



THE PULSE

A Taste of the World

By Briana Gapsis

On Friday, January 29th, 2010, the UCF COM hosted its First Annual Multicultural Celebration in recognition of the rich cultural background of the charter class, the inaugural faculty, and staff of the College of Medicine. A pot-luck style sharing of culture, members of the COM, preceptors, and research mentors participated by bringing dishes representative of a variety of cultures, by contributing pictures from their travels, and a great variety of music. "It was great to enjoy delicious food, learn, and have fun with not only my fellow students but the staff and faculty as well!" exclaimed charter class member Ashley Ferrara.

Dean German brought a delectable ratatouille, and opened the evening with a few words. Music ranging from Shakira to Flogging Molly set a nice ambiance while the food, from sancocho and jerky to Greek salad and pistachio cake, was plentiful and absolutely delicious. Of particular note was Romeo Joseph's baked chicken and Dr. and Mrs. Kibble's Bakewell English Tart, both of which won prizes for Best Meal and Best Dessert, respectively. Throughout the evening, a slideshow of photographs from the students' travels as well as international trivia questions played. Keith Connolly dominated the trivia competition while Steven Bright and Irina Prelipcean came in second and third, respectively.

This event was the brain-child of Uchechi Anumudu and Katherine Ferstadt, who organized the Multicultural Celebration with the help of Irina Prelipcean, Zsuzsanna Scionti, and Briana Gapsis. They are very grateful for the wonderful degree of participation from the COM family and the help of everyone who made contributions and aided in set-up and clean-up. They are also appreciative of the support of the Barbara Ying Multicultural Center, which donated the decorations for the evening as well as many of the prizes from the giveaways.

Next year, the Multicultural Celebration will be held at the new Lake Nona campus. With a larger student body and continued participation from the faculty and staff, the Second Annual Multicultural Celebration will be even better than the first!

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A Letter from the UCF COM M.D. Program Student Council

By Brittany Moscato & Ashley Curry

We have successfully completed our first semester of medical school, and the momentous occasion was celebrated with members of Lake Nona Country Club who graciously hosted a holiday dinner reception. After a satiating meal, we heard from Dr. Karl Altenburger, a graduate of the charter class of the USF School of Medicine. In hearing his story, we realized how closely our present mirrors his past. As always, we are amazed by the continuing support we receive from the Central Florida community.

Being a part of such an enthusiastic community has also provided us with many unique opportunities. Through our preceptorships we are getting real world experience, our preceptors readily putting their trust in us to help care for their patients. Some report that they have already had the opportunity to suture, and one student has even performed a lumbar puncture. Most importantly, we are getting extensive interaction with patients which is essential to becoming a good doctor.

Community members are also an asset to FIRE research projects. We spent our first few months of school searching for a mentor that would guide us to successfully complete a self-designed research project. Since finding this influential person, we have conceptualized a project and developed the hypothesis and aims we strive to accomplish. Projects range from working with college obesity to developing biotechnical devices. Written proposals and verbal defenses will be completed in late March.

We were fortunate to share our time in the anatomy lab with numerous community physicians. While they shared stories and mnemonics from their time in the lab, we discovered that although medical education is constantly changing, human dissection is an experience that unites past, present and future physicians. As our time in the anatomy lab came to a close we stepped back from the dissection table and reflected on the importance of the donations that we received. The human body is a wealth of information, but we recognize that it is more than just a learning tool. We plan to honor those who donated their bodies in a small ceremony on UCF's main campus in March.

After anatomy lab, some students find that getting outside is the best way to unwind before hitting the books in the evening. Intramural sports have been a raging success; currently the College of Medicine has men's and women's teams competing in various leagues. Whether students get involved through intramurals or just get together with friends, we challenge any medical school to produce a more active class (roughly 50% participate regularly in pick-up games of frisbee, soccer, volleyball or football).

