spring 2008 semester, the Procedures in Clinical Medicine course for second-year students continued this custom by undergoing a fundamental makeover that incorporated more hands-on experiences, deemphasized didactic lectures, and underscored a more-collaborative approach to teaching and learning. "Incorporating clinical procedures has always been part of the training of our students," said David Thomas, M.D., J.D., who serves as course director and chair of the Department of Surgery. "However, this is a more unique and expanded clinical procedures course than we've done before because it includes five separate components at this point in time."

The five modules—**online self-study**, **autopsy**, **mock OR**, **surgery**, and **medicine/cardiac**—allow the students to be exposed to a spectrum of information and procedures that will enable them to be more proficient with the hands-on aspect of medicine when they embark on their third-year clinical rotations. "In the past, the procedures were spread out over a longer period of time, and there was more demonstration and less hands-on work," Dr. Thomas explained. "We also added some procedures while eliminating others. For instance, the students used to cast each other. But we felt that in today's world of medicine, especially in urban areas, the opportunity to do casting was going to be limited. We also decided that even if graduates were going to practice in a rural area, casting was something they would probably be taught at the residency level, so there was no point including it in the clinical procedures course any longer."

The semester-long course kicked off with an eight-hour online self-study module that was offered through

the HPD Library to provide the students with a range of background information before they actually performed any of the identified procedures, which would take place during a two-week period in late April and early May. They also attended an information-packed lecture presented by Dr. Thomas, who discussed topics such as OSHA issues, universal precautions, and prescription writing in detail.

The six-hour autopsy module, which has been in existence for several years thanks to a cooperative agreement with both the Broward and Palm Beach County medical examiner's offices, also underwent some significant tweaking last semester. While participating in this component, students learned about the death certificate completion process, autopsy techniques and procedures, common problems encountered during an autopsy, and basic forensic pathology.

"The autopsy experience is now coordinated in a more organized fashion than ever before, and every student must participate," Dr. Thomas stated. "In the past, students had the option of witnessing an autopsy or doing a history and physical. Historically, about two-thirds did the history and physical, but we felt that was inadequate because students need to be able to do histories and physicals as well as view an autopsy."

Clinical Procedures Crash Course

During a two-week period last spring, the second-year students had an opportunity to display their clinical skills by participating in an array of procedures spread over three distinct modules. First on the agenda was the four-hour mock OR segment, which was held for the first time in NSU's Mock OR. This unit included procedures such as proper hand washing, gowning and gloving, and sterile technique as well as inserting central lines and chest tubes into medical simulators. "We have always taught techniques such as gowning and gloving, but we had done it in a rather artificial environment in the Histology Lab," Dr. Thomas explained. "This year, we incorporated the resources of the university and utilized the Mock OR, which is a reasonably well-equipped operating room consistent with any operating room you would see in a hospital."

Next came the four-hour surgery module, which afforded students a chance to practice procedures such as suturing, laceration repair, and lesion removal in the Histology Lab. "We use pigs feet for this module because the skin texture resembles that of a human being," Dr. Thomas said. "We also use the suture material and instrumentation most commonly seen in emergency rooms and doctors' offices to accurately replicate what the students will experience once they begin their clinical rotations."

The fifth module—medicine/cardiac—was also held in the Histology Lab and involved a variety of simultaneous experiences, including blood draws, blood gasses, IV fluids, lumbar puncture demonstration, pulse oximetry, and glucometer use. Using a mix of medical simulators—and each other—to practice on, the students learned how to perform procedures such as becoming comfortable with drawing blood and inserting nasogastric tubes. In the future, the medicine/cardiac module will also provide medical simulators that will allow students to practice arthrocentesis (inserting an injection into a joint) techniques.

"Every student performed every task, which is unique to medical education," said Heidi Lane, Ed.D., assistant professor of internal medicine and director of patient-centered education. "Clinical procedures for second-year medical students are an innovation in education that is both time-consuming and expensive. But it serves as an excellent utilization of resources and mechanical simulation we haven't had an opportunity to take advantage of in the past."

Another invaluable element was the inclusion of 12 residents from a range of hospitals, who played an integral role in the educational process by serving as trainers to the students. In addition to benefitting the students, it provided valuable lessons for the residents as well as the college. "One of the things medical schools are judged by is how well the beginning third-year students integrate into the hospital system during their clinical rotations," Dr. Thomas explained. "A mutual feedback system between residents and the college is necessary

because we don't always know what the hospitals consider important. With the residents participating in training our students under the supervision of clinical and full-time faculty members, there was a lot of positive interaction. We also discovered that many of the participating residents went back to their hospital program directors and said they learned things as well and felt the experience was very important for their certification process.

"Because residents are closer in age and training status to medical students, there was more give and take than normal in the clinical procedures program," he added. "There were multiple feedback opportunities at all levels, so we felt the use of the residents was extremely important and extremely well-received. One aspect that is very important about including the residents is it completes the cycle of medical education. Medical education is not just old guys like me talking to the students; it is students learning from their immediate peers, and those peers coming back and teaching the students with assistance from faculty members like me who help guide the process."

Marti Echols, Ph.D., who serves as assistant dean of medical education and assistant professor of internal medicine, put her own spin on the course's enhanced attributes. "It's important for the students to see residents teach because it plants a seed in the students' minds that they may want to do something similar when they're residents or when they're physicians in practice. In a school like ours that's dependent upon adjunct faculty coming in to assist with the educational model, the sooner we can show our students it's exciting and fun to work in this model, the more opportunity we will have to capture somebody who may want to do his or her residency training with us.

"It also gives our students an opportunity to be more skilled, which results in them being more highly regarded when they embark on their clinical rotations," she added. "Because they have gone through this extensive procedures training, it means they're more apt to have the residents or program directors invite them to participate in different procedures during their rotation experiences. This is just another opportunity for us to reinforce how important it is to have integration in the medical education. The students have the didactic component in the lecture hall and through the systems courses.

"We're simply trying to take that theory and translate it into real-life scenarios because it really helps them understand the big picture in regard to how it's tied to medicine and how it's a deliverable," she continued. "Any time you can make something more real for students, it's beneficial because it gets them much more excited about studying and learning—and it remains with them in terms of long-term memory. We're trying to develop top-flight physicians, and I think this revamped course reinforces our commitment to that goal."

Because the enhanced Procedures in Clinical Medicine course was well-received by all involved, the college is considering incorporating the course into the systems curriculum and has already looked into purchasing a cutting-edge METI-Man human patient simulator, which is a computer-driven, full-sized mannequin that delivers true-to-life scenarios that swiftly change to meet instructors' goals.

The following individuals played a significant role in ensuring the success of the two-week clinical procedures crash course segment last spring:

Residents

Tye Barber, D.O./Family Medicine – PGY 2
Broward General Medical Center

Margaret Bell, D.O./Internal Medicine – PGY 1
Mount Sinai Medical Center

Hans Bez, D.O./Family Medicine – PGY 2
Palmetto General Hospital

Roya Ghorsriz, D.O./Family Medicine – PGY 3
Broward General Medical Center

Zoie Goldstein, D.O./Family Medicine – PGY 3
Palmetto General Hospital

Carlos Gomez-Meade, D.O./Family Medicine – PGY 3
Broward General Medical Center

Scott Greenberg, D.O./Orthopedic Medicine – PGY 3
Broward General Medical Center

Juliana Machado Rodrigues, D.O./Internal Medicine – PGY 2
Columbia Hospital

Matthew Moody, D.O./Emergency Medicine – PGY 1
St. Lucie Medical Center

Christen Nardi, D.O./Internal Medicine – PGY 1
Mount Sinai Medical Center

Jeannette Rios, D.O./Internal Medicine – PGY 2
Mount Sinai Medical Center

Jacqui Thomas, D.O./Surgery – PGY 3
Palms West Hospital

Full-Time and Clinical Faculty

Jules Cohen, D.O.
Peter Cohen, D.O.
Marti Echols, Ph.D.
John Isask, D.O.
Ronald Kaufman, D.O.
Francis Kleeman, M.D.
Heidi Lane, Ed.D.
William Levin, D.O.
Ronald Platt, D.O.
Mel Propis, M.D.
Adam Rubenstein, M.D.
Stan Simpson, D.O.
David Thomas, M.D., J.D.
Margaret Wilkinson, Ph.D.

