



Scoop

July 16, 2004

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS MEDICAL SCHOOL AT HOUSTON

Events to Know

July

26 **President's Forum, President James T. Willerson** speaking, 11:30 a.m., MSB 2.135.

IN MEMORIAM

Dorothy "Dottie" Burks, widow of the late **Thomas F. Burks II, Ph.D.**, who was executive vice president for research and academic affairs from 1991-2001, has died.

Kathleen Burks, their daughter, has requested that in lieu of flowers, donations be made to the Thomas F. Burks Scholarship for Academic Merit, by contacting Lisa Christison, Office of Development, University Center Tower, Suite 1261, or 713-500-3204.

UTMost Interest

President James T. Willerson, departing editor of the medical journal *Circulation*, recently was in the news (*Houston Chronicle*, 7/13/2004). The article touted Willerson's ability to raise the bar of excellence in regards to the journal and win acclaim for the publication.

CALLING ALL FITNESS BUFFS

Come on up to the 8th floor Medical School Fitness Center. The easiest way to get to the center is via stairwell 7D near the 7th floor yellow elevator.

Membership is just \$25 a month. Kick boxing, pilates, total body workout, and personal training are just some of the ways offered to keep you fit. Call 713-500-5044.



Getting fit in aerobics class.

TALENTED HIGH SCHOOL GRADS TAKE TWO-WEEK MED COURSE

Every summer, for the past 12 summers, they come from all over Houston to the Medical School. "Remember when you were a kid and somebody asked you what you wanted to be when you grow up – policeman, fireman, doctor?" asked **Lana Gaines**, director, special projects, Admissions. "Well no one in high school or college can really tell a student what it's like to be a doctor, so 12 years ago at the request of the University of Texas System, I started the UT High School Summer Program." Students accepted into the program must have at least a 3.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scale, college bound in the fall, and need to write a paragraph on why they want to go to medical school. This year, Gaines said, the two-week program has nine students who were pulled from 60 high school graduates, who are briefed with, for example, glimpses of open heart surgery, a cardiac catheter, lifeflight in action, even dissections of cow's eyes with ophthalmology residents. The students have both above average high school grades and SAT scores.



(L. to R.), **Kayleigh Eaves**, a North Shore High School graduate going to St. Thomas in the fall and **Raakhee Patel**, a Second Baptist High School graduate going to UT-Austin in the fall.

school grades and SAT scores.

Gaines will track the students as they matriculate through college, advising and encouraging them in their academic pursuits. "I'd say, on average, two out of the nine students each year will eventually go on to get their medical degree."

"We counsel them about how to succeed in college. Take the subjects you have an interest in, we tell them and put the pedal to the academic medal that first semester. That first semester is crucial. Study, study, study. It's make or break time. You'll be tempted to go out with your friends ten o'clock at night. Wrong. If you want to ease up, do it when you already have a 3.8 grade average, say in your junior year."

- C. O'Brien

DIVERSE JAMP STUDENT PROGRAM IN ITS SECOND YEAR

The Medical School recently provided its second JAMP (Joint Admission Medical Program) summer session, running six weeks, from May 24 through July 2. The JAMP program was created by Senate Bill 940 of the 77th Texas Legislature.

"This program is for economically disadvantaged students," said **Dr. Wallace Gleason**, assistant dean for admissions and student affairs. "We had nine students this summer, including those of Mexican-American and Vietnamese descent. There were six females and three males, all roughly 19 years of age." Eight medical schools participated in JAMP this summer. There were 128 slots available for undergraduate students last year and 80 participants were chosen. The 9 students on campus this year came from UT Austin, UT Pan American, Midwestern State University - Wichita Falls, and Texas A&M.

The curriculum for the second summer session was a biochemistry course taught by **Drs. Bill Seifert**, and **Alan Levine**, Department of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology. (Cont'd back p.)



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HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER AT HOUSTON
MEDICAL SCHOOL

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National Youth Leadership Forum On Campus

FUTURE WOULD-BE DOCTORS TAKE NOTES

On July 8, in Room 2.006, 110 high school students from several states were given a glimpse of a day in the life of a medical student by first- and second- year students with the words, "It's a lot like college, but more intense. It's really fun. We all still have lives. There's actually a lot of studying. But it's incredibly fun because you're learning what you like. We have a block schedule the first four weeks; the last two weeks we're studying for exams; then it's over; there's a block party; and, you're happy again."



