

# COM OUTLOOK

Winter 2016  
Volume 16, Number 3



Alumni Duo Successfully Blends Marriage and Medicine

# Dean's Message

ELAINE M. WALLACE, D.O., M.S., M.S., M.S.



THESE ARE EXCITING TIMES in medicine. There are a variety of new things that physicians must be knowledgeable about, such as designer drugs, robotic surgery, and diagnostic radiology. There are also newly explored fields, such as genomics and the human brain project, that will redefine the ways physicians promote health and treat diseases.

In order to remain at the forefront of medical progress, the college has been actively engaged in a yearlong project of curriculum revision. We have been exploring what medical schools are teaching across the United States, what new materials are necessary for our students to learn, what are the most effective modalities of teaching, and how NSU-COM can present the optimal curriculum that allows our students to emerge as stellar medical residents and physicians. So far, we are impressed by how well we meet the national standards, and we are stimulated by the areas that afford us opportunity for growth.

Additionally, we have not lost sight of our mission—to help patients achieve wellness. To this end, the COM is recommitting to the wellness of its students and faculty and staff members. Wellness projects are introducing us all to opportunities, such as humor as a healing art, guided meditation, yoga breathing, food as medicine, and the importance of exercise and sleep. It is only when we ourselves are happy and well that we can assist our patients in this journey.

Research is blossoming as our faculty members find new ways of understanding health literacy, post-traumatic stress disorder, Gulf War syndrome, patient compliance to medications, the genomic basis of disease, and HIV. Education is flourishing as the COM has recently added two new master's degree programs in medical education and nutrition, as well as a certificate program in social medicine. Service continues to be a core value of the COM as faculty members and students are engaged in more community service projects than any other college at the university.

The COM is undergoing a renaissance in health. Keep an eye on us. The best is yet to come.

## COM OUTLOOK

*Volume 16, Number 3*

*COM Outlook* is produced by  
Nova Southeastern University  
College of Osteopathic Medicine  
3200 South University Drive  
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33328-2018

<http://osteopathic.nova.edu>

Connect with us on Facebook  
[www.facebook.com/novaosteopathic/](http://www.facebook.com/novaosteopathic/)

**NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY**  
George L. Hanbury II, Ph.D.  
*President and Chief Executive Officer*

**HEALTH PROFESSIONS DIVISION**  
Frederick Lippman, R.Ph., Ed.D.  
*HPD Chancellor*

**COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE**  
Elaine M. Wallace, D.O., M.S., M.S., M.S.  
*Dean*

**EXECUTIVE EDITOR**  
Scott Colton, B.A., APR  
*COM/HPD Director of Medical  
Communications and Public Relations*  
(954) 262-5147  
[scottc@nova.edu](mailto:scottc@nova.edu)

**ASSOCIATE EDITOR**  
Debra R. Gibbs, B.A.  
*Medical Communications Coordinator*  
(954) 262-1545  
[dgibbs1@nova.edu](mailto:dgibbs1@nova.edu)

**ART DIRECTOR**  
Randall McCafferty  
*Senior Graphic Designer  
Office of Publications*

**OFFICE OF PUBLICATIONS**  
Ron Ryan, *Director*  
Sheryl Koral, *University Editor*  
Carol Reynolds-Srot, *Assoc. Editor/Copywriter*  
Roberta Harris, *Graphic Production Manager*



# IN THIS ISSUE

Winter 2016



## FEATURES

- 3 Mitigating Stress: Student Wellness Initiative
- 6 Student, Faculty Member Respond to Mid-Flight Emergency
- 8 Humble Beginnings Build Unforgettable Terry Legacy
- 10 Nepal Vacation Plans Turn to Earthquake Relief
- 13 Service to Others Enhances Educational Experience
- 18 Mentoring Osteopathic Medical Students
- 37 D.O. Duo Blends Marriage and Medicine



## COLLEGE of OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE NEWS

- 22 Carisa Champion-Lippmann: AOA Board of Trustees
- 22 White Coat Ceremony: Class of 2019
- 23 Medical Care in Panama
- 23 NSU-COM Students Garner AOF Honors
- 28 Elaine Wallace Receives Morton Terry Founders' Award
- 28 Angela Garcia Receives Prestigious Pharmacy Awards
- 32 Project SEAMIST: \$4.29 Million NIH Grant
- 33 Nancy Klimas Receives Significant Award
- 36 FSACOF Convention in Orlando



## DEPARTMENTS

- |                                 |                                      |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| i Dean's Message                | 29 Research/Scholarly COMMUNICATIONS |
| 2 Chancellor's COMMUNIQUE       | 34 Alumni Corner                     |
| 22 Student COMMUNICATIONS       | 42 NSU-COMMUNICATIONS                |
| 26 Faculty/Staff COMMUNICATIONS | 44 NSU News of Note                  |

On the cover: Alumni Tiffany Sizemore-Ruiz, D.O. (2009) and Camilo Ruiz, D.O., F.A.C.O.I. (2007), have been married since 2011. They own and operate a general internal medicine practice in Fort Lauderdale called Choice Physicians of South Florida.

