

COM Outlook

NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

SUMMER/FALL 2019

DR. KIRAN C. PATEL COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE



**ETHICS, EMPATHY,
AND EMPOWERMENT**

PAGE 10

SHARKS DO MORE THAN SURVIVE. THEY THRIVE.



Sharks are strong, fast, resilient, and adaptable. Their presence enables the entire ecosystem to flourish. At NSU, we appreciate Sharks.

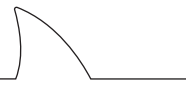
The world needs forces of nature like **YOU**.

Our distinguished KPCOM alumni are making significant contributions to health care and humanity on many levels. If you have a compelling story about your life or career that you would like to share with the readers of *COM Outlook*, please contact Scott Colton at scottc@nova.edu.

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(Correction: In the "Battling Bias" article published in the spring 2019 issue of COM Outlook, the wrong date was listed for when Elizabeth Blackwell, M.D., became the first woman in the United States to earn a medical degree. It should have read 1849 instead of 1949. We regret the error.)

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We live in a society that is obsessed with achievement, credentials, and status, so is it shocking to learn that some parents and students are willing to sacrifice their integrity to get into various schools and universities?

Students cite the college preparation and selection process as among the most stressful events they encounter during their high school years. Not surprisingly, this pressure has been shown to cause both physical and mental health issues.

Research conducted by Denise Pope, Ph.D., for the Challenge Success program at Stanford University in California, determined that what students do at college, and how much they are engaged in activities, matters much more than where they attend college. Additionally, numerous studies have indicated a strong connection between student engagement in schools and later happiness in their chosen careers.

Pope cited involvement in several areas that correlated with later-life gratification in the workplace. The areas included participation in extracurricular activities, experiential learning, working on projects over several semesters, and classes taught by professors who care and/or make learning exciting.

At Nova Southeastern University's Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine, we put our core values of academic excellence and student centered at the top of our priority list. The focus of our curriculum, whether in the undergraduate, graduate, or D.O. programs, is to create an environment where students can have experiences in the areas described above.

Would this correlation, if known, have changed parents' involvement in the recent nationwide admissions scandal? Would it alter the fact that students feel the need to cheat in school to be competitive candidates for their chosen career paths? Is the recent admissions debacle only the tip of the iceberg, with its depth representing an "end justifies the means" mentality?

To quote Jason Gay in a recent *Wall Street Journal* article, "Not everyone cheats. Not everyone cuts corners. There isn't a diploma in the world that's more valuable than your integrity—and you can't buy your integrity back."

Phyllis J. Filker, D.M.D., M.P.H.
Associate Dean of Undergraduate, Graduate,
and Community Education
Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine



The past few years have been incredibly productive for the Nova Southeastern University (NSU) Health Professions Division (HPD), and more achievements are on the way. When you reflect on your future, however, it's also important to review your past.

I find it extremely satisfying to assess all that has occurred since Morton Terry, D.O., applied his visionary approach and professional abilities to create the first osteopathic medical

school in the southeastern United States in 1979, which evolved into what we now know as NSU's Health Professions Division.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the establishment of Southeastern College of Osteopathic Medicine, now known as the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine. When you look at the HPD, which consists of eight successful colleges, it stands as a proud testament to Dr. Terry, as well as the various Board of Trustees and Board of Governors members who have supported us over the years.

I have been affiliated with the HPD for more than 36 years. During this time, I have carefully looked to the past for a view of the future when it comes to enhancing the education we provide, simply because education and the presentation of pedagogy are constantly changing. In terms of our academic structure, we are always looking to enhance the educational experience for our students. This is accomplished by implementing the most cutting-edge technology, and through our various, and sometimes subtle, curricular revisions.

At NSU, we are always looking toward the future. The HPD now offers more than 60 degree and certificate programs through its 8 colleges at the university's campuses in Fort Lauderdale/Davie, Fort Myers, Jacksonville, Miami, Miramar, Orlando, Palm Beach, Tampa Bay, and Puerto Rico.

A recent high point is the official opening of our Tampa Bay Regional Campus, a state-of-the-art, 325,000-square-foot facility in Clearwater. It houses an additional site for the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine, allowing another 150 matriculants, as well as new facilities for the Dr. Pallavi Patel College of Health Care Sciences and other HPD programs.

In keeping with this progressive trend, the Martin and Gail Press HPD Library at the Fort Lauderdale/Davie Campus was revamped, replacing written texts with a digital workspace that allows students to immediately access a wealth of databases and almost triple the amount of information that was previously available to them. During the closing month of the recent spring semester, more than 47,000 visits were made to the Martin and Gail Press HPD Library, which is amazing.

Thanks to Dr. Terry's remarkable vision, all of us at the HPD are living the future.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Frederick Lippman". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Frederick Lippman, R.Ph., Ed.D.
Chancellor, Special Projects
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Parkland Revisited



Nicole Cook and daughter, Eden Hebron

Reflection and Action During Turbulent Times

BY SCOTT COLTON, B.A., APR

When two Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School students committed suicide in March, it unleashed a flood of emotions for Nicole Cook, Ph.D., M.P.A., associate professor of public health at the KPCOM, and her daughters, Eden and Maia Hebron, who survived the mass shooting that took place in the hallways and classrooms of their Parkland, Florida, school on February 14, 2018. Not surprisingly, emotional aftershocks persist.

“It has been a rough and somewhat crazy year,” said Cook of the turbulent times her family has endured. “I think we are doing okay right now, but it’s hard to know, as things seem to change from minute to minute.”

In the aftermath of the Stoneman Douglas tragedy, mass shootings continue to dominate the headlines nationally and internationally. These heartbreaking incidents include the October 2018 Tree of Life synagogue shooting in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, that killed 11 people and the 2 mosque terror attacks in Christchurch, New Zealand, that claimed 50 lives in March.

Closer to home, the recent suicides of two Stoneman Douglas students, as well as the March suicide of Jeremy Richman, whose daughter was killed in the December 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre in Newtown, Connecticut, prove a potent point. In some cases, the mounting survivor guilt and residual aftereffects simply become too much to bear.

“On some level, I think we were all very fearful, yet somewhat expectant, that there would be suicides, as it is part of the trajectory

among children who suffer from trauma,” Cook said. “The suicide of Mr. Richman was incredibly sad to me. In fact, he was in South Florida speaking at Florida Atlantic University not long before he died. He was a model for other parents who lost their children in Parkland. It concerns me how the parents of our 17 angels are doing in general, and particularly in the wake of Mr. Richman taking his own life.”

The Rocky Road to Healing

As a concerned mother and public health professional, Cook has navigated a tricky path when it comes to supporting her daughters’ healing in the wake of the Parkland incident, subsequent mass shootings, and recent suicides. “My older daughter, Maia, who is a freshman at the University of Florida (UF), initially refused any kind of behavioral health care, although I kept trying to gently offer text therapy, telemental health, or anything else,” she explained.

Following the Pittsburgh shooting, Maia helped plan a vigil at UF. A few weeks later, in November 2018, 12 people were shot and killed in a country-western bar in Thousand Oaks, California, that was frequented by college students. Maia attended a similar vigil at UF for the Thousand Oaks victims, and the event triggered a strong reaction.

“It was a sad time, and Maia had difficulty feeling safe out of her dorm,” Cook admitted. “Thankfully, she was brave enough to ask for care, and she began

telemental health with a great therapist, which provided her important coping skills to resume her freshman year.”

The March suicides of two Stoneman Douglas students also proved difficult for Maia, who was close with one of them. “Maia was friends with beautiful Sydney Aiello for years, and she was very torn about whether she should come home for the funeral,” Cook said. “As a mother, I felt she had endured more than her share of funerals, trauma, and grief. I encouraged her to stay in Gainesville and participate in a suicide walk at UF, which she did. I hope this was the right decision. Sadly, there is no instruction manual for any of this.”

Cook’s daughter, Eden, has become an outspoken advocate for gun control. She was in one of the classrooms on that fateful February 14 afternoon when a former Stoneman Douglas student used an AR-15 assault rifle to kill three students and injure five more in her English class. Her advocacy, however, has come at a cost.

“Eden was very involved in gun control last year and spoke at various events, including the American Public Health Association’s opening conference in California last November,” Cook explained. “She said that speaking publicly empowers her to share her story for change, but on the other hand, she says it is emotionally exhausting. While she is a powerful and compelling speaker, changing our country’s gun-control laws should not rest on the shoulders of my young daughter.”

Toward the end of 2018, a negative media encounter convinced Eden to temporarily step away from the spotlight. A reporter had chosen to sensationalize her story when her singing skills earned her an opportunity to perform at a competition held at New York’s prestigious Carnegie Hall. “During the interview, Eden told the reporter she didn’t want to be known as the ‘girl from Parkland.’ When the article was published, however, the headline read ‘Parkland Shooting Survivor Finds Therapy in Singing at Carnegie Hall,’” Cook recalled.

“That, plus some other events, resulted in Eden retreating from public speaking for a while,” Cook added. “But she agreed to join several other girls from her class for an extended interview with *The New York Times* on the one-year anniversary of the Stoneman Douglas shooting, and she said the shared experience and discussion were cathartic.”

Taking Action Against Inaction

As the spate of mass shootings mount, Cook is perplexed that U.S. gun laws haven’t been modified to eliminate easy access to certain weapons. “I cannot rationalize how most people think it is okay that our children have to live in fear every single day of being shot in schools, nightclubs, airports, and universities so other people can have the freedom to purchase killing machines,” she said.

“My husband, Igal Hebron, was in the army for four years, and he carried an M16 rifle, which is similar to the AR-15,” she added.

“He doesn’t understand why any civilian would ever need a military-style assault weapon for any reason except mass killing.”

