Our department of Health Sciences - Multicultural and Community Affairs (HS-MACA) is built on the premise of encouraging and believing in people (students) that they can achieve success if only they have the tools (mentoring and tutoring) to do so.

According to data from the American Association of Medical Colleges (AAMC), only 11 percent of medical school graduates are people of color. The statistics is similar for the dental school graduates. In Nebraska, there are 1.7 percent African Americans and 2.3 percent Hispanics of the current 2117 practicing physicians in the state.

Since its founding in 2000, HS-MACA has provided services to over 10,000 disadvantaged students in our community, some of whom are currently in healthcare professions. The services start very early in the fourth grade through precollege, college and professional schools. The process of encouraging the students to consider a healthcare profession early is the key to pipeline programming.

Recently, HS-MACA received a three million dollar grant from Health Resource Service Administration (HRSA), a division of the US Health and Human Services (HHS), over the next 5 years to help increase diversity in the healthcare professions. We rightly call this program Pipeline to Success. The goal of the program is to provide opportunities for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds to access education and training necessary to be healthcare providers, to improve retention in school, increase matriculation and graduation rates and provide community-based clinical health professional training in primary care.

This newsletter is dedicated to all our students and hard-working faculty, staff and community who support our pipeline programs and provide service, encouragement and words of wisdom to help Creighton University HS-MACA to continue to increase the diversity in healthcare professions, on our campus and in the nation.

The Mission Statement of Health Sciences Multicultural and Community Affairs is:

“To promote Creighton University as a recognized leader in the training and development of a multicultural health care workforce that serves to reduce health disparities in underserved and diverse communities through research, culturally proficient education, community interaction and engagements.”

Sade Kosoko-Lasaki, MD, MSPH, MBA, FMASS Associate Vice Provost – Multicultural Affairs Professor of Surgery (Ophthalmology), Professor of Preventive Medicine & Public Health

HS-MACA Pipeline Programs

At Creighton University, the Office of Health Sciences’ Multicultural and Community Affairs (HS-MACA) provides leadership in the training and development of a multicultural healthcare workforce that serves to reduce health disparities in underrepresented and diverse communities through research, culturally proficient education, community interaction, and engagements. HS-MACA has a long and proud history of helping economically and educationally-disadvantaged (mostly minority) students prepare for careers in health professions. Since its inception, the Health Sciences Multicultural and Community Affairs Office has introduced hundreds of young people to health-sciences careers through pipeline programs that serve area students beginning in the 4th grade and continuing through middle school, high school, college, and beyond.

In 1975, Creighton University was the national leader in planning and implementing a Post-Baccalaureate (PB) Program for underrepresented students who need an additional year of academic preparation following undergraduate education before being accepted to medical school. Along with the PB Program, Creighton also implemented a successful summer-only program for provisionally-accepted medical, dental, pharmacy and other health professions’ students. Creighton’s programs were widely regarded as innovative, effective, and replicable. Today, approximately 360 practicing physicians, dentists, pharmacist and other health professionals can thank Creighton University and its Post-Baccalaureate and Pre-matriculation Programs for contributing to their successful, professional education. The university has invested millions of dollars (approximately $10,000 per student per year of education in scholarship for professional school) in this program. In addition, numerous health profession programs around the country reference Creighton University in its leadership role in providing post-baccalaureate education to disadvantaged students for medical, dental, pharmaceutical, and other health professions.

HS-MACA continues to embrace the diversity that each of our students bring to our programs. HS-MACA serves as the foundation for a variety of “pipeline” programs. These programs serve students from grade school to college to professional school by providing educational opportunities and exposure that allows diverse students to be competitive applicants for health-science schools. In addition, our programs provide information to the young individuals so that they will consider health professions their career of choice in the future.

The programs expose young people from diverse backgrounds to career opportunities they might not have otherwise considered and help them envision themselves in health-sciences surroundings. Mentors encourage students to establish short- and long-term educational and professional goals and make educational choices that will foster an ongoing interest in science. Programs include: Focus on Health Professions; Middle School Initiative; Sudanese Student Learning Initiative; Summer Research Institute; High School Health Disparities Community-Based Research Program; and Summer Biomedical Health Disparities Research Training Program.

Pipeline programs lay the groundwork that can lead to students becoming viable applicants to competitive programs in medicine, dentistry, and other health-science disciplines. Today, the Health Sciences Multicultural and Community Affairs (HS-MACA) is recognized as an innovative department that pioneers and synthesizes community, education, and research in the development of future healthcare professionals who are culturally aware and work toward the elimination of health disparities.
HS-MACA Post-Baccalaureate Class of 2018-2019

Johnny Atencio
Pre-Dental

Olufunmilayo Badejo
Pre-Medical

Albert Cohen-Sedgh
Pre-Dental

Antonio Igbohidi
Pre-Medical

Shaneese Longboy
Pre-Dental

Bianca Luna
Pre-Dental

Geraldine Manansala
Pre-Dental

Nicole McNichols
Pre-Medical

Anny Nguyen
Pre-Medical

Daniel Paku
Pre-Medical

Nathan Ramos
Pre-Medical

Todd Rhode
Pre-Dental

Alex Sasaki
Pre-Medical

Ansar Wali
Pre-Medical

LaDijah Wood
Pre-Dental

HS-MACA Post-Baccalaureate/Pre-matriculation Alumni Scholarship

Johnny Atencio
Pre-Dental

Albert Cohen-Sedgh
Pre-Dental

Shaneese Longboy
Pre-Dental

Anny Nguyen
Pre-Medical

Geraldine Manansala
Pre-Dental

Alex Sasaki
Pre-Medical

HS-MACA Post-Baccalaureate/Pre-matriculation Alumni Scholarship

Congratulation HS-MACA Scholarship Recipients 2018-2019

John T. Elder Post-Baccalaureate Scholarship
Elizabeth England, M3

Drs. Gbolahan and Sade Lasaki Family Scholarship
Dental
Bianca Luna

Drs. Gbolahan and Sade Lasaki Family Scholarship
Medical
Daniel Paku
HS-MACA 2019 Graduation Awardees

