

DECEMBER 2004

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- 2003 HGSC-SMART Program
- 2003 HGSC-PGET Program
- HGSC Engineering Scholar

Five HGSC-PGETer's Begin Graduate School

We congratulate five of our postbacc participants who started their graduate studies this fall. Lori Banks, Marcus Coyle, Stephanie Gench, Michael Lago, and Stacy Lloyd. Marcus and Stephanie were members of the inaugural class that began the fall of 2003. Marcus, a graduate of Phillips University in Oklahoma, was accepted into a Certificate program in Hospital Administration at Texas Women's University. He will enroll in the Master's program after completing the certificate program. Marcus is attending this program on a part-time basis while remaining employed here at the HGSC. Stephanie Gench



Lori Banks



Marcus Coyle



Stephanie Gench

was accepted into the Doctor of Pharmacy program at the University of Houston. Stephanie received a Bachelor of Science degree from Texas A&M University. She worked at HGSC for two years before leaving to take additional courses and begin



Michael Lago



Stacy Lloyd

nursing school the following term. She decided after doing some reflection that she was

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PROGRAM DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Before beginning graduate school, it is smart to take a good look at your financial situation. I find that some students have unrealistic expectations about their ability to live a 'normal' life while pursuing a graduate/professional degree. Making smart choices begin well before you leave to become an expert in your chosen field. You should operate with the attitude that you need the bare minimum to live. If you have an outrageous car note and/or credit card

debit, then you are asking for major headaches in graduate school. When your financial life is out of control, your ability to learn suffers. If you are worrying about how to pay your bills, your tuition, and purchase books, you are decreasing your chances to effectively prepare for your program. When these type of things



Murray

weigh on a person, they break down in some obvious way. So, the added stress of maintaining a B average in graduate school, keeping up in medical school, and/or focusing on your research project will force you to consider taking the edge off in ways you would not normally entertain.

Sacrifice is the name of the game. Unless you inherit

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HGSC-SMART PROGRAM UPDATE

All of the members of our first HGSC-SMART program have met their first career milestone which is graduating from college. Jessica Benton (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute) and Susan Edionwe both graduated this May 2005. Jessica is a Chemical Engineer at Frito Lay in Dallas, TX and Susan was accepted into medical school at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, TX. The other members of this inaugural group are doing the following: Michael Benard—second year of his Master's program in

Mechanical Engineering; Candi Davis—second year of her postbacc research program; Cherie Lee—second year of graduate school; and Mary Wesley completed the second year of her postbacc program and was accepted into the Master's of Public Health program at the University of Alabama-Birmingham.

Two members of the HGSC-SMART II class are still in undergraduate school awaiting graduation. They are Ivy Caddore and Freddy Rodriquez. Freddy did a summer internship with Shell Oil here in Houston, TX. The

following members of this second class graduated May 2005: Oji Abgai II (Emory University); Lamin Bagura (University of Houston); and Erica Taylor (Prairie View A&M University). Tankia Keys graduated in 2004 and spent this year in the BCM-PREP program. Oji was accepted into Moorehouse School of Medicine for the fall term. Lamin accepted a research technician position at Texas Children's Hospital. Erica returned to the HGSC-SMART III program and was accepted into the BCM-PREP program for the fall.

HGSC-PGET PROGRAM UPDATE

The first class of HGSC-PGET (Pre-Graduate Education Training Program) participants graduated in May. This inaugural class was made up of the following individuals: Marcus Coyle (Loading), Abdul Gabisi (Closure), Stephanie Gench (Oligo), Cerissa Hamilton (BAC Prep), Keelan Hamilton (Oligo),

FitzHerbert LeGall II (Production), Geoff Okwuonu (Production), and Gabrielle Williams (Assembly). We are excited about the progress our first class made in this program. One program requirement is that everyone must take the

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HGSC-ENGINEERING AND SMART SCHOLAR PROGRAMS UPDATE

Sidney has completed his first year at PVAMU in the Mechanical Engineering department. He said it was nothing like the community college experience. He learned a great deal and also met fellow engineering students that he could study with when he was on campus. Sidney joined the two engineering societies on campus that could

help him navigate through his years there (National Society of Black Engineers and American Society of Mechanical Engineers). At the end of his first semester, he decided that he needed to devote all of his available energy to obtaining his degree. He resigned his position in the Robotics Laboratory and became a full time student. Sidney interned

here in the HGSC this summer in Mike Metzker's laboratory and was able to get engineering internship credits.