In an attempt to elicit positive change, Cook ventures into the community nearly every weekend to petition for Ban Assault Weapons NOW—a citizens’ initiative in Florida that aims to have an amendment banning assault weapons added to the 2020 Florida ballot. “I hear the most illogical reasons why people will not sign the petition. I am trying to understand other people’s positions, as my training as a public health professional taught me not to be judgmental and to remain open to different cultures, but this is very difficult for me,” she said.

“New Zealand banned assault-weapon sales six weeks after the Christchurch massacre, yet Florida still allows private sales of military-grade weapons without any required background check. Smith & Wesson manufactures more than 500,000 assault weapons every year, and most of our society encourages it through inaction.”

In her role as a public health professional, Cook acknowledges that more also needs to be done in terms of preparing for, and responding to, mass shootings, as last year’s Stoneman Douglas incident illustrated. “We have an idea of what should be done from lessons learned from prior shootings, and a lot of these lessons were not applied. In addition to centralizing resources, we also needed to establish and maintain proactive, person-to-

person contact. This was not done, and it still hasn’t been. We never received any personal contact from the school to discuss, assess, educate, or inform,” she explained.

“As a result, many people have absolutely no idea about services, accommodations, or behavioral health post-trauma. There is a lot of confusion and uncertainty,” she added. “It’s important to highlight that there are many talented and

expert volunteers and programs, but, until recently, they were offered by an unconnected network of organizations and disseminated sporadically through social media, websites, or robocalls.”

Cook, who has collaborated with local officials, organizations, and parents to improve the process moving forward, is enthusiastic about Eagle’s Haven—the new, long-term



Eden Hebron

“The heartbreaking fact is that our kids already went through the worst trauma imaginable last year when they were forced to grow up and learn to live with unimaginable grief.”

—Nicole Cook

wellness center that opened immediately in the wake of the recent suicides to serve the Parkland/Coral Springs community. “In terms of wellness, our collective goal now is to help reduce mental health stigma, raise awareness about services, and improve help-seeking behaviors, including connecting people to Eagle’s Haven,” Cook said.

“Public health professionals possess many tools to support dissemination and engagement, such as having information available in multiple languages, materials appropriate for people of low literacy, and innovative outreach with technology,” she explained. “Thankfully, these strategies are slowly, but surely, gaining more headway.”

Recently, Cook watched with pride as the NSU community came together to support behavioral health when undergraduate and graduate students, colleagues, and alumni volunteered to translate suicide prevention materials into Haitian-Creole, Hindu, Portuguese, and Spanish.

Distance-Based Behavioral Health Therapy

Another important service Cook has strongly advocated for is easy access to telemental health, which involves using the phone,

text, email, or videoconferencing to conduct counseling sessions.

“Telehealth offers privacy and convenience and has demonstrated efficacy when compared to face-to-face interaction,” she said. “In many rural and underserved areas, telehealth has flourished in specialties such as psychiatry, stroke care, and dermatology.” Not surprisingly, Cook believes telemental health is an important service that can gain traction among students, teachers, first responders, and parents who may not be willing to walk into a therapy office.

“In Florida, many providers, including Medicaid, will reimburse for behavioral health services delivered through videoconferencing, in accordance with licensing boards and privacy and security laws. Unfortunately, there has been very slow adoption of this service in South Florida,” said Cook, who has also encouraged Stoneman Douglas High School administration to survey students to discover how they prefer to receive care.

“Most behavioral health services for the Parkland/Coral Springs area were largely set up to require people to walk into a physical location for ongoing care, though some providers do provide in-home therapy,” added Cook, who earned her telemental health

training certificate earlier this year so she could serve as a resource for adopters in South Florida.

As her family comes to grips with the recent suicides and frequent news reports of additional mass shootings, the goal is to “do what we know how to do, which is to be here for each other. As a mom, all I can do is let Maia and Eden know we are here for them, and that we love and support them,” Cook said.

“After months of not engaging publicly, Eden went back on Twitter to encourage people to speak up if they are hurting, and she agreed to do an interview with *People* magazine to help reduce the stigma of behavioral health, which was well received nationwide,” she added. “Gently, we encourage Eden and Maia to make sure they have healthy outlets, whatever they choose that to be—gym, beach, music, or friends.”

The recent suicides have clearly had a significant impact on Cook and her family, but “the heartbreaking fact is that our kids already went through the worst trauma imaginable last year when they were forced to grow up and learn to live with unimaginable grief,” she concluded. “So, as sad as these additional deaths have been, they understand this is part of life.” □



Artwork by NSU University School students in response to the 2018 Parkland shooting

Top: **Matthew Lyons**, Grade 11
Pencils Not Guns, 2018
Mixed Media

Left: **Nicole Steiner**, Grade 11
School Survivor, 2018
Mixed Media

Above: **Jake Nissen**, Grade 12
The New Normal, 2018-2019
Charcoal and Color Wash

PILLARS OF LEADERSHIP

Graduate Trio Exemplifies Ethics, Empathy, and Empowerment

BY SCOTT COLTON, B.A., APR

When the class of 2019 students began their educational odyssey at the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (KPCOM) four years ago, many approached the experience with specific goals. Some chose to delve into research, while others had a passion for involving themselves in various community service endeavors.

Some were open to exploring where the educational process would lead them, while others opted for a nose-to-the-grindstone approach in their pursuit of the highest grades possible. There were others, however, who felt a calling to lead by example, as well as a desire to champion student issues, enhance the educational experience for their osteopathic peers locally and nationally, and leave a legacy.

Three conscientious and compassionate students from the class of 2019 truly epitomized the intrinsic qualities of great leaders throughout their years at the KPCOM—Alixandria Fiore Pfeiffer, D.O.; Vikisha Hazariwala, D.O.; and Natalie Negron, D.O.



ALIXANDRIA FIORE PFEIFFER: Epitomizing Ethics

According to Fiore Pfeiffer, who was born and raised in Miami, Florida, her parents instilled in her a hunger to give back. “They always pushed me to not shy away from asking questions, being curious about the world we live in, and helping others,” said Fiore Pfeiffer of her mother and father, who are a teacher and a public servant, respectively.

“They really were examples to my brother and me of giving your time to help, even if it is just for one person,” she added. “They always told me I was capable to be a voice for others. Because of this, I have always challenged myself to be a leader and an advocate who tries to positively impact those around me.”

Fiore Pfeiffer, who is the first person in her family to pursue a graduate degree, was initially exposed to medicine following a series of sports injuries that plagued her throughout high school and during her years as an undergraduate student at Marywood University in Scranton, Pennsylvania. What propelled her into the medical field, however, was her mother’s health scare, which occurred during Fiore Pfeiffer’s sophomore year in college.



Alixandria Fiore Pfeiffer represents Omega Beta Iota during national D.O. Day on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C.

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FAST FACTS

ALIXANDRIA FIORE PFEIFFER, D.O.

Hometown

- Miami, Florida

Leadership Highlights

- creator and editor in chief of Omega Beta Iota national newsletter
- member of the KPCOM Student Leadership Committee
- national resident-physician adviser for Omega Beta Iota
- national student leader for the National Osteopathic Student Caucus
- parliamentarian for the KPCOM's SGA Executive Board

Residency Training

- obstetrics and gynecology residency at the University of Texas—San Antonio

KPCOM Kudos

"NSU provided me with substantial and unique opportunities I sometimes thought were too good to be true, from presenting cervical cancer research at Yale University and introducing local high school students to medicine to treating hundreds of patients throughout Jamaica. Because of its prime location in South Florida, research reputation, and strong network of student leaders and alumni, the KPCOM was a perfect storm for my dreams. I will be forever grateful for what it gave me."

Words of Wisdom

"Sometimes, it is so incredibly easy in this field to want to give up and not believe in yourself or your abilities. But, in time, everything just comes together. You must trust the process. Part of that takes perseverance and effort, part of that takes having the right influential people in your life, and, most importantly, part of it takes faith."

"My mother received emergency treatment and management by a gynecologic oncologist in Miami on Easter weekend in 2013. I watched how the physician treated her with compassion, respect, and autonomy, all the while wearing several different hats for her. He was her surgeon, oncologist, primary care physician, confidant, and advocate," Fiore Pfeiffer explained.

"I marveled at the level of care she received, and it really affected me," she added. "Although my decision to become a physician was made in early adulthood, my core ambition in life never changed. I wanted to bring hope to the hopeless and be the light for those in the dark. Medicine was ultimately my vehicle to do so, and I never looked back."

Because Fiore Pfeiffer had been an active student leader while attending Marywood University, she pursued similar opportunities at the KPCOM. "When I was accepted to NSU, not only did my primal leadership instinct kick in, but I also had a strong urge to give back to the college for letting me be part of the family, and for taking a chance on me," she said.

"After the first week of school, I was in awe of the intelligence, charm, and family-oriented personality of my classmates," she added. "By the time Club Week rolled around, I had met several upperclassmen who were willing to talk to and educate me on their respective clubs and organizations. Soon after joining the class of 2019 Student Government Association (SGA), I felt as though I had found my niche."

Fiore Pfeiffer balanced her rigorous academic schedule with

an enriching slate of extracurricular activities, such as being involved with the national political osteopathic honor society Omega Beta Iota (OBI) and serving as a KPCOM student ambassador. Other activities included volunteering as an anatomy fellow, peer mentor, national mental health liaison, and a member of the Student Leadership Committee. "The work of my incredible classmates and fellow SGA members really inspired me to keep working hard for something bigger than us," she said.

In an academic career rife with accomplishment, Fiore Pfeiffer points to her involvement with Omega Beta Iota as her proudest achievement. "I was introduced to OBI through Saamia Shaikh, one of my classmates and a fellow SGA member, who helped pave the way for others, including myself. I was elected to several executive board positions, most recently as national director, where I led the organization and worked with exemplary osteopathic students across the country who demonstrated a remarkable capacity for advocacy on behalf of our profession and patients," she explained.