### NOTICE OF ACCREDITATION

Nova Southeastern University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award associate's, baccalaureate, master's, educational specialist, doctorate, and professional degrees. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of Nova Southeastern University.

### NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Nova Southeastern University admits students of any race, color, sex, age, nondisqualifying disability, religion or creed, sexual orientation, or national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school, and does not discriminate in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

12-011-15RWM



# Chancellor's COMmunique

FREDERICK LIPPMAN, R.Ph., Ed.D.



*“The wonderment of walking around our hallways and seeing the rainbow of white-coat patches and scrubs unmistakably indicates the diversity of our programs.”*

NOW THAT ALL THE NEW STUDENTS in our various Health Professions Division (HPD) programs have had a chance to settle into their academic routines, it gives me the opportunity to reflect on when we first merged with Nova University in 1994 and came to the Fort Lauderdale/Davie Campus with about 1,900 full-time students. Today, that number has grown to approximately 9,500 full-time students in our multifaceted HPD programs.

The wonderment of walking around our hallways and seeing the rainbow of white-coat patches and scrubs unmistakably indicates the diversity of our programs. It's a scenario that will only continue to increase with the recent approval of the NSU Board of Trustees to establish the College of Allopathic Medicine, which will exist alongside our esteemed College of Osteopathic Medicine. As a result, the HPD will consist of eight colleges in the not-too-distant future.

Because NSU has always endeavored to be at the forefront of educational innovation, the university took the bold step earlier this year to realign many of its colleges and programs. As part of this realignment, a number of the university's undergraduate programs were relocated to other NSU colleges, including the HPD's College of Health Care Sciences. This was a wise move in my opinion, because I believe it will serve as a catalyst to increase the number of dual-admission opportunities for our students.

During the past several months, five academic degree programs that were formerly housed at other NSU colleges were repositioned into the College of Health Care Sciences. These include the B.S. in Speech-Language and Communication Disorders, the M.S. in Speech-Language Pathology, the SLP.D. in Speech-Language Pathology, the B.S. in Athletic Training, and the B.S. in Exercise and Sport Science.

This realignment also brings tremendous efficiency to presenting education to our undergraduate students because it creates an atmosphere of mentorship and collegiality between the undergraduate, graduate, and first-professional students. As a result, we're helping to set the educational paradigm for the rest of the nation.



## Wellness Initiative Alleviates Anxiety, Maximizes Health for Medical Students

Scott Colton, B.A., APR  
COM/HPD Director of Medical  
Communications and Public Relations

**W**hen Elaine M. Wallace, D.O., M.S., M.S., M.S., became dean of the College of Osteopathic Medicine in February 2015, one of her initial aims was to address a problem that has perpetually plagued medical students—the frequently destructive repercussions that result from dealing with unrelenting stress.

During her inaugural meeting with the college's Administrative Council in February, Wallace shared the results of a survey entitled "Comprehensive Statewide Multidimensional Evaluation of Medical Student Wellness in the State of Florida" that included student participation from the nine existing Florida medical schools. Although only 22.1 percent of the medical student population completed all or part of the survey, the results were compelling in that they told a story of substance abuse, marked increases in stress and suicidal ideation, and an overall decline in wellness after matriculation. Alarming, more than 46 percent of the respondents had recently questioned their decisions to enter the medical profession.

*(Continued on next page)*



## Wellness Initiative Alleviates Anxiety, Maximizes Health for Medical Students (*cont.*)

Over the ensuing weeks, Wallace asked the Administrative Council members to investigate ways to enhance student wellness, which culminated in the formation of the Student Wellness Committee. Composed primarily of faculty members, the committee was tasked with the objective of crafting a definitive plan that would address important issues associated with the subject.

Following its first meeting in April, the committee discussed the wellness topics that would come to define the inaugural event—the Student Wellness Orientation Cruise. “In researching how other medical schools were addressing this problem, I learned of one school that hosted a half-day wellness retreat for its students,” said Barbara Arcos, D.O., associate professor and chair of the Department of Family Medicine, who chairs the Student Wellness Committee. “I loved the off-campus retreat concept and took the idea to Dr. Wallace. After gaining her approval and discussing various options, we chose a cruise on the Intracoastal Waterway for the retreat venue.”

