

COM **OUTLOOK**

Spring 2018



KPCOM Students Lend Helping Hands to Puerto Rico

Contents

04



Features

04 Heartbreak and Heroism

M.S. DEM STUDENT AIDS HURRICANE VICTIMS IN PUERTO RICO

08 Phyllis J. Filker

ASSOCIATE DEAN'S CAREER PATH TRAVELS FROM DENTISTRY TO OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

12 Healthy Studies

NUTRITION DEGREE PROGRAM ADDS LUSTER TO KPCOM ACADEMIC OFFERINGS

17 Aiming High

NEW FELLOWSHIP MERGES EARLY INTEREST IN HEALTH CARE WITH MENTORS AND THE COMMUNITY

20 Med-Tech Club

GROUP PLANS TO MAKE CUTTING-EDGE CONNECTIONS

22 India

MEDICAL OUTREACH ODYSSEY SERVES DUAL PURPOSE

24 Integrative Medicine Program Takes Its Place in the Osteopathic Mosaic

32 Alumni Spotlight on Tyler Cymet

ALUMNUS CREDITS NSU FOR MAJOR ROLE IN HIS SUCCESS

22



24



Departments

01 Leadership Exchange

02 Interim Chancellor's COMmuniqué

03 In the News

KPCOM RECEIVES COCA APPROVAL FOR CLEARWATER SITE

26 Student COMmunications

28 Student Perspectives

30 Faculty COMmunications

36 Alumni in the News

39 Closing Notes

39



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Leadership Exchange



Welcome to the spring 2018 issue of *COM Outlook*.

These are exciting times for the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine with the planning of our site in Clearwater, which will be a part of NSU's new Tampa Bay Regional Campus. I'm happy to report that our application for the Clearwater location,

as well as our class size increase of 150 students, was approved by the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA). This was a substantial undertaking and a required step, which we passed with flying colors.

The Tampa Bay Regional Campus is in the process of being excavated and prepared, and our Clearwater Steering Committee has been formed. The committee members, who represent all areas of the college, will plan the layout, equipment selection, classroom technology, processes, and curriculum co-delivery between the Fort Lauderdale/Davie Campus and the Clearwater location.

The Steering Committee will assure a smooth transition from paper to reality. Weekly trips to Clearwater are now underway, and multiple partners have committed resources and facilities to the success of the additional location.

We have been overwhelmed by the outpouring of support from the Clearwater/Tampa community and would like to thank all who have come on board to be a part of this wonderful undertaking.

As we take on this new venture, we have every confidence in the exceptional education and services we provide to our students and look forward to bringing this opportunity to the Tampa Bay area.

Thanks to all of our alumni, faculty and staff members, students, and community partners for their continued support.

Guy M. Nehrenz, Ed.D., M.A., RRT

Senior Associate Dean of Osteopathic Medical Education

Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine

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Interim Chancellor's COMmunique



NSU's Health Professions Division (HPD) has evolved into one of the largest and most comprehensive health care education institutions in the United States, comprising 8 unique colleges and more than 60 degree and certificate programs.

In late January, NSU announced significant financial gifts, which resulted in the renaming of two HPD colleges. The College of Allopathic Medicine became the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Allopathic Medicine, while the College of Nursing was renamed the Ron and Kathy Assaf College of Nursing. This altruistic trend continued in February when a significant gift from Martin and Gail Press resulted in the renaming of the HPD Library.

From our newest college—the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Allopathic Medicine—to our oldest—the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine—each enhances NSU's esteem by providing high levels of innovation and distinctiveness. The allopathic college, which is in the process of matriculating its inaugural class, will offer students an innovative model of teaching and practicing medicine.

The osteopathic college, established in 1979, is distinguished by its hallmark D.O. program, but it also consists of five master's programs and one bachelor's program—with more on the horizon. Similarly, the Dr. Pallavi Patel College of Health Care Sciences has experienced explosive growth, with 10 distinct health care disciplines and 29 degree programs among its academic offerings.

The College of Pharmacy continues to push the envelope regarding innovation. To provide its students with the most up-to-date training, the college is launching a new Pharm.D. curriculum in August, which will focus on patient care and drug delivery and integrate leadership and professional development principles.

To provide students with the best hands-on training possible, the College of Optometry upgraded its Ophthalmic Optics/Contact Lens Lab and the Pediatrics/Low Vision Lab. Its Procedures Lab also was transformed with new exam rooms that include electronic presentation capabilities and video slit lamps, as well as a room with procedure simulation equipment.

In 2017, 12 students and 2 faculty members from the College of Dental Medicine were inducted into the Chi Psi chapter of Omicron Kappa Upsilon, the national dental honor society. Additionally, the college's faculty members are conducting cutting-edge research in areas such as diseases that develop bone lytic lesions.

The Ron and Kathy Assaf College of Nursing has much to be proud of as well. Its Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Program achieved a 100 percent pass rate on the state licensure exam in the 2016–2017 academic year, while its Entry B.S. in Nursing Program has an average state licensure exam rate of 98 percent throughout the college's three campuses.

These ongoing achievements enhance our growth, visibility, and position in the health professions marketplace.

Irving Rosenbaum, D.P.A., Ed.D., M.P.A.
Interim Chancellor
Health Professions Division

In the News



Architectural rendering of NSU's Tampa Bay Regional Campus

KPCOM Receives COCA Approval for Clearwater Site

In December, the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (KPCOM) received approval from the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA) for a class of 150 students to begin studying at an additional site in Clearwater, Florida, in the fall of 2019. The KPCOM site at the NSU Fort Lauderdale/Davie Campus will continue to enroll a class of 230 students annually.

“NSU is pleased to get this affirmation of our plans for the Clearwater site,” said NSU President and CEO George L. Hanbury II, Ph.D. “This is a monumental opportunity for the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine to expand to meet the increasing demand for top-quality medical care.”

“With a class of 230 students on the Fort Lauderdale/Davie Campus and 150 in Clearwater, NSU’s Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine will have an even greater impact statewide, nationally, and globally,” said Elaine M. Wallace, D.O., M.S., M.S., M.S., KPCOM dean. Wallace will oversee both sites, and Kenneth Johnson, D.O., FACOOG, the college’s assistant dean of faculty affairs, will serve as the on-site executive associate dean and oversee the day-to-day operations at the new Tampa Bay Regional Campus.

The college’s expansion was made possible by a commitment from the Drs. Kiran & Pallavi Patel Family Foundation announced in September 2017. It includes a \$50-million gift and a \$150-million

investment in real estate and facilities, featuring a 325,000-square-foot medical education complex—a major component of NSU’s Tampa Bay Regional Campus in Clearwater.

Students interested in the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine will complete the standard application, with interviews following at NSU’s Fort Lauderdale/Davie Campus. Selected students will have a choice of studying at the Fort Lauderdale/Davie Campus or the Tampa Bay Regional Campus.

NSU already has established agreements with the HCA West Florida Division and the Florida Hospital System for clinical rotations and residency opportunities in the Tampa area. ■

HEARTBREAK

M.S. DEM STUDENT



BY SCOTT COLTON, B.A., APR, COM/HPD DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

In the winter 2018 issue of *COM Outlook*, Brian Hierholzer, Pharm.D., CPh, TTS, a student in NSU-KPCOM's Master of Science in Disaster and Emergency Management (M.S. DEM) Program, shared his experiences providing vital health care to the victims of Hurricane Harvey last summer in Houston, Texas. Less than a month later, Hierholzer was called to duty again as a member of Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT) Florida 5 when he was deployed to Atlanta, Georgia, and Puerto Rico to assist sick or wounded Hurricane Maria patients.

When Hurricane Maria lashed the island of Puerto Rico last September with sustained winds of 155 miles per hour at landfall, the scope of destruction and vastness of human suffering stunned residents and shocked the world.

As a result, Hierholzer, who is a clinical assistant professor in the NSU College of Pharmacy's Department of Pharmacy Practice, wasn't the least bit surprised when he was deployed as a DMAT member to provide medical assistance to the storm victims. From September 27 through October 13, Hierholzer treated countless patients in both Georgia and Puerto Rico. "We spent five days in Atlanta caring for dialysis patients who were evacuated to Atlanta from Puerto Rico, and then we were sent to Puerto Rico," he said.

Although he had taken part in other disaster relief efforts and had witnessed his fair share of storm-related damage, nothing could have prepared him for what lay ahead as he and his DMAT colleagues arrived in Puerto Rico. "The devastation was severe and widespread. It began when we landed at the airport," he recalled. "Airplane hangars were strewn about the runways, and huge, mangled steel structures were everywhere."

During the bus ride to a sports arena called Coliseo Juan Aubin Cruz Abreu "Bincito," which served as the DMAT's home base, the hurricane's destructive path unspooled before the DMAT members in true Technicolor horror. "Forests of trees lay flattened, and 30-story buildings were missing the majority of their windows from the ground floor all way up to the rooftop,"

and HEROISM

AIDS HURRICANE VICTIMS IN PUERTO RICO

Hierholzer said. “I don’t believe there was a single billboard left standing, and power poles and stoplights lay across many roadways. It was a sobering sight.”

Once the DMAT members arrived at the arena in the town of Manatí on the island’s northern coast, they began establishing acute-care services to accompany the facility’s existing inpatient setting and make it as habitable as possible. “There was no running water and very limited generator power when we arrived,” he explained. “Fortunately, our logistics team was able to establish a water source and bring power to the entire facility, including the all-important air conditioners, within hours.”

While the logistics crew worked its magic, the health care team began to take inventory of the supplies, as it transformed the arena into a 200-bed inpatient and acute-care facility. “The facility was open for patients prior to our arrival and was treating about 10 patients daily,” Hierholzer said. “Once we restored power and water, we were able to handle a greater patient load. By the time we were relieved, we were seeing about 300 patients daily in the acute-care area and had about 40 inpatients, including many who had to be ventilated mechanically.”

During its seven-day stay at the arena, the DMAT Florida 5 treated more than 1,350 patients. “To put that in perspective, we were treating the equivalent of a 100,000 visit-per-year emergency department in austere conditions with limited resources,” he said. “It was truly a remarkable endeavor, and from what we’ve been told, it was the most successful joint venture between a DMAT team and a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) support team in National Disaster Medical System history.”

Many hurricane-related injuries and deaths stemmed from accidents occurring in the days and weeks after the storm. To illustrate this point, Hierholzer recounted the

emotional story of a 10-month-old who was brought to the arena during the DMAT’s second day in Puerto Rico.