Other extracurricular activities are also taking off. The emergency medicine, orthopedics and internal medicine interest groups have been established. MedPACT, the student group for humanitarian aid, is currently investigating opportunities for students to do medical work abroad. The Wilderness Medical Society organized a camping trip to the Ocala National Forest in December. The College of Medicine has an active social committee that enhances student life by planning a variety of events. Multicultural Day, which took place on January 29, showcased the diversity of the class. People donned traditional clothing, ethnic dishes filled the room with exotic aromas and flags from different countries flew overhead. We are looking forward to a talent show and skit night at the end of the spring semester, as well as an end of the year celebration for students and faculty.

AMSA and AMA have also been very active on campus. In December, we enjoyed a visit from AMSA's president Dr. Lauren Hughes. In January, five students involved in the AMA attended the regional conference in Atlanta. Following that trip, they invited Dr. James Dolan, the president of Florida Medical Association to speak at the College of Medicine and share FMA's stance on healthcare reform. This issue is in the forefront of the political arena, and our professors ensure that we stay informed as we contemplate how changes in the healthcare system will affect our futures as healthcare professionals.

It is hard to believe that in just a few months we will be completing our first year of school. We are looking forward to a new building and a new incoming class as 2010 promises to be the best year to date for the UCF College of Medicine.



AMSA: Reaching Out

By Will Kang

***UPDATES:** We've been busy. But there is still much more to do.

Ronald McDonald House: In November, we cooked dinner at the Ronald McDonald House, a "home-away-from-home" that offers comfort and care to families of children receiving medical treatment. "This was a great opportunity for us to better understand what families of patients go through when their loved ones are ill," said Tiffany Chen. We would like to thank Walmart and BJ's for their donations.

Health Care Center for the Homeless: Just in time for the holiday break, we took up a collection for the Health Care Center for the Homeless. We donated two 30-gallon bags of toiletries and hundreds of dollars in donations for their Mobile Medical Unit. The Mobile Medical Unit is a 37 foot medical clinic on wheels, which visits homeless shelters, domestic violence facilities, migrant camps and other service providers for the homeless throughout Orange, Osceola, and Seminole counties.

Whitecoat embroideries: Thanks to an incredibly generous donation from the Fann Emblem and Embroidery Company, we were able to embroider our white coats with our names. We raised over \$300, which will help fund our future community projects and AMSA education efforts. Thank you, again Fann Emblem. We look forward to working together next year.

Hosting National AMSA President Lauren Hughes:

Dr. Hughes visited Orlando and met with our chapter over dinner. After the meeting, she said the outstanding enthusiasm and enlightened questions blew her away - high praise from someone who visits hundreds of medical schools across the country. Already, the strong reputation of our school is spreading nationwide.

Undergraduate mentoring: We have in the works a mentoring session with UCF premedical clubs Pre-med AMSA, Pre-Professional Medical Society (PPMS), and International Medical Outreach (IMO). We are aiming to "complete, enrich, & inspire education of medical students," a vital priority in our Constitution.

Boggy Creek: In April, members of AMSA are going to volunteer three days at Camp Boggy Creek. The Eustis, FL camp enriches the lives of children who have chronic or life-threatening illnesses. We will stay at the camp for the weekend and spend time with children with asthma.

Osceola Council on Aging: VP of Community Engagement Tiffany Chen is leading a group of AMSA members to meet with the Osceola Council on Aging. The council is a remarkable advocate for the elderly, providing healthcare and counseling to those who need it. At this meeting we will begin to lay the foundations for a partnership between AMSA and the Council, fulfilling our commitment to long-lasting service with the community.

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AMSA - Continued

On a personal note, my medical school experience has been rewarding, but more challenging than I expected. I love what we are learning, how we are taught, and I enjoy working hard, but sometimes late at night on Research Parkway, I wonder if there is life beyond muscles and hormones.

We had some visitors in our anatomy lab - students from a local high school. I taught them my favorite mnemonics and all that I've learned about the human body (though often I realized in mid-sentence that I forgot the very tendons I told them were so cool). When the time was up, they exclaimed their disappointed at having to leave so soon. I was probably more disappointed than they were. I do not remember having so much fun. Those thirty minutes were a fresh reminder that there is much that goes on outside the walls at UCF.