The committee chose 10 concise areas to serve as the basis for the wellness curriculum. The following were discussed on the cruise:

- nutrition
- physical activity/exercise
- substance/alcohol use and addiction
- recognizing trouble (early intervention and available resources and services)
- relaxation
- academic aids (study habits, test-taking tips, and time-management strategies)
- personal health
- stress reduction
- social outlets (student organizations and student-led activities)
- emotional wellness (relationship issues, depression, and quality time)

After months of planning, NSU-COM coordinated its inaugural Sunset Student Wellness Orientation Cruise aboard

the yacht *Catalina* on August 5. The excursion allowed the entering first-year classmates to enjoy a three-hour cruise along Fort Lauderdale’s scenic Intracoastal Waterway, get acquainted with their fellow students and faculty members, and discuss student wellness topics to help them thrive during their medical school experience and beyond.

“The 10 stations set up on the cruise corresponded to our 10 curriculum topics, with each station staffed by two faculty members,” Arcos explained. “Students were given a mock passport upon boarding the ship and were asked to have it stamped at each station, with the intent that every student would briefly visit every station during the first half of the cruise. Because of their interest, many students returned to specific stations for in-depth conversations with the faculty members during the second half of the cruise.”

Earlier that day, to prepare them for the evening cruise topics, the students were given a survey that assessed their current levels of health and wellness. The survey included 30 multiple-choice questions—3 questions for each of the 10 topics—which encouraged the students to think about their overall health.

Two days later, as part of the class of 2019’s Orientation Week activities, Arcos and Jill Wallace-Ross, D.O., assistant professor of family medicine, gave a presentation that explored each of the survey questions in more depth and provided additional details as to why the topic of each question was important to individual health and wellness—particularly in the context of medical school.

“Student wellness has been a passion for me throughout my tenure at NSU,” Arcos stated. “By anyone’s standard, medical school is a rigorous endeavor that continues well beyond medical school. With proper preparation and counseling, every student can increase his or her likelihood of successfully meeting the inevitable challenges that are inherent in a medical career. I believe that adopting wellness coping strategies early in the medical career provides the best opportunity for maintaining health throughout a physician’s lifetime.”

## Inaugural Event Student Wellness Orientation Cruise

August 5, 2015



*Elaine Wallace (right) greets the students as they board the Student Wellness Cruise.*



*Barbara Arcos discusses a wellness topic with an interested student.*



*Janet Hamstra, Ed.D., M.S., director of preclinical education (right), enjoys a moment of levity with several first-year students.*

Based on the exceedingly positive feedback Arcos and other faculty members received following the inaugural wellness activities, the foreseeable goal is to incorporate wellness activities into periodic Academic Society meetings, which will allow students and faculty members to engage in detailed discussions. “We will begin meeting more regularly with the students in 2016 within their societies to discuss wellness,” Arcos said. “Our hope is to provide additional opportunities to maintain student wellness outside of the society meetings as well.”

The establishment of a targeted student wellness program is simply a continuation of the college’s overarching goal to promote and provide a holistic approach to health and wellness for all who work and study at the College of Osteopathic Medicine. “The osteopathic profession is based on the

paradigm of mind, body, and spirit in an atmosphere of wellness. Despite this, our medical school education spends years of time teaching us to take care of others, but little time teaching us ways to take care of ourselves,” said Wallace. “The Student Wellness Committee was designed to assist student doctors in making healthy personal choices throughout their medical careers in order to decrease their likelihood of conditions such as isolation, anxiety, substance usage, obesity, and depression.

“The college’s faculty and staff wellness committees are committed to doing the same,” she added. “As a result, educational and interactive programs are presented throughout the year to engage anyone associated with the COM in wellness. Our goal is clear—to make the COM, and all associated with it, the healthiest place on campus.”



COMPASSIONATE CARE

# Student, Faculty Member Respond to Mid-Flight Emergency

By Scott Colton, B.A., APR  
COM/HPD *Director of Medical Communications and Public Relations*

ON MAY 26, second-year student Joshua Gildin and his wife, Chani, were enjoying what appeared to be a seemingly routine flight on JetBlue Airways when, about 40 minutes prior to landing, the flight crew scurried down the aisle to address the passengers on the PA system located at the front of the plane.

Due to his NSU-COM education, combined with the basic emergency medical technician (EMT) certification training he earned in New Jersey, Gildin intuitively realized that a possible medical emergency loomed. “I looked at Chani, who is also an emergency medical technician, and she suggested I go to the front of the plane and offer my services if they were required,” he explained. “As I got up from my seat, the flight crew asked