Staff

Donna Chase
Marysel Sierra

Dr. Calzada with his daughters Cristina and Andrea and sons Paul and Joseph.

From Cuba to NSU: Dr. Pablo Calzada Recounts Arduous Path to Achieving American Dream

By Scott Colton, Director of Medical Communications

As a child growing up in a small village in Cuba, Pablo J. Calzada, D.O., M.P.H., FAAFP, always knew he wanted to pursue a career in the medical field. What he didn't know, however, was how passionately resolute he would be when it came to making his dream become a reality.

"I always enjoyed biology assignments like dissecting frogs," said Dr. Calzada, who serves as associate professor of family medicine and public health and assistant dean of clinical operations. "But then something happened in middle school that had a big impact on me. I had a biology teacher who was very engaging and made me realize how much I loved subjects like human anatomy and biology. He persuaded me to enter a knowledge contest concerning biology, and I did very well. But, most importantly, it really developed in me an interest that this is what I wanted to do with my life."

Dr. Calzada, who is the youngest of four children, soon showcased his innate ability for helping creatures of both the two- and four-legged variety by crafting an ingenious contraption to improve the quality of life for one of his dogs that had been run over by a car. "She had lost the ability to stand and walk, so I created a device to help her move around," explained Dr. Calzada, who was a young teenager when he hatched the idea. "She would basically just sit on her back two legs, so I created a leather support with two wheels so she could propel herself around the house."

A few years later, when he was about 14, Dr. Calzada made the bold decision to leave his family and attend boarding

school in a big-city environment that would allow him to take full advantage of his inquisitive mind. "My parents flipped out when I told them what I wanted to do, but they reluctantly agreed," he explained. "I went to a boarding school about 150 miles away from my village but came home on the weekends and holidays."

Adios, Cuba...Hello, United States

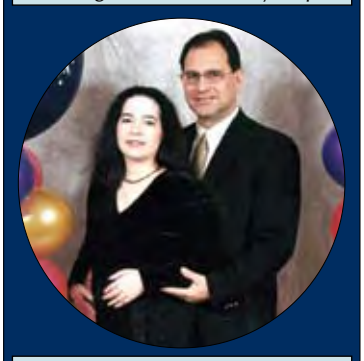
After graduating from high school, Dr. Calzada spent almost three years working toward his M.D. degree at Superior Institute of Medical Sciences School of Medicine in Santa Clara, Cuba. However, a significant downturn in the Cuban economy soon led to considerable citizen unrest, resulting in what came to be known as the Mariel Boatlift, which occurred when the Cuban government announced in April 1980 that anyone who wanted to leave the island could do so.

Between April and October of 1980, approximately 125,000 Cubans made the perilous 90-mile voyage to South Florida to start a new life in the democratic confines of the United States—including Dr. Calzada. "When the opportunity came for me to leave the island, I made the difficult decision to leave my family and migrate to the United States," he said. Although he had no close relatives in this country, Dr. Calzada was able to rely on the kindness of several family friends who had migrated to the United States and ultimately settled in New Jersey. "They kindly offered me housing, bought me a car and furniture, and prepared a room for me in their basement, which is where I lived until I found a job and saved enough money to get my own place," he recalled.

Because he had no grasp of the English language when he arrived, the first job he lined up in the New Jersey town of Gillette was working as a machine operator at a plastics company, where he toiled from 5:00 p.m. until 1:00 a.m. each day. "I wanted to register for college, so working those hours was perfect for me," said Dr. Calzada, who immediately immersed himself in becoming adept with the language of his adopted country. "One of the main reasons I learned the language so quickly was because I had a deep desire to gain knowledge, but I also felt I needed to learn the language in order to go to college, become part of mainstream America, and do things the American way. Once I got here, I stopped watching TV in Spanish and began watching everything in English because that's how you learn."

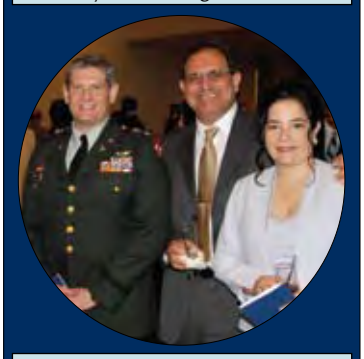
Dr. Calzada in his military garb.

During a stint on a navy ship.



Dr. Calzada with his wife, Maria.

Family fun during a vacation.



2008 graduation dinner dance.

Within months of his U.S. arrival, Dr. Calzada enrolled at Montclair State College in Upper Montclair, New Jersey, where he began taking the necessary general education courses required to enhance the 84 credit hours he had amassed at medical school in Cuba. "Luckily, through the Czech embassy in Washington, D.C., I managed to get all my transcripts transferred here," he explained. "Because the United States does not have diplomatic relations with Cuba, the Czech embassy in Washington took care of issues for Cuban citizens in the United States, and then the Swiss embassy in Cuba took care of issues for America in Cuba. So the Czech embassy was really the point of contact for me, and the government officials there were kind enough to help me get my transcripts."

While he was completing his coursework at Montclair State College, Dr. Calzada had a fortuitous encounter with a fellow Spaniard, Dr. Angel Pellicer, who had completed a postdoctoral fellowship at Columbia University with Dr. Richard Axel, obtained a job at New York University (NYU) School of Medicine, and opened a research lab. "In April 1981, he invited me to come and work for him as a research assistant," he stated. "So I was able to quit my job at the plastics factory and work on projects involving cancer research and animal models for leukemia and genetic engineering that were developing."

However, after enduring several brutal New Jersey winters, the tropically bred Calzada decided to head to South Florida in late 1983 for a vacation and scope out the job market. Miraculously, he landed a job almost equivalent to the one he had been doing at NYU at the University of Miami School of Medicine in Dr. Sally Atherton's research laboratory.

SECOM Embraces Dr. Calzada

While his research career at the University of Miami flourished, Dr. Calzada never lost sight of his ultimate goal of earning his medical degree, so he began applying to various medical schools, with the hope of having his credits from Cuba transferred. Unfortunately, he was rejected or placed on the alternate list at most of the schools he applied to during that time.

Enter a savior called SECOM (Southeastern College of Osteopathic Medicine).

"I didn't know much about osteopathic medicine at the time, but a friend introduced me to a radiology fellow who worked at Biscayne General Hospital," said Dr. Calzada, who became an American citizen in 1986. "He explained to me over the phone what a D.O. was and that if I wanted to be a caring, compassionate physician, my avenue was to be a D.O. I asked if I could meet him, so I went to his office. By the time I left, I was completely convinced that not only was my avenue to become a physician the D.O. route, but that I wanted to be like that guy. It's amazing how a mentor can affect your life. He wrote a letter of recommendation for me to SECOM, and I got accepted. I also applied for a navy scholarship because I didn't know how else I was going to get financing to pay for tuition being that I was an immigrant."