**HS-MACA Leadership Awards**

- Melissa Napoleon, for leadership in the Multicultural Health Science Students Association (MHSSA).
- Zachary Austin, for leadership in the Student National Medical Association (SNMA).
- Diana Ndunda, for leadership in the Multicultural Health Science Students Association (MHSSA).
- Nejmun Huussen, for leadership in the School of Medicine 2019 underrepresented student who best promoted the mission of HS-MACA.
- Zaynab Austin, for leadership in the Student National Medical Association (SNMA).
- Tony Nguyen, for leadership in the School of Dentistry 2019 underrepresented student who best promoted the mission of HS-MACA.
- Angel Ogbeide, for leadership in the School of Dentistry 2019 underrepresented student who best promoted the mission of HS-MACA.

**Student Leadership Award**

- Diana Ndunda, for leadership in the Multicultural Health Science Students Association (MHSSA).
- Zachary Austin, for leadership in the Student National Medical Association (SNMA).
- Flora Aren, for leadership in the School of Pharmacy and Health Professions 2013 underrepresented pharmacy student who best promoted the mission of HS-MACA through service and community outreach.

**School of Dentistry**

- Casey John Dufurrena
- Benjamin Ryan Escobedo
- Kai Michael Ezell
- Jayson Henry Gurule
- Lenesia D. Haynes
- Philip Bradley Nation
- Tony Nguyen
- Tohi D.Odejimi
- Angel Khinde
- Adea J. Reyes

**School of Medicine**

- Aabra Ahmed
- Carynn Austin
- Eric Basappa
- Sarah Budney
- Nicholas Cabal
- Ferdinand Ross Cacho
- Rei Christian Calma
- Monika Dangeti
- Aaron Fried
- Dylan Gobo
- Phoebe Hua
- Nejmun Huussen
- Andrea Itto
- Sana Kiblinger
- (Waheed)
- Taesoo Kim
- Lenora Lewis
- Alice Lin
- Kaysey Lorente
- Eric Magliulo
- Melissa Napoleon
- Merrie Oshiro
- Yu-Soon Park
- Riki Patel
- Tej Patel
- Emily Quick Bear
- Joshua Rabbag
- Alexander Seger
- Andrew Sikorsky
- Michael Simhadchalam
- Margaret Siu
- Ahmed Taheen
- Rachel Thiet
- Wenting Tong
- Ruomei Wu
- Leo Yamaguchi
- Peter Yang

**School of Pharmacy and Health Professions Physical Therapy**

- Rachel Jarvie
- Kristina Lam
- Junzhe Li
- Alexendra Michalak
- Paul Nguyen
- David Nishiki
- Benjamin Ota
- Hannah Runez
- Daniel Wagner
- Yu Zhang

**Occupational Therapy - Campus**

- Eruo Aire:
  - Olufotolami Akinnnade
  - Stephanie Anasi
  - Steven DeLeon
  - Dana Fernandez
  - Khadijah Lane
- Elaine Joy Pinacate
- Savannah Rodriguez
- Jazmin Taylor
- Sharla Rivera
- Yajing Chu

**Occupational Therapy - Alaska**

- Jacqueline Strawderman
- Jazmin Taylor
- Tony Taylor

**Occupational Therapy - Regis**

- Sylverline Agomoh
- Sunjoo Sunny Choi
- Audra Rinsen
- Natalia Rivera

**Occupational Therapy - Greater Omaha Distance**

- Lynette Aoki
- Hannah Ehresman

**Post-Professional - Occupational Therapy**

- Crystal Gaddy
- Patrick Manuel
- Chinom Woko
- Soma Saravana Perumal
- Stacey Scott

**Pharmacy - Campus**

- Rabie Abasi
- Arielle Bautista
- David Cao
- Siy Chen
- Tiffany Cheng
- Alvin Cheung
- Kyu Won Choi
- John Colorado
- Michon Fuchigami
- Brandon Haytes
- Kayla Haverkamp
- Xavier Hill
- Zachary Miraki
- Viet Ho
- Pauline Huynh
- Peter Khong
- Connie Liang
- Samuel Llona
- Diana Ndunya
- John Nguyen
- Linh Thanh Nguyen
- Hao-DaOan Pham
- Shariha Rivera
- Taylor Sehah
- Tony Tran
- Johnny Tran

**College of Nursing**

- Alia Marri Ancheta
- Joshua Ancheta
- Angelica Bustamante
- Alyssa Cambras
- Marissa Casas
- Alyssa Domingo
- Paul Jason Enriquez
- Mary Catherine Flood
- Tyra Fukushima
- Alissa Gezon
- Julie Juarez
- Amy Kawakami
- Nina Kelley
- Tyler Kelley
- Laila Khong
- Kristen Kojima
- Morgan Mackinney
- Alexandra Mihalka
- Mahi Nagar
- Yoshua Piescer

**HS-MACA Post-Baccalaureate and Pre-Matriculation Alumni**

- Ferdinand Ross Cacho
- Casey John Dufurrena
- Philip Bradley Nation
- Leneshia D. Haynes
- Jayson Henry Gurule
- Rei Christian Calma
- Melissa Napoleon
- Zachary Austin
- Nejmun Hussein
- Tony Nguyen
- Angel Ogbeide
- Diana Ndunda
- Leo Yamaguchi
- Ada Reyes
- Leneshia Haynes
- Nejmun Hussein
- Tony Nguyen
Recruiting for Pipeline Programs

HS-MACA serves as the foundation for a variety of “Pipeline” Programs. These programs lay the groundwork that can lead to students becoming viable applicants to competitive programs in medicine, dentistry and other health sciences disciplines while addressing the elimination of health disparities in the state and the nation. “Pipeline” Programs expose students from diverse backgrounds to career opportunities they might not have considered otherwise and help them envision themselves in health sciences surroundings. These programs serve students from grade school to college to professional school by providing educational opportunities and exposure that allows diverse students to be competitive applicants for health sciences schools. HS-MACA’s “Pipeline Programs include: Post-Baccalaureate Pre-Medical and Pre-Dental Programs, Pre-Matriculation Program, Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP), Focus on Health Professions, Middle School Initiative, Sudanese Student Learning Initiative; Summer Research Institute, and our Mini Health Sciences School and Day Camp.