“Due to the storm, the family’s home was partially destroyed, so the family was confined to only two rooms. One of the rooms had been turned into a makeshift kitchen, but while trying to cook rice, the mother accidentally knocked over the pot of boiling water, which fell into the infant’s crib and badly burned the child,” he recalled. “Fortunately, we were able to treat the wounds and provide follow-up care over the next few days. Seeing an infant in pain is an experience that really stays with you.”

Hierholzer also shared details about a female patient he said would be a friend for life. “While trying to



Brian Hierholzer poses with a patient he treated for severe burns.



Left: A 19-year-old asthmatic in distress is prepped for transport to a local hospital.

Bottom right: The DMAT Florida 5 members pose for a group photo at the Coliseo Juan Aubin Cruz Abreu “Bincito.”

Bottom left: Mangled airplane hangars were a common sight at local airports.

Below: A 10-month-old burn patient was one of the many cases treated by the medical team.



prepare a meal for her family, she inadvertently poured gasoline into a pot instead of water. Needless to say, the result was devastating,” he explained. “When she presented to us, she had already been treated and released by one of the area hospitals. When we opened the bandaging, we found wounds that were in desperate need of care.”

It took Hierholzer and others several hours to clean the multiple wounds and excise the dead flesh. “Due to the need for daily wound care that was unavailable from the local health care community, we decided to keep her with us in the arena until she could be transferred to the *USNS Comfort*—a hospital ship that was circling the island,” he said. “I would spend time with her every day helping to clean her wounds and make her comfortable.”

In the midst of all the chaos and tragedy, however, Hierholzer found himself emotionally uplifted by the many acts of kindness he heard about or witnessed during his time in Puerto Rico. “Despite the hardships every resident was experiencing, many were willing to

sacrifice what little they had in order to help others,” he said. “On day three, we were called to the front of the building where a young woman was having difficulty breathing. We rushed her back to the treatment tent and began working on her and her sister.”

After speaking with the woman’s sister, Hierholzer learned that the sisters had been sitting in their yard when they noticed flames leaping from their neighbor’s home. “Despite having asthma, this young woman and her sister ran into the burning structure to help their neighbors escape. Breathing in that much smoke most likely exacerbated her asthma, so her airways were closing down, making it all but impossible for her to breathe,” he explained.

“We were forced to intubate the woman and send her to the local hospital,” he added. “I was never able to ascertain whether she recovered, but I will never forget the selflessness she showed by putting herself in danger to help others.”

The outpouring of assistance from many of the local residents also touched Hierholzer's heart. To help their neighbors, volunteers showed up at the sports arena to serve as translators and assist with various tasks. "From the woman who cooked and brought us hot meals, to the town's mayor—who stopped by daily to see if there was anything we needed—the people were tireless, selfless, and truly invested in helping their neighbors in any way possible."

Participating in a disaster relief effort can be an emotionally draining, but deeply rewarding, experience for many reasons. "I will never forget my teammates and the members of the VA who worked with us. More than 100 people put their lives on hold and left their jobs and families to help those in need," Hierholzer said. "They work 12- to 18-hour shifts, eat meals from a bag, sleep on cots, and then get up and do it again. They are a remarkable breed of heroes who will always have my admiration." ■

Disaster Relief: LESSONS LEARNED

BY BRIAN HIERHOLZER, PHARM.D., CPH, TTS

The most valuable lesson I've learned while participating in relief efforts, not only in Puerto Rico but in other disasters as well, is that disaster relief is not perfect. Whether man-made or natural, roadblocks are constantly thrown in the path of those trying to help. Historically, federal and local bureaucracies, lack of supplies, damage to critical infrastructure, and Mother Nature all try to make doing your job more difficult.

I can proudly say that with each event I participate in, these things get better each time. Disaster relief is an ever-evolving field. While not perfect, those involved are aware it is not perfect, and they are consistently looking to improve. The people involved are motivated problem solvers, which can only lead to improvement with every incident to which we respond. I learned there is no place I would rather be, despite the imperfections. There is no more gratifying experience than being able to come to the aid of people experiencing one of the worst times of their lives. ■



Second-year student Meagan Mayo, president of the Disaster Medicine Club, places a disaster relief pin on Michael Goldstein, class of 2020 president.

DISASTER MEDICINE CLUB AIDS HURRICANE VICTIM

The KPCOM's Disaster Medicine Club (DMC) displayed its altruistic side throughout the fall semester by collecting supplies and money for the victims of hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria. Thanks to the assistance of the Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Club and Student Advocate Association, the DMC raised money through the sales of green disaster-awareness pins, baked goods, and a Zumbathon event.

The DMC also joined forces with the NSU College of Pharmacy, which has a program at the Puerto Rico Regional Campus, to coordinate an inter-professional collection drive. The club's efforts paid off in a big way, resulting in the collection and donation of 300 pounds of clothing, food, and toiletries. Additionally, thanks to the generosity of the NSU community, the Disaster Medicine Club was able to donate \$5,000 to Haiti hurricane relief efforts, \$500 to Hospital del Niño de Puerto Rico, and \$415 to the Greater Houston Community Foundation. ■

Phyllis J. Filker

ASSOCIATE DEAN'S CAREER PATH TRAVELS FROM DENTISTRY TO OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

BY SCOTT COLTON, B.A., APR, COM/HPD DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

One of the wonders of life is how predictably unpredictable it can be. Take, for example, the accomplished life of Phyllis J. Filker, D.M.D., M.P.H., who serves as associate dean of undergraduate, graduate, and community education for the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (KPCOM).

Despite pursuing a career trajectory that involved dental medicine throughout most of her adult life, Filker made the surprising decision to transition from dentistry to osteopathic medicine when she accepted a KPCOM leadership position in July 2014. If you had asked Filker five years ago if she would have foreseen herself working as an administrator in an osteopathic college, the answer would have been an emphatic no.

Filker, who was born in Baltimore, Maryland, and relocated to Atlanta, Georgia, with her family when she was in elementary school, didn't grow up having a specific career goal in mind. However, her father, who worked as a project manager for the City of Baltimore Public Housing Department, and her mother, who was a high school math and science teacher, heavily influenced her. "My two siblings and I were always encouraged to be the best we could be in whatever field we picked, but we were highly encouraged to attend college, become doctors, and work for ourselves."

As a child growing up in Baltimore, Filker often would go with her father to visit various public housing



sites during the holidays and distribute toys or turkeys to the residents. Not surprisingly, her father's passion for improving the human condition was a trait that would have a significant impact on Filker's life and career.

When her father was elevated to the position of social service coordinator for the Southeast region of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the family relocated to Atlanta. The move proved to be rewarding for Filker, who was able to indulge her desire to work with the underserved community and

spend her summers assisting at public housing projects for the elderly, filling in wherever needed.

ZEROING IN ON DENTISTRY

The decision to attend college was a given for Filker, who had always excelled in school, especially in math and science. Her older sister, who is a radiologist at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, was already a student at the University of Florida (UF), so Filker chose to follow in her sister's footsteps and become a Florida Gator as well.

While pursuing her undergraduate degree, Filker had the opportunity to do some research at UF's College of Dentistry, which spurred her interest in pursuing a career in the dental field. As a result, she applied and was accepted into the university's dental school, earning her D.M.D. degree in 1980.



A number of KPCOM administrative deans gather to share information. They are (from left) Mark Sandhouse, D.O., M.S., associate dean of administration and academic director of medical education; Guy M. Nehrenz, Ed.D., M.A., RRT, senior associate dean of osteopathic medical education; Elaine M. Wallace, D.O., M.S., M.S., M.S., KPCOM dean; Phyllis J. Filker; Delia Harper-Celestine, Ed.D., M.P.H., assistant dean of student and alumni affairs; Kenneth E. Johnson, D.O., FACOOG, executive associate dean; and Edward E. Packer, D.O., FAAP, FACOP, assistant dean of clinical affairs.

Thanks to her UF connections, Filker quickly received a job offer from a dentist in Boca Raton, Florida, who served as an adjunct professor at UF. “I packed my possessions, filled my 1975 Mazda RX3 to the roof, and left college life for the sun and sand of Boca Raton,” said Filker, who would soon experience a number of exciting life changes.

While volunteering at a health fair in western Boca Raton, Filker crossed paths with a young dentist, Steven D. Muckey, D.D.S., who was working at the same health fair booth. Muckey asked Filker to dinner when her shift ended—and they have been together ever since. Merging their talents, the couple opened a dental practice in Delray Beach, Florida, and followed that milestone by getting married on November 13, 1982.

The next 15 years would prove to be happy and productive ones for Filker, who practiced all facets of dentistry, but most enjoyed being involved with the cosmetic cases. “It was a very family-oriented practice, and during those years, I attended many of my patients’ christenings, bar mitzvahs, and weddings,” said Filker, who would join her dedicated team for lunch and catch up on the latest soap-opera twists on *Day of Our Lives* whenever time permitted.

As their practice blossomed, so did their family. First came Erin, who is a fourth-year resident physician,

followed by David, a business school student. Although their practice was flourishing, Filker knew she wanted to spend more time with her children, who were attending a private school in nearby Fort Lauderdale. As a result, Filker and her husband sold their practice in 1997 and later relocated to Fort Lauderdale.

FILKER’S NSU CAREER COMMENCES

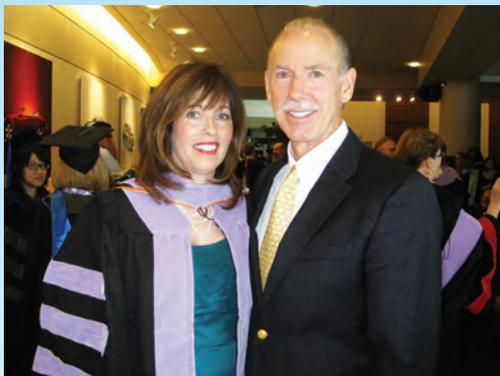
Although she had never worked in the world of academia, Filker joined forces with the newly established NSU College of Dental Medicine (CDM) in 1997 as an adjunct instructor, which allowed her great flexibility when it came to spending quality time with her children. In 2004, however, with daughter Erin about to head off to Princeton University in New Jersey, the self-proclaimed “partial empty nester” decided it was an opportune time to join the CDM as a full-time faculty member.

In the summer of 2004, Filker became a CDM assistant professor and served as director of clinical preventive dentistry. During the next decade, however, her role within the college would broaden considerably, encompassing an array of leadership positions that allowed her to bring the real world of dental medicine into the classroom.