That night, I decided to shift my focus away from reaching ever upwards during med school. It would be more fulfilling to reach out another way - to those that are coming behind us and to those that need a hand up.

This is why AMSA is so special to me. We are a group of students, here and across the nation, just trying to reach out. With macaroni and chicken we reached out to the children staying at the Ronald McDonald House. With our time and experience we reach out to the smart, motivated kids trying to be physicians themselves. With our rapidly developing skill as doctors we will reach out to the elderly patients in Osceola County.

So reader, whoever you are, look for us to reach out to you in the future. When we do, please reach back. There is still much to do.

It has been an exciting and productive time for the new UCF COM International Humanitarian Group. Committees have been formed as we work to establish our identity, our mission, our constitution, and begin to mold our collective enthusiasm into a permanent foundation for a strong, well-organized global outreach organization. Of the myriad tasks at hand, one of the most important has been to establish a name that we can call our own. After two intense sessions of discussion, the group has decided on the name: Medical Students Providing Across Continents, or medPACT.

We anticipate global trips for medical students will begin by the spring or summer of 2011. The initial planning and fundraising for these humanitarian service trips are ongoing as medPACT begins work throughout this year to establish a permanent endeavor in Central America. Once we complete that, there will be no limit for medPACT!

-Jason Crowley & the medPACT Team

**Delicious Greek Food...Opa!****By Briana Gapsis**

In Orlando, there may be no Cheers bar. However, the medical students now have a restaurant where everyone really will know their name. Late in December, medical student Ruth Strakosha's family opened a new Greek restaurant in Oviedo called Santorini. A lovely, column-framed mural of the Greek isle for which it is named and traditional Greek music playing in the background immediately transport diners to the Mediterranean. From the hummus appetizers to the moussaka and lamb kebob main courses to the baklava dessert, the food would satisfy the Olympic pantheon. Conveniently located off of Alafaya, Santorini is only about 15 minutes from the current College of Medicine, and is well worth a visit, or repeated visits. It is a favorite hangout for medical students!

Santorini
111 Geneva Dr.
Oviedo, FL 32765

Student Spotlight: Jonathan Gullett

It was a hot, humid summer afternoon circa 2006. My perspiration--in part due to the Central Florida weather, and in part due to my nervous anticipation of beginning the dreaded two semester series of organic chemistry--was in full effect. Our professor, the son of a Mississippi-based preacher, quickly eased my concerns with a full lecture of motivational quotes. Surprisingly, our second lecture was much the same, with little to no mention of the class itself. Before I knew it, the fast-paced, initially seemingly complex world of organic chemistry began to unfold before my eyes. Sadly, it was then that I met my first love.

I quickly engulfed myself in the course. I was passionate, and I excelled. As I completed the series the following semester, I began to tutor the subject. My energy and obvious love for organic chemistry were infectious, and my students admittedly found themselves enjoying it more than they may have otherwise.

Prior to the beginning of medical school, I had aspirations of writing an organic chemistry "help" book--"for students, by student(s)." While I certainly got off to a good start, hand-writing five chapters in five days at a local Seattle-based coffee supplier, my dream seemingly died as the start date for medical school was fast approaching. I reluctantly

placed the partially completed project on my dusty bookshelf, perhaps to never be seen again.

Dr. German, Dean of the University of Central Florida's brand-new College of Medicine, had other plans. Each of us, through our I-1 research module, are both encouraged and required to complete a "FIRE" (Focused Individualized Research Experience) project. While on paper, the goal of this module is to produce hypothesis-driven research of scholarly work for subsequent presentation or publication, the admitted main impetus for Dean German's infusion of the experience into our curriculum was to enable us to pursue an area of passion during medical school that we likely wouldn't have had time for otherwise.

Questions abound: could my FIRE project incorporate completion of my book, and if so, which College of Medicine professor would have sufficient experience in the subject and be willing to serve as my (required) research mentor? In a twist of fate, during orientation week, I came to find out that our first science-based module director (Dr. Phanstiel) is an organic chemist by trade. Upon acceptance of my project idea and approval of my research mentor, my dream was, in effect, kept alive...