Recruiting plays a very integral role in the success and operations of HS-MACA’s “Pipeline Programs. Effort to recruit students for HS-MACA’s “Pipeline Programs” and community initiatives are very important. The Recruitment and Retention Manager is responsible for coordinating recruitment activities and securing applications for HS-MACA ‘Pipeline’ Programs by collaborating with Creighton University’s Health Sciences schools, departments and student organizations, engaging the community, disseminating information to Omaha Public Schools, universities and colleges. HS-MACA maintains a sustained and broad, aggressive outreach strategy that engages students earlier; targeting groups traditionally underrepresented in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields while providing mentoring and supportive resources so that students have the opportunity to thrive. HS-MACA’s current strategies to recruit include(s):

- Collaborating with Creighton University School of Medicine, School of Dentistry, School of Pharmacy and Health Professions, and College of Nursing
- A targeted marketing campaign aimed at reaching underrepresented students and organizations.
- Focus on recruitment areas that currently are not being geographically or strategically served by summer enrichment programs.
- Focus on three specific catchments areas: 1) the Midwest region, 2) historically black colleges/universities and schools with large underrepresented and disadvantaged populations like, Morehouse College and Spelman College in Atlanta and Dillard University in New Orleans, 2) Hispanic colleges 3) other Jesuit institutions.
- Targeting Creighton University students, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, University of Nebraska-Omaha and the Creighton University immediate catchments area which include the neighboring states of North Dakota, South Dakota, Kansas, Missouri, Colorado, and Iowa.
- Advertising to students that have an interest in pursuing health sciences as a career. (e.g. student organizations like SNMA, MHSSA, MAPS, LMSA and MAPS)
- Distributing brochures and fliers that have been useful in recruiting students to previous HS-MACA programs will be distributed and the responses will be tracked.
- Hosting information sessions on campuses during recruitment trips
- Advertising on HS-MACA web site, HS-MACA social media sites, bulletin boards in science departments of targeted schools.
- Communicating with Science Advisors
- Advertising in Minority Student’s journals, professional organizations, list serves and newsletters

HS-MACA’s current recruitment strategies have allowed for the successful implementation of “Pipeline” Programming. HS-MACA has not created a model allowing us to bridge the achievement gap and increase the retention of diverse students in health sciences that extend beyond academic support but our “Pipeline” Programs provide access and opportunity for those students traditionally underrepresented in STEM fields. “Pipeline” Programs provide information to the young individuals so that they will consider health professions as a career of choice in the future so in order to achieve success; it takes a collaborative effort, and a comprehensive recruitment strategy.
The Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP) is a federally funded grant that provides students from economically or educationally disadvantaged backgrounds an opportunity to develop the skills needed to successfully compete for, enter, and graduate from health professional school. The program’s purpose is to provide students from disadvantaged backgrounds the access, education and training necessary to become a healthcare professional with the overarching goal of increasing diversity within the healthcare workforce. Currently, the U.S. healthcare workforce does not reflect the diversity of the nation which can result in an adverse effect on the health outcomes of diverse populations. To add to that point, underrepresentation of minorities in the health professions has implications for worsening health disparities [1]. By aiming to increase diversity within the healthcare workforce, the Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP) directly addresses racial and ethnic health disparities that exist throughout the United States.

Sharing a bit of history, Creighton University has an extensive reputation with the Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP); where its existence at Creighton University began in 2000 and continued for nine years until government funding ceased in 2009. Lo and behold, another grant opportunity presented itself, was successful and now there exists the Creighton University Pipeline to Success Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP). Over the next five years, the Pipeline to Success Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP) endeavors to provide a multitude of program activities that cultivate the union of academics and interpersonal experiences within each student that will prove to be a vital tool along the journey to success.

The Creighton University’s Pipeline to Success – Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP) offers a multitude of benefits to each student such as formal and informal opportunities for counseling, mentoring and group support; academic support services, academic enrichment, and skill development; reduction in cognitive or attitudinal barriers to learning through discussion of educational, personal, and/or family issues that may impact academic progress; educational and clinical shadowing activities; and training in primary care settings as well as opioid abuse, mental and behavioral health. In addition, students actively participate in monthly meetings/workshops that focus on varying topics such as financial aid planning, health disparities, stress management, public health, etc. There are group sessions with local practicing physicians, dentists, pharmacists, occupational therapists and physical therapists along with scheduled field trips and tours of health professional private offices. These are designed to provide our students with an overview of various health professionals and their responsibilities including its complexities, skills and core competencies required to be a health professional.

Creighton University's Pipeline to Success – Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP) has partnered with a number of collaborating community partners who have committed, through access, resources and advisement, to ensure the development of the health career "pipeline" and its sustainability. The community partners include: Creighton University, Metropolitan Community College, Omaha Public Schools, OneWorld Community Health Centers, Inc. and Heart Ministry Center. The program consists of five programmatic components (varying durations): High School Health Careers Ambassador Program, Structured High School Summer Program, Undergraduate Health Careers Ambassador Program, Structured Undergraduate School Summer Program and Health Professional Health Careers Ambassador Program.

Currently underway is the 2019 High School/Undergraduate/Health Professional Careers Ambassador Program, just to name a few, where students have participated in the benefits of the Pipeline to Success - HCOP Mentoring Program, an inaugural Opioid Abuse and Mental and Behavioral Health Panel and with more lined up in the form of clinical shadowing opportunities at the North Omaha Area Health (NOAH) Clinic, Heart Ministry Center and OneWorld Community Health Centers, Inc.