"With the help of my executive board, we were able to increase our application numbers by almost 200 percent, and we saw great growth on a national scale with the help of our national partners, such as the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine's government relations team," she added.

"Creating a national newsletter for OBI also made me proud, as I was able to help set up a platform for students and members

alike to network, engage, and discuss non-sustaining legislation and reform.”

Fiore Pfeiffer’s OBI leadership experience proved beneficial on a range of levels. “I met many osteopathic medical students, physicians, and leaders who helped educate me and show me the path to efficient and impactful health care advocacy, which does the most important thing—protect our patients,” she said.

Fiore Pfeiffer’s unbridled commitment earned her well-deserved recognition. In addition to being named KPCOM Student of the Year by her peers earlier this year, Fiore Pfeiffer earned the KPCOM Student of the Year honor at the 21st Annual NSU Student Life Achievement Awards in April.

Her achievements were also recognized on a national level when she earned second-place honors in the Council of Osteopathic Student Government Presidents National Student D.O. of the Year competition, which featured a field of 41 candidates. “To be given this place among all of the talented and hardworking osteopathic students in the country was so humbling,” Fiore Pfeiffer acknowledged.

As her KPCOM academic career concludes, Fiore Pfeiffer has much to be grateful for, including a date with destiny that occurred during her first week of medical school. While attending the welcome event called Osteoblast, she met her

future husband, Wilson Pfeiffer, D.O., also a member of the 2019 graduating class.

Next up on Fiore Pfeiffer’s educational agenda is the start of her obstetrics and gynecology residency training at the University of Texas—San Antonio. “I hope to subspecialize in the field once I complete my residency and continue to help advance women’s health care in our country,” she said.

“I also plan to continue my passion for advocacy for my patients and the profession, as well as teach,” she added. “Additionally, I hope to use my expertise to provide health care to those in need through my family’s nonprofit organization in Jeremie, Haiti, which is my mother’s hometown.”



VIKISHA HAZARIWALA: An Empathetic Approach



Vikisha Hazariwala performs at the 2016 NSU’s Got Talent competition with several classmates, with whom she formed a band called The Heartbeats, to relieve study stress and express their creativity.

Much like Fiore Pfeiffer, her class of 2019 classmate, Hazariwala didn’t commit to a career in medicine until she had already reached the college stage of life. The reason? Too many appealing options.

“As a child, I was fascinated with the stars and wanted to be a rocket scientist, but I was also amused by life in the water and wanted to be a marine biologist,” said Hazariwala, who would get so riled up by the daily news that she considered becoming a journalist. “I was also moved by music and wanted to be a singer.”

She attributes much of her intrinsic curiosity to her parents, who ensured that the family dined together every night at 6:30 to watch the nightly news and



FAST FACTS

VIKISHA HAZARIWALA, D.O.

Hometown

- Gainesville, Florida

Leadership Highlights

- administrative peer mentor for the KPCOM Silverman Society
- administrator of public affairs for the KPCOM's Student Government Association
- editor in chief of the *SGA Rounds* student newsletter
- member of the KPCOM Student Leadership Committee
- national liaison for the American Medical Student Association Special Olympics

Residency Training

- ophthalmology residency at Beaumont Health in Detroit, Michigan

KPCOM Kudos

"One of my favorite memories was my trip to Washington, D.C., for D.O. Day on Capitol Hill. Osteopathic students from around the country meet in March every year and advocate for changes in the medical field. It was an honor to speak with my district's representatives and to share with them the necessity of maintaining teaching hospitals in rural areas."

Words of Wisdom

"Study with conviction and sincerity. The reward of knowing more and showing more kindness is when your attending physician trusts you enough to pass you the scalpel and drill, or when the attending calls you in the middle of the night to help assist with lifesaving measures. Don't think of yourself as 'just' a medical student. You are now a part of a loved one's medical team."

discuss global issues. These daily discussions instilled in her the value of working hard, like her parents, who dedicated their lives to others.

Hazariwala, who grew up in Gainesville, Florida, may have taken her time in terms of deciding on a medical career, but when the inspiration to do so materialized, she immediately acted on it. Thanks to her love of music, Hazariwala's medical ambitions were stoked after she volunteered for an organization at the University of Florida called Arts in Medicine.

"As the musician 'on call,' I would bring my guitar to patients' rooms in the nearby hospital and play and sing them a song of their choice. These intimate moments helped patients reveal to me their insecurities and fears about life and death, and the relationships that made them whole," said Hazariwala, who earned her Bachelor of Science in Nutritional Sciences degree from the University of Florida. "I realized the impact I could have as their physician by caring for them in their most vulnerable times. That's why medicine was the one profession that spoke to my soul the most."

Prior to becoming a KPCOM student, Hazariwala took a gap year to conduct clinical research at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. "Upon meeting my research adviser, she told me the best part of her job was knowing she could not only improve her patient's lives, but also that she could contribute to the advancement of science. I immediately knew I wanted to have the same impact on people for generations to come," she explained.

"Research taught me all the skills necessary for medicine—patience, creative and critical thinking, and effective communication," added Hazariwala, who would soon be using her writing and organizational skills as editor in chief of the KPCOM's student newsletter, *SGA Rounds*. "I realized that being editor in chief of *SGA Rounds* would allow me to dictate how I wanted to be remembered at NSU. The newsletter provides an opportunity for students to share their experiences with volunteering and leadership, which helps them blaze a trail for junior students."

During her two-year stint in the editor's role, Hazariwala wrote several articles, including one detailing the stories of four classmates who overcame health challenges in their lives. "They fought cancer, inflammatory diseases, and multiple surgeries as pediatric patients and continued to strive for excellence through adulthood," she said. "I was so touched by their stories and wanted to share their perspectives—from bedridden to bedside, from patient to physician."

During her time at the KPCOM, Hazariwala's passion for research and writing broadened to include leadership, which occurred when she became aware of, and bothered by, the numerous governmental policies that dictate a physician's capabilities.

"I was compelled to take part in this type of decision-making at a local level by participating in the KPCOM's Student Government Association as administrator of public affairs. This role allowed me to reach out to school administration and physicians in the Fort Lauderdale area, as well as to our



Vikisha Hazariwala assists her attending neurosurgery physician during a craniotomy procedure to help release excess fluid from a patient's brain.

Florida representatives who work in Washington, D.C.," she said.

"I was also driven to start conversations at the KPCOM about mental health awareness. A few years ago, new statistics about physician suicide were released. Sadly, more than 400 physicians a year are lost to suicide, including my late uncle, who was an anesthesiologist in California. Not only did I have a deeply personal reason to raise my voice, but I also wanted to ensure I was part of an ongoing conversation that so desperately needs traction today."

In addition to the aforementioned activities and activism, Hazariwala takes great pride in her participation in one of the college's medical outreach trips to

Jamaica. "I had the chance to spend time with about 20 of my classmates in rural parts of this island nation, where we provided general medical health exams and visual acuity tests," she said. "We organized clinics in small churches and schools and learned to appreciate the precious value in the medical resources we often take for granted in the United States."

With her gaze fixed on the future, Hazariwala leaves her NSU family to begin her ophthalmology residency at Beaumont Health in Detroit, Michigan, which includes a transitional year in medicine. "My goals during and after residency are not so different than what I currently try to achieve," she said.

"I would like to become involved with groups like Women in Ophthalmology and Congressional Advocacy Day to lobby for improved practice management outcomes for my patients and my colleagues' patients," she explained. "In addition to patient advocacy, I would like to continue doing research in hopes of improving outcomes in those with ocular tumors."

While she embarks on her residency training with an understandable eagerness, Hazariwala also brings to her budding career a levelheaded approach to medicine. In April, her beloved cousin passed away at age 63 after fighting a losing battle with metastatic prostate cancer.

"His diagnosis was made in its late stages, and the disease had progressed much more aggressively than other tumors," she said. "It was insidious and unfair. Our families held hands and prayed in the hospital for three days before he took his last breath."

Although it wasn't her first experience with human loss, Hazariwala realized something within her had altered during the grieving process. "I recognized a change in myself, a perspective I had not known I had. Over the past two years, I have witnessed much sadness on my clinical rotations. And with each tragedy, my heart has hardened a bit further," she admitted.

"The tears do not flow as swiftly, and my hands tremor less with each death I witness," she concluded. "However, it is the lives we can save, the diagnoses we can catch, and the treatments we can offer that make this profession an incredibly humbling journey."

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NATALIE NEGRON: Failure Fosters Empowerment

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Natalie Negron hones her diagnostic skills on a robotic manikin in the college's Medical Simulation Clinic.

Negron credits her career choice to an unlikely source—the medical shows *ER* and *Grey's Anatomy*. As a child growing up in Fort Worth, Texas, Negron was riveted to the TV screen as she watched fictional characters like Meredith Grey perform lifesaving surgeries.

“Growing up, I fell in love with so many different careers and changed what I wanted to do quite a bit, but I kept coming back to medicine,” said Negron, whose family relocated to South Florida when she was eight. “As crazy as it may sound, since no one in my family was in the medical field, these fictional characters were some of my first role models. That’s why I wanted to pursue a career path that would allow me to have as great, and as positive, of an impact as the characters I revered.”

While these fictional portrayals lit the initial fire, a personal incident fueled the medical flame

prior to Negron attending the KPCOM. During the summer before her junior year of high school, Negron’s grandfather underwent emergency surgery following a nasty fall and was hospitalized in Puerto Rico for two weeks.

“I often recall that time as the best and worst two weeks of my life. It was during this terrifying situation that I first found myself. I helped take care of my grandfather by making sure he took his medication, walking him around the hospital, and feeding him his meals,” she recalled.