Attending SECOM proved to be a blessing for Dr. Calzada for a number of reasons because it was during this time when he met his wife, Maria, who was a first-year optometry student at Southeastern University of the Health Sciences—the precursor to NSU's Health Professions Division—while Dr. Calzada was a first-year osteopathic medical student. In April 1993, a month before their respective graduations, they officially wed.

After graduating from SECOM, Dr. Calzada completed his family medicine internship in June 1994 at Naval Hospital Jacksonville in Jacksonville, Florida, which was followed by a family medicine residency at St. Vincent's Medical Center in Jacksonville, which he resumed in June 1997 after completing his three-year service commitment as a general medical officer in the Atlantic Fleet.

During his stint in the navy, Dr. Calzada had the chance to experience many memorable moments, but one of the most heartwarming occurred when he was deployed to the Black Sea and visited a port in Romania called Constanza. "While we were there, we helped out at a facility called Casa Esperanta that served as home for over 30 HIV-positive kids," said Dr. Calzada, who provided medical care to his shipmates on their various voyages. "We put together a working crew of 15 sailors and did things like fix toilets, paint walls, and generally refurbish the house."

It was there where Dr. Calzada came into contact with an eight-year-old girl named Oana, who left an instantaneous—and indelible—impression on him. "She had been born HIV positive by antibodies but was not infected," he stated. "Even though she was HIV negative, Oana was rejected by her family because of the stigma of having HIV or AIDS. I fell in love with Oana, who clung to me the whole time I was there, so I called Maria and said I have to bring this girl home. Unfortunately, my captain informed me that since we were on a warship, I couldn't bring her back with me but that I could arrange for someone to adopt her. Through the navy community, we helped get her adopted by a navy couple stationed in Bahrain."

NSU Looms on Professional Horizon

With his military commitments met and his residency training completed, Dr. Calzada took at a stab at launching a private practice but found that something elemental was missing in the process. "I worked at several places attempting to start a private practice, but my interest was really in community health and academia," said Dr. Calzada, who joined the University of Florida College of Medicine as a faculty member with the responsibility of serving as medical director of the Duval County Health Department WestJax Clinic.

"Throughout my navy career, my strong interest in community health and population health was pretty evident," said Dr. Calzada, who remained at the University of Florida until July 2003. "I wanted to do family medicine and be a primary care physician, but I also wanted to extend that care to communities and not just individuals, so I pursued a master of public health degree from the University of South Florida College of Public Health and graduated in 2001. It was very exciting and rewarding to engage at that level, so I went a step further and completed a faculty development fellowship in family medicine through the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill to improve my teaching skills."

"I have a great sense of gratitude to the college, to osteopathic medicine, and to this country for giving me the opportunity to have achieved my dreams," Dr. Calzada proclaimed. "My American dream was not just about having a large house and an expensive car. It was about achieving my professional goals and giving back. One of the satisfactions I have is that among all the problems this beautiful country faces, there is enough goodness out there and enough people who recognize the possibilities that others may possess. My coming back to NSU-COM and being part of the organization and contributing to its success is just my way of paying back the many opportunities I was given."

Although his career was reaching new heights, Dr. Calzada had a strong yearning to return to South Florida—and reconnect with his osteopathic medical roots. "I always wanted to come back to South Florida and the osteopathic profession and give back whatever I could," he explained. "So when a position opened at NSU-COM to join the faculty as an assistant professor and teach in the Palmetto General Hospital Family Medicine Residency program, I jumped at the chance."

Since joining NSU's College of Osteopathic Medicine in August 2003, Dr. Calzada has spent the past five years climbing the proverbial corporate ladder. A promotion to the position of chair of the Department of Family Medicine in early 2005 was subsequently followed by being named as medical director of NSU-COM clinics in April 2006, which led to his current appointment as assistant dean of clinical operations. Since his arrival at NSU—and to better understand the complexity of

Pictured in this family portrait in Cuba during the early 1960s are (from left): Dora (sister); Arminde (mother); Dr. Calzada; Eduardo (brother); and Idania (sister).

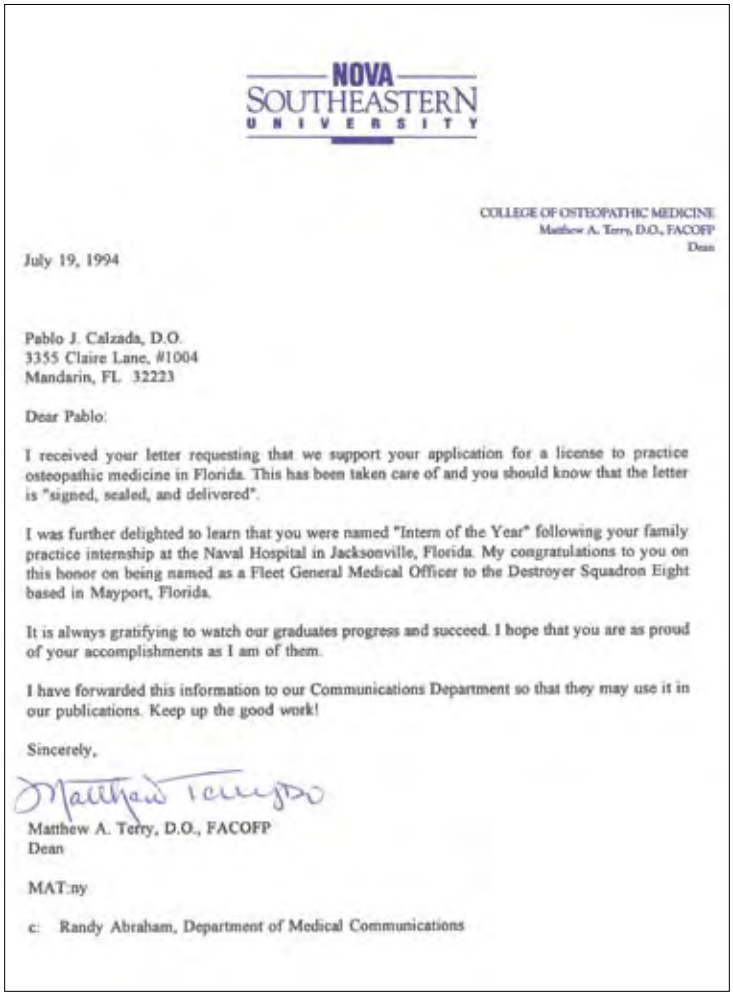
issues in health care delivery—he completed a health policy fellowship offered by Ohio University in partnership with NYCOM and the AOA in 2005.

As he celebrates his fifth anniversary at NSU-COM, Dr. Calzada is looking toward the future by continuing to provide patient care while indulging his interest in clinical and primary care research. "I've always kept active in providing patient care by seeing patients by myself or with residents at least one day a week," said Dr. Calzada, who also served as interim DME at Broward General Medical Center from June 2007 through March 2008. "I have also maintained several ongoing projects in which some research is being done at the primary care level to look at what we can do to improve our medical clinics.