Looking forward to the continued success of each student now and in their future health professional careers.

“The road to success is not a path you find but a trail you blaze.” – Robert Brault

Let’s continue to blaze ahead HCOPers!

#TeamHCOP

Aminatu Issaka, MS
Program Supervisor, HCOP


HCOP students meet on Saturdays for educational sessions lead by HCOP staff Isaac Inkabi, Christina Jelinek, and Aminatu Issaka.
Encouraging Healthy Study Habits in High School and Undergraduate Students

As the academic success counselor for Creighton University’s Pipeline to Success – Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP), I am a coach and guide to our students as they work toward their goal of becoming a healthcare professional. In particular, I help our student participants strengthen their study and time management skills early on in their academic careers, to lay a foundation for success in health professional school. In talking with our students – and through my own experience as an educator – I know that springtime is a wonderful time of year, but it is also a time when high school and undergraduate students especially start looking forward to summer break. Everyone loves the fresh hope of warmer weather, but I remind my students that there are pitfalls to be considered as we roll toward the end of the academic year.

One thing I am continually asking our students is, “what is your study strategy?” The conscientious student has an answer for this question, because they have taken the time to consider how they learn, they have tried various ways of studying, and they can tell you what methods are the most successful for them. Teaching academic success includes helping students to organize their time and create a plan for their study, so that they consider their own learning and take responsibility for it. These study skills, such as time management and building healthy study habits, will carry them through health professional school if they learn them early and stay diligent.

As summer approaches, it’s tempting for high school and undergraduate students to be less faithful to their study habits. For those students, I offer a few springtime tips.

1. **Get outside.** It’s easier to stay in the library all winter long, but when the weather turns nice, it’s more difficult for some to sit down and study. Freshen up your study routine by taking your study materials out on the porch, to a coffee shop with a patio, or to the park. If the call of the outdoors is making it hard to stick to your study routine, bring your study routine outdoors, or build time into your day to go enjoy the fresh air. You’ll come back renewed and focused.

2. **Revitalize, but don’t abandon your study habits.** As days get longer and we start to anticipate the end of the school year, it can be helpful for students to change up their daily schedule. However, keeping track of how much time you’re spending on your studies - and not allowing that time to diminish - is key to ending the year on a high note.

Our motto here at HCOP is “success is a journey, not a destination”. When it comes to academic success, this quote can be applied to our daily choices. As we enter this season of spring, it’s important to remember that it’s our dedication to being successful each day that leads to an academic year we can look back on with pride.

When it comes to pride, I am personally very proud of our HCOP students and the hard work they put in. From our high school students to our health professional school students, they are, as a group, dedicated, mature, and hard-working. They give me hope for a better future, and as their academic success counselor, I do everything in my power to assure we are giving our students any supports they may need to reach their full potential.

Christina Jelinek, BS
Pipeline to Success – HCOP
Academic Success Counselor

2. **Finish strong.** It is easy to procrastinate more as the academic year comes to a close. I often see students try to “coast” on their earlier hard work. However, this is the time of year when, as a teacher, I have watched my students’ GPAs fall. Make every effort to keep apathy from creeping in. Have a friend or loved one hold you accountable for your study plan and set new goals as finals week approaches.

2019 HCOP Ambassador Program visits the North Omaha Area Health NOAH Clinic
HS-MACA Academic Success
Pipeline Programs

My role as Assistant Director, Academic Enrichment for the Health Sciences – Multicultural and Community Affairs (HS-MACA) with pipeline programs is focused mainly in the post-baccalaureate program and giving presentations to pipeline students. The three topics I address with every group I present to is implicit belief, how students process information as learners and the SOAR study method.

Implicit Belief

Each student brings with them a personal theory of their own intellectual ability. I focus on whether the student believes that their ability is a fixed trait or it is malleable. Before I can teach students learning strategies, I need to convince those with a fixed trait implicit theory that they are wrong. Until a student believes that their ability is a fixed trait or it is malleable, the student will begin to think they are not capable learners and will give up trying. The goal of pipeline programs is to develop a healthcare workforce that looks like the patients being served. We in HS-MACA get the privilege to develop student talent and make a difference in the quality of healthcare.

Information Processing

The way students process information in learning environments is often overlooked and assumed to be efficient. Understanding the way in which we learn aids in learning more deeply and more efficiently. Students must realize that they are responsible for using selective attention to attend to the message being presented. Next they need to understand how information in their working memory is active for only a minute and if nothing is done with the information, it is likely to be forgotten. If a student chooses to make internal and external connections with the material to be learned, i.e. encoding, they will add to existing bodies of knowledge (schemas) and have access to the learned material in testing situations. The last component is metacognition which is the regulatory process of ‘thinking about one’s thinking’. This helps the learner to manage what they know and how to access it, how to stay focused, and so on. All in all, the students I present to have never been exposed to this model and their learning has suffered for it.

The SOAR model (2005)(1) is built upon the Information Processing Model with the purpose of teaching students to become purposeful, independent learners. The SOAR method is composed of four distinct levels.

The S stands for selection of material. Selection of material is important in that note taking is a generative activity, aids in attention, and notes serve as an artifact of what was presented in class. Without a complete set of notes, students tend to only remember a fraction of presented material after a week. The O stands for organization of materials. The best way for students to organize their materials is first to make sure they have a complete set of notes. Once that is accomplished, the students are taught how to represent the material utilizing hierarchies, diagrams, and matrices. Doing so provides a “big picture” of relationships within the text promoting learning beyond simply memorizing facts. The A stands for associating the materials. This is where students connect new information with existing knowledge. Building on the within patterns recognized by representing the material in the Organization step, students encode the new information beyond the text. Mnemonic strategies are a specific way to promote these external connections. The R stands for regulation. Unlike many study strategies, this SOAR model promotes the students’ regulation of their own learning. This regulation, metacognition, requires that the student monitors their learning using appropriate strategies. Once a student learns to select the appropriate information, organize their notes, create associations and regulate their learning they will become independent, lifelong learners’ (Lang, 2012)(2).