“As a private practitioner, you essentially have the expertise and knowledge to treat patients, but academics



Above, from left: Enjoying daughter Erin's wedding are Steven D. Muckey (husband), Erin (daughter), Alex (Erin's husband), Phyllis Filker, and David (son).



Far left: Filker and her husband, Steven, are shown at her M.P.H. graduation ceremony in 2012.



Left: Filker as a proud high school graduate

Bottom: Wedding preparations with her daughter, Erin



requires an additional skill set. As an adjunct instructor for the CDM, I worked in the clinic with students and later helped teach the lab portion of the Operative Dentistry course,” she explained. “I also worked with faculty members I admired and learned the dynamics of medical education, including how to construct engaging PowerPoint presentations. During my years in private practice, I also served as a clinical evaluator for a nonprofit research group that tested new products after they hit the marketplace. This research aspect of my career also helped with my transition to academics.”

Within a year, Filker was adding new responsibilities to her burgeoning résumé, assuming the role of course director for the first-year Operative Dentistry course, as well as providing oversight to both the lecture and laboratory sections and giving many of the composite dentistry lectures. She also tackled the role of director of quality improvement for the CDM and chaired the Quality Improvement Committee.

Additionally, Filker developed and implemented the CDM's Quality Improvement Program, which had the goals of maintaining and applying standards that ensure the quality and continuous improvement of patient care. "As committee chair, I facilitated protocols to identify deficient areas within the college relating to patient care," she said. "Action plans were then developed and written in a format that facilitated assessment with measurable criteria."

While she was still a CDM faculty member, Filker enhanced her academic pedigree by earning a Master of Public Health (M.P.H.) from NSU's Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine in 2012. "The reputation of the KPCOM Master of Public Health program was impressive to me, and its mission to 'improve the health of the population through education, research, and service, with emphasis on multicultural and underserved populations,' was aligned with my goals," said Filker, who served as an associate professor in the M.P.H. Program from 2012 through 2014.

During her decade-long career at the CDM, Filker's role gradually transitioned from classroom instruction to a primarily administrative function, which was a development she embraced. "I realized that this career direction would open new doors and new areas for growth," said Filker, who had actively participated in the M.P.H. Program's reaccreditation process and served on the program's advisory and curriculum committees while she was still a full-time CDM employee.

Because of her close involvement with the M.P.H. Program, Filker heard that a significant leadership position was becoming available in the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine, which she decided to pursue. In July 2014, Filker left the CDM to become the KPCOM's assistant dean of graduate and community education.

PROGRAMMATIC ENHANCEMENT

Although she was well-versed in the specifics of the college's M.P.H. Program, Filker admitted to feeling a bit overwhelmed in her new position. Her trepidation was understandable, especially when you consider she had no knowledge of the dynamics of the college or the individual curricula of the other existing KPCOM

master's degree programs, which at the time included biomedical informatics and disaster and emergency management, as well as several certificate programs.

Filker quickly overcame her trepidation by playing a pivotal role in many key KPCOM initiatives, including the development of a Bachelor of Science in Public Health degree program, leading the efforts to develop and implement two medical immersion camps for high school students, establishing a monthly faculty and staff wellness lunch, and expanding the Emergency Medical Services program. She also played an integral role in the formation of the college's Master of Science in Nutrition and Master of Science in Medical Education programs.

In June 2017, in recognition of her achievements and contributions to the college, Filker was promoted to her current role as associate dean of undergraduate, graduate, and community education. "I enjoy working with my KPCOM colleagues and share the love of NSU's unique character," she said. "We all work well together and bring to the table different perspectives on issues. My mentor, Dr. Elaine Wallace, has helped me grow to where I am much more skilled with my administrative duties. It really is an ongoing challenge, but with it comes the satisfaction of being a part of this amazing group."

While the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine already comprises six degree programs and numerous certificate programs, Filker is busy investigating several new academic offerings that may soon be added to the college's programmatic mix. These include the possible establishment of Bachelor of Science in Nutrition and Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Informatics degree programs, as well as the creation of a certificate program that would enhance job opportunities for physician assistants interested in working in an emergency room.

When she's not busy helping lead the college to new heights, Filker and her husband indulge their love of travel. "I have a map of the world where I place colored pins on all the cities I have visited," said Filker, who has already planned an epic expedition to Capetown and Victoria Falls in South Africa, which will include a three-day safari. "My goal is to cover the map with pins." ■

Healthy STUDIES

Nutrition Degree Program Adds Luster to
KPCOM Academic Offerings

BY SCOTT COLTON, B.A., APR, COM/HPD DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS



Although the renowned D.O. program at NSU's Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic (KPCOM) has been the college's cornerstone since its establishment in 1979, the KPCOM also offers an array of undergraduate, graduate, and certificate programs that span the health care spectrum.

The online Master of Science in Nutrition program, which is one of the newest additions to the KPCOM academic mix, welcomed its inaugural class in the fall of 2015 and recently celebrated its inaugural graduate. This distinctive degree program was created in response to the expanded emphasis in the United States on wellness and nutrition in professional practice and the demand for skilled nutrition professionals.

"Nutrition assessment and nutrition intervention for chronic diseases are important components of the new health care reform mandates," said Stephanie N. Petrosky, M.H.A., RDN, FAND, director of the nutrition program and graduate admissions. "The program was designed to further the education of those who want to integrate nutrition into other health professions and complement the academic preparation for entering the profession. The curriculum provides students from varied undergraduate disciplines, or from other graduate areas of study, with the knowledge and applicable skills related to the nutrition practice."

According to Petrosky, the rationale for developing the M.S. in Nutrition program was based on a significant





From left: Rim Makhouf, D.O.; Stephanie N. Petrosky; Alejandra Velandia; Tobin Silver, Ph.D., CSCS, associate professor for the nutrition program; Camila Jaramillo; and Coral Rivera during a recent orientation session.

component—the absence of a strong nutrition aspect within the diverse programmatic offerings at NSU’s Health Professions Division. “The rich interprofessional platform of NSU’s Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine and the Health Professions Division provides an excellent environment for this degree program,” she explained. “Nutrition is an essential and integral part of medicine and health care delivery, which is why elective course offerings are open to all NSU students.”

The program’s 42-credit-hour program incorporates the latest technology and tools in distance learning through synchronous meetings and self-directed activities to maximize the student experience. All students receive a 15-credit-hour core in the fundamentals of nutrition and are required to complete a 6-credit-hour special project focused on an original individual or community-based research project, which involves the fundamentals of research and collecting data.

Students proceed through a generalist program of study or can declare concentrations in sports nutrition, community nutrition, or functional nutrition and herbal therapy. Courses cover the basics of nutrition assessment, nutri-



tion counseling and communication, interprofessional leadership, advocacy, public policy, and nutritional biochemistry. A range of electives also is offered, which allows students to round out their own interests with trendy topics like plant-based eating patterns, obesity epidemic, and models of health behavior.

“My favorite part of the program is learning about herbal supplements and alternative forms of medicine that are present in different cultures in the Introduction to Functional Nutrition and Herbal Therapy course,” said

Cynthia Abraham, who will be graduating from the program in August. “There isn’t enough evidence-based research on this topic, and many people fear the unknown and adverse drug-nutrient interactions. It is because of this lack of knowledge, however, that I feel it is necessary to take the time to learn more about them.”

Because the nutrition field is a budding one in the United States, the career outlook for those earning degrees or certifications in the profession is extremely promising. The Master of Science in Nutrition degree, in particular, provides a strong educational foundation to work in a variety of professional roles.

“Some of the settings where our students find jobs include hospitals, long-term care facilities, physician offices/private clinics, outpatient care centers, schools and universities, home health companies, corporations, athletic training centers or gyms, health departments, food production centers and plants, health care insurance companies, and private consulting businesses,” Petrosky said.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment in the nutrition field is expected to increase 16 percent during the next 7 years. Job growth is primarily expected in the areas of wellness, prevention of disease with diet and foods, and greater integration of nutrition practice into primary care.

The flourishing nutrition landscape is presenting expanded employment opportunities for many professionals, including Abraham, who is working as a lead instructor for the Special Olympics. “I became involved with Special Olympics through the M.S. in Nutrition program. I started out as a volunteer, helping the instructor at the time in measuring the students’ weight and blood pressure, as well as providing healthy snacks that are simple enough for them to make, yet nutritious to eat,” she explained.

“Eventually, I took on the role of instructor and have taught the students the MyPlate dietary guidelines and general tips and tricks for optimal nutrition intake,” Abraham added. “This opportunity has given me experience in advocating nutrition to the public. Once I earn



Although the Master of Science in Nutrition program has only been in existence since the fall of 2015, several programmatic enhancements and accolades already have occurred. In December, the program earned approval as a candidate for the Future Model of Education Graduate Programs, leading to certification for registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) eligibility from the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics.

“As a result, we will expand the current M.S. in Nutrition to include an additional program concentration leading to professional practice,” Petrosky explained. “After site visit and final accreditation, we expect the inaugural class to begin in the summer of 2019.”

According to Petrosky, the program aspires to become a center of excellence for nutrition and dietetics practice. “Our faculty members and students continue to be active in promoting nutrition and wellness throughout the NSU community,” she said. “The program has also been working with the college’s faculty members to further integrate nutrition content into the osteopathic medical school curriculum, which shows our commitment to enhancing the foundational knowledge to future physicians.”

Petrosky also is working toward expanding individual consultation services, special events, and workshops. A future goal involves developing a Bachelor of Science in Nutrition degree program and submitting it for approval, with a potential start date in the fall of 2019.

Additionally, the program recently received a United States Department of Agriculture grant related to research and promotion of three key wellness initiatives: eating more fruits and vegetables, becoming more active, and practicing stress management. The project puts NSU in a national cohort of 90 universities as an intervention site focused on making positive on-campus changes.

“We have been collecting detailed research on campus food services, wellness practices, vending, campus walkability, and readiness to change,” Petrosky said. “Our first promotional activity offered meditation breaks during fall finals week to HPD students.”

Join the “Fruvement” on the nutrition program’s Facebook page @GetFruved NSU or on Instagram at [getfruednsu](#).

this degree, I will be able to serve as a trustworthy source when patients come to me for nutrition advice.”

In addition to the M.S. in Nutrition degree, the college launched a Graduate Certificate in Functional Nutrition and Herbal Therapy, which provides professionals an option for advanced preparation in this evolving area of practice. The abridged program of 15 credits comprising 5 courses helps practicing health professionals understand the tenets of herbal and functional nutrition in a systems-based approach.