Age: 29

Degrees earned: Baccalaureate degree in Exercise Physiology from the University of Florida, Baccalaureate degree in Molecular biology and Microbiology from the University of Central Florida, Master's degree in Exercise Physiology from the College of St. Scholastica

Hobbies: Tutoring organic chemistry (and physics), Playing (guitar and classical piano) and listening to music, Spending quality time with my family, dog and friends, Writing (e.g. previously published two manuscripts in peer-reviewed research journals; currently writing two books), Conquering abstract puzzles/challenges (e.g. creating Rubik's cube algorithms; memorizing digits of pi; other nerdy endeavors)

UCF COM Athletics: The Beginning of Dynasty?

By COM Sports Correspondent Bubba Kangaroo

Orlando, FL. The 1980s Forty-niners. UCLA Bruins basketball. The Ming family of China. Those legendary dynasties may soon take a backseat to the athletes of the UCF College of Medicine. The men's volleyball and basketball teams have powered through the UCF Intramural regular season schedule and are preparing for deep playoff runs.

The men's volleyball team, Spiking Arrhythmias, led by captain Jon Beilan, extended their winning streak to five last week with a resounding straight sets victory over the Pink Ladies. The Arrhythmias overwhelmed their pink-clad opponents with superior size, speed, testosterone, and fashionable socks. "This is why we came to this school!" exclaimed Beilan after the game. "To make big plays in big games in the University of Central Florida Intramural Sports Recreational Volleyball League!"

UCF Intramural Standings - Men's Volleyball Rec

	W	L	PCT.
Spiking Arrhythmia	5	1	0.833
Team 321	4	1	0.800
Comp A Ballers	4	1	0.800
Jangles	3	2	0.600
Air Power	3	2	0.600
Settas N Forgettass	2	3	0.400
Anonymous	2	3	0.400
Pink Ladies	2	4	0.400
Silly Nannies	1	4	0.200
Jimmy Fun	0	5	0.000

Spiking Arrhythmias Roster

Name	Ht
Jon Beilan	5'8"
Steve Bright	6'0"
Will Kang	5'8"
Bryant Lambe	6'5"
Luke Lin	5'7"
Lynn McGrath	5'9"
Virgil Secasanu	5'10"
Luke Stevens	5'11"
Rafik Zarifa	6'3"



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Athletics - Continued

The College of Medicine’s 3-on-3 Basketball Team, Shake n Bake, has raced to an undefeated start in the Men’s Competitive League. With a staggering average margin of victory of 17 points, Shake n Bake has displayed a dominance not seen since Joey Chestnut ate 68 hot dogs to win his third Nathan’s Hot Dog Eating Championship. Starting Power Forward Will Kang explains Shake n Bake’s unusual yet intimidating moniker: “Not only is it the name of a delicious fake fried chicken mix, it is slang for anti-fungal drug amphotericin, and military slang for combined use of high explosive and white phosphorus artillery rounds. I also think we exemplify the camaraderie and class displayed by Ricky Bobby and Cal in the epic cinema feature, Talledega Nights.” Shake n Bake, of course, was the battle cry of Ricky Bobby, portrayed artfully by Will Ferrell.

UCF Intramural Standings - Men's 3-on-3 Basketball

	W	L	PCT		
Shake n Bake	3	0	1.000	Shake n Bake	
BackcourtViolators	2	0	1.000	Roster	
Silent Bombers	1	1	0.500	Name	Ht
All Day	1	1	0.500	Steve Bright	6'0"
Team Jordan	1	1	0.500	Matt Dean	6'5"
Flyboys	1	1	0.500	Will Kang	5'8"
Lost Boys	1	1	0.500	Rafik Zarifa	6'3"
Live and Die by Your 3's	1	1	0.500		
Pippen Aint Easy	0	2	0.000		
ATW II	0	3	0.000		
DDP	0	2	0.000		

The Atrial Kicks

By COM Sports Correspondent Briana Gapsis

This fall the UCF COM women’s soccer team, the Atrial Kicks, kicked off the inaugural intramural season for the medical school. The team is green, only two of the players have ever played soccer before, but full of energy and enthusiasm. Despite the lack of experience, the team has coalesced well, and their performance improves with each game. “I’m really proud that the team has taken the time to get together to learn new skills, overcome challenges, and to have a great time,” says Captain Shawna Bellew.