Summary

There is more to promoting academic success for pipeline students but the concepts discussed above address major deficits in student learning and allows students to leave with a plan. Becoming an efficient learner takes time and practice but without the knowledge of how one processes information and the beliefs that guide them, they will continue to utilize inefficient strategies. The worst case is that students will begin to think they are not capable learners and will give up trying. The goal of pipeline programs is to develop a healthcare workforce that looks like the patients being served. We in HS-MACA get the privilege to develop student talent and make a difference in the quality of healthcare.

In summary of what the academic success counselor provides is a growth mindset with a researched learning model that produces independent learners that construct knowledge in place of rote memorization.

References:

3 Lang, J. (2012) Sudanese Academic Success. HS-MACA
**Working Together is Success**

As a University of Nebraska graduate, gone are the days where I had doubts about attending an in-state rival institution. At Creighton University’s HS-MACA Post-Baccalaureate Program, I have learned to be a better version of myself. My initial thoughts as I started this program included whether I was doing the right thing and if it was too late to withdraw myself from the program. These thoughts stemmed from the incredible amount of information, or so it seemed, that was thrown our way in the beginning weeks. Reflecting back to those first few weeks, I now understand that I had not realized something incredibly important that this program strives for. With the program’s academically-driven intensity, Dr. Kosoko-Lasaki and the HS-MACA staff have fostered an environment for students to be successful, and be successful together.

During my undergraduate years, I oft would find myself studying rigorously prepping for an upcoming exam or after a challenging exam. This time around it was different. My classmates and I were encouraged to work together. It was never meant to be spring every waking moment studying with everyone, but when we faced four to six exams crunched in one week, which happened pretty frequently, it became second nature to be around my classmates. In this manner, we also developed a strong sense of accountability and responsibility for one another. Personally speaking, this has been incredibly wonderful. I was in-tuned in classes and changed my perspective to not worry or be afraid of the workload.

Undoubtedly, an integral part of the program is to develop smarter and more efficient studying habits and that started with the first week of class early in the summer. As a group, my classmates and myself took it a step further. In prepping for the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT) and the Dental Admission Test (DAT), we dedicated additional time outside of studying for courses and self-studying for the respective tests to meet weekly to study and review together. This allowed for an opportunity to help us engage in an active learning environment where we pick each other’s brains about topics that were strengths for others and vice versa.

As we wrap up our final semester of courses and start preparation for medical and dental schools, I am happy to say that I realized the importance of teamwork early on in the program which helped me invest time and dedication to strive for success with my classmates. It has paid dividends. It has allowed me to develop and further strengthen my time-management, communication, and team-working skills. It goes without saying that Dr. Kosoko-Lasaki, the staff including Mr. Mervin Vasser and Mr. Jefferay Lang were instrumental to my success and development as a student, as a person, and as a future physician.

**Uncovering Academic Potential**

I consider myself a late bloomer—after graduating from the University of New Mexico with a degree in Sociology, I discovered my passion for dentistry. Having taken no pre-requisite classes for dental school in undergrad, I went back to school and finished the requirements in two years. During this time, I joined the Pre-Dental Society at UNM and volunteered at the New Mexico Mission of Mercy. Mission of Mercy is the state’s largest charity event, providing first care, first served free dentistry to thousands of underserved New Mexicans. Here I saw firsthand the impact that dentistry has on a person. I couldn’t wait until I was the one providing that service to those individuals. My acceptance into the Creighton Post-Baccalaureate Program has afforded me the opportunity to fulfill my dreams.

The Creighton Post-Baccalaureate Program is where my classmates and I have begun to uncover our true academic potential. This is where we were constantly told that belief in our abilities is vital to our success in professional school. In our Academic Success class we learned that our intelligence is malleable, and we are all works in progress. Believing that statement gave us a mental boost that we needed.

Being a non-traditional student, I found myself struggling to gain acceptance into dental school. I wasn’t the competitive applicant required of most dental schools, but luckily, I was chosen to be part of Creighton’s Post-Bac program where I have developed skills that will not only allow me to be a successful dental student, but a successful and competent professional for the rest of my life.

The yearlong program is aimed at fine tuning our study habits, developing time-management skills and bolstering our GPA’s and DAT scores. We are held to high standards and much is expected of us. I know that the skills we have learned and the lessons we have been taught will prove to be invaluable in our future endeavors. Being academically successful is important, but just as important is being a positive influence on our community. This year we had the opportunity to participate in community-oriented activities such as Reach Day, Mission of Mercy, and weekly presentations at Common Ground, all of which taught us about health disparities in the community.

The program is rigorous, but it is not a competitive environment. We are a collaborative group and have gotten along since the first day of the program. One thing I have learned is that working together and sharing resources is key to succeeding in this program. If you find yourself unsuccessful on your first attempt to gain admission to Medical or Dental school, I highly recommend the post-bac program. I am proud to be a part of this program, and am excited to see each one of us achieve our dreams.
The Focus on Health Pipeline Program

HS-MACA’s Focus on Health after school Pipeline Program is designed to provide quality after school programming for middle school students. Specifically, HS-MACA strives to foster student growth through STEM-centered (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) experiential learning that encourages these young people to consider careers in health-science related fields to address the lack of diversity and promote greater inclusion within these disciplines. With these objectives a program cannot exist merely as an academic practice but must also serve as a support system to assist and encourage those students who hope to pursue a career as a health professional. It is well documented that low-income students of color face persistent and systemic opportunity gaps when compared to their more affluent peers. These disparities manifest in a myriad of ways, but if we ever hope to live in a more equitable world, we need to build it ourselves—and bridging these opportunity gaps is a vital component of that mission. HS-MACA prioritizes that mission in all its efforts to build a better and more equitable healthcare system for all people.