“I was amazed at how natural it felt to take care of him, as though it was my primitive instinct,” she said. “My affinity for caring for others allowed me to make the best of a horrible situation. It really sparked my interest in the medical field and set me down a path to become a doctor.”

After earning her Bachelor of Science in Biology from Nova

Southeastern University (NSU) in 2015, Negron matriculated into the KPCOM, making an immediate impact as a student leader within the college, as well as nationally. “I had a desire to better my school, to champion student issues, and to leave my program better than I found it,” said Negron, who served as president of the college’s SGA in 2017–2018.

During her KPCOM tenure, Negron became the inaugural member of the college’s Mental Health Awareness Task Force, volunteered as national first vice chair for the Council of Osteopathic Student Government Presidents, and served as student adviser to the American Osteopathic Association Board of Trustees. She also became a member of the NSU President’s 64—an elite body of student leaders who provide targeted feedback to the university’s president and serve as student ambassadors and representatives at NSU events.

Negron’s involvement allowed her to broaden her expertise and tackle some weighty issues, such as drafting and recommending changes to the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation standards for D.O. colleges pertaining to sexual harassment, professionalism and ethics, and mental health.

“Of all the projects I’ve had the unique honor to be involved with, the initiative I derive the most meaning from, and consider my greatest contribution to my community, is empowering my fellow students to serve as advocates and leaders,” said Negron, who developed a proposal to incorporate sexual misconduct and suicide

prevention training into the medical student curriculum.

Becoming a KPCOM graduate and embarking on her family medicine residency training at Oak Hill Hospital in Brooksville, Florida, are huge triumphs for Negrón, who almost surrendered her medical school dreams following a setback during her senior year as an NSU undergrad. “I was applying for medical school, and as any premed student can attest, the process is grueling and exhausting. You are pushed to your limits mentally and physically,” she explained.

“You place yourself in a vulnerable position by entering into what can oftentimes be a cutthroat and competitive environment,” Negrón added. “My personal struggle was made even harder because I had to take my Medical College Admission Test twice. Standardized tests had never been my strong suit, but I was so discouraged upon receiving my first score. I began comparing myself with others, and I started to doubt my ability to succeed, to make it into med school, and to one day become a physician.”

To compound her anguish and self-doubt, Negrón encountered an unsupportive administrator who told her to consider a different field, such as law, and give up her dream of becoming a physician. Not surprisingly, Negrón was devastated.

“One day, when I was feeling completely overwhelmed by it all, I confided in my genetics professor, who shared some words with me I have never forgotten: ‘Failure is not what defines you. What defines you are your actions and willingness to get back up

and keep going,’” she said. “At a time when I had started to lose faith in myself, he never lost sight of my potential. With his words engraved in my mind, I pushed forward.”

Negrón not only persevered, she thrived, winning several prestigious accolades, including the Florida Osteopathic Medical Association Seltzer Legislative and Healthcare Policy Award in 2017. In early 2018, she was voted KPCOM Student of the Year by her peers and duplicated that feat a few months later when she received the KPCOM Student of the Year honor at the NSU Student Life Achievement Awards.

“Had I listened to the administrator who gave up on me, I never would have followed my true passion,” added Negrón, who plans to remain involved in health care and public policy issues at the state and national level throughout her career. “In the time that has passed since then, I have used those words, both from the administrator and from my professor, as motivation to continue forward and follow my dreams.”

One such dream is to complete a fellowship in women’s health following her residency and open a women and children’s health center in South Florida for the underserved.

“The challenges we face happen for a reason, even if they are unclear in the moment,” she stressed. “Be resilient in the face of adversity, and remember that the middle space is only temporary. There are brighter days ahead after the storm if you have faith and trust the process.” □



FAST FACTS

NATALIE NEGRÓN, D.O.

Hometown

- Fort Worth, Texas

Leadership Highlights

- inaugural member of the KPCOM Mental Health Awareness Task Force
- national first vice chair for the Council of Osteopathic Student Government Presidents
- president of the KPCOM Student Government Association
- student adviser to the American Osteopathic Association Board of Trustees
- student delegate for the Florida Osteopathic Medical Association Board of Trustees

Residency Training

- family medicine residency at Oak Hill Hospital in Brooksville, Florida

KPCOM Kudos

“What I have appreciated most from my mentors and role models has been the belief they have placed in me. It is because they believed in me that I have felt inspired and motivated to accomplish my goals. As a direct consequence of this, I have dedicated my time as a student leader to do the same for others.”

Words of Wisdom

“Sometimes our biggest successes can be rooted in what seem like our biggest failures. What I mean by this is that sometimes the obstacles we face in life, though we may not know it in the moment, may reveal themselves later in life to be learning experiences and hidden blessings.”

INDELIBLE EXPERIENCE

STUDENTS TRADE SPRING BREAK FOR ECUADOR MEDICAL ADVENTURE

BY FELICIA F. OURN

Once spring break rolls around, a rest from the rigors of medical school becomes many students' ultimate objective. Rest, however, was the last thing 36 osteopathic medical students looked forward to as they embarked on the KPCOM's international medical outreach trip to Ecuador in March to provide health care to 1,040 grateful patients.

Nearly 1,800 miles away from home, the air was cooler than the South Florida breeze, Spanish was the primary language, and bottled water was the most sought-after commodity. Before beginning clinic days, the team members had an opportunity to immerse themselves in the culture and be tourists, exploring Quito and visiting historic churches and museums.

By day two, however, the students were ready to provide basic medical attention to impoverished communities. Working collaboratively to enhance the educational experience were Darren Cohen, D.O.; Jacqueline Moljo, D.O.; Daniel Olsen, D.O.; Leonardo Cisneros, D.O.; Maria Bello, M.D.; Stephen Campbell, Ph.D.; Patrick Powell, Ed.D.; Grace Birmingham, R.N.; and Evelyn Martinez, KPCOM medical outreach program coordinator.

Cisneros and Moljo were able to give back to their childhood communities, as they were both born and raised in Ecuador. "Going back to Ecuador and helping those individuals with whom I share roots proved to be a transforming experience," Cisneros said. "Working alongside and teaching medical students, in addition to helping a group of people whose culture I under-

stand so well, ironically proved to be more of a learning experience for me."

The participating students, physicians, and volunteers began their first of four clinic days in the rural town of Loreto. Students working in the triage area were the first to greet people and take their medical histories. Patients then waited to be seen by a team consisting of one physician and a handful of students, who took a history of the chief complaint and performed a basic physical. Students then presented their case and suggested the appropriate treatment or care plan.

Many patients worked on a farm and had moderate-to-severe hypertonic back muscles. Other common complaints were joint pain, leg pain, and headaches—mostly due to dehydration. Interestingly, students discovered that what is known as acetaminophen in this country, which was often given to those who had aches and pains, was called paracetamol in all other countries aside from the United States.

Many patients also received osteopathic manipulative treatment (OMT) for their somatic dysfunctions. Seeing the patients' immediate relief from hands-on manipulation left a remarkable feeling. What is considered as minimal treatment in the United States was received with significant gratitude from many patients.

The team then traveled to a jungle town near Loreto, providing health care services in the pouring rain. Seeing children joyfully run in the rain with ripped



Top: Ecuador health care team. Above, left: Class of 2022 student Patrick J. Mansell bandages a girl's cut finger. Above, right: Class of 2022 student Carmen Estefania Sainz puts her OMT training to good use.

and dirty clothes on their backs was a bittersweet sight. Some members of the health care team even gave their own lunches to the families after observing the town's scarcity of food.

The children's innocence, mixed with the poverty of the community, reminded everyone of the college's mission to improve the health of underprivileged populations and to have students become knowledgeable and compassionate medical professionals. During the team's return to Quito for the last clinic, the remaining medical supplies were distributed to those in need.

As the volunteers gathered at the airport for the return flight home, many were exhausted from their efforts. Some suffered from common traveling illnesses, while others were understandably homesick.

None of that, however, stopped the flurry of stories students shared with one another, the laughter of reminiscing about the past week's adventures, or the silence of those reflecting on the experience gained from participating in this memorable medical outreach trip. □

Felicia F. Ourn is a class of 2022 KPCOM student.

GRADUATION 2019



AWARDS AND PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS

Senior Week provided numerous opportunities for the class of 2019 students to celebrate their long-awaited KPCOM graduation. Events included an afternoon awards presentation, a celebratory bash at the Rooftop on Las Olas Boulevard in Fort Lauderdale, and the Senior Awards Dinner Dance and military Commissioning Ceremony at The Diplomat Beach Resort in Hollywood, Florida.

The week culminated on May 17 with the Health Professions Division Commencement Ceremony held at the Rick Case Arena in the Don Taft University Center on NSU's Fort Lauderdale/Davie Campus. During the 2018-2019 academic year, 230 D.O., 24 Master of Science in Biomedical Informatics, 20 Master of Public Health, 9 Master of Science in Nutrition, 5 Master of Science in Disaster and Emergency Management, and 4 Master of Science in Medical Education degrees were conferred.

During the ceremony, graduates were acknowledged for their accomplishments in front of an enthusiastic audience filled with family, friends, and faculty members. Mary C. Mayhew, secretary of the Agency for Health Care Administration in Florida, delivered the keynote address and received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree.