Agapito is completing his first year as a HGSC-SMART recipient. He works full time in the Loading Department here and takes nine hours per semester. He is adjusting to the course load and his work schedule.

2005 HGSC-SMART PROGRAM

Our third summer internship class began Memorial Day weekend. The HGSC-SMART III members are Jazmine Cooper (Biology/Chemistry), Perla Del Fierro (Biology/Psychology), Brodderick Hagans (Mechanical Engineering), Florence Okonkwo (Biology/Chemistry), Josiah Onyenekwe (Biology), Rosalie Sebasagari (Biology/Music), Erica Taylor (2004 HGSC-SMART), and Sidney Morris (HGSC-Engineering Scholar). These students represented the following universities: Prairie View A&M University, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, and the University of Houston-main campus. These students were the first class to take the HGSC GRE prep course offered by KAPLAN. A KAPLAN representative taught the full length KAPLAN course during our nine week summer program. This was the first summer group that liked the Rice dorms!! They did not complain as much as our past students. This group worked with the tutors, attended the weekly BCM biomedical seminars,



2005 HGSC-SMART Program students with Drs. Richard Gibbs and Debra Murray

and other BCM SMART program activities. Their research projects ranged from optimizing medical sequencing verification protocols; to identifying genes in the Retinal Differentiation pathway in *drosophila*; to analyzing mutations found during germline development in *C. elegans*; to modifying the dispensing robot to increase production

efficiency. We selected Rosalie, Perla, and Erica to support their abstracts at the 2005 student research conferences. They presented posters of their work at SACNAS in Denver, CO and at ABRCMS in Atlanta, GA.

(See photo collage page 5)

2005 HGSC-PGET PROGRAM



The third class of HGSC-PGETer's began June 2005 in order for them to take the KAPLAN course along with the summer students. The members of this class are Ramatu Gabisi (Dillard University), Whitney Guevara (University of Houston-downtown), Michael Lago (Florida State University), and Courtney White (Dillard University). Of the four new students, Whitney has a computer information systems degree instead of a degree in biology. These new members joined in the program activities

and became acquainted with members from the other classes. When Michael was looking for a job, he had applied to graduate schools in the area, as well as, for research technician positions. He received valuable mentoring from this program and this resulted in him gaining admission into the University of Texas Health Science Center Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences. He began his Ph.D. program this fall (2005) in the Integrative Biology and Pharmacology Department.

PROGRAM DIRECTOR'S CORNER *(continued from page 1)*

a great deal of money or have parents who don't mind supporting your credit card whims or new car extravagances there are several things you have to consider. You must have a well thought out plan to succeed in your program.

REMEMBER, while you are a student, live like a student.

Before beginning a program, you should know the total cost of your education including your everyday living expenses. You must factor in everything to get an accurate picture of what your financial life will entail. A budget is key to living within your means. If you know how much you have, what you owe and when you owe it, you can focus more clearly on your goal of succeeding in your graduate

program. When you follow a well thought out budget plan you create a peaceful mental environment that allows you a chance to learn your subject matter without any undue burdens. The program you are considering for graduate/professional school should inform you about any funding opportunities they provide. You should apply to any and all grants and fellowships available for a person with your background pursuing your specified degree. Do not forget to ask about departmental grants and research assistantships. If you must take out a loan, only apply for what you need. You will have to pay it back. You can request to have any

loans you are responsible for deferred if this is appropriate (if you are still paying loans from your undergraduate years, make sure you have deferred these before beginning graduate school). There maybe situations where your program does not provide any funding assistance so you may have to work. Consider working for the institution if they provide tuition discounts for their employees. Of course you want to work in a position that will also benefit your graduate training program.

Good choices will mean that you can maneuver through your graduate/professional programs and begin to live like a professional when you graduate.