"I participated in a project in which we did some community engagement with NSU's Center for Psychological Studies to conduct a combined interdisciplinary approach to help enhance the level of care we provide," he added. "I also engaged in a project at our North Miami Beach clinic by having a postdoctoral fellow from the psychology school come down and counsel patients we were dealing with who had mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety, so they could be seen promptly within our setting instead of having to be referred out. I am also working with the Applied Research Center at NSU's Fischler School of Education and Human Services. There are two Ph.D. faculty members—Tom Kennedy and Alex Edmonds—who have collaborated with me to design a project to measure the effectiveness of using biofeedback as an intervention with diabetic patients and see how much they can improve their sugar control by adding biofeedback as part of their treatment module."

When he's not busy working, Dr. Calzada spends as much time as possible with Maria, who works in a LensCrafters' office in Coral Springs and is opening her own practice, his daughters Cristina and Andrea, and sons Paul and Joseph.

"I have a great sense of gratitude to the college, to osteopathic medicine, and to this country for giving me the opportunity to have achieved my dreams," he humbly proclaimed. "My American dream was not just about having a large house and an expensive car. It was about achieving my professional goals and giving back. One of the satisfactions I have is that among all the problems this beautiful country faces, there is enough goodness out there and enough people who recognize the possibilities that others may possess. My coming back to NSU-COM and being part of the organization and contributing to its success is just my way of paying back the many opportunities I was given."



NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE
Matthew A. Terry, D.O., FACOFP
Dean

July 19, 1994

Pablo J. Calzada, D.O.
3355 Claire Lane, #1004
Mandarin, FL 32223

Dear Pablo:

I received your letter requesting that we support your application for a license to practice osteopathic medicine in Florida. This has been taken care of and you should know that the letter is "signed, sealed, and delivered".

I was further delighted to learn that you were named "Intern of the Year" following your family practice internship at the Naval Hospital in Jacksonville, Florida. My congratulations to you on this honor on being named as a Fleet General Medical Officer to the Destroyer Squadron Eight based in Mayport, Florida.

It is always gratifying to watch our graduates progress and succeed. I hope that you are as proud of your accomplishments as I am of them.

I have forwarded this information to our Communications Department so that they may use it in our publications. Keep up the good work!

Sincerely,

Matthew A. Terry, D.O., FACOFP
Dean

MAT:ny

c: Randy Abraham, Department of Medical Communications

Students Sharpen Clinical Skills During Medical Mission to Nicaragua

By Emmie Barford, OMS-III and CMDA 2008 Mission Trip Coordinator

In March 2008, the college's Christian Medical and Dental Association teamed up once again with First Baptist Church of Fort Lauderdale to go to Nicaragua and do medical mission work. This year, we had almost 50 participants from the colleges of osteopathic medicine, dental medicine, and allied health and nursing at NSU.

This was our third year working with First Baptist Church, Dr. Nour Sirkir, and his wife, Carolyn. Some of the money for this trip came from bake sales and towel sales; however, the majority was raised through very successful anatomy reviews put together by CMDA Vice President Jessica Cuello and many wonderful tutors who volunteered their time to help our cause.

We flew into Managua late in the evening on March 15 and spent the night at the Samaritan Inn—the hostel at the Sirkirs' compound. The next morning we attended a lovely outdoor local church service for Palm Sunday and then left by bus for Cuapa, a rural village located a four-hour bus ride east of Managua in the mountains. In Cuapa, half of us stayed in a rural hotel while the other half stayed in a generous Cuapa resident's private home. We set up our clinic in the local church and saw patients Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and half of Thursday. We traveled back to Managua on Thursday and returned that evening to the Samaritan Inn, where we spent the rest of our nights. We left Nicaragua on a red-eye flight late Saturday evening and arrived back in Fort Lauderdale early Easter morning.

We did our clinical work in Cuapa, with medical and dental clinics set up in a makeshift clinic at the church, using sheets and wire to divide about eight different exam rooms as well as dental and pharmacy areas. We had four doctors, two nurses, an EMT, and two dentists working with us and were able to see about 400 patients. We donated our remaining medications and supplies to the Sirkirs for them to use at their local clinic in Managua and distribute anywhere else they might be needed.

During our clinic days, we had teams of two to three medical students seeing patients and then presenting to the doctors. We had about three to four dental teams going at once doing everything from cleaning to tooth extraction. We also had a lab station for taking blood glucose, urine dipstick, and pregnancy tests. A number of the patients complained of musculoskeletal aches and pains, which were attended to by OPP fellow Joy Kang and those assisting her. We also dealt with issues such as diabetes, urinary tract infections, rashes, colds, parasites, and prostatic hypertrophy.

On our two free days, we went on a "canopy tour" zip-lining on platforms through treetops on the side of a volcano,

swam in a volcanic lake, visited Volcan Masaya (an active volcano), and toured the Masaya artist's market. We also had some interesting adventures on the trip, which included

- climbing to the "monolito" in Cuapa
- forgetting the pain medication suitcase at the airport and trekking back to Managua for it
- eating "hamburgers" made from a slice of ham, thousand island dressing, and white bread
- taking showers by pouring buckets of water over our heads since Cuapa only has running water a few hours a day
- a few scary spiders
- a long line for some kind person's private outhouse on the bus ride trip to Cuapa

All in all, it was a fantastic trip and a great privilege to help the people of Cuapa and work together on our medical and spiritual mission.

Candace White Shares Personal Experiences

"One of the trip's highlights was working in the clinic in Cuapa. The people were beautiful and appreciative of the services we were offering. I honestly felt like a real physician for eight days. Having the opportunity to work with classmates and physicians to problem-solve and determine what disease or problems may be occurring with the patients was exciting. It put all of those late nights of studying into perspective.

I think I have found a true passion in mission work. I enjoy learning about other cultures and the most common disease states seen in various countries besides the United States. I like the hands-on experience you receive by practicing medicine because every disease state is not like what you would expect out of a textbook. I was also delighted to discover that many of the students at NSU are compassionate and care about serving and helping others. Although we are all here to receive a quality education, our common bond on the mission trip was that there is more to life than just our world. Time passes by so quickly, and none of us want to look up and wonder where the time went.

When dental student Melissa Ngo was bitten mysteriously by a bug, she had a terrible allergic reaction. She requested that OMS-III Alean Frawley come to check on her, so, Alean, Damilola Olupona, and I rushed to her room once we got the news. Sure enough, her face had begun to swell and hives were beginning to appear all over her body. Alean began to check Melissa's vitals, and they all appeared within normal range. However, while listening to her lungs, we did hear some wheezing. Alean began to use her hands to gently massage Melissa's temples to calm her down and then moved to her upper extremities to relax her muscles.

Melissa was so tense and upset that all of this had happened the first day we arrived to Cuapa, she was overtaken with sadness—and we weren't going to leave her side until she felt better. Alean broke into spiritual song, and we gathered around Melissa's bed and began to join in with Alean. We hummed along as she sang at least five spirituals. Amazingly, after each song, Melissa appeared to feel and look better. We sent a colleague to get one of the physicians to come down and check on Melissa that night. However, by the time the doctor came, Alean had already worked her magic.

Whether it was her special touch, angelic voice, or comforting words, I witnessed the power of osteopathic medicine and spiritual healing. The next morning, Melissa had no swelling, her hives were completely gone, and she had the brightest smile on her face. What a great way to start our week in Cuapa, with everyone supporting one another. For all of those that were in the room that evening, I am sure they would agree it was a night to remember."