Bellew leads the team on offense, making aggressive advances towards the goal, with the aid of fellow forward, the lightning-fast Ashley Curry. Whether on defense or midfield, Ruth Strakosha is five feet of fear-inspiring fury, and few opponents stand a chance getting by Tiffany “The Natural” Chen. Mabel Avilas plays a solid deep midfield while Jen Villavicencio does double duty as a defender and attacker, unafraid to bring out her familiarity with MMA. Briana Gapsis anchors the defensive line, and the newly recruited Brittany Moscato is already making great contributions to the team at forward. Last, but certainly not least, the formerly untried goalie, Uchechi Anumudu is a veritable wall in the goal, fearlessly facing down opposing offence and blocking penalty kicks. The 0-4-1 record does not bear out the nature of the games; each match, Atrial Kick has held its own against the competition, and possession time is usually equal.

The class has been incredibly supportive, and the team is grateful for our regular fans as well as everyone who plays with them at the weekly scrimmages. “I am also surprised and pleased by the amount of fans that come out and support us every week,” says Bellew. “Hopefully, weekly soccer games will become a year round COM tradition.” Already, her wish is well on its way; many of the students play pick-up soccer, ultimate, football, or volleyball following lab on Tuesdays. Already, the other IM teams are exhibiting the benefit of this practice, and, next year, the soccer team will be an even more formidable force.

Learning from “Gifted Hands”

By Ruth Strakosha & Katherine Ferstadt-Vargas

It is on rare occasions that we start our mornings at 5 a.m., willingly. However, that day the thought of three surgeries on the schedule kept us invigorated. Over our winter break and with the help of Dr. Jose Borrero, Assistant Professor of Surgery, we had the opportunity to shadow a very talented hand surgeon, Dr. Wadih S. Macksoud. For one of us, this was the first time being inside an operating room.

It was interesting to watch a surgeon in action, especially since we had only recently explored the wonders of the human body ourselves. After scrubbing in, which was a milestone experience in itself, we walked into the first procedure room to see a reconstructive surgery for a radial club hand on a toddler. One of the things that struck us most was the ease with which the surgeon approached his task. Several radiographs were taken at each step of the operation to ensure that the various corrective rods were placed appropriately, or that the correct bone fragment was drilled. Although the tasks sound very mechanical, the work was done with great finesse by Dr. Macksoud and his team.

Not only was the live anatomy fascinating, but we also had the chance to talk with the anesthesiologist regarding the various physiological processes that she was monitoring. Our talks gave us flashbacks to the prior weeks of HB-2.

Our second surgery was for a recurrent carpal tunnel, something we had also talked about but never seen. The procedure was so practiced that it took the surgeon just fifteen minutes to complete his work. From that room, we quickly transferred to our last case of the day, a trapezius removal for severe arthritis of the patient’s carpal-metacarpal joint. This was possibly the most fascinating of cases, as the surgeons were able to use the patient’s own tendon to fix her arthritic joint.

This shadowing opportunity gave us a chance to explore some interesting anatomy and to get a glimpse at the world of surgery. The passion with which these doctors performed their work was evident in their movements. The whole experience was inspiring, from seeing the patients that we hope to treat one day to contemplating the possible paths we can take after we complete our medical training at UCF COM.



By Bryant Lambe

Starting the seven hour drive to Atlanta, GA, with five people and luggage all packed into a CR-V, I didn't know what to expect of the trip. It was the first AMA Regional Conference that we had ever attended as a school, and the first time that all of us had spent so much time that close together. Though we all shared a classroom each day, the five of us together was a unique situation, as each one of us kept a separate circle outside of studying hours. Our only common interest on this trip was seeing what the AMA had to offer.