The certificate program’s innovative courses highlight functionality of body systems, etiology of diseases, toxic reactions of herbs, interactions with medications, herbal therapy for special populations, dietary approaches to imbalances in the body, and the roles of health care professionals in educating patients. Graduates will gain additional practice competencies and skills that can be incorporated into the care of their patients.

Petrosky, who helped shepherd the M.S. in Nutrition curriculum from inception to success, is proud to be involved with a program that offers “a very competitive value and flexible program of study that offers our students autonomy, programmatic customization, and self-paced learning. Students can attend full time or pace their degree over seven years, if desired, to help achieve their own goals,” she said.

“The curriculum was set up with the term ‘cutting edge’ in its vision so future students would see many options and applicable content to study. We add the depth of a strong, active faculty to the course development and delivery, bringing real-time practice trends right into the class,” Petrosky added. “Students gain strong knowledge and immediately apply it through realistic and practical activities. The program is very involved at national, state, and local professional levels to bring our students high-level networking and educational programming to complement the curriculum.”

Abraham was impressed with what the KPCOM’s M.S. in Nutrition program offered from a curricular standpoint, which explains why she chose it over more-established ones. “I chose the NSU program in order to effectively incorporate nutrition into preventative care

as a future health care provider,” she said. “NSU stood out in that it focused on educating health care providers about modern concepts of nutrition, and to consider the social and psychological aspects in utilizing them in one’s respective health care field.”

Once she began her online coursework, Abraham was equally impressed with the dedication and breadth of knowledge exhibited by the faculty members who “genuinely care for their students and make sure they are on track to reach their goals upon graduating from the program,” she explained. “At the same time, they challenge the students to think outside the box and to break the cognitive biases they might not have realized they even had. The faculty members also allow students

“NUTRITION IS AN ESSENTIAL AND INTEGRAL PART OF MEDICINE AND HEALTH CARE DELIVERY, WHICH IS WHY ELECTIVE COURSE OFFERINGS ARE OPEN TO ALL NSU STUDENTS.”

—STEPHANIE N. PETROSKY

to gain a deeper understanding of what makes up the standard American diet today, and how that will change in 20 years.”

In her role as the nutrition program’s director, Petrosky has enjoyed watching its evolution from idea and inception to full-scale success. “It’s been quite a journey from only five years ago when the concept was just a conversation. Through the continued encouragement and support of KPCOM administration, we have shown quality results in a short period of time,” she said.

“We are currently riding a wave of rapid program enhancements to meet current student needs and future demands of the profession,” she added. “We believe we have the capacity, creativity, and courage to build a benchmark program. The next years will prove to be even more exciting as we infuse nutrition throughout the NSU community and beyond.” ■

AIMING HIGH



NEW FELLOWSHIP MERGES EARLY INTEREST IN HEALTH CARE WITH MENTORS AND THE COMMUNITY

BY DEBRA R. GIBBS, B.A., MEDICAL COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

In November 2017, two dedicated academic units at Nova Southeastern University—the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine and the NSU University School Upper School—collaborated to create a fellowship. The yearlong program was developed for Upper School students interested in learning more about becoming health care practitioners, including medicine, but also fostered interaction with other colleges within the Health Professions Division—offering an opportunity for increased understanding of various health care professions.

The catalyst for the fellowship is linked to the success of the Achieve in Medicine (AIM-High) and AIM-Higher programs—two weeklong programs established to enhance enthusiasm for careers in the health professions and to instill a passion for medicine in exceptional high school students.

The fellowship was envisioned by Elaine M. Wallace, D.O., M.S., M.S., M.S., KPCOM dean, who wished to provide USchool students a variety of health care experiences beyond the classroom.

continued on page 18



From left: Steven Zucker, D.M.D., M.Ed., associate dean for community affairs and director of the AHEC Tobacco Training and Cessation Program; Sheri Schour, senior project specialist; and Dianna Silvagni with NSU University School fellowship participants

continued from page 17

The original brainstorming group included David Spangler, Ph.D., director of community collaboration; Scott Fech, Ph.D., director of the Upper School; and Jaimie Crawford, associate director—all from USchool—and KPCOM administrators Jill Wallace-Ross, D.O., assistant dean of osteopathic clinical education, and Phyllis Filker, D.M.D., M.P.H., associate dean of undergraduate, graduate, and community education.

With the program placed within the KPCOM's community education structure, the organizers chose a leader for the fellowship—Dianna Silvagni, J.D., clinical assistant professor of medical education and nutrition. “Since Dianna Silvagni had done such a fantastic job leading the AIM-Higher camp last summer, and this fellowship program was very similar, we reached out to her to see if she had interest in being the coordinator,” Filker said. “Then we worked with her to craft a tentative schedule of sessions to run operations.”

Working together, representatives of USchool and the KPCOM developed an application process that included an essay component to ascertain the applicants' maturity, compassion, and commitment. A group of 60 students applied, and after interviews with representatives from USchool and the KPCOM, 12 were selected to participate.

“All the finalists were excellent students with various activities in which they were already participating. Applicants had to be able to attend two sessions a month from October 2017 through April 2018,” Silvagni said. “The NSU University School requires that participants complete a journal entry for each program in which they participate, and the KPCOM asks them to evaluate each program.”

The fellowship guidelines build bridges on and off campus, blending a variety of learning experiences, including basic life support, smoking cessation, suturing, simulation labs, and shadowing in not only the KPCOM clinic, but in College of Dental Medicine and College of



“My public speaking and communication skills have increased since delivering this presentation to middle school students. My newly gained confidence is definitely a product of presenting numerous times in one day.”

—Julianna Herrera, after smoking cessation training

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“I feel we are all responsible for both our knowledge and our ignorance. And, as a result of this training session, a new responsibility to act during certain crises has replaced the responsibility of not knowing how to act, forcing me to become a more selfless, compassionate, capable individual—a healer.”

—Michael Gonzalez, after basic life support training

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“I received thorough and complete training, and I have no doubt that in an emergency situation, I would utilize basic life support.”

—Ainsley Kohler

Optometry clinics. Simulation labs also include the Ron and Kathy Assaf College of Nursing and the College of Pharmacy as well as the KPCOM. The Audiology Program, part of the Dr. Pallavi Patel College of Health Care Sciences, also will participate.

“Before the fellows start their shadowing experiences, they complete a standardized patient lab. There, they will have the opportunity to interview ‘patients’ and be videotaped. Next, they will be evaluated by a medical student who will give feedback on their encounters,” Silvagni said. “This can be an extremely powerful experience and give the fellows insight into what they will see in the clinic setting, offering the fellows a broad overview of several areas of health care when training and providing care to patients.”

An important element of the fellowship focuses on the interaction between the fellowship students and the first- and second-year KPCOM students who volunteered to serve as mentors on an ongoing basis for the 2017–2018 year. College of Optometry students also plan to continue working with the fellows.

The fellows’ first endeavor matched them with first-year students performing community outreach in the KPCOM’s Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) Tobacco Training and Cessation Program. The fellows joined a first-year student/mentor, along with a few other first-year students. The fellows completed the half-day training program and took responsibility for part of the presentation. The first-year students were impressed by the maturity and commitment of the fellowship students and enjoyed their participation.

Silvagni knows the importance of interaction and looks forward to further progress and success, saying, “Coordinating several shadowing and clinical simulation labs for the participants has been a herculean task. Blending the vast diversity of clinical schedules between the various colleges, and the flexibility needed from the busy fellowship students, takes many phone calls, emails, and determination to pull it all together,” she said.

After completing basic life support training in October, Michael Gonzalez, a fellow, offered feedback on his experience. “I have gained immense leadership and teamwork experience. It has helped me better understand the interdependence of education among multiple ages and intellectual groups and the capability/responsibility I would have as a medical professional to communicate complicated topics effectively in layman’s terms,” he said.

Other comments and journal entries shared by the fellows support the fellowship’s success. “The reward is watching the fellows’ enthusiasm and pride in what they are doing—seeing how much they are learning about health care and what a profession in health care might mean for them. They are the bright future of health care,” Silvagni said. ■

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“I had to be confident in what I was presenting to impact these students in the best way possible, so they could understand the importance of smoking abstinence.”

—Lauren Rouse

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“Because of this experience, I would like to spend more time in the future informing children on health and medicine, to help prepare them for the future, and change the community for the better. The smoking cessation training taught me that in order to be an influential figure, and an effective doctor, I must retain an open-minded, understanding, and empathetic attitude.”

—Karishma Dangodara, after smoking cessation training



From left: Med-Tech Executive Board officers Kevin Moriles, Justin Shang, Rodrigo Podesta, Christopher Samaan, Leah Elson, and Aaron Marbin

Med-Tech Club

GROUP PLANS TO MAKE CUTTING-EDGE CONNECTIONS

MEDICAL

BY KEVIN MORILES, FIRST-YEAR STUDENT AND MED-TECH VIRTUAL REALITY RESEARCH CHAIR

If you were to walk into any classroom in the United States, what would be the first thing you noticed? Would it be the arrangement of student desks and classroom furniture? Or, would your eyes notice something far subtler, something involving the innocuous laptops that seem to sit on every student's desk from elementary school to college?

We live in an era of explosive technological advancement. This is especially true in education, as there is a transition from antiquated paper notebooks to modern notebook computers to enhance learning. As a result, devices with storage spaces that far exceed the capabilities of a 100-page paper notebook are utilized at the flick of a wrist.

The evolution of technology in the classroom, however, does not stop at the laptop. Student biometric readings, augmented reality glasses, and collaborative, multi-touch devices are creeping into the realm of education, including medical education.

To stay abreast of these trends, eight Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine students—Leah Elson, Joren Manuel, Aaron Marbin, Kevin Moriles, Rodrigo Podesta, Christopher Samaan, Santroy Samuels, and Justin Shang—established the Medical Technology Club (Med-Tech for short) in August 2017. These students, who comprise the club's executive board, recognized medical technology as an essential part of advancing the medical field, which includes the utilization of nanotech, virtual and augmented reality, biotech, and 3-D printing.

By enhancing medical education through the implementation of technology, Med-Tech seeks to cultivate a more highly equipped and effective physician. In terms of services, the club also seeks to help students get involved in local community events to spread knowledge on Med-Tech, connect students to local companies who utilize nanotech, biotech, and pharmaceutical skills, and host research clinics in order to help

students become involved in technology-based research. The club also aims to be multidisciplinary, expanding beyond the D.O. program into the other Health Professions Division (HPD) colleges.