Part of this work is accomplished by diversifying the healthcare field, seeing more providers of diverse backgrounds become health professionals through the ongoing efforts of departmental programming, such as through the Post Baccalaureate program for example. However, the pathway that leads to professional school and a career as a health professional doesn’t begin when a student completes their undergraduate studies, or even when they arrive on a college campus. There are a million minute and commonplace exchanges, connections and experiences during one’s formative years that coalesce into feelings of empowerment, capability and achievement. It is my responsibility in my direct service role in teaching the after-school lessons to engage my students in such a way that they come away from the exchange feeling empowered to pursue their dreams.

The program targets students from systemically underserved and traditionally underrepresented demographics. I do programming at Lewis & Clark, Marrs, Monroe, McMillan, and King Science & Technology Middle Schools through the Omaha Public Schools partnership with the Collective for Youth organization. Collective for Youth’s mission is to provide quality out of school time programming for youth, to build a community-wide out of school time system, and to bridge systemic opportunity gaps. The after-school programming is free and any students at these school may sign-up and select which programs they would like to be a part of. My students sign-up for the Focus on Health Pipeline Program because they are interested in STEM topics, being future healthcare providers, or because they just find the lessons interesting. These efforts are quite impactful. The program reached 237 individual students over the last academic year who attended class a total of 1278 hours of programming, numbers which are both likely to be duplicated if not eclipsed this year with ongoing numbers of 221 individual students and 1166 total student hours. These precious hours provide contact time with programming for students who will begin learning about and developing the skills they need to make decisions about their future careers.

Lessons include asking students to become engineers to safeguard an egg from a two-story drop using padding and a makeshift parachute that they design; to get hands-on and dissect sheep eyes and hearts and a mouse brain, in order to understand more about our own anatomy, and to operate as chemists theorizing on the how caffeine will impact water bugs, as well as mixing their own concoctions of slime and ice cream. Student creativity in problem solving is emphasized, both in small groups and in individual projects, and effort, regardless of a successful outcome, is always praised to encourage continued resolve in student’s lives in the face of the adversity and unknown outcomes that they will encounter.

To work for the Pipeline Program is to work to dismantle the systemic inequality that face these students through providing greater educational access. Such work is done within a reciprocal relationship of trust, understanding, compassion, and learning rather than from a unilateral, top-down approach of an educator dictating right and wrong, correct and incorrect to their students. It is work I am pleased to be a part of. Every day I interact with the future of this country (and with a few future healthcare providers too I’m sure) and they continue to amaze me with their inquisitiveness, determination, problem solving, intelligence, and sympathy for one another. These are the hallmarks of any good healthcare professional, and I believe that their future inclusion in the field will make the healthcare outcomes of all patients that much better.
For over a year now HS-MACA has partnered with King Science & Technology Magnet Middle School as they work to develop their Health Career Academy. In the context of this partnership HS-MACA has been able to expose King Science students to various health care related activities. We have recruited guest speakers for a sixth grade health class, including Creighton University professors from the Occupational Therapy and Exercise Science departments, a CHI physician, two CHI nurses, and members of the HS-MACA staff who have shared their expertise and career journeys in healthcare with these students, inspiring them to undertake their own journeys. We have also been able to provide medical student volunteers to assist the class in CPR training, an activity where students come away feeling confident that if an emergency should arise, they are prepared to help.

This health class serves as a precursor to sorts to the Health Career Academy itself. Interested students apply for the program, including writing an essay and having a reference as well as maintaining a certain grade point average. Therefore, if high schools participate for the available class slots, I was happy to be asked to be one of the interviewers last year, the first year of the program, and I look forward to fulfilling that role again this year. All applicants express an interest in learning more about possible careers within healthcare, and many intend to be future providers.

Once selected, students spend several hours each week within their academy, going on field trips to medical centers and hospitals, listening to lectures from health care professionals, working on projects, and learning about the discipline. HS-MACA also continues its role working with these students by serving as a connection point to various guest speakers and health professionals, and especially in organizing a week long Mini-Health Sciences Camp over the summer. The camp provides an opportunity for students to come to a college campus and see what higher education has to offer, as well as expose them to various health science related fields. Students meet with faculty from medicine, dentistry, occupational therapy, exercise science, physical therapy, pharmacy, and nursing and can perform various activities related to these professions while they learn about what they are and what it takes to get that specific degree. Members of the Health Career Academy are excited to be on campus and learning about a topic they have expressed genuine interest in. We take them to Bergan Mercy Hospital and practice scrubbing in, working with mannequin patients who express symptoms, and even performing a surgical search for paperclip inside a mannequin’s stomach using real surgical cameras and tools. The young people in the Health Career Academy are diligent workers and intelligent students and represent the next generation of healthcare professionals. HS-MACA is proud to do its part to provide greater access to the field for them and to assist in making their dreams that much closer to reality.
Happy Easter from HS-MACA and the students of Creighton University

HS-MACA Alumni Update

Congratulations to Tobi Odejimi on his marriage

HS-MACA Community Health Advocate graduates Spring 2019

Adelani Kosoko (DOB July 21, 2017)
Adesoji Kosoko (DOB September 18, 2018)
Dr. Kosoko-Lasaki’s grand children

Phebe Mercado Jungman is originally from the Philippines where she finished her Bachelor of Science Degree in Commerce, major in Accounting at West Negros University and her Master of Business Administration at the University of St. La Salle.

She is happy finding a good job at Creighton University and plans to fulfill her dreams and passion working with great people in the academe where she used to have several years of experience in the Philippines. She is happily married to Dean Jungman and they both live in South Omaha for good.