-Candace White, OMS-II-

Nicaragua Mission Trip Participants

Lelah Abdulah, M.D.
John Agostinelli, D.O. (First Baptist)
Martha Agostinelli, (First Baptist)
Emmie Barford (osteopathic medicine)
Keren Braithewaite (osteopathic medicine)
Adriana Cioara (First Baptist)
Jessica Cuello (osteopathic medicine)
Jourdan Donoho (First Baptist)
Jared Foster
April Foster (osteopathic medicine)
Chrisropher Franco (osteopathic medicine)
Alean Frawley (osteopathic medicine)
Katie Heinz (osteopathic medicine)
Linda Heinz
Jones John (osteopathic medicine)
Rebecca Joyce (First Baptist)
Maitri Shelly Kalia (osteopathic medicine)
Nimisha Kalia, M.D.
Joy Haeshin Kang (osteopathic medicine)
Claudia Knight (osteopathic medicine)
Avanthi Kopuri (dental medicine)
David Lamborn (osteopathic medicine)
Matthew Laughlin (osteopathic medicine)
Amy Lee (osteopathic medicine)
Elia Martinez, M.D.
Dr. Vi Dinh Ngo (dentist)
Melissa Ngo (dental medicine)
Carol Nieman (First Baptist)
Damilola Olupona (osteopathic medicine)
Rita Patel (dental medicine)
Kelly Quinn (allied health and nursing)
Naveen Raj (osteopathic medicine)
Michael Ree (osteopathic medicine)
Tim Rice (First Baptist)
Gerri Romero (First Baptist)
Tim Scott, EMT (First Baptist)
Shaheen Shamji (osteopathic medicine)
Dr. James Stoycheff (dentist)
Natalia Toro (NSU undergraduate)
Chrissy Truglio (allied health and nursing)
Tanya Wallace (dental medicine)
Candace White (osteopathic medicine)
Nitha Yoyakey (osteopathic medicine)

Eye-Opening Experiences in Ecuador

By OMS-II Jacquie Heim

For 41 students from Nova Southeastern University's College of Osteopathic Medicine and the College of Allied Health and Nursing's Physician Assistant Program, the morning of Friday, March 14 was more than just another day of exams and the first day of spring break. For these students, that was the morning they left their books at home, packed their bags full of scrubs and diagnostic equipment, and set out on a 10-day trip to be spent serving over 1,100 patients in medically underserved communities in Ecuador. Fourteen health care providers including physicians, physician assistants, nurses, and an EMT joined our students to form a cohesive team committed to international medical outreach in areas of immense need.

Ecuador's capital, Quito, greeted our eager team of 55 volunteers with a roomful of exotic fruits and a weakening altitude. However, the most impressive greeting was that given by a population in need of adequate health care. Local schools provided the shelter for our two makeshift clinics in Quito. We shuffled the students' benches around in order to utilize them as exam beds and as the dividers between "exam rooms." Once our triage station was up and running, the clinics became swollen with large families in need of medical attention, with each patient presenting with a 10-year history of every health-related issue that had never been addressed by a physician.

From Quito, we traveled by bus to the smaller cities of Chaco and Baeza. There, we were able to use the buildings of existing clinics, which allowed us to offer individual, private exam rooms for our patients. Many of the people we saw in this region had come from distant villages, having traveled for several hours just to see the health professionals of our group. As we packed up to leave for the day, we were surrounded by the arms of little children reaching out to us for toothbrushes, toothpaste, sunscreen, donated toys—or maybe just a little attention.

After spending two extended clinic days in the cities of Baeza and Chaco, we continued on to Tena—a village nestled deep in the hot and humid Amazon. Of the communities our group visited, Tena was, by far, in greatest need of health care and services. We saw patients who admitted they had never in their lives seen a physician. While performing a physical exam on a young boy in Tena, one of my fellow students found several cervical lymph nodes to be easily palpable. It quickly became apparent that he was suffering from generalized lymphadenopathy, and there was little we could do for his condition. In the next room over, another student was examining a child's nose and mouth when she found nasal polyps, indicative of cystic fibrosis. The vast majority of the population we saw in Tena was indigenous and spoke Quechua and only a few key words and phrases in Spanish. Local volunteers from the village offered to translate from Quechua to Spanish, which would then be interpreted by our own translators from Spanish to English.

Challenges to providing adequate health care presented themselves everywhere. Our makeshift clinics were by no means ideal, but they sufficed. Unfortunately, our traveling pharmacy ran out of several antibiotics, pain relievers, vitamins, and steroid medications before we even arrived at our last clinic site. Although the language barrier was frustrating and taxing for everyone, as first- and second-year medical students, we began to understand that the gravity of a patient's condition can be heard in just the tone of a voice or read by the look on a face. Not only was the trip an eye-opening experience in regard to unusual medical conditions, it opened our eyes to the desperation of a people that lack the privilege of ready access to health care.

Faculty Participants

Mike Funk, P.A.

James Howell, M.D., M.P.H.

Krishnamurti Munoz, D.O.

Naushira Pandya, M.D., CMD

Students

Charles Aldrich (physician assistant)

Amanda Bailey (osteopathic medicine)

Chris Bailey (osteopathic medicine)

Kelly Balestra (physician assistant)

Deidre Bass (osteopathic medicine)

Sona Bhatti (osteopathic medicine)

Gracie Blum (osteopathic medicine)

Erin Carnahan (physician assistant)

Catherine Cashman (osteopathic medicine)

Mary Chrisochos (osteopathic medicine)

Rayhanur Chowdhury (osteopathic medicine)

Ari Cohen (osteopathic medicine)

Randy Daniel (osteopathic medicine)

Justin Disanto (osteopathic medicine)

Lydia Ditirro (osteopathic medicine)

Aleksandr Dubrovskiy (osteopathic medicine)

Sarah Duquette (osteopathic medicine)

Jordan Fabrikant (osteopathic medicine)

Genny Feinberg (osteopathic medicine)

Alan George (osteopathic medicine)

Brenda George (osteopathic medicine)

Elizabeth Giangiulio (physician assistant)

Joshua Green (osteopathic medicine)

Taylor Haston (osteopathic medicine)

Jacqueline Heim (osteopathic medicine)

Shawn Iverson (osteopathic medicine)

Bob Kostoroski (osteopathic medicine)

Prachi Kothari (osteopathic medicine)

Lindsay Lacorte (osteopathic medicine)

Thuy Le (osteopathic medicine)

Ritchelle Martinez (osteopathic medicine)

Aaron Mickelson (osteopathic medicine)

Omar Mubaidin (osteopathic medicine)

Kristine Nelson (osteopathic medicine)

Adam Phillips (osteopathic medicine)

Shana Rissmiller (osteopathic medicine)

Ryan Schroeder (osteopathic medicine)

Shruti Shanker (osteopathic medicine)

Gauri Sunkersett (osteopathic medicine)

Ben Tishman (osteopathic medicine)

Alan Turner (osteopathic medicine)

Altruism on Display at Jamaica Medical Outreach Excursion

By Carrie Goldstein, Freelance Writer

The opportunity to participate in a medical mission is one that I hope all people in or outside the medical field have the opportunity to experience in their lifetime. It demonstrates the power of a committed, small group of people and highlights the incredible life we are able to lead.

Over 160 volunteers, medical students, and faculty members from NSU's Health Professions Division attended to more than 5,000 local residents during the annual medical outreach mission to Jamaica, which was coordinated by NSU-COM and took place over a 10-day period in June. This yearly trip is in its eighth year visiting both the areas of Kingston and St. Mary to reach as many local patients as possible. Teams from the fields of medicine, dentistry, occupational therapy, public health, pharmacy, optometry, and physical therapy worked together to bring the most comprehensive medical personnel and supplies to these areas. Led by Paula Anderson-Worts, D.O., M.P.H., associate professor of family medicine and public health, and Don Daly from CR Communications, the group spent six months leading up to the trip securing donated medical devices and pharmaceutical products.