“Med-Tech’s mission is to provide HPD students with up-to-date information regarding advancements in medical technology in their respective fields and offer valuable information on potential research opportunities,” said Marbin, Med-Tech president. “Our goal is to encompass all health professions, because Med-Tech is relevant to all forms of medicine. We also utilize virtual reality to help students visualize topics they are learning in class, but in a three-dimensional space for better understanding.”

Incorporating virtual reality (VR) into anatomy tutoring is one of Med-Tech’s biggest projects. The

club has already hosted one review session for medical anatomy and plans on coordinating many more for the incoming KPCOM class of 2022. Additionally, the club hopes to hold both group and specialized tutoring.

“When it comes to learning, it’s best to have a variety of resources available in order to solidify the material, because each person learns differently,” said Samaan, the club’s head of VR and augmented reality. “VR is just one way of learning, and it happens to be a very effective form of learning in medical education. The club hosts VR reviews for anatomy, and they are effective. To fully utilize the technology, however, it’s best to learn in small groups.”

Samaan believes virtual reality can solidify difficult concepts in medical anatomy and eventually optimize other subjects in medical education. ■



India

MEDICAL OUTREACH ODYSSEY SERVES DUAL PURPOSE

BY SCOTT COLTON, B.A., APR, COM/HPD DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Assisting underserved populations locally, nationally, and internationally is a perpetual goal of the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine. The KPCOM's commitment to the underserved was in evidence again in December during its medical outreach trip to Ahwa in the Dang district of the state of Gujarat, India, and at a separate fact-finding excursion to another area of Gujarat about five hours away from the outreach site.

The medical outreach trip, which involved a collaboration with Ashok Patel, D.M.D., comprised a dedicated team of four physicians and seven medical students, as well as one Master of Public Health student and a dental student. "Over the course of several patient-care days, we were able to provide medical care to about 400 people and offer dental services to approximately 100 local residents," said Jill Wallace-Ross, D.O., assistant dean of osteopathic clinical education, who oversaw the outreach excursion.

The NSU medical contingent treated patients at the Vanbandhu Arogya Dham medical facility established by the Richard Condorelli Memorial Foundation. As is the case with many international medical outreach trips, the medical team witnessed and treated a variety of health-related issues.

"We saw children with allergies, various types of respiratory-tract infections, multiple skin and eye diseases, as well as hypertensive patients," Wallace-Ross said. "One woman was in an abusive relationship with an alcoholic husband, had several young children—and no obvious way out of her circumstances. All these conditions highlight the fact that no matter where you go, people have needs that are similar to all of us."

In the midst of the medical outreach, Wallace-Ross traveled to another area of Gujarat to visit the site where Dr. Kiran C. Patel, M.D., the college's namesake, has a hospital and is planning to build a medical school.

In addition to providing a \$50-million-plus dona-

tion to the college last year through the Drs. Kiran & Pallavi Patel Family Foundation Inc., Dr. Kiran C. Patel established an endowed scholarship for rural and underserved medical education, with the intent of soliciting donors to contribute \$1 million. Each year, interest from the endowed scholarship will allow up to 44 KPCOM students to complete a two-month, all-expenses-paid rural and underserved medicine elective clinical rotation at the Shree Chhotubhai A. Patel Hospital & Community Health Centre named after Dr. Kiran C. Patel's father.

During her visit, Wallace-Ross assessed the facilities and investigated the most effective way to implement the KPCOM underserved medicine rotations at the hospital. "The core values of NSU-KPCOM are in line with those of Dr. Kiran C. Patel," Wallace-Ross explained. "As such, one area of focus is on international medicine and providing medical care to those with limited access who are in need."

According to Wallace-Ross, the India rotations include a number of objectives, such as

- providing care to those living in and around Mota Fofalia, Gujarat, India
- offering learning opportunities to students, including clinical-reasoning skills, dealing with health conditions in the region, providing care to those with limited resources, and other aspects of medicine when in a rural or underserved community
- imparting cultural competency on several levels based on country of origin, socioeconomic status, caste system, and religious considerations
- fostering ongoing relationships between American and Indian physicians and student physicians to enhance cross-cultural medical education

During her time at the hospital, Wallace-Ross toured the facilities and assessed the types of cases the students



Clockwise from top: The NSU-KPCOM medical outreach team poses for a scenic photo; a pediatric patient receives a thorough checkup; a member of the team performs an exam, one of approximately 500 medical and dental checkups that were administered.

may be involved in during their India rotations. “Two cases that presented during my visit were a drunk man who fell and hit his head and a young woman in her fifth month of pregnancy who had abdominal pain,” she said. “It was interesting to recognize that there were many injuries related to alcohol, even though Gujarat has a law making alcohol consumption illegal for residents. Additionally, there is very little prenatal care, so this was the first visit to any physician for the young pregnant woman.”

Thanks to its exciting partnership with Dr. Kiran C. Patel, KPCOM students will have the opportunity to participate in inspiring clinical rotations in India while providing much-needed care to underserved patients. ■

STUDENTS SHARE MEMORABLE OUTREACH EXPERIENCES

“During my first night in the rural town of Ahwa, I was met with an incredible display of the vibrant culture of India. After settling into our hotel, we walked through the town and stumbled upon a traditional Indian wedding with 3,000 people in attendance taking place in the neighboring hotels. As we walked up to the groom’s wedding procession, the family greeted us and asked us to join in the festivities and dancing. We kicked off our jet lag and were instantly immersed in the electric, colorful atmosphere.”

—Matthew K. Creech, second-year student

“The India medical outreach trip, and the experiences I had during it, mean more to me than words can describe. I was fortunate to take part in helping the people of Ahwa, as well as experience India in such a beautiful way. I am so thankful for the learning experience I received from not only the physicians, but also from the people of Ahwa. This trip impassioned me, even more than before, to pursue and love the career of medicine.”

—Janelle Ramcharan, first-year student

“Working with a totally different patient demographic than what we are accustomed to in the United States, gave me a huge appreciation for how challenging it can be to provide care in regions like these. The clinic days were extremely busy, and that fueled the learning experience, even if it meant we were exhausted most days. This experience not only allowed me to help people who may have never seen a doctor in their entire lives, but it also allowed me to grow as a person.”

—Gagandeep Gill, second-year student



Integrative Medicine Program Takes Its Place in the Osteopathic Mosaic

BY DEBRA R. GIBBS, B.A., MEDICAL COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

Considering the various components of a patient's life is paramount in the practice of osteopathic medicine. The new Integrative Medicine Program at the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (KPCOM) demonstrates another important development in the college's continuing commitment to health care.

"Integrative medicine (IM) is healing-oriented medicine that takes account of the whole person—body, mind, and spirit, as well as lifestyle. The IM Program will include other evidence-based treating modalities and bring them together in one program," said Alison C. Bested, M.D., FRCPC, chair of integrative medicine and clinical director of NSU's Institute for Neuro-Immune Medicine. "The program will bring the unique opportunity to offer patients different treatment modalities and research together in one clinical program. As a result, faculty members and students will learn about the different treatments while seeing patients in the program."

Marking a natural progression in health care training

by emphasizing the relationship and use of all appropriate therapies, both conventional and alternative, makes the Integrative Medicine Program another highlight of the comprehensive vision of Elaine M. Wallace, D.O., M.S., M.S., M.S., KPCOM dean.

The principles of integrative medicine are

- a partnership between patient and practitioner in the healing process
- an appropriate use of conventional and alternative methods to facilitate the body's innate healing response
- an examination of all factors that influence health, wellness, and disease, including mind, spirit, and community as well as body

"The KPCOM is the first in the United States to offer a 15-hour, master's-level graduate certificate program within a medical school setting. The program examines the biochemistry, physiology, and genomics of patients' conditions and explores the scientific-based research on how foods and herbal remedies affect the

conditions,” said Lynn Lafferty, Pharm.D., N.D., M.B.A., endowed assistant professor of integrative and complementary medicine.

“The philosophy neither rejects conventional medicine nor accepts alternative therapies uncritically and recognizes that good medicine should be based in good science, be driven by inquiry, and open to new paradigms,” Bested said.

The program employs natural, effective, and less-invasive interventions whenever possible, along with the broader concepts that promote health and prevent illness, to treat ailments while training practitioners to be models of health and healing—committed to the process of self-exploration and self-development.

“The World Health Organization defines health as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity,” Bested said. “In order to promote health in people, the entire scope of health, or the determinants of health, need to be understood—including the person’s biology and genetics, culture, income, education, and physical environment. All of these factors play a role in the health of the individual and are important when treating a patient in integrative medicine.”

Some integrative therapies include diet, herbs, traditional Chinese medicine, Ayurvedic medicine—considered to be the world’s oldest health care system and named for the Sanskrit word meaning the “science of life”—relaxation therapy/mind-body medicine, and homeopathy.

Bested considers teaching the relaxation response, or meditation, as the best way to introduce students to mind-body medicine. Understanding the relaxation response helps students identify the basic physiology of both the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems and how the body responds to stress.

Integrative medicine courses promote the understanding of related traits and treatments to diagnose and heal patients. For example, patients with chronic pain may not be helped by traditional Western medicine, but may find relief through osteopathic treatments, acupuncture, and mindfulness meditation.

In the future, Bested plans to offer a full-time and part-time fellowship program in integrative medicine that will combine online classes and clinical experience. For example, students would explore Chinese medicine in the online classes, then work alongside an experienced practitioner and perhaps administer acupuncture. The programs will prepare students for the American Board of Physician Specialties examination in integrative medicine. Success with this examination would lead

to certification or a diplomate in integrative medicine—a recognition Bested has achieved.

Janet L. Roseman-Halsband, Ph.D., assistant professor of integrative medicine, leads elective, online courses in beginning and advanced spirituality and medicine. “The courses provide a structure for

medical students to learn about the importance of the spiritual lives of their patients and give them opportunities to reflect on their own beliefs for nurturing their own souls,” she said.

“Osteopathic medicine honors the triumvirate of mind, body, and spirit, and the courses can help them learn tools for dialogue with patients about important issues. Students also study research that supports the yearning patients have for addressing their spiritual needs, especially when diagnosed with a serious illness,” Roseman-Halsband added. “The Sidney Project in Spirituality and Medicine and Compassionate Care furthers education in this area during residency and offers a safe space to discuss the psychosocial challenges of medicine.” ■

“Osteopathic medicine honors the triumvirate of mind, body, and spirit, and the courses can help them learn tools for dialogue with patients about important issues.”