**Chancellor's Award
(Osteopathic Medicine)**
Daniel Rubin, D.O.

**Dean's Award
(Osteopathic Medicine)**
Zachary Snow, D.O.

**Research Award
(Osteopathic Medicine)**
Kelly Hilton, D.O.

**Golden Apple Award
(Osteopathic Medicine)**
Kara Brien, M.B.A.

**Chancellor's Award
(Master of Public Health)**
Steven Brettler, M.P.H., Pharm.D.

**Dean's Award
(Master of Public Health)**
Jennifer Ulysse, M.P.H.

**Research Award
(Master of Public Health)**
Shubham Sharma, M.P.H.

**Service Award
(Master of Public Health)**
Vladimir Pierre, M.P.H.

**Golden Apple Award
(Master of Public Health)**
Cyril Blavo, D.O., M.S., M.P.H. & T.M., FACOP

**Chancellor's Award
(Biomedical Informatics)**
Abedulnaaseer Mohammedlamien, M.S.

**Dean's Award
(Biomedical Informatics)**
Maria Vera Nunez, M.D., M.S.

**Research Award
(Biomedical Informatics)**
Jonathan Raof, M.S.

**Service Award
(Biomedical Informatics)**
Krista Riveron, J.D., M.S.

**Golden Apple Award
(Biomedical Informatics)**
Harold E. Wiggin, Ed.D.

**Chancellor's Award
(Disaster and Emergency Management)**
Tia Urella, M.S.

**Dean's Award
(Disaster and Emergency Management)**
Christopher Steers, M.S., M.P.A.

**Service Award
(Disaster and Emergency Management)**
Samantha Ward, M.S.

**Golden Apple Award
(Disaster and Emergency Management)**
James Greenstone, Ed.D., J.D.

**Chancellor's Award
(Medical Education)**
Jill Wallace-Ross, D.O., M.S.

**Dean's Award
(Medical Education)**
Mamie Warren, M.S.

**Golden Apple Award
(Medical Education)**
Mary Ann Butler-Pearson, Ed.D.

**Chancellor's Award
(Nutrition)**
Cassandra Curcio, M.S.

**Dean's Award
(Nutrition)**
Marissa Case, M.S.

**Research Award
(Nutrition)**
Camila Jaramillo, M.S.

**Golden Apple Award
(Nutrition)**
Lillian Craggs-Dino, D.H.A., RDN, LDN, CLT

A. Alvin Greber, D.O., Cardiology Award
Lauren Gin, D.O.

**Albert L. Weiner, D.O., Memorial
Psychiatry Award**
Tyler Seidman, D.O.

Alumni Association Award
Tyler Seidman, D.O.

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American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) District XII Daniel R. Barkus Outstanding Achievement in the Study of OB/GYN
Lauren Muth, D.O.

American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) District XII Outstanding Achievement in the Service of OB /GYN
Alixandria Fiore Pfeiffer, D.O.

Clinical Service Award
Sultan Majid, D.O.

Dean's Community Award
Vikisha Hazariwala, D.O.

Dean's Government and Public Policy Award
Elizabeth McCaskey, D.O., M.P.H.

Dean's Organizational Award
Natalie Negron, D.O.

Donna Jones Moritsugu Award
Albert Chester

Endocrine Society Award
Jaimie Fabricant, D.O.

Excellence in Emergency Medicine Award
Daniel Novak, D.O.

Florida Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Luther W. Holloway Award
Sneha Tolia, D.O.

Florida Chapter of the American Academy of Osteopathy Award in Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine
Kristopher Schock, D.O.

Leonard Tow Humanism in Medicine Awards
STUDENT RECIPIENT
Hytham Rashid, D.O., M.P.H.
FACULTY RECIPIENT
Luzan Phillpotts, D.O., M.P.H.

Matthew A. Terry, D.O., Memorial Award
Allison Nguyen, D.O.

Merck Manual Award for Outstanding Graduating Medical Students
Juan Arana, D.O.
Kiara Jennings, D.O.
Eno-emem Michael Okpokpo, D.O., M.P.H.
Gee Yoon Park, D.O.
Rachel Salveson, D.O.

Morton and Geraldine Terry Internal Medicine Award
Mileydis Alonso, D.O.

Morton and Mary Smith Achievement Award
Parth Gandhi, D.O.

Outstanding Achievement in Geriatrics Award
Daniel Mandel, D.O.

Outstanding Student in the Study of Pediatrics
Christina Baxter, D.O.

Outstanding Student in Pediatric Service
Michele Bresler, D.O.

Predocotoral Osteopathic Principles and Practice Fellowship Certificates
Parth Gandhi, D.O.
Sara Hartey, D.O.
Francis Lomanta, D.O.
Genevieve Marshall, D.O.
Christina McGuirk, D.O.
Kristopher Schock, D.O.
Hayley Talboy, D.O.

Predocotoral Research Fellowship Award
Christopher Mancuso, D.O.
Kelly Hilton, D.O.

Rose Community Service Award
Elsa Tchouambou Pougoue, D.O.

Samuel J. Salman, D.O., Award in Family Medicine
Hannah Arn, D.O. □



Blue Zones



Lifestyle Principles for a Long and Healthy Life

BY ALEX NIKOLIC

While modern geneticists claim that human DNA's natural life span is about 90 years, life expectancy in the United States has been declining for the past several years and is currently at 78.6. Recent studies suggest that our genes dictate 20 percent of our life span, while 80 percent is dictated by our lifestyles.

Thus, a purely biochemical perspective tells us we are robbing ourselves of roughly 12 years of living. In an era of contradicting information about health and aging, how does an average person know what lifestyle allows us to live up to our genetic potential?

Luckily, we have scientific data on that. Researchers have found five population areas that constantly exceed U.S. genetic potentials when it comes to health and life expectancy. People in the five so-called Blue Zones follow certain principles that add years to their lives—and life to their years.

What Are Blue Zones?

Blue Zones represent five regions of the world in which residents consistently live longer and healthier lives than the populations of other areas. The five locations—Nicoya, Costa Rica; Sardinia, Italy; Ikaria, Greece; Loma Linda, California; and Okinawa, Japan—have 10 times more centenarians than other areas and significantly lower rates of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and cancer.

Blue Zone Lifestyle Traits

The United States is in a public health crisis, with cardiovascular disease, obesity, and diabetes rates being higher than ever. Additionally, 85 percent of U.S. medical costs are due to physical inactivity, food choices/portion sizes, tobacco, and unmanaged stress.

Although geographically unconnected, the residents of Blue Zone populations seem able to avoid chronic disease and premature death through physical activity, life purpose, healthy eating, social support system, and engagement in spirituality or religion.



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

It is no surprise that physical activity made the list of Blue Zone principles. The biggest surprise, however, is that these populations rarely work out. Instead, people move naturally throughout the day. They garden, mow their lawns, hike hills while looking after their sheep, or simply bike to a friend's house or downtown.

There is an abundant amount of research suggesting that sedentary lifestyles increase the risk for chronic diseases up to 20 percent and are linked to premature death. Blue Zone residents are constantly engaged in low-impact exercise and stay sexually active well into old age. Statistically, 70 percent of Blue Zone residents are sexually active after the age of 90.

They also match their physical activity with proper rest. Most residents are not employed in a traditional sense, so they sleep as much as their body requires. Additionally, they take regular naps during the day, which has been shown to reduce the risk for Alzheimer's and cardiovascular disease.



LIFE PURPOSE

In terms of Blue Zones, life purpose often derives from religion. Even though these regions have different cultures, purpose and meaning are an essential part of their health and longevity.

In Okinawa, for example, they use the term “ikigai,” which is best translated as “your reason for being.” But they do not have a vocabulary term for retirement. Taking care of their grandchildren and transferring knowledge and wisdom to their youth are the reasons why Okinawans keep waking up every morning well into their old age.



HEALTHY EATING

People in the Blue Zones have instinctively developed a healthy diet, which we can back up with scientific data. The diet is 90 percent

plant based and includes whole grains, potatoes, yams, beans, greens, nuts, and tofu. They rarely eat processed meat, but they occasionally include organic goat cheese and fish. Another notable habit is that they usually eat smaller portions from smaller plates, which also prevents them from overeating.

A vast amount of data suggests that a low-fat, high-carb, plant-based diet can prevent, and even reverse, many chronic diseases, including cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity, certain cancers, and depression. In terms of alcohol, even though the newest research suggests there is no safe amount of alcohol that can be consumed, most Blue Zone populations consume a very moderate amount of one glass per day with food.

Alex Nikolic is a second-year KPCOM student.



SOCIAL SUPPORT SYSTEM

Fifteen years ago, Americans had three close friends on average. Today, we have one-and-a half. Researchers claim that loneliness

kills, and that having fewer than three close friends has an equivalent effect on our bodies as smoking one pack of cigarettes a day. On the other hand, the Blue Zone cultures put a strong emphasis on family and friends by living close to them, committing to a life partner, and investing in their children with time and love.



SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGION

The examples above show us that religious beliefs and values of Blue Zone populations play a fundamental role in every aspect of people's lives—from purpose to

cuisine. The kind of religion or denomination does not seem to matter, if it is practiced. Most people in Loma Linda commit to spending at least 24 hours every week on their faith, which also includes hiking in nature.

Researchers suggest that people who attend faith-based services at least 4 times a month can add up to 14 years to their life. They also theorize that such individuals are happier, healthier, less stressed, and live longer, on average, compared to the general population.

Creating New Blue Zones

The Blue Zone Vitality Project, funded by the United Health Foundation, is an initiative to produce Blue Zones in U.S. communities. They have already implemented these healthy lifestyle principles in several cities, where they have been shown to reduce health care costs, increase life spans, decrease obesity (especially in children), and improve tobacco cessation.

We do not need any more studies to prove the health benefits of these principles; we need to start implementing them into our communities. To find out more about how to get your community involved in the Blue Zone Vitality Project, visit bluezones.com/services/blue-zones-project/. □



TRIUMPH OVER TRAUMA

15-FOOT FALL LAUNCHES NEW CAREER PATH

BY RYLAN HOLMBERG

Now, let's get one thing straight: Superman can fly; I cannot. Consequently, when I'm changing a burnt-out lightbulb on top of the rear end of the fuselage of an F-16 jet aircraft and slip, head first, off the jet, I do not win against gravity. Imagine the 15 insignificant feet becoming the longest distance traveled—and the only thing between life and possible death—for me, a young United States Air Force serviceman.