HGSC-PGETER'S BEGIN GRADUATE SCHOOL *(continued from page 1)*

more interested in pharmacy. Stephanie highly recommends that anyone interested in pharmacy volunteer in a hospital based (student volunteer) program to learn first hand what is entailed in this career choice.

Lori Banks and Stacy Lloyd were members of the HGSC-PGET II class and National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS) post-baccalaureate research fellows. They both graduated from Prairie View A&M University in May and joined our program the following July (2004). Lori's research project involved identifying mutations in toll-like receptors in patients with virus induced dilated cardiomyopathy. She

conducted her studies in Dr. Jesus Vallejo's laboratory at Texas Children's. She presented a research poster titled "Domain-Containing Adapter Inducing IFN-(TRIF) Gene and Its Potential Association With Virus-Induced Dilated Cardiomyopathy" at the 2005 Pediatric Academic Societies' Meeting in Washington, D.C. Lori was accepted into the Molecular Virology and Microbiology Ph.D. program at Baylor College of Medicine. Stacy Lloyd worked in Dr. Tao Shin's laboratory investigating the relationship of genes involved in germline development in *C. elegans*. Stacy was second

author on a poster presented at the Fifteenth International *C. Elegans* Meeting in Los Angeles, CA. Stacy was accepted into the Human Genetics graduate program at the University of Pittsburgh's School of Public Health.

Michael Lago is one of our newest members of the PGET program. He is a member of the PGET III class. Michael worked in Materials Core for six months and was only able to actively participate during the summer in our postbacc program. While he was looking for employment (before being hired by HGSC), he also applied to several graduate programs in the Houston area. When he applied to our program, he immediately took

2005 HGSC-SMART PROGRAM



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The Human Genome Sequencing Center (BCM-HGSC) was established in 1996 when the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI) designated Baylor College of Medicine as one of six pilot programs for the final phase of the Human Genome Project. In 1999, the Center received an \$80 million, five-year grant as one of three sites from the pilot program chosen to complete the final phase of the project. Dr. Richard Gibbs is the Director of the HGSC and Dr. George Weinstock is the Co-Director. The HGSC is located on the top three floors of the Alkek Building of Baylor College of Medicine in the Texas Medical Center (Houston, Texas).

www.hgsc.bcm.tmc.edu

POSTBACCALAUREATE OPPORTUNITIES *(continued from page 2)*

Topics in Genomics course. Everyone enjoyed taking this class and learning from researchers across the country about how important genomic research is to understanding biomedical processes. Accomplishments to date: Abdul (June 2004: Ph.D. program in Biochemistry at the University of Illinois-UC); Stephanie (August 2005: PharmD. at University of Houston School of Pharmacy); Cerissa (December 2003; M.S. in Molecular Biology-University of Houston-Clear Lake); Gabrielle (December 2004: M.P.H.—Tulane University School of Public Health).

HGSC-PGET II had a good year. They interacted with the remaining members

of PGET I in both the weekly brown bag sessions and the monthly Professional Meetings. A couple of the speakers in the Professional meeting made a tremendous impact on a couple of the members. For example Dr. Ron Peters from the UT School of Public Health painted a true picture of public health for some of the members and this in turn helped them decide if this is or not the career choice for them. Dr. James Phillips, Dean of Medicine at BCM, spoke with both our summer and postbacc students who were considering medical school and these students had a lot of details cleared up after he explained how the process works.

The NIGMS postbacc fellows in the program attended

the SACNAS meeting in Austin, TX where they met several recruiters from the schools they were interested in and received application fee waivers. After applying to several schools and interviewing during the spring, Lori was accepted into the Virology and Department here at Baylor College of Medicine and Stacy was accepted into the Human Genetics Department at University of Pittsburgh School of Public Health. They both began their graduate programs this August. Candi decided to remain the last year of the postbacc and focus on preparing for schools that offer the Doctor of Pharmacy.

HGSC-PGETERS *(continued from page 4)*

advantage of the mentoring Dr. Murray provided to all program participants. Although Michael had given up on the idea of being able to start graduate school, he followed the advice he received which resulted in getting his application considered for fall admission. He was accepted into the Integrative Biology and Pharmacology Ph.D. program at the University of Texas Health Science Center-Houston.