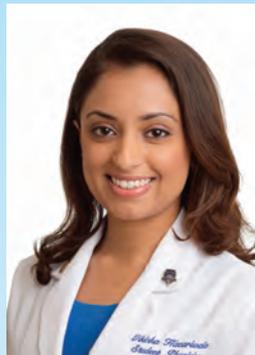
—Janet L. Roseman-Halsband

Student COMmunications



Parth Gandhi

Third-year student Parth Gandhi received the Medical Student Professionalism and Service Award from the American College of Emergency Physicians at its annual Scientific Assembly held October 29–November 1 in Washington, D.C. The award recognizes students who excel in the compassionate care of patients, professional behavior, and service to the community and/or specialty.



Vikisha Hazariwala

Vikisha Hazariwala, class of 2019, earned first-place honors in the experimental research category in the college's Consortium for Excellence in Medical Education Ninth Annual Scientific Research Poster Competition held November 3 in the NSU Don Taft University Center. Hazariwala served as first author of the winning poster titled "Zinc and S-Adenosylmethionine Mediate Lung Inflammatory Cytokines in Otherwise Healthy HIV-1-Infected Individuals."



Christopher Mancuso

Third-year student Christopher Mancuso, M.H.S., received a \$1,260 scholarship from the Food for Health Foundation to participate in the T. Colin Campbell Center for Nutrition Studies eCornell Plant-Based Nutrition Certificate Program. The scholarship provides full tuition for the online, plant-based nutrition course offered through Cornell University.



Hytham Rashid

Hytham Rashid, class of 2019, was selected as a 2018 Paul Ambrose Scholar. He was 1 of 40 U.S. health professions students who earned this honor. As a Paul Ambrose Scholar, Rashid will be presenting the work he's doing to lower the disproportionate incidence of HIV/HCV coinfection among the LGBTQI+ community by incorporating needle exchange services into HIV test counseling in South Florida.



Abhinay Reddy

Abhinay Reddy, class of 2018, won the first-place award at the student poster competition held at the Florida Chapter of the American College of Physicians' annual scientific meeting held December 9 in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. His winning entry is titled "A Curious Case of COP: Cryptogenic Organizing Pneumonia Presenting as a Solitary Lung Mass."



Krista Riveron

Biomedical informatics student Krista Riveron, J.D., received the 2018 Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS) South Florida Chapter Scholarship, which is awarded to a student member who exhibits academic excellence and future leadership potential in the health care information and management systems industry.



Moizz Syed

Third-year student Moizz Syed was the first-place winner at the annual Council of Osteopathic Student Government Presidents Winter Research Symposium Case Presentation Poster Competition held January 12 at Nova Southeastern University. His winning poster was titled "Complete Bladder Herniation Into Inguinal Hernia with Open Repair."

First-Year Students Claim Burnell Awards

First-year students **Evelina Arzanova**, **Samar Eisa**, and **Scarlett Somarrriba** received the Kenneth Burnell Student Research Award for their research project "Assessing the Dependence of Skin Properties on Handedness as a Potential Aid for the Early Detection of Breast Cancer Related Lymphedema (BCRL)." The award is presented to NSU-KPCOM students who conduct outstanding research in clinical medicine or biomedical science.

Additionally, class of 2021 students **Andrea Alvarez** and **Maria Labra** received the Burnell Student Research Award for their project "Method and Reference Values for Early Detection of Lower Extremity Edema." ■

Student Perspectives

The Question I Get Asked Every Day

BY CHAD RICHARDS, FIRST-YEAR STUDENT

As we began our medical school journey, we knew we would be responsible for answering many questions—thousands of exam, practice, career, and life questions. As classmates get to know each other, we ask questions about each other, our study methods, career goals, and hobbies.

With all of these questions, however, I am asked the same one daily. As soon as people learn I am in medical school—and that my wife and I have four children—their jaws inevitably drop and they say, “Oh my goodness, how do you do it?” Every day, whether it’s a student, faculty member, the person cutting my hair, or the attendant at the post office, they always want to know how in the world my family handles my being in medical school.

My answer is always this: You shouldn’t ask me; you should ask my wife. She is the reason I, at the age of 33, was finally able to get into medical school after 10 years of struggle. She is more than a source of support; she is the lifeblood of my family. I am convinced that when we get to the end of this medical school journey, I will take my diploma, walk across the stage, and hand it to her.

Medical school is hard, raising children is hard, but raising four children is a little bit like trying to control a brushfire everywhere you go. With the right support, however, it is completely doable. No matter how difficult things get, we know there will always be someone to lean on. The support we give each other far outweighs the additional stress having a family brings.

I once heard Jean Robey, M.D. (a writer and advocate for women in medicine) say in an interview that she frequently is asked how medical school is possible as a single parent, and that her follow-up question is always, “Well, what is your support network like? You can do anything if you have the right support.”



From left: The Richards family includes wife Allison, sons Charles and Thomas, dad Chad, and daughters Elizabeth and Lincoln.

I am so thankful that my support network consists of an unrelenting spouse, drooling babies, ear infections, school projects, sleepovers, and my own little cheer squad that makes sure I never take for granted how lucky we are to be on this medical school journey. ■

Death Is Healing

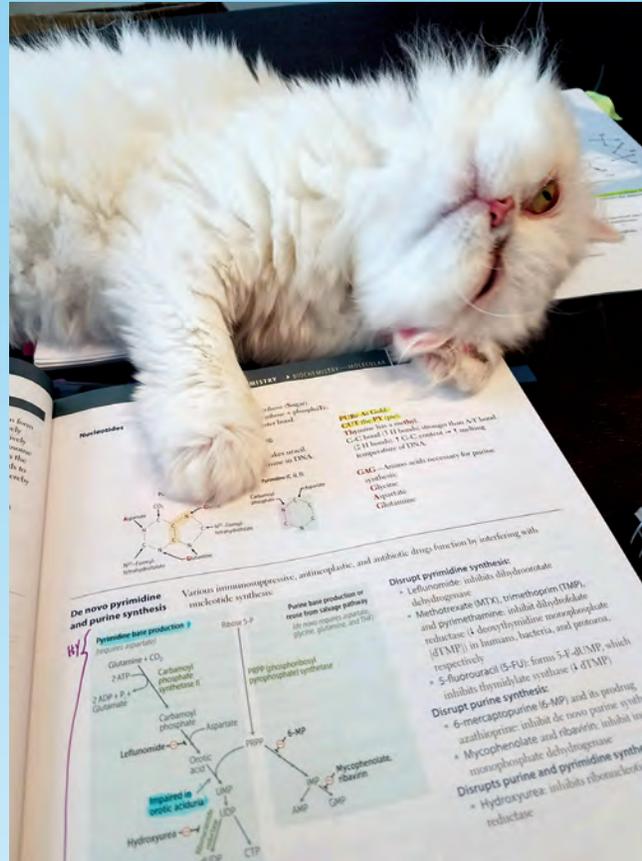
BY CHRISTOPHER LARRIMORE, M.SC., THIRD-YEAR STUDENT

Early use of the word disaster described a star breaking apart. I can think of no image that better expresses the look in someone's eyes after encountering great personal loss. Although born with the knowledge that death is a part of life, for many, the shadow of death obscures the meaning of action and limits our full potential. It becomes easier to ignore our fate, sustaining a fear rather than accepting it.

While the weight of mortality does not grow lighter, neither does its familiarity. Like others, I have experienced loss and felt its sting. Recently, from an unlikely place, I realized that death should not be feared and can actually be healing. Death can end suffering; it can offer a chance for families to recover and develop a greater sense of their own existence.

As medical students, we learn how to sustain life and reverse disease. Consequently, my words surely must sound like blasphemy. I aspire to become an oncologist for the chance to defend patients from the inevitable threshold. I do not believe, however, that a physician's duty is merely to stave off death or even return patients to their old lives. It is also to take into our arms the wounded and dying. We must help them find dignity and peace, perhaps maybe even clarity, so they may develop a better sense of their own existence, in this life or the next.

The famous essayist and poet Walt Whitman proposed that only the physician could truly understand the "physiological-spiritual man." With such possibility, it makes sense for our community to not fear death or harbor guilt for the loss of patients we could not save. Instead, we should forge relationships with the suffering, so that even in the face of decay, we can continue to follow the question of what makes human life meaningful. Why? Because humanism makes us better servants.



Christopher Larrimore gets an assist from his furry study partner, Bebe.

As it so happens, I did not reach this perspective following the loss of family members or even after witnessing fatalities in the military. Instead, it happened days before my COMLEX exam from the least likely of places. After I took a break from a long day of studying, my furry little study partner gave a loud cry. Moments later, my feline friend died in my arms from a sudden heart attack.

She had been suffering from cardiomyopathy for years; her life was clearly less enjoyable. I had hoped she would live until my graduation, because she had been there from the start. I used to joke that she wore the white coat, and not me, considering she was a white fluff ball. However, when my father later told me that death is healing, I reached a valuable truth.

Although the unknown is scary, it breathes renewal into us all. Her suffering ended, and my worry released. In a way, she did make it to my graduation, just not in the ordinary sense, preparing me for the challenges that await me as an oncologist. ■

Faculty COMmunications



Paula Anderson-Worts, D.O., M.P.H., an associate professor of family medicine who joined the college in 1997, was named interim assistant dean of faculty. She assumed the position previously held by Kenneth Johnson, D.O., FACOOG, who will be the on-site executive associate dean and oversee the day-to-day operations at the new KPCOM site at the Tampa Bay Regional Campus in Clearwater, Florida, which will open in the summer of 2019.



Isa Fernandez, Ph.D., M.A., professor of public health, was elected chair of the Adolescent Trials Network for HIV/AIDS Interventions (ATN) Executive Committee. The ATN is a research network supported by the National Institutes of Health with an annual budget of \$22 million. As chair, Fernandez will lead the development of the ATN's research agenda and prioritization process, direct monitoring and evaluation functions, and serve as the network's ambassador and liaison to federal agencies, other networks, and scientific bodies.



Janet Lynn Roseman-Halsband, Ph.D., assistant professor of integrative medicine, received the 2017–2018 Kenyon-Favreau Research Award in recognition of her work with obstetrics and gynecology residents at Women & Infants Hospital in Providence, Rhode Island—a Brown University medical school-affiliated program. Since 2001, NSU-KPCOM has provided this funding opportunity to faculty members through an endowment created by the late Franklin Kenyon and Frances Kenyon Agneski.



Elaine M. Wallace, D.O., M.S., M.S., M.S., KPCOM dean, received a Trailblazer in Health Award from the Broward Community & Family Health Centers, Inc., at a recognition dinner held February 23 at the Signature Grand in Davie, Florida.