I woke up 48 hours later after having been in a coma for nearly 24 of those hours, surrounded by loved ones and fellow members of the military, with a ridiculously painful headache I'm sure many of them would attribute as the reason for my off-color attitude. It is at this moment of full consciousness that the CT scan of my head is revealed for me to behold.

Within the depths of my calvarium, you can make out an egg-shaped opacity in the right frontal portion. The attending physician says, "That's a pretty big bleed you had there, man." Indeed, I had suffered an epidural hematoma, a fractured right frontal bone, and my eye nearly popped out.

Okay, I exaggerated the last part, but it was prop-
totic (bulging out of the socket a few centimeters) due to the increased intracranial pressure I had been experiencing. After looking at the CT images, the only thing that came out of my mouth was "medicine is miraculous."

For me, the sight of the inside of my skull, where the matter that makes me who I am resides, was

exhilarating. I knew health care was a passion of mine in that very moment, but I did not know just how far that passion would take me.

After completing my time in the Air Force, I dove in and started completing prerequisites for the X-ray technologist program at Weber State University in Ogden, Utah. I gained entrance into the program, part of which consisted of 1,500 clinical internship hours. During those hours, I was able to observe physicians (radiologists and surgeons) in their element, clearly doing what they love.

I asked one of the radiologists, who would let me watch him dictate imaging studies, "Dr. Dunn, what does it take to get to where you are?"

"You've got to go medical school, Rylan," he stated bluntly.

He proceeded to tell me what that might look like, and how I might get there. I completed my internship with three questions on my mind: How do I get a job? How do I get into medical school? Then what?

The first one took a little while—about four years—and the second tested my endurance and mental fortitude. The third is now reality, and I've quickly realized medical school will push me to my limits like I've never been pushed before.

The process of getting into medical school was rewarding, but also grueling, and there were definitely times it felt like not seeing my dream through would be the better option. However, in moments like those,



Above: Rylan Holmberg (center, with beard) poses with a mix of fellow NSU students, volunteers, and physicians at the 2019 Pride Festival Health Fair held in February at Fort Lauderdale Beach.

I remembered the relationships I'd built through various volunteer and leadership positions, through shadowing physicians, and through didactic involvement. Those relationships helped me surge toward the finish line.

If I hadn't pursued my dream to become a physician, those relationships would not have been built—and I would not trade them for the world. It's hard. There is no doubt about that. But the journey is worth the struggle.

My story is not very typical of a medical student, and that's okay. Pursue your passions, do what you love, and never back down from the challenges you are presented. Ultimately, one thing is certain: You do not want to be at the last 15 feet of your journey, then think back later and wonder why you did not pursue your dream. I promise you can make it happen. □

Rylan Holmberg is a second-year KPCOM student.



Holmberg recovers from the injuries he sustained in a 15-foot fall from an Air Force jet.



Holmberg during his Air Force basic training in 2007.

GENETIC EDITING

The Marvels and Concerns of a Revolutionary Technology

BY SAMIKSHA PRASAD, PH.D., AND VICKI TOSCANO, PH.D., J.D.

Humans have directed genetic modifications for thousands of years through selective breeding. However, the precise mechanism was not truly understood until the discovery of DNA and the genetic code. We are at a crucial point today with a breakthrough called the CRISPR/Cas9 system—short for Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeat DNA Sequences/CRISPR-associated protein 9 system, hereafter called CRISPR.

CRISPR grabs our attention because it enables potent, specific, and accurate methods of genome editing in every type of cell (bacterial, animal, and plant). It is an extremely versatile and equally controversial new technology.

Nova Southeastern University (NSU) is uniquely poised as an educational and clinical research hub, and the clinical faculty members can benefit from gaining expertise in new technologies with a wide range of medical applications. Nonetheless, as NSU faculty members venture into this new research arena, it is important to consider the ethical implications of CRISPR's capabilities.

Background

The CRISPR system is an ancient bacterial immune system discovered in 1987. However, it was only when the Cas genes associated with DNA repeats were discovered in 2002 that a major door was opened in the field. In 2012, the idea for using CRISPR as a genome engineering tool was published by Jennifer Doudna, Ph.D., and Emmanuel Carpenter, Ph.D., which led to CRISPR being used in mouse and human cells by Feng Zhang, Ph.D., by 2013.

The CRISPR technology is a two-part system composed of an endonuclease protein (Cas9) whose DNA-targeting specificity and cutting activity can be programmed by a short guide RNA (gRNA). The gRNA only allows Cas9 to function where there is an exact match for the sequence it carries.

The gRNA carries a 20-letter sequence, which targets the region of the native genomic DNA. This 20-letter sequence is modular. This modular targeting system allows us to insert, delete, or modify DNA at a precise location on the genome, thus, making the

CRISPR system a much easier and reproducible technology from other genome editing tools because of its programmability.

Benefits

The CRISPR toolset is noteworthy for the number of different scientific advances it may catalyze. Agriculture and livestock are already benefiting from CRISPR technology. Laboratory and industry-based applications are in place using the CRISPR system to produce hormones, growth factors, and life-saving clotting factors in bacterial systems for human use. There are also studies using CRISPR for HIV treatment with promising results.

Additionally, CRISPR-based cancer therapies have been approved for human trials, with the first one approved in 2016 in the United States, followed within the month by Chinese scientists announcing that they will treat lung cancer patients with immune cells modified with CRISPR technology. Further, there are thousands of genetic disorders and diseases for which applications of CRISPR are pivotal. These range from mild disorders, such as color blindness, to serious or fatal diseases, such as hemophilia or Huntington's disease.

As the use of CRISPR increases and our knowledge improves, we could potentially solve other, more complicated topics, such as aging. These medical applications have one thing in common. They are limited to the individual receiving the CRISPR-based therapy unless they are used on reproductive cells or very early embryonic cells.

Caution

The means to edit the genome of a human embryo already exist and have been attempted a few times, although the technology is still in its early stages.

In fact, in 2018, Jiankui He, Ph.D., claimed he employed CRISPR technology to genetically modify human embryos, which resulted in live birth. His purported aim was to make the embryos resistant to HIV infection by altering a gene that encodes for a chemokine receptor called the CCR5 receptor, which the HIV virus uses to dock and enter the host cells. This project shines a light on the ethical perils of this new technology.

First, this research used an unproven and potentially dangerous method to accomplish something that may be done using other reliable and less risky methods. Second, he didn't simply edit the genome of an embryo to conduct experiments to test for efficacy and safety. He claims to have implanted those embryos into a womb, thereby creating an unjustifiable risk of potential harm to the children.

Third, this genetic edit blurred the distinction between gene therapy to treat disease and genetic enhancement. This distinction marks an important ethical boundary—one which many believe should not be crossed, and certainly not without serious dialogue and consensus.

As researchers here at NSU and around the globe begin to explore the uses of CRISPR technology, they must squarely face the important responsibilities this new technology creates and demands. While government regulations may mitigate some of the high risks associated with CRISPR technology, it is the research community regulating itself, and each other individually, that is most crucial during this era of human-directed genetic manipulation using the power of CRISPR. □

Samiksha Prasad, Ph.D., is an assistant professor of microbiology in the College of Medical Sciences. Vicki Toscano, Ph.D., J.D., is an associate professor of philosophy and legal studies in the Department of History and Political Science in the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences.



Alumni in the News



Maria Behnam-Terneus, D.O., FAAP, FACOP ('09),

served as the course director for the first pediatric hospitalist board review course in the country. Behnam-Terneus is a pediatric hospitalist, pediatric

residency program associate program director, and associate program director of the Pediatric Hospitalist Fellowship Program at Nicklaus Children's Hospital in Miami, Florida.



Lauren Boudreau, D.O., CLC ('17),

became a certified lactation counselor through the Academy of Lactation Policy and Practice.



Tyler Cymet, D.O.,

FACP, FACOFP ('88), served as a curriculum consultant to the Armed Forces College of Medicine in Cairo, Egypt, and published a video textbook featuring 24 hours of

lectures and 600 recall questions on osteopathic manipulative medicine for Lecturio.



Sabine D. Elisee, D.O.,

M.P.H. ('11) was recognized by Davie Fire Rescue in Davie, Florida, for saving the life of a man who passed out while exercising at the gym. Elisee was in the midst of her own

workout when she noticed gym personnel running toward a man who lay lifeless on the ground. Relying on her NSU training and rapid-response skills, Elisee resuscitated the man after about eight minutes of emergency intervention.



Robert Hasty, D.O.,

FACOI, FACP ('00), was named founding dean and chief academic officer of the proposed osteopathic medical college at the Kansas Health Science Center (KHSC) in

Wichita, which would be the first new medical school in Kansas in more than a 100 years. Hasty previously served as founding dean and chief academic officer of the Idaho College of Osteopathic Medicine.



Francoeur Cadet, D.O. ('05), received the 2019 Florida Department of Health in Orange County's Alfred L. Bookhardt, M.D. Award in recognition of his commitment to increase access to health care.

Francoeur Cadet (second from left) at the award ceremony

If you have a compelling story about your life or career that you would like to share with the readers of *COM Outlook*, please contact Scott Colton at scottc@nova.edu.



Aaron Klein, D.O. ('01), joined Boca Raton Regional Hospital's BocaCare® physician network in February, where he provides a concierge medicine option to the network's patients—the first hospital-based concierge

medicine program in Palm Beach County, Florida. Klein is board certified in internal medicine and has been practicing medicine in Boca Raton for 13 years.