A medical student demonstrates a brain function.

The Medical School experience is part of an effort started by the National Youth Leadership Forum (NYLF), founded in 1992, which has helped over 50,000 students nationwide hone in on good career choices.

Said one medical student, "I don't go to class at all; you can watch your instructors on streaming video. They're aired the same day as class at 4 p.m. It's good for night owls like myself; I have time to do things during the day, like follow the doctors around in the clinics. It's also nice for people who want to go to class but miss something, or if you're sick, or your kids are sick. Right now, it's just all basic science."

And another medical student told the audience, "The important thing is that you come with an open mind. Take everything in stride. Try it all out, like third-year rotation, and then decide what you want to do."

Responding to questions, one medical student said, "You don't have to be a math or science major in college; if you like those subjects, fine. But other majors, like mine, for example, was eastern religious studies, are acceptable. Definitely take the prerequisites, the general chemistry, biology, and calculus. Actually the Medical School likes to see liberal arts majors apply because they represent people who can communicate, write, and think in a

different way. Take something you're interested in."

Said **Dean Stanley Schultz** to the group, "Fifty years ago, medicine lacked the power it has today. We had cures for some infectious diseases. For almost anything else, you held hands, and you wept inside. In the course of 50 years, medicine has gone through an explosive growth. Diseases that were fatal not that long ago, are now curable. Nothing can be more exciting than to take individuals who are seriously ill and return them to normal lives. Those of you who choose medicine as a career are in for an extremely exciting period. I envy you."

The high schoolers later broke into groups to tour the Medical School and Neurology, Sound, and Gross Anatomy labs. For more information about the NYLF, visit <<http://www.nylf.org>>.

- C. O'Brien



Leadership students at orientation.



A medical student explains in neurological detail.

JAMP PROGRAM, CONTINUED

In addition there was an MCAT course taught by Kaplan, a test preparatory firm. A series of presentations on medical experiences also were given.

JAMP students are required to maintain a minimum GPA of 3.25 for the duration of their college experience, and in addition, need to complete three summer internships at a minimum of two different medical schools, to broaden their experience of a medical school. A student accepted to JAMP receives admission to a Texas medical school, if all program requirements are met.

JAMP students receive financial assistance, both during their college years and in medical school. JAMP is supported by continued appropriations from the Texas Legislature.

For more information about the JAMP program, visit <<http://www.utsystem.edu/jamp>>.

- C. O'Brien

WHAT IS SYNESTHESIA?

Do you see letters in color? Is music colored for you? Do you taste things you touch, or hear different odors?

You may have synesthesia, a rare phenomenon in which stimuli to one sense are experienced by other senses.

Common forms are letter-color synesthesia, in which people see letters of the alphabet in different colors, and sound-color synesthesia, in which people hear sounds in different colors.

If you believe you may be synesthetic and are interested in participating in more information. Or visit <<http://www.utsystem.edu/eagleman/syn.html>>.

DEANS NAMED AT UT DENTAL BRANCH & UT SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH



Catherine Flaitz, D.D.S.

Catherine Flaitz, D.D.S., has been named dean of The University of Texas Dental Branch at Houston after serving as interim dean of the school since September 2002 (See related *Scoop* story, 1/17/2003).

"I am honored to have been chosen as the dean of the Dental Branch, especially as we prepare to celebrate our centennial in 2005," said Flaitz. "The timing is perfect for the Dental Branch to partner with the components of the Texas Medical Center to explore the ways that molecular medicine can improve oral health."



Guy Parcel, Ph.D.

Executive Dean Guy S. Parcel, Ph.D., John P. McGovern Professor in Health Promotion at The University of Texas School of Public Health at Houston, has been appointed to a three-year term as dean of the school by **James T. Willerson, M.D.**, president of The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, effective January 2005.

Parcel will become only the third dean in the 35-year history of what is the oldest school of public health in Texas.

Parcel's research includes: children's diet, exercise, smoking prevention and asthma self-management, as well as school-based STD/HIV infection intervention.

(Sources: *News on the Go* 7/13/04, *Public Affairs Press Release*, 6/30/04).