Faculty Duo Named KPCOM Professor, Researcher of the Year

Hilda De Gaetano, D.O., M.S.Ed., FACOP, FAAP, senior assistant dean (left), and Nicole Cook, Ph.D., M.P.A., assistant professor of public health (right), received significant honors in October at separate university events. During the NSU 16th Annual Faculty Reception, De Gaetano was recognized as KPCOM's Professor of the Year. Cook earned the college's Provost's Research and Scholarship Award at the NSU External Funding Recognition Reception.

The Professor of the Year honor recognizes significant contributions to research, scholarship, and exceptional instruction. The Provost's Research and Scholarship Award recognizes innovative and sustained activities in scholarly pursuits in support of NSU's mission to foster intellectual inquiry, academic excellence, research, and a dynamic learning environment.

Faculty and Staff Members Recognized for Longevity

Congratulations to the following KPCOM faculty and staff members who celebrated significant employment milestones in 2017.

30 YEARS

Elaine Lefkowitz

20 YEARS

Paula Anderson-Worts

15 YEARS

Debra Chase
Hilda De Gaetano
Heike Dose
Guy Nehrenz
Gustavo Saldias

10 YEARS

Rebecca Cherner
Rogerio Faillace
Heather McCarthy
Jennifer Silva

5 YEARS

Debra Gibbs
Ana Maria Homs
Lynn Lafferty
Pamela Moran-Walcutt
Lubov Nathanson
Odessa Pemberton
Stephanie Petrosky
Irma Rey
Janet Roseman-Halsband

SPOTLIGHT ON

Tyler Cymet

ALUMNUS CREDITS NSU FOR MAJOR ROLE IN HIS SUCCESS

BY SCOTT COLTON, B.A., APR, COM/HPD DIRECTOR OF
MEDICAL COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

When Tyler Cymet, D.O., FACP, FACOFP, a 1988 alumnus, began attending the KPCOM in 1984, his initial goal was to become a general practitioner and work in South Florida when he graduated. But, as the poet Robert Burns famously said, “The best-laid plans of mice and men often go awry.”

Cymet, who spent his teen years in Hollywood, Florida, was fully committed to staying in South Florida until various postgraduate educational and employment opportunities led him to lofty institutions such as Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and Yale University School of Medicine. “Dr. Anthony J. Silvagni, the KPCOM’s dean emeritus, jokingly reminds me that I am an NSU failure since Yale and Johns Hopkins aren’t in Florida, and I ended up far from my intended path,” he said.

Although his illustrious postgraduate training in the Northeast exposed him to many mind-expanding concepts, Cymet also credits NSU for altering his projected career path. “If NSU hadn’t introduced me to clinical research, given me the opportunity to do my clinical rotations far from home, or provided me with various leadership opportunities, then I would have fulfilled my dream of being a general practitioner in Florida.”

During his formative years, Cymet’s parents exposed him and his siblings to a gamut of experiences, which included working in the hotel his mother managed in Miami Beach. “My older sister, younger brother, and



I pitched in by working in the hotel,” he said. “We helped run the switchboard, worked at the front desk, and prepared the guest rooms.”

From an early age, Cymet proved to be a voracious reader who was extremely self-motivated to learn, which led to his skipping a few grades and graduating early at the age of 16. Due to his academic prowess, he also experimented with going to college when he was just 14 by taking classes at Miami-Dade College and Broward College.

At 16, he earned a scholarship to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York. After a brief stay, however, he decided to return to South Florida to work at several jobs for about 18 months before going to college.

“The real decision on how I was going to spend my life was made while I attended Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia,” Cymet said. “I loved acquiring knowledge, thinking, and questioning. I considered pursuing a Ph.D. in medical anthropology or psychology since understanding people seemed like the knowledge most worth pursuing. But, medicine eventually made the most sense to me.”

While earning undergraduate degrees in anthropology and psychology from Emory University, Cymet began the arduous process of applying to various allopathic and osteopathic medical schools. “My family always pursued natural health options,” explained Cymet, whose extended family included several chiropractic physicians. “D.O. schools made the most sense for me since my personal philosophy is the same as the osteopathic philosophy, and I really wanted to learn manual medicine.”

By the end of the application process, Cymet was accepted to two medical schools: Northwestern University’s Feinberg School of Medicine in Chicago, Illinois, which was an allopathic school, and Southeastern College of Osteopathic Medicine (SECOM)—the precursor to NSU-KPCOM—in North Miami Beach. Making a decision, however, wasn’t easy.

“SECOM had not graduated a class at the time I was accepted, so it was a difficult decision,” he said. “I decided to put deposits down on both schools and attend Northwestern University the summer before matriculating into



In 2009, Cymet and fellow 1988 alumnus Robert Crook, D.O., purchased a bench located near the Terry Building, with the donation benefiting the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine.

SECOM as a way of comparing and feeling comfortable that the education would be at the same level.”

Once he began attending SECOM, his fears faded quickly thanks to the robustness of the curriculum and the enduring relationships he made with fellow students and faculty members. “My favorite memories are of time spent with my study group. Robert Crook, Michael Baron, and Rosemarie Bredahl Mead were friends and role models for me,” he said. “We spent a tremendous amount of time together in the library and doing things I never would have done had we not been organized alphabetically, making my best friends those in the SECOM class of 1988 whose last names began with B or C.”

Beyond bonding academically, Cymet’s peers broadened his worldview, exposing him to various activities and cultural events for the first time. “I had never gone to a concert before medical school, so Rosemarie made me mixtapes and took me to Grateful Dead concerts,” he said. “Robert taught me to be an outdoorsman and prioritized whitewater rafting and outdoor running over any kind of conventional life.”

He also credits faculty members, such as Edye Groseclose, Ph.D., professor of biochemistry, for helping him assimilate confusing concepts and preparing him for the fulfilling career he has today. “The first time I was ever overwhelmed academically was at NSU,” he admitted.



Top left: Cymet with daughter Ilana and wife Holly

Bottom left: In 2008, Cymet represented former Vice President Joe Biden in surrogate presidential debates during Biden's presidential run.

Top right: A young Cymet worked as an adviser to former President Jimmy Carter for nine exciting days.

Center right: Cymet displays his endurance during the 2003 Baltimore Marathon. Over the years, he has participated in about 30 marathons.

Right: Cymet participates in a duathlon.



continued from page 33

“I remember going to Dr. Groseclose’s office without a clear understanding of a biochemistry concept. I didn’t even know how to ask for help. Dr. Groseclose taught me how to know I needed help, and how to ask for it. NSU changed how I viewed thinking and moved me from collecting facts to understanding and using the knowledge I have.”

POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION REAPS GRATIFYING OUTCOMES

After earning his D.O. degree from SECOM in 1988, Cymet embarked on a rigorous postgraduate educational odyssey that included completing an osteopathic internship and research fellowship at the Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine, which focused on the effects of osteopathic manipulative medicine on pulmonary function. His next educational step involved doing his primary care internal medicine residency training at one of the most prestigious medical schools in the United States—Yale University School of Medicine in New Haven, Connecticut.

In 1992, Cymet began a fulfilling affiliation with the Sinai Hospital of Baltimore/Johns Hopkins School of Medicine Program in General Internal Medicine in Maryland,

which would endure until 2008. During his 16 years with the institution, Cymet served in a range of roles, many of which overlapped due to his myriad responsibilities.

From serving as director of osteopathic medical education and associate program director of the internal medicine residency program to acting as medical director of outpatient medicine and founder and medical director of Sinai Community Care, Cymet oversaw a complex array of areas, which helped expand his knowledge base and sate his innate intellectual curiosity.



“NSU changed how I viewed thinking and moved me from collecting facts to understanding and using the knowledge I have.”

—Tyler Cymet

“I’ve always loved the idea of pushing our understanding of people just a little further than it was before,” said Cymet, who appeared in five episodes of the TV series *Untold Stories of the ER*. “I love finding answers and enjoy being around smart people who ask questions. There is a beauty in understanding what we know well enough to also see the areas that don’t make sense, and understanding that our current knowledge may be wrong.”

During his years at Sinai Hospital of Baltimore/Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, Cymet indulged his curious nature by becoming involved in a spate of interesting projects, including attempting to name a previously undescribed body part—the finger bump that occurs on the writing finger from continuous use, which is still unnamed and not completely defined. “While I understand it is an acquired body part,” he explained, “I was able to participate in debates over whether or not it is an actual body part.”

In 1992, Cymet experienced his first brush with fame when he published “Ad Diction Ary of Drug Users’ Terms” in the *Journal of the American Osteopathic Association*. “At the time, it was the most widely read and cited article in the journal’s history,” he said. “I did about 50 interviews related to the article and felt like a minor celebrity.” He also defined a genetic syndrome that had previously been unidentified and thought to be fatal. “I had a patient with the defect who was very much alive, so the syndrome was dubbed Erondu-Cymet Syndrome.”

As the 21st century dawned, Cymet continued to rack up impressive achievements. He is especially proud of the role he played during the postal anthrax attack of 2001, which included helping to identify a new syndrome called Aborted Anthrax Syndrome. “I spent two years advocating for patients affected with the disease,” said Cymet, who has been married to Holly Cymet, Ph.D., a biophysicist, for 15 years and is the proud father of 9-year-old daughter Ilana. “The question of who should be responsible for providing care to the victims of a bioterror attack is a clear question without a clear answer.”

His many accomplishments and contributions to the medical profession also include working with the military to provide scholarships for osteopathic physicians, which resulted in an increase of more than \$150 million in scholarship money for students attending osteopathic medical colleges, and serving as president of the Maryland State Medical Society. Another proud achievement involved the establishment of a common clinical site for D.O. schools in Chacraseca, Nicaragua, through DOCARE International when he was the organization’s national president.

In 2008, Cymet shifted career gears and accepted a leadership position with the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM) in Bethesda, Maryland, as chief of clinical education. The position has been a rewarding one for Cymet, who develops, coordinates, and implements AACOM activities related to clinical education—from undergraduate medical education through residency—with an emphasis on clinical faculty development and coordination.

Throughout his prolific career, which has earned Cymet significant recognition, including being named Physician of the Year by the Maryland Association of Osteopathic Physicians in 1998 and 2005 and receiving the American Osteopathic Foundation Educator of the Year Award in 2016, he has never lost touch with his osteopathic alma mater.

“I feel connected to NSU. Being a Floridian gets baked into you. Even though I’d been a Floridian before going to NSU, the school leveraged the environment in unique and exciting ways. I would have never been to a migrant labor camp, worked with a public health investigator, or inspected the McDonald’s onion-chopping plant had it not been for NSU’s view of health and the role of a physician,” Cymet explained.