Katarina Lindley, D.O., FACOFP ('04), received the 2019 American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ACOFP) Excellence in Advocacy Award, which recognizes physicians who have significantly contributed their

time and talents to national health care policy issues at the local, state, and/or federal levels on behalf of their profession and patients. She received her award during the ACOFP 56th Annual Convention and Scientific Seminars held March 21–24 in Chicago, Illinois.



Katie Meyer, D.O. ('13), joined the Children's Clinic—Saltillo pediatric staff in Mississippi. She completed her pediatric residency training at Broward Health Medical Center's Chris Evert Children's Hospital in Fort

Lauderdale in 2016, where she was named Resident of the Year. Meyer previously worked at the Dignity Health Medical Foundation in Merced, California.



David Pizzimenti, D.O., FACOI, ('02), was named director of inpatient services at North Mississippi Medical Center in Tupelo, Mississippi. In this role, he will also serve

as the founding director of a large internal medicine residency program in one of the nation's most underserved areas. Additionally, he has served on the American Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) Internal Medicine Resident Review Committee since 2017 and is serving on the ACGME 2035 Subcommittee.



Stephen Plumb, D.O. ('99), accepted a new position in May at Phoebe Dermatology in Albany, Georgia, where he assumes responsibility for building a new practice from the

ground up and leveraging his board certifications in anatomic pathology, clinical pathology, dermatopathology, and dermatology—with a fifth to come soon in Mohs surgery.



William Stager, D.O., M.S., M.P.H., FAAFP, FAAMA, FAAO, FACOFP *dist.* ('89), past president of the Florida Osteopathic Medical Association, was elected to the American Academy of Osteopathy Board of Governors.



Tony L. Weaver, D.O. ('11), became the first Native American/Alaskan Native to graduate from an Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education-approved plastic and reconstructive

surgery residency program. Weaver also is the first osteopathic physician to complete the University of Mississippi Plastic Surgery Program. He will be seeing patients in the newly established Huntsville Hospital Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery Clinic in Huntsville, Alabama. □

PORTRAIT IN PERSEVERANCE

BY SCOTT COLTON, B.A., APR

“You will never be taken seriously in medicine because you are blonde, petite, attractive, and too nice.”

These were the soul-crushing words a female residency administrator uttered to K Kay Moody, D.O., M.P.H., FACEP, while she was in the midst of completing her postgraduate emergency medicine training. Sadly, it wasn't the first time Moody, a 2009 alumna, endured similar words of derision as she worked to realize her dream of becoming a physician.

“I am glad I didn't listen to the naysayers,” said Moody, who triumphed over adversity to become a respected emergency medicine physician at Capital Medical Center in Olympia, Washington, and the founder and CEO of the innovative Glacier Rock Wellness Ranch. “I am a woman who grew up in a small town without college role models, who was told my place was in the kitchen.”



Moody, who was raised on a farm in Texarkana, Arkansas, opened a successful ballet school in her hometown at age 20 before getting married and having three sons. Although she loved being an entrepreneur, wife, and mother, Moody also harbored a dream of becoming a physician.

Fast forward to 1995. Moody and her family are living in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, where she runs a ballet school and takes part-time liberal arts courses at the University of Oklahoma. Life seems ideal until April 19, when an anti-government militant detonates a truck filled with explosives outside the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City.

Amid the wreckage, 168 people lie dead and hundreds more are injured. Moody responds by calling the local hospital to volunteer her services.

“That day was a huge turning point for me,” Moody recalled. “When I called the local hospital and asked if I could come and help, the woman who answered the phone asked if I had any medical training. When I told her I didn’t, she said, ‘Stay away, you’ll just be in the way’ and hung up.”

Feeling helpless, Moody made a major life decision. “After the woman hung up on me, I said, ‘Okay, it’s time I get my medical training.’ I was so shaken by the event, and by my feeling of being unprepared to help, that I closed my ballet school and went back to school full time to prepare for medical school,” she said.

Moody threw herself into her premed coursework at the University of Oklahoma Honors College and graduated cum laude in 1999. Her goal of becoming a physician may have seemed more secure, but additional obstacles lay ahead after she headed south and completed postbaccalaureate coursework at the University of Florida.

BUILDING A NEW LIFE IN FLORIDA

When Moody interviewed for a spot at NSU’s Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (KPCOM), she felt an immediate kinship with the people and the university. “I was so excited by the beautiful campus, the palm trees, and the nice people. It felt right the moment I walked on campus,” Moody said. “I was a 38-year-old, nontraditional student with a ballet background. I was raising three sons, but it didn’t seem to matter to the college.”

When Moody began her KPCOM education in the summer of 2003, it should have been one of the happiest

MOODY’S WORDS OF WISDOM

“Be you! The world tries to stick us in boxes, but we each have something unique to offer, and if we hide that to try to ‘fit in,’ it is a disservice to the world.”

“Kindness is not weakness. Kind people are frequently mistaken as weak, but kindness is actually courageous, and kind people are often the strongest.”

“I teach my children NOT to listen to the people who predict doom and impossibility of their dreams. The naysayers are only telling you what they can’t do.”

“Taking risks exposes us to failure. I have had my share. But I dare again and again, at the risk of embarrassment when I fall. I get up, cry, cuss a little, and get back to work.”

“I don’t want to teach by telling; I want to teach by doing. Fail, get up, fail, get up. Only then can I connect with others with true understanding.”

times of her life. Unfortunately, she found herself dealing with a difficult divorce while trying to raise three children ranging in age from 11 to 15 at the same time. As a result, Moody understandably struggled to keep pace with the rigorous academic workload.

Sometimes, however, when life seems at its lowest ebb, something wonderful occurs. Although she was determined to “never date again,” Moody surprised herself when a classmate asked, “If you ever did date again, what would be your ideal?”

“Without hesitation, I said, ‘a 35-year-old Matt Moody.’ “My heart ran away with me every time I saw him in Steele Auditorium or in labs. I called it the ‘Moody reflex.’ ” she said.

Although she was a few years older than the object of her affection, the attraction proved mutual. “We had our first date on February 18, 2004, and now, 15 years later, he still makes my heart race,” Moody admitted.

Because Moody’s road to fulfillment had been paved with obstacles, it’s not surprising to learn that her path to romantic bliss also contained a potential speed bump. “When we realized we were completely in love, he asked if I was willing to have children with him,” she said.

“I already had three sons and was struggling to pass my classes, but I said yes,” she added. “We got engaged and pregnant right away, because I was almost 40. We simply didn’t have time to wait because of my age.”

The next few years were a blur of activity as Moody gave birth to daughters Grace, now 13, and Faith, now 11,

ALUMNI Spotlight



and labored through her KPCOM coursework. “We put the wedding off until we had some time to plan it,” Moody explained. “We got married the day after my last exam in 2005. I planned the wedding for a Wednesday, because we had to squeeze it in. Grace was born three days later.”

CONTENTMENT COMES INTO FOCUS

Moody graduated two years behind her husband in 2009, using the additional time to bring two beautiful daughters into the world and earn not only her D.O., but a Master of Public Health degree as well. After completing her emergency medicine residency training at Albert Einstein Medical Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Moody accepted a contract position with a level-one trauma center in Johnson City, Tennessee.

“We searched the United States for a beautiful area with no state income tax. We wanted mountains and lots of outdoor beauty, so we bought a farm in eastern Tennessee,” said Moody, who has always found solace in nature. “But as the start date approached, the hospital network suddenly offered me a medical director position. I had never even been an attending physician yet, but I said yes.”

Four years later, Moody was ready for her next great adventure. She found it near Mount Rainier in Washington.

“After a tough four years in residency that included living in a small apartment with few days off,



Top left: The Moody's celebrate their anniversary with a surprise cake at the Johnson City Medical Center in Tennessee.

Top right: K Kay Moody enjoys a scenic view with her children, from left, Grace, Faith, Dillon, and Dustin.

Bottom left: Moody exudes joy as she signs the paperwork to purchase the land for what would become Glacier Rock Wellness Ranch.

I experienced such soul healing whenever I had the opportunity to sit near a creek, listen to the water run over the rocks, dig in the dirt to plant flowers and fruit trees, or hike the mountain in my backyard,” she explained. “I wanted to share this emotional restoration with colleagues who are suffering extreme work-related stress.”

In 2017, while visiting various locations that would serve as the perfect spot to raise their children and offer solace and serenity to her work-weary peers, the Moodys found the ideal 75-acre parcel of land in northwest Washington, just outside Mount Rainier National Park. “We searched for a place with an airport within easy driving distance. On the must-have list were a creek with the water-over-rocks sound, open green spaces, and mountains, as well as an abundance of beautiful forests and hiking trails. We found paradise,” she admitted.

WELLNESS RANCH BRINGS BLISS

Signing the purchase papers for what would soon become Glacier Rock Wellness Ranch allowed Moody to finally smooth over the remaining emotional potholes naysayers had placed in her path and offer fellow physicians respite on the expansive property.

“The ranch is a destination for physicians to come together and share the joys and challenges of practicing medicine. We support one another for healing, education, and inspiration. It’s a place to play, to laugh, to relax, and to challenge one another to find creative solutions in today’s health care climate,” she explained.

“We leave behind the stresses of everyday life to hike through the woods, sit by the glacier-fed creek and river, share stories around a bonfire, and so much more,” added Moody, who works full-time in the emergency department at Capital Medical Center, as does her husband. “The ranch provides physicians with the time and space they need to reflect on who they are and why they decided to dedicate their lives to practicing medicine in the first place.”

The wellness ranch, which offers a range of membership options, currently has more than 400 members from throughout the United States and Canada. Members have 24/7 access to the private ranch for camping, hiking, and spending time with their family or other physician members.