The AMA, or American Medical Association, is the largest physicians' advocacy group in the U.S. Although their work lobbying for major medical legislation in Washington gathers the majority of their media, they have perhaps an even more important role in the day to day healthcare policy and procedure followed by most hospitals around the country. The AMA Medical Student Section allows students to participate in the creation and molding of these policies, to bring ideas to fruition on a national scale. One of the most famous contributions from a medical student was a resolution that went all the way up to the

top, and then into national policy: the ban of smoking on airline flights.

While the five of us didn't succeed in anything nearly as big as setting a national policy, we all came out feeling accomplished on the trip. For those of us who had been to a meeting before, it was another chance to network, learn more from our colleagues, and better understand how the system runs. For those who hadn't gone to the first conference, it was proof that the AMA was a worthy endeavor, and motivation to become more active and involved in the student organization.

And finally, it was not without fun. From touring the Georgia Tech campus with our alumni-host Virgil, to eating fried foods at the famous "Varsity" restaurant, to dancing at "Opera", a restored 1920's opera house turned night club, everyone had a great time and we all got to know each other a little better. Throw in a first-hand view of a police sting operation and a few misadventures trying to find gas in South Georgia, and it was a trip that none of us will forget, and one that has us already booking flights for the next conference this summer!



Three UCF Med students, Jen Villavicencio, Bryant Lambe, and Virgil Secasanu, enjoy lunch at the historic "Varsity" restaurant in Atlanta while representing UCF at the AMA Regional Conference.

Social Committee: *Forthcoming Events*

The up and coming social committee has a lot planned:

High Ropes Course (Feb. 26): The high ropes course is 350 feet long, 45 feet high and has eight elements and a double zip. Translation: a ton of fun and rush of adrenaline. Plus, it will be a great way to get to know the HB-3 module staff and get outdoors for a bit.

COM Cadaver Ceremony (Mar. 12): This will allow us to pay our respects and thank those that have given us their bodies so that we could learn from them. Students

will recite poems or sing songs that will convey their opinions and memories of the anatomy lab experience.

Two events in the works are the first annual Short Coat Social (med school prom) and the first annual UCF COM Talent show-Skit Knight. Your social committee is hard at work planning these events, and we look forward to bringing you details as soon as we can get them.

- *Mitch Popovetsky, Chair of the Social Committee*

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions regarding this newsletter issue, please contact the Editor of The Pulse, Sarina Amin, at samin@knights.ucf.edu.

Thank you to Irina Prelipcean for the graphic design of our newsletter!

Internal Medicine Interest Group (IMIG)

By Virgil Secasanu

One of the exciting privileges in being the Charter Class is helping to lay out the foundations of our medical education and training. Medical Interest Groups are a common mechanism to influence our understanding of medicine, and we are pleased to announce that UCF has recently chartered the student-run Internal Medicine Interest Group (IMIG).

IMIG will work to (1) to serve as a resource for students to learn about the field of internal medicine; (2) to promote the field of internal medicine and it's fellowships among students; (3) to provide leadership and professional networking opportunities; and, (4) to recognize outstanding students and faculty mentors within the Internal Medicine field. We are also associated with the national American College of Physicians, the nation's single largest medical specialty society. Our Faculty Advisor is Dr. Maria Cannarozzi (UCF Associate Professor of Internal Medicine and Pediatrics and Fellow of the American College of Physicians).

Officer elections were held recently, and the following students were selected:

President - Virgil Secasanu
 Vice President - Aura Fuentes
 Treasurer - Irina Prelipcean
 Secretary - Briana Gapsis
 Chair of Seminar Series - Rafik Zarifa

We are planning several exciting events in the coming months, including: physician seminars on professional experiences within Internal Medicine (including representation from specific fellowships such as Cardiology, Endocrinology, Hematology, Oncology, and Infectious Diseases) and medical skills workshops (including tool use, cardiac auscultation, and health screenings). If you are a physician in the field of internal medicine and you would like to help influence our understanding of this great field, please contact one of the officers by way of the UCF College of Medicine Office of Student Affairs.