“Doing these things in your hometown gives it more meaning,” he added. “Sharing stories with current students at the KPCOM who are still having similar rural health experiences, and learning from many of the same people, maintains the strong bond I have with the college.” ■

Alumni in the News



*Clockwise from top left:
Andrea Z. Ali-Panzarella,
Robert Hasty, Sherreen G.
Batts, Tiffany Sizemore-Ruiz,
Berry Pierre, Watson Ducatel,
and Vicky Marsh*



Andrea Z. Ali-Panzarella, D.O., M.P.H., FAAP, FACOP ('06), who was board certified in November, became the first fellow to graduate from the Emory University School of Medicine Child Abuse Pediatric Fellowship in Atlanta, Georgia. There are approximately 360 child-abuse pediatricians in the United States.

Sherreen G. Batts, D.O., FAAP ('97), is retiring from the U.S. Air Force after 20 years of service this summer and plans to pursue a civilian position as a neonatal hospitalist/pediatrician.

Robert (Darrel) Collins, D.O. ('93), joined the new cardiology practice affiliated with the South Georgia Medical Center in Valdosta. Collins, who is board certified in cardiovascular diseases by the American Board of Internal Medicine, did his internal medicine residency training at the University of Florida and completed a cardiology fellowship at Indiana University School of Medicine.

Angie Harris, D.O. ('00), joined the medical staff of Family Physicians of Alton, which is located on the Alton Memorial Hospital campus in Alton, Illinois. "I enjoy practicing family medicine because I get to treat the whole family," she said. "From children and young adults to seasoned adults of both genders, I really enjoy partnering and caring for patients of all ages and backgrounds."

Robert Hasty, D.O., FACOI, FACP ('00), founding dean and chief academic officer of the Idaho College of Osteopathic Medicine (ICOM), received exciting news in December when the American Osteopathic Association's Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA) voted to allow the college to recruit and matriculate students for its inaugural class in fall 2018. The ICOM resides on the Idaho State University Meridian Health Science Center campus in Meridian, Idaho, about 10 miles from Boise.

Gregory Kozlov, D.O. ('06), a physical medicine and rehabilitation specialist, joined the Coastal Spine and Pain Center in Middleburg, Florida. As an interventional pain management physician and anesthesiologist, Kozlov supports patients living with pain by incorporating a multidisciplinary approach to patient care.

Vicky Marsh, D.O. ('12), opened a family medicine practice called Bluestar Medical, P.A., in 2017 in Plantation, Florida. She spent her first year of postgraduate training at Wellington Regional Medical Center in Wellington, Florida, before completing her family medicine residency at St. Joseph's Hospital in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Marsh also completed a fellowship in addiction medicine at Larkin Community Hospital in Miami, Florida.

Berry Pierre, D.O., M.P.H., FACOI ('11), interviewed fellow class of 2011 alumnus **Watson Ducatel, D.O., M.P.H., FACOI**, on his weekly podcast *Lunch and Learn with Dr. Berry*, where they discussed the new American College of Cardiology/American Heart Association blood pressure guidelines. Pierre serves as program director of the internal medicine residency program and director of medical education at Wellington Regional Hospital in Wellington, Florida.

Tiffany Sizemore-Ruiz, D.O., FACC ('09), was selected to serve on the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States Scientific Advisory Committee. She serves as a liaison between the Distilled Spirits Council and multiple media outlets discussing alcohol consumption and safety. ■

CORRECTION: In the winter 2018 issue of *COM Outlook*, William L. McCoy, D.O. ('08), was inadvertently listed as deceased. We regret the error and are happy to report that McCoy is alive and well.

Alumni in the News

1989 Graduate Receives NSU Distinguished Alumni Achievement Award

William H. Stager, D.O., M.S., M.P.H., FAAFP, FAAMA, FAAO, FACOFP *dist.*, 1989 alumnus, received an NSU Distinguished Alumni Achievement Award at a ceremony held November 9 at NSU's Grande Oaks Golf Club in Davie, Florida.

The annual Distinguished Alumni Achievement Awards recognition event salutes outstanding graduates from each NSU college or school and is the highest and most prestigious honor NSU bestows upon its alumni. The program recognizes alumni who have realized their potential around the world by demonstrating a record of distinguished service and extraordinary achievement in a particular profession, discipline, organization, or community cause.

Stager, who was the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (KPCOM) alumni award recipient, has been a primary care physician since 1990 and serves as a KPCOM clinical professor. During his long career, he has taught hundreds of medical students, interns, residents, and physicians throughout the United States, Canada, Norway, and China. Additionally, he has published more than 200 articles in health and fitness magazines and medical journals.

While he was a first-year KPCOM student, Stager worked as a lab instructor and a lecturer in anatomy, embryology, histology, medical ethics, and neuroanatomy because he had already earned his Master of Science in Anatomy degree. Two years later, he became a KPCOM predoctoral teaching fellow in osteopathic principles and practice, which are concepts he teaches to this day.

Stager is a Fellow of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Academy of Medical Acupuncture, and the American Academy of Osteopathy. He also is the recipient of several prestigious awards,



From left: Jennifer O'Flannery Anderson, Ph.D., NSU vice president for the Division of Advancement and Community Relations; Anthony J. Silvagni, D.O., Pharm.D., M.Sc., FACOFP dist., FCPP, KPCOM dean emeritus and director of international and interprofessional medicine; William H. Stager; and George L. Hanbury II, Ph.D., NSU president and CEO

including the 2011 Florida Academy of Osteopathy Distinguished Service Award, the 2010 Florida Society of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians Physician of the Year Award, and the 2007 Florida Osteopathic Medical Association Presidential Achievement Award. ■

Closing Notes



Institute for Neuro-Immune Medicine Hosts Screening of Award-Winning Documentary



On December 2, NSU's Institute for Neuro-Immune Medicine (INIM) hosted the South Florida premiere of *Unrest*—an award-winning Sundance Film Festival documentary that focuses on the plight of myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS) patients. The 90-minute documentary was screened at NSU's Miniaci Auditorium.

Nancy Klimas, M.D., left, the KPCOM's assistant dean of research, INIM director, and professor and chair of the Department of Clinical Immunology who is an internationally known ME researcher, is a featured expert in the film. The plot centers on 28-year-old Jennifer Brea—now one of Klimas' patients—who is set to marry the love of her life when she's struck down by a fever that leaves her bedridden. When doctors tell her "it's all in her head," she points her camera on herself and her community and looks for answers, including a fight for a cure.

"This is an eye-opening documentary that provides valuable insight for ME patients, as well as their loved ones, caregivers, and medical professionals," Klimas said. "Jennifer's story will help increase awareness of how this commonly misunderstood disease affects patients 24/7." ■

Closing Notes

NSU Surpasses \$250-Million Fund-Raising Goal

ALLOPATHIC AND NURSING COLLEGES RENAMED

NSU is a step closer to fulfilling its vision to be the South Florida destination for health care education thanks to two significant financial gifts. One will support the allopathic medicine college, while the other will support the nursing college. Combined, these gifts helped the



Drs. Pallavi and Kiran C. Patel

university achieve the \$250-million goal for its Realizing Potential campaign three years ahead of schedule.

A \$25-million gift from the Drs. Kiran & Pallavi Patel Family Foundation, Inc., resulted in the renaming of the College of Allopathic Medicine to the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Allopathic Medicine. The donation to the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Allopathic Medicine, which will have a charter class of 50 students in August, will provide scholarships for students requiring financial support to attend medical school.

This latest gift comes on the heels of the Patels' previous financial commitment of \$200 million last September, comprising a \$50-million gift and an additional \$150 million real estate investment to develop a new site for NSU's Tampa Bay Regional Campus in Clearwater, Florida. This new campus will provide an additional location for NSU's osteopathic medicine program.

"The cumulative generosity of the Patels' contributions, and all the other philanthropic gifts we have received since 2016, brought us very close to our \$250-million goal," said NSU President and CEO George L. Hanbury II, Ph.D. "Then, Ronald Assaf,



Kathy and Ron Assaf

NSU's Board of Trustees chair, and his wife, Kathy, stepped up with their own gift, which put our Realizing Potential campaign over the top, three years ahead of our 2020 target date."

The Assafs' gift resulted in the re-naming of the College of Nursing to the Ron and Kathy Assaf

College of Nursing. During their longtime affiliation with the university, the Assafs have donated more than \$5 million to NSU.

"The Patels, the Assafs, and many of our other supporters share our vision and core values to transform the way we educate our future leaders, while simultaneously providing a variety of health care and other services to the community at large," Hanbury said. "These generous gifts provide additional resources necessary to build an integrated, university-driven health system in Florida that has worldwide reach."

To meet demands in its various medical, health care, and life-science programs, NSU is planning to build a 250,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art integrated medical education building to complement its health professions facilities and health care centers.

Hanbury said the university has a \$3.5-billion economic impact throughout Florida. "And, with funded projects currently in the pipeline at the Fort Lauderdale/Davie Campus and the Tampa Bay Regional Campus, it is expected that by 2020, our economic impact throughout Florida will exceed \$5 billion," he revealed. ■

20th annual celebration OF EXCELLENCE

OUR EMERALD ANNIVERSARY

Renowned Philanthropists Receive NSU President's Award for Excellence in Community Service

Dr. Kiran C. Patel, M.D., a Tampa-area cardiologist and philanthropist, and his wife, pediatrician Dr. Pallavi Patel, M.D., received the NSU President's Award for Excellence in Community Service, which they were given during the university's 20th annual Celebration of Excellence event held January 27 at the Fort Lauderdale/Davie Campus.

The award supports NSU's community core values and encourages the ongoing pursuit of community service. The Patels join an impressive list of honorees that includes Jim and Jan Moran, Claire and Dan Marino, Wayne and Marti Huizenga, and Guy Harvey.

"If you're looking for a great example of what it means to give back to the community, look no further than Drs. Kiran C. and Pallavi Patel," said NSU President and CEO George L. Hanbury II, Ph.D. "Their impact goes well beyond NSU. They are making a difference in the lives of people across the globe. No one is more deserving of this award than the Patels."

In addition to receiving the NSU President's Award for Excellence in Community Service, Dr. Kiran C. Patel was named Floridian of the Year by *Florida Trend* magazine in its January issue. ■



From left: Jill Wallace-Ross, D.O., assistant dean of osteopathic clinical education; Elaine M. Wallace, D.O., M.S., M.S., M.S., KPCOM dean; Dr. Kiran C. Patel; and Dr. Pallavi Patel



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