FAST FACTS

K KAY MOODY, D.O., M.P.H., FACEP

Hometown

- Texarkana, Arkansas

Professional

- board certified in emergency medicine
- emergency medicine physician at Capital Medical Center in Olympia, Washington
- former president of the American College of Emergency Physicians, Tennessee Chapter
- founder and CEO of Glacier Rock Wellness Ranch

Residency Training

- emergency medicine residency at Albert Einstein Medical Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Personal

- married to class of 2007 KPCOM alumnus Matt Moody, D.O.
- mother to Lorenz, 31; Dillon, 29; Dustin, 27; Grace, 13; and Faith, 11

Most Extraordinary Occurrence

“The first time I made straight A’s in ninth grade was a game changer for me. It sounds like no big deal, but for me, it changed the way I felt about myself. Until then, I did not consider myself to be a smart kid. My parents divorced when I was in middle school, and I watched my mom work a minimum-wage job while we lived in poverty. I promised myself I would not repeat history, and I decided that education was my ticket out of poverty.”

“We also have an outdoor venue for physicians to utilize for their group retreats or continuing medical education (CME) conferences,” said Moody of the ranch, which hosted its inaugural CME event called Docs in the Wild in June. “We have glamping pods on the river, a cottage, a pavilion, a large covered arena, and a 20-stall barn I plan to renovate into sleeping rooms, plus an open venue for barn dances, weddings, and other events.”

Moody is the first to admit that her life has been anything but conventional or easy. Through it all, however, she endured, emerging as a true portrait in perseverance thanks to the support of her husband and children.

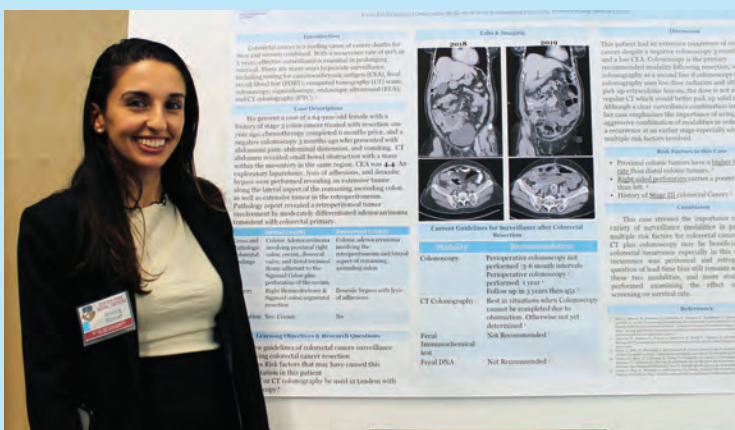
“Our lives were, and continue to be, filled with love, risk, uncertainty, and emotional exposure,” she said. “Matt and I had the courage to trust our hearts, to trust each other, and to know we were strong and resourceful enough to figure things out as they unfolded. We have each other’s back—and always will.” □



Alixandria Fiore Pfeiffer, class of 2019, was named KPCOM Student of the Year at the 21st Annual NSU Student Life Achievement (STUEY) Awards held April 16 at a ceremony in the Miniaci Performing Arts Center. Additionally, the college's Pediatrics Club was nominated in the Graduate Organization of the Year category. For those unfamiliar with the STUEY Awards, the event was created in 2000 to honor the people and organizations that best exemplify the NSU Core Values of academic excellence, student centered, scholarship/research, integrity, innovation, opportunity, diversity, and community. Pictured at the STUEY ceremony, from left, are husband Wilson Pfeiffer, who is also a class of 2019 KPCOM student; George L. Hanbury II, Ph.D., NSU president and chief executive officer; and Alixandria Fiore Pfeiffer.

Scott Colton, B.A., APR, director of medical communications and public relations for the Health Professions Division, received second-place honors in the 2019 American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM) Excellence in Communications Awards Program. Colton earned his award in the Best Feature Story or Article category for his *COM Outlook* piece "Beating Addiction: 2006 Alumnus Shares Harrowing Story of Opioid Dependence." AACOM represents the 35 colleges of osteopathic medicine in the United States that are accredited to deliver instruction at 55 teaching locations in 32 states.

Eric A. Goldsmith, D.O., FACOS, assistant dean of clinical affairs, was named president of the Florida Osteopathic Medical Association (FOMA) in May when the existing president announced his sudden resignation. Goldsmith had been serving as FOMA president-elect prior to his elevation to the top leadership spot.



Third-year student **Jessica Wassef** received the Best in Surgical Oncology Award for her research project "Recurrent Colon Cancer After Negative Colonoscopy: Exploring the Gaps in Colorectal Cancer Surveillance" at the national Student Osteopathic Surgical Association Conference held March 30–31 in St. George, Utah.

Third-year students **An V. Nguyen**, **Tymour Malik**, and **Trevor Nezwik** received the first-place best poster award for their case study "A Suspicious Eye for an Extra X" at the American College of Osteopathic Pediatricians conference held April 11–14 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Third-year students **Priyanka Ochaney** and **Komal Patel** received a first-place award in the student category for their case report "The Importance of Risk-Reducing Prophylactic Mastectomy in BRCA Carriers" at Largo Medical Center's Scholarly Activity Poster Competition held May 13–16.

They also presented their case report at the Florida Academy of Family Physicians Spring Forum held May 3–5 in Orlando, Florida.

Naushira Pandya, M.D., CMD, FACP, professor and chair of the Department of Geriatrics, received the James Pattee Award for Excellence in Education on March 9 at the annual meeting of the AMDA—The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine in Atlanta, Georgia. The award is bestowed annually to an individual in recognition of significant contributions to the AMDA’s educational goals, as well as to advanced education specific to post-acute/long-term care practice.

Saamia Shaikh, class of 2020, won first place in the Best Case Report (podium presentation) category at the South Florida Chapter of the American College of Surgeons (ACS) annual meeting held March 16 in Fort Lauderdale. Shaikh’s report was titled “Surgical Management of Incidental Appendiceal Adenocarcinoma Ex Goblet Cell Carcinoid Tumor with Appendectomy, Secondary Right Hemicolectomy, and Abdominal Wall Resection.”

Third-year student **Gabriela Teixeira** and fourth-year student **Christina Baxter** received the first-place award for their research project “Children’s Wellness Program: Enhancing Educational Attainment Through Improved School Health” at the American College of Osteopathic Pediatricians conference held April 11–14 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. □



Third-year students **Nicholas Wawrzyniak**, left, and **Gabrielle McDermott**, who are KPCOM predoctoral osteopathic principles and practice fellows, swept the top two awards at the poster competition held in conjunction with the American Academy of Osteopathy Convocation, held March 13–17 in Orlando, Florida. Wawrzyniak captured first-place honors for his poster “Regional Dependence of Myofascial Meridians in Chronic Low Back Pain,” while McDermott won second place for her poster “Orbital OMT for Grave Situations: Treating Exophthalmos.” KPCOM students have won first place in this national competition for three consecutive years.



Elizabeth Barley, a Bachelor of Science in Public Health student, received a first-place award for her research poster “A Study of Pediatric Oral Health in Ahwa, Gujarat, India.” She presented her research at the 18th Annual Undergraduate Student Symposium held April 5 at NSU’s Fort Lauderdale/Davie Campus.

Anthony J. Silvagni Bids Adieu to NSU

On May 30, the KPCOM bid a fond farewell to Anthony J. Silvagni, D.O., Pharm.D., M.S., FACOFP *dist.*, FCPP, dean emeritus and director of international medicine, at a retirement reception honoring his 21 years of service to the college.

“I have never been in any position for 21 years, so it’s hard for me to believe this much time has gone by,” said Silvagni, who served as KPCOM dean from July 1998 through January 2015. “I stayed because of the energy and innovation the faculty and staff members always brought to the program, as well as the drive to develop new knowledge for the improvement of patient care.”

During his fruitful tenure, Silvagni helped oversee a sustained period of growth and achievement even he couldn’t have foreseen when he became the college’s fourth dean.

“When I was dean, it felt like I had a new job every week due to everything that was happening in regard to building the school and creating new programs,” he added. “The greatest reward was watching various



To honor Anthony J. Silvagni’s iconic mustache, the college presented him with a clever sculpture to celebrate his years of service. Pictured, from left, are Silvagni; Elaine M. Wallace, D.O., M.S.⁴, KPCOM dean; and Dianna Silvagni, J.D., Silvagni’s wife.

faculty members get recognized in the literature and through their professional organizations. I would not trade my time at NSU for anything I’ve ever done professionally in my life.” □

Postbaccalaureate Program Established at Tampa Bay Regional Campus

NSU’s Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (KPCOM) is always seeking ways to provide essential educational programs for interested applicants. The latest addition to the college’s academic mix is an on-site postbaccalaureate certificate program, based at the Tampa Bay Regional Campus, which will accept its inaugural cohort of about 50 students in the fall of 2019.

The two-semester program is geared toward KPCOM applicants who meet the minimum-required Medical College Admission Test score, but were not admitted into the D.O. program because they had lower GPAs than students who were accepted. The program, which will bolster the students’ knowledge in anatomy, biochemistry, genetics, physiology, immunology, and microbiology, will also offer a course focusing on study skills.

“This program will provide students with an opportunity to enhance their skills and knowledge in



preparation for an education in osteopathic medicine,” said Phyllis J. Filker, D.M.D., M.P.H., associate dean of undergraduate, graduate, and community education. “The program will consist of core medical sciences courses taught by outstanding and credentialed scientists and clinicians.”

Students achieving a 3.6 average will automatically matriculate into the D.O. program. Those students obtaining a 3.3–3.5 average will be granted an interview into the program. □

RESTORING LIFE TO THOSE WHO PRESERVE LIVES

"I was doing very well throughout my career. But when I came back from the Gulf, one of the first things that I picked up on was this horrible chronic fatigue. I couldn't explain it. ... I was told that it is in my head."

—Jimmy Arocho, U.S. Army (Retired)



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