Welcome to HS-MACA

Born and raised in Lincoln, Nebraska, Christina Jelinek graduated from the University of Nebraska – Lincoln with a Bachelor of Science degree in K-12 Art Education.

Prior to coming to Creighton University, Christina worked in the rural school district of Pawnee City, Nebraska as the district’s only art educator, and also served as a coach, assistant director, and class sponsor. In her five years there, Christina found her true passion in developing relationships with students and helping them figure out a plan for their post-school success. She also loved to connect her classes with the community, leading students to create community art pieces and service projects for the local VFW.

Since coming to Omaha, Christina has been passionate about continuing to give to the community of Omaha and to form relationships with students. This passion drives her work as the academic success counselor for Creighton University’s Pipeline to Success – Health Careers Opportunity Program, where she helps students achieve success on their journey to becoming health professionals.

Mrs. Jelinek resides in midtown Omaha with her husband Jered, two cats Clive and Seamus, and their dog, Mikko.

Isaac Inkabi is the Program Coordinator and Data Manager for Creighton University’s Pipeline to Success – Health Careers Opportunity Program. Isaac was born and raised in Mampong, Ashanti Region (Ghana - West Africa).

He received his Bachelor of Engineering in Mechatronics from Shandong University of Science and Technology in Qingdao, China.

For the past four years, Isaac has been working as an Information Technology expert rendering services to technology companies in Lubbock, Texas before relocating to Omaha.

Isaac is happily married and enjoys spending time with his family.

Phebe Mercado Jungman is originally from the Philippines where she finished her Bachelor of Science Degree in Commerce, major in Accounting at West Negros University and her Master of Business Administration at the University of St. La Salle.

She is happy finding a good job at Creighton University and plans to fulfill her dreams and passion working with great people in the academe where she used to have several years of experience in the Philippines. She is happily married to Dean Jungman and they both live in South Omaha for good.
Mini Health Sciences School and Day Camp

Since the year 2000 the Health Sciences Multicultural and Community Affairs Office has introduced over ten thousand young people to health sciences careers. Our Pipeline Programs serve students nationally, with particular attention to those in Nebraska at many academic levels, including middle school, high school and college years, and beyond.

Since 2015 HS-MACA has collaborated with the Creighton University Health sciences community which includes: School of Medicine, School of Dentistry, College of Nursing, School of Pharmacy and Health Professions, Exercise Science Department, Physician Assistant Program, CHI Bergan Mercy, CU EDGE and Creighton Athletic Department in order to expose young people from diverse backgrounds to career opportunities they might not have considered otherwise and help students envision themselves in health sciences surroundings.

Outreach programs range from one day to one week with 25-30 students on average in attendance. Students from Jesuit Academy, King Science and Technology Magnet Center, NOAH Clinic, McMillan Junior High School and Partnership4Kids participated in our Mini Health Sciences School/Day Camp where they were exposed to careers in the health sciences and provided a perspective of what is considered health science and the various jobs available to them in the many related fields. The mini day camp/school includes panel discussions with students, healthcare professionals, interactive hand-on activities, and an insider tour of the hospital, including operating rooms, simulation labs, dissections and wellness activities.

HS-MACA continues to embrace the diversity that each of our students bring to our programs and serves as the foundation for a variety of “pipeline” programs. We understand that Pipeline Programs lay the groundwork that can lead to students becoming viable applicants to competitive programs in medicine, dentistry, and other health-science disciplines.

Creighton University Preventing Glaucoma Blindness:
Mission to the Dominican Republic
April 2019

Introduction

Glaucoma is a group of eye diseases colloquially known as the “sneak thief of sight”. Asymptomatic elevated intraocular pressure progressively damages the optic nerve in millions around the world. Classically, the disease effects peripheral vision first and progresses toward central vision. April 2019 marked Health Sciences – Multicultural and Community Affairs’ (HSMACA) 14th annual preventative ophthalmology trip to the Dominican Republic (DR). The annual mission is under the leadership of Dr. Sade Kosoko-Lasaki, glaucoma specialist, professor of surgery and preventive medicine at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska. The goal of the mission is to combat blindness from glaucoma and Vitamin-A deficiency, which has been identified as a highly prevalent cause of childhood blindness in the DR by the World Health Organization. For over a decade, Dr. Kosoko-Lasaki and support staff have provided over four-thousand-two-hundred eye examinations in the Dominican Republic. This includes over one-hundred-and-thirty-five (135) surgeries at Creighton’s Institute for Latin American Concern (ILAC) in Santiago, Dominican Republic, and Dr. Sebastian Guzman’s clinic in downtown Santiago. Special thanks to Dr. Guzman and his team for his remarkable support of the mission and generous post-operative care for many of the patients.

The trip’s purpose is glaucoma management, basic ocular health education, examination of children for signs of vitamin A deficiency in the eyes and the distribution of mega-dose Vitamin-A capsules. Glaucoma is the leading cause of blindness in Black and Hispanic populations, putting the Dominican population squarely at risk. In addition to glaucoma, the World Health Organization deems the Dominican Republic at risk for Vitamin-A deficiency. In recent years, we have added instructions on basic hand-washing, proper eye drop administration, introduction to cataract, introduction to pterygium, care of the post-surgery patient and Zika virus prevention measures to the education seminar.

In addition to ocular health examination lectures to the Cooperadores, all the 37 lecture attendees received the annual complete ocular eye exam. Basic spherical glasses were provided to many patients. Single vision glasses for distance and reading are dispensed based on the retinoscopy and spherical subjective refraction. These glasses are donated from various organizations and individuals who are recycling their old glasses. Treating individuals in a developing country who have refractive error and complicated ocular disease is a difficult task, but it is beneficial when done as a complete exam. Identifying and providing those who need glasses has added a much-needed benefit to our outreach process.