The living conditions of the communities served by the medical mission contingent are best described as bleak. Most of the residents live in shantytown-like conditions that consist of small one- or two-room houses with even less land than living space. The access to health care in these rural areas of Jamaica is limited at best, with many only served by the participants of this medical outreach program.

The residents in these areas are in desperate need of the most basic medical treatment and hygiene. The two most common medical issues seen are diabetes and hypertension. However, in comparison to diabetic patients in the United States who are on a treatment regimen to monitor their sugar levels two to three times a day, diabetic patients in these rural towns are getting their sugar checked once a year by a

doctor from the NSU-COM medical team. They can't afford a blood glucose monitor, and even if the device was donated, they would not have the ability to pay for test strips or the access to order them consistently. To combat this problem, the health care professionals focused on educating patients about lifestyle changes they could make to improve their diabetes or prevent it from worsening. Even then, members of the health care team were told by the patients that they did not have an array of food options to choose from, so they ate what was available even if their health was sacrificed.

Even some of the clinics and churches the health care team worked out of were compromised. One site had to borrow electricity from a neighboring house and set up triage outside. The dental team members worked outside every day in an alley next to a church, using stadium chairs for their patients to lean back on while they performed extractions. As with any general medical practice, ailments can range from the common cold to more serious conditions. This year, the team was lucky to once again have David Perloff, M.D.—a Broward cardiologist—participate because he was able to bring an EKG machine and echocardiogram with him. This service was unique to the medical mission and proved to be a great benefit to the patients that were served.

One benefit for the participating medical students was the hands-on clinical experience they received, which allowed them the opportunity to perform pelvic exams, pap smears, and prostate examinations. The students were also able to see the effects of conditions that are treated more expediently in the United States, such as untreated rashes, deteriorated cataracts, and the effects of uncorrected congenital heart disease.

These opportunities and the altruistic spirit of the trip are truly inspirational and make the experience worthwhile for all involved.

Health Care Practitioners

DENTISTS
Tyler Blackburg, D.M.D.
Ennio DeLeon, D.M.D.
Diane Ede-Nichols, D.M.D.
Juan Espanol, D.M.D.
Harry Lehrer, D.M.D.
Hector Naranjo, D.M.D.
Maria Segrera, D.M.D.
Daniel Torres, D.M.D.

PHARMACISTS
Lori Arena, Pharm.D.
Nancy Borja, Pharm.D.
Emily Hoffman, Pharm.D.
Jodie Malhotra, Pharm.D.
Jehan Marino, Pharm.D.
Katherine Phillips, Pharm.D.
Kelsey Weber, Pharm.D.

OPTOMETRISTS
Michael Bacigalupi, O.D.
Gregory Black, O.D.
Noel Henry, O.D.
Sherrol Reynolds, O.D.

PUBLIC HEALTH
Chinua Alleyne
Khadija Anderson
Delia Celestine, M.P.H.
Nicole Kellier, M.P.H.
Pilar Martin, M.D., M.P.H.
Yoko Young San

PHYSICAL THERAPISTS
Dawn Brown-Cross, Ed.D.
Komal Shah

MEDICAL DOCTORS
Paula Anderson-Worts, D.O.
Steve Andrews, M.D.
Clarence Clarke, D.O.
Oswaldo Domingos-Pitra, M.D.
Joanna Drowos, D.O.
Keisha Goodison, D.O.
Carol Liebel, D.O.
Mayur Manair, M.D.
John May, M.D.
Krishnamurti Munoz, D.O.
Naresh Pathak, M.D.
David Perloff, M.D.
Luzan Phillpotts, D.O.
Sandi Scott-Holman, D.O.
Delisa Skeete-Henry, M.D.
David Thomas, M.D., J.D.

Students

DENTAL
Atif Ahmed
Domenic Aloise
Nicole Berger
Damian Black
Maria Boutsikos
Amy Bouvier
Mangal Chandarana
Payal Chokshi
Salvatore Colombo
Daniel Fenton
Heidi Finkelstein
Scott Fulp
Hagan Hastings
Maria Andreina Izarra
Ali Jadali-Araghi
Manuel Jimenez
Martha Lorrius
Michelle Mayer
Shannon McCarthy
John McLin
Neda Moghaddam
Melissa Ngo
Thomas Niemi
Michelle Palmer
Yadiris Reynoso
Jason Rose
Ryan Smith
Jenna Zonneveld
William Sackheim
Sasan Sani
Fred Tepedino
Blake Winokur

PHARMACY
Kristin Cipolla
Angeliza Del Rosario
Chelsea Fuenzalida
Angela Garcia
Nicole Lamb
Ryan Nowicki
Efleda Orpilla
Lea Schilit
Danielle Talleri

PHYSICAL THERAPY
Payal Magiawala

MEDICINE
Joan Bankhead
Sagir Bera
Tanaz Beraham
Donna Dalpe
Watson Ducatel
Maurico Escobar (UM)
Ingy Fouad
Tracey Harpaul (UM)
Aisha Khan
Dulce Mastarinas
Poonam Mathur
Clark Montague
Jenine Paner
Nikita Patrawala
Crystal Rego
Meghna Shah
Michelle Tom
Robinson Trevil
Audrea Vaughan
Candace White
(UM: University of Miami)

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY
Ashley Davis
Latia Kirby

OPTOMETRY
Marlyne Alcinor
Smith Blanc
Alan Bui
Christina Chan
Jennie Cho
Iliana Garrido
Tracey Hering
Oanh Hoang
Cynthia Joseph
Karen Malcolm-Griffith
Erin Latter
Zarrin Naqvi
Thienhuong Nguyen
Judy Thi Nguyen
Willnella Peters
Magdalena Saint Louis
Desiree Stryker
Phong Tran
Tammy Wallace
Tascha Wells
Chue-Mai Yang

Volunteers

Nadia Anderson
Alden Anderson
Heather Clarke
Clover Pat Daly
Don Daly
Paulette Dennis
Dorothy Goodison
Kirk Lyttleton
Crystal-Ann Marriott-Blake
Erica McClymont
George Robinson
Christina Thomas
Brett Tyler
Conroy Anderson
Maria Bernal
Natalie Clarke
Danika Daly
Yannick Daly
Carrie Goldstein
Lashonda Linton
Nikita Maniar
Nadege Matenap
Julie McClymont
Kush Shah
Toni Tribble
Edgar Worts
Marilyn Zabielinski

Auxiliary

Armani Anderson
Milicent Anderson
Zoe Clarke
Averil Harris
Beris Anderson
Romario Clarke
Alfred Harris
Nyjemela Harris
Alexander Worts

NSU-COM Alumni Association Executive Committee

Past Presidents

Pre 1995 - Holly Pomeranz, D.O. ('86)
1996 - Daniel McBath, D.O. ('90)
1997 - Orlando Garcia, D.O. ('94)
1998 - Michael Gervasi, D.O. ('87)
1999 - Tamer Gozleveli, D.O. ('94)
2000 - John Geake, D.O. ('93)
2001 - Isidro Pujol, D.O. ('94)
2002 - Jeffrey Grove, D.O. ('90)
2003 - Glenn Moran, D.O. ('88)
2004 - Kenneth Johnson, D.O. ('91)
2005 - Steven Cimerberg, D.O. ('87)
2006 - Ronald Renuart, D.O. ('90)
2007 - Gregory James, D.O. ('88)

Trustees at Large

Annette Da Silva, D.O. ('96)
Tamer Gozleveli, D.O. ('87)
Mayrene Hernandez, D.O. ('01)
Stephen MacDonald, D.O. ('90)
Glenn Moran, D.O. ('88)
William Stager, D.O. ('89)

2008-2009 Officers

Robert Blackburn, D.O. ('86)
President

Ronald Tolchin, D.O. ('89)
President Elect

Daniel Carney, D.O. ('95)
Vice President

Paula Anderson-Worts, D.O. ('94)
Secretary

Andrew Gross, D.O. ('93)
Treasurer

Gregory James, D.O. ('88)
Immediate Past President

Howard L. Neer, D.O.
Associate Dean, Alumni Affairs

Lynne Cawley, M.Sc.
Director, Alumni Affairs

Living Tribute Honorees

2002 – Mary Smith Allegro
2003 – Arthur Snyder, D.O.
2004 – Lori Dribin, Ph.D.
2005 – Edye Groseclose, Ph.D.
2006 – Howard Hada, Ph.D.
2008 – Cyril Blavo, D.O.

Distinguished Service

2007 – Mary Smith Allegro

Celebration of Excellence Distinguished Alumni

1999 – Archie McLean, D.O. ('88)
2000 – James Turner, D.O. ('88)
2001 – Daniel McBath, D.O. ('90)
2003 – Joel Rush, D.O. ('85)
2004 – Jeffrey Grove, D.O. ('90)
2005 – Gregory James, D.O. ('88)
2006 – Glenn Moran, D.O. ('88)
2007 – Ross Zafonte, D.O. ('85)
2008 – Majdi Ashchi, D.O. ('89)

Alumni in the News

Linda Delo, D.O ('86) and **Michelle Powell-Cole, D.O.** ('95) were 2 of 41 Florida physicians who were honored as Champions of Culturally Competent Care by FMQAI—the Medicare Quality Improvement Organization for Florida.

John Geake, D.O. ('93) was featured on WINK News in Southwest Florida and discussed being a hometown doctor in the rural community of Moore Haven, where he provides care for about 1,600 patients through his local practice.

Jared Lechtenstein, D.O. ('01) has joined the cardiology practice of David Steiman, M.D., who has offices located in Plantation and Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Dr. Lechtenstein completed six years of internal medicine and cardiology training at Mount Sinai Medical Center, is board eligible in cardiology and nuclear cardiology, and board certified in internal medicine and comprehensive echocardiography.

Will Kirby, D.O., FOACD ('00), who is now a board-certified dermatologist practicing clinical and cosmetic dermatology in Beverly Hills, California, can currently be seen in his second season as a featured physician on the popular TV show *Dr. 90210*, which is broadcast on the E! network. Dr. Kirby is the only osteopathic physician featured on the show. He also made a guest appearance on the season finale of the Comedy Central program *Reality Bites Back* and was featured on TLC's *LA Ink* and a Canadian program called *Reality Obsessed*. In addition, Dr. Kirby will be making a presentation on "The Art of Laser Tattoo Removal" at the upcoming AOA Annual Convention and Scientific Seminar in Las Vegas, Nevada, as well as the 16th Annual World Congress on Anti-Aging in December.

Merideth Norris, D.O. ('00), who is a family physician at Blue Hill Memorial Hospital in Blue Hill, Maine, recently received the Maine Osteopathic Association Young Physician of the Year Award. The accolade is presented to a D.O. who has been in practice for at least one full year and not more than five years, has already demonstrated involvement as a practitioner and as a member of his or her community, and has also demonstrated the potential to become a major force in osteopathic medicine in the future.

Paul Smith, D.O. ('07) was named outstanding first-year resident in the Department of Family Medicine at Texas Tech University-Amarillo. He also was elected vice chair of the Section of Resident Physicians for the Texas Academy of Family Physicians.

Paula Zozzaro-Smith, D.O. ('07) was named outstanding first-year resident in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Texas Tech University-Amarillo. She also received the Intern Research Award for her project entitled "Colonization of Methicillin Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* in Pregnant Women."

2008-2009 Annual Campaign

Nova Southeastern University College of Osteopathic Medicine has grown in size and reputation, and the achievements and success of our alumni are reflective of the quality of education received at NSU-COM.

Over the next several weeks, you will be receiving information about our Annual Campaign. NSU-COM provided you with the foundation on which you have built your professional success. The education you received was strong, the clinical training was excellent, and opportunities such as medical missions and health fairs helped prepare you for your life as a physician. And our superb faculty members continue to dedicate their lives to training young men and women to become the best health care professionals in their field.

There are several opportunities and ways to show your support. From student scholarships to "buying a bench," your gift benefits the COM and supports the lives of others.

If you have made a gift to the Annual Fund in the past, we thank you for your donation and hope that we can continue to have your support in the 2008-09 campaign. If you haven't made a monetary donation recently, please take the time to give back to the profession and support future generations of osteopathic physicians. Any gift, large or small, can make a significant difference in the lives of those coming after you.

Thank you for your support of and commitment to NSU-COM.

Lynora Bassett Curtis, D.O. ('01) welcomes class of 2008 graduate Yvette Tivoli, D.O. (right) into the NSU-COM Alumni Association.

NSU-COM Alumni Shine at FSACOFP Convention

NSU-COM was well represented at the 28th Annual Florida Society of American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians Convention and National Family Practice Update, which was held in Orlando from July 30 through August 3, as over a dozen full-time and clinical faculty members presented lectures. A reception was held for alumni during the conference that was attended by approximately 85 alumni, students, and assorted dignitaries. Ronnie Martin, D.O., FACOFP, president of the national ACOFP, and Carlo J. DiMarco, D.O., president of the American Osteopathic Association, addressed the crowd.

NSU-COM's Office of Alumni Affairs also boosted the college's profile by having an exhibit booth onsite to greet alumni and others in attendance. Several students attended the conference and helped work the booth. Students in attendance were Brandon Weeks, Amanda Bailey, Lacy Knowles, Maansi Doshi, Kurt Wukitsh, Donna Dalpe, Buck Scholtz, Matt Levine, Emmie Barford, and Avery-Lee Thornhill. The COM Alumni Association also sponsored a bus one evening to take NSU-COM and LECOM students to City Place in Orlando.

One of the convention highlights was the installation of 1989 NSU-COM alumnus William Stager, D.O., as the incoming FSACOFP president. 1986 alumnus Robert Blackburn, D.O., the current president of the college's Alumni Association, introduced Dr. Stager, who was recognized at the evening reception with a plaque and a pair of personalized cufflinks from the NSU-COM Alumni Association. In addition, 1986 alumnae Bridget Bellingar, D.O., was named Physician of the Year by the organization.

Alumni Association Fund Honor Roll

In the spring of 1999, NSU-COM launched an alumni-based fundraising effort to generate dollars that would be used to create an endowment fund to reduce future tuition costs for NSU-COM students and produce a funding pool that would be utilized for discretionary purposes as determined by the Alumni Association Executive Committee. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the following list of donors; however, if you notice an error or omission, please contact Lynne Cawley in the Office of Alumni Affairs at (954) 262-1029 to rectify the matter. For example, the college has received a number of donation cards with credit-card pledges where no name is listed. The Office of Alumni Affairs cannot process the credit-card donation without a name indicated, so if you have not received a letter of thanks from NSU-COM but know you have made a credit-card contribution, please contact Ms. Cawley at the aforementioned phone number.

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** in honor of 2008 Living Tribute Award recipient Dr. Cyril Blavo*

Cumulative List (1999-2008)

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Represents donors that have made a significant deferred gift via life insurance policies, insurances, or trusts.

Dr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Grove ('90)
(Gift: $500,000 life insurance policy)

Dr. Albert Whitehead
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Chancellor's Council ($5,000+)

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Dr. Tamer Gozleveli ('87)
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Alumni Association Fund Honor Roll

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Dr. Bridget Bellingar's Childhood Heartbreak Leads to Flourishing Career

By Scott Colton
Director of Medical Communications

Dr. Bellingar with her pride and joy, Hunter.

Life has a tendency to toss unexpected curveballs at all of us during various points in our lives. However, when a doting daughter loses her father at the tender age of five, the impact of that devastating loss undoubtedly plays a major role in many of her future decisions.

That was certainly the case for 1986 NSU-COM alumnae Bridget Ann Bellingar, D.O., who says the death of her father at age 29 after undergoing open-heart surgery led her to search for answers by pursuing a career in the medical field. "That experience definitely drove me to understand the medical issues of what really happened and to examine why he died so young," she said. "He had his surgery at Tampa General Hospital, which was one of the finest heart surgery facilities in Florida at that time. Unfortunately, in the 1960s, medicine wasn't as advanced and detailed as it is now, so you can only suspect that we just didn't have the knowledge then that we have now."

Dr. Bellingar, who was born and raised in Tampa, initially had planned to become a surgical assistant until her high school physics' teacher, Dr. Thomas, urged her to aim higher and continue on to medical school. In fact, to help her attain this goal, Dr. Thomas played an instrumental role in helping Dr. Bellingar obtain an academic scholarship at Hillsborough Community College, where she earned an A.A. degree.

After graduating from community college, Dr. Bellingar went on to earn her B.A. degree in biology from the University of South Florida. Prior to graduating, however, she had the privilege of spending a summer shadowing an osteopathic icon named Dr. Margaret Raffa in her Tampa-based office. "I spent a summer in her office to determine if I wanted to pursue the allopathic or osteopathic route," said Dr. Bellingar, who launched her medical career by volunteering as a candy striper while she was in high school. "Dr. Raffa was very kind to her patients and used manipulation, so after spending the summer with her, I knew I wanted to be just like her, so she was pretty instrumental in my choosing the osteopathic path."

Because a new school named Southeastern College of Osteopathic Medicine (SECOM) in North Miami Beach was the closest osteopathic college to Tampa, Dr. Bellingar had her heart set on studying there. However, when she failed to get accepted into SECOM's inaugural class in 1981, she did something that many would deem brave—if not a bit foolhardy. "I was so determined to get in that I actually moved from Tampa to North Miami Beach to be near the school," she explained. "I then let Dr. Morton Terry know I had moved two blocks away from the school even though I hadn't been

Dr. Bellingar and peers at their 1986 SECOM graduation.

accepted to the program yet–and I kept letting him know I was there."

Dr. Terry, who was the founder and president of SECOM, was understandably impressed with her obvious gumption. "When he asked me why I had moved down, I told him I had done so because I planned on getting into the college this time even though I was rejected the year before. He asked if I could afford to pay the annual tuition, which at that time was $10,500, and I of course said yes. I must have made a serious impression on him because he agreed to accept me into the incoming class that year."

It should have been a deliriously happy time for Dr. Bellingar, and it probably would have had it not been for one unhappy detail–lack of money. "I called my mother, who had now raised four kids on her own without my father, and told her I had gotten into SECOM, but we didn't know how we would get the money," she said. "About a week later, my mom called to tell me she had found the money. Thankfully, her boss had agreed to loan me the money at a five percent rate until I could pay him back when my school loans came through. That's how I was able to pay for my tuition."

Dr. Bellingar, who served as president of the Florida Society of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (FSACOFP) in 2005-06, remembers her years as a SECOM student fondly. "I was this naïve female coming from Tampa," she explained. "I had no friends there and didn't know anyone, but I was taken under a lot of wings by my fellow classmates. I even had my first bagel and cream cheese when I went to medical school. All in all, I had a great experience there and was treated very well. In fact, when my car broke down in my fourth year, the school graciously gave me a loan so I could buy another one and continue to travel on my monthly rotations."

After completing her internship at Metropolitan General Hospital in Pinellas Park, Florida, Dr. Bellingar continued to boldly plot her future on her terms by opening a small private family practice in Largo, Florida. "I knew I wanted to go into private practice right away," said Dr. Bellingar, who obtained a $30,000 loan from a local banker to open her practice. "In the beginning I basically did everything from drawing my patients' blood to checking their vitals. I would even take the billing home at night and do it by hand."

Today, her practice has expanded to eight rooms and a 13-person staff that includes two nurse practitioners, two massage therapists, and her mother, who helps manage the office. "One of the reasons I wanted to be in my own practice and not work for anyone else was so I could be the boss," explained Dr. Bellingar, who is board certified in family medicine, has a Certificate of Added Qualifications in geriatric medicine, and achieved her fellowship in 2006. "By doing so, I knew that when I got married I would not have to have my child raised by a nanny or placed in a daycare facility."

Now divorced, Dr. Bellingar is a single mom who takes a hands-on approach with both her patients and her 10-year-old son, Hunter. "I had the ability to be able to raise my son in my office," said Dr. Bellingar, who has staff appointments at three hospitals in the Largo and St. Petersburg areas. "I start seeing patients at 6:45 in the morning, so I wake Hunter up at 6:15 and we come to the office. My mother then takes him to school. I work four days a week until 1:00 p.m., pick Hunter up from school, and then spend the rest of the afternoon doing activities with him like biking, swimming, and playing golf. After he goes to bed at 8:00, that's the time I can catch up on things and work on my extracurricular professional activities for the ACOFP and FSACOFP. It makes for long days, but I feel it's important to spend quality time with my son."

Because she's successfully dealt with so many personal and professional challenges, Dr. Bellingar is able to pass her vast scope of knowledge and experience on to the next generation of female physicians. "All the female students who rotate through my practice have a new awareness that they can really do it on their own," she said. "They can have their own practice, raise a family, set their own hours–and avoid working for someone else while being their own boss."

Dr. Bellingar with Florida Governor Charlie Crist.

2008-09 Calendar of Events

October 26 - November 1, 2008

AOA 113th Annual Convention and Scientific Seminar
Las Vegas, Nevada
NSU-COM Booth #114
Alumni Luncheon – Monday, October 27, 2008 – 1:15-2:30 p.m. – Room TBD
Alumni Reception – Monday, October 27, 2008 – 7:00-9:00 p.m. in the Secret Garden and Dolphin Habitat at the Mirage Hotel and Casino

November 8-9, 2008

CE Medicolegal Conference
(jointly sponsored by BCOMA and NSU-COM)
NSU-COM Campus – Davie, Florida

January 31, 2009

Protecting Our Next Generation, Ages 0-3
NSU-COM Campus – Davie, Florida

February 5-8, 2009

Academic Corrections Health Care Conference
Hilton Airport – Fort Lauderdale, Florida

February 6-8, 2009

13th Annual Alumni Reunion and CME Program
Plantation/Davie, Florida
Renaissance Hotel (social events) and NSU-HPD Campus (CME)

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