After a thirteen hour trip to Santiago on Friday April 5th 2019, the mission
began on Saturday, April 6th, 2019 with an educational seminar on ocular health for a group of thirty-seven (37) cooperadores (the primary healthcare workers of the villages). Dr. Kosoko-Lasaki, Dr. Eduardo Martinex and Optometry student Brett Briggs provided instruction on glaucoma, cataract, pterygium, handwashing and alleviating Vitamin A deficiency. Glaucoma, cataract and other eye diseases are best diagnosed with a routine eye exam. Pterygium is best prevented with UV protection and can often be managed without surgery. The cooperadores took this education and literature to share with their community. The biggest benefit is disease prevention and baseline knowledge to know when to refer.

The next five days involved eye exams, selective laser trabeculoplasty, and Vitamin A deficiency screening and distribution of the capsules to many children (ages 6 months to 10 years of age) in the rural areas of the DR as needed. The team provided eye exams to individuals at ILAC. New and existing glaucoma patients were provided glaucoma medications or referred for surgery. If other ocular complications were found, such as cataracts or pterygium, patients were referred to Dr. Guzman for treatment and follow-up. On Wednesday, the team visited a school house near Rodeo, DR for Vitamin A megadose (50,000-200,000 IU). Vitamin A deficiency causes night blindness, severe dry eye, conjunctival metaplasia, and in severe cases, blindness from cornea involved xerophthalmia. Vitamin A is a fat-soluble vitamin; therefore, the body is able to store it for long periods. An administered megadose can provide lasting benefits for two to three years. In addition to Vitamin A distribution, patients were refracted and single vision glasses were distributed on an as-needed basis. Lastly, during the visit to the Rodeo, the team also administered an anti-helminthic medication, albendazole, to all the children and the adults. The administration of the albendazole was not related to the Vitamin A deficiency. The albendazole was given because of the convenience of multiple dosing of a community with medications that do not interact.

### Results

Two-hundred-and-seventy (270) individuals were impacted during the six-day mission trip. A total of one-hundred-and-fifty (150) complete slit lamp ophthalmic exams were performed. These exams included registration, ocular history, risk assessment, visual acuity tests, slit-lamp biomicroscopy, posterior pole evaluation with a 78D lens and Goldmann tonometry. Retinoscopy, automated perimetry, dilation, direct fundoscopy, and indirect ophthalmoscopy were done as needed. Patients that were on maximum medical therapy and had high IOP were referred for surgery. The children have a flash light exam for ocular signs of vitamin A deficiency. Some of the children had retinoscopy to identify refractive errors prior to the dispensing of glasses.

Travel time to the Haitian border campo of Rodeo took about three hours one-way. Once there, ninety-six (96) children, ages 6 months to 10 years were screened and received 50,000-200,000 IU of Vitamin A. Conjunctival Aerosis, ocular signs of vitamin A deficiency was identified in twelve (12) children. All the 96 children were administered megadose Vitamin A for subclinical signs or clinical signs of xerophthalmia (Vitamin A deficiency). Vitamin A is a fat-soluble compound vital to the immune system, epithelial health and visual function. More information about Vitamin A deficiency can be found at www.sightandlife.org.

In addition to the aforementioned ninety-six (96) children, twenty-four (24) adults were administered albendazole provided by ILAC, totaling one-hundred-twenty (120) individuals treated with anti-parasitic medication.

Visual Acuity was established in each eye, with a 20-foot Snellen or illiterate-E eye chart. Once the patient’s vision was assessed with and without pinhole, either refractive lenses were used in a refractive lens tree model or retinoscopy was done to improve each eye. Spherical Lens powers ranged from -6.00D to +2.50D. All of the administered glasses improved the vision in one or both eyes. Patients were given single vision eyeglasses for refractive error, including presbyopia. Special thanks goes to the Dr. Jokoye Babalola Family Foundation (JOBAFF) for providing many single vision glasses for distance and reading.

We were greatly encouraged to see many people previously diagnosed in our past mission trips return for follow up on their conditions. Fifty-two (52) patients examined had new or existing glaucoma. A total of twenty (20) selective laser trabecuoplasties (SLT) were performed. SLT is a minimally invasive outpatient laser surgery that remodels the trabecular meshwork to augment the outflow of the aqueous humor and lower intraocular pressure. It is used when eye drop medications are not lowering the eye pressure enough or are more causing significant side effects. It can also be used as initial treatment in glaucoma. SLT has been in use for than 25 years in the United States and around the world to safely lower intraocular pressure. For more information about SLT, consult: Damji, K. F., Bovell, A. M., Hodge, W. G., Rock, W., Shah, K., Buhrmann, R., & Pan, Y. I. (2006). Selective laser trabecuoplasty versus argon laser trabecuoplasty: results from a 1-year randomised clinical trial. The British journal of ophthalmology, 90(12), 1490–1494. doi:10.1136/bjo.2006.098855

Effective management of glaucoma requires patient compliance and diligent education. When patients gain a greater understanding of their chronic disease better outcomes are achieved. Regular follow-up care is essential to preserving vision. Patients may develop an allergy to a medication and sometimes the medication loses its effectiveness at controlling intraocular pressure. These patients are on these medications for life and it is essential that the patient is monitored for these complications. Dr. Guzman takes most of these glaucoma patients into his practice for a very low cost of follow-up care. Many were also referred to Dr. Guzman for other ocular diseases, including cataract, pterygium, retinal disease. Dr. Guzman and the ILAC clinic will be handling the follow-up visits, post-op care, and further follow-up for these patients.

### Conclusion

The children, adults, and health-care personnel in the Dominican Republic all greatly benefited from the collaborative efforts of the mission. New and existing glaucoma patients were served, and the local team members will continue follow-up to manage their disease. This project is effective, continues to be sustainable and works in conjunction with other healthcare teams which visit ILAC. The cooperadores learned valuable health information that will reduce the incidence of eye infections and incidence of blindness. Using this methodology, ILAC can reach the poor and marginalized residents in the remote, underserved areas of the Dominican Republic better than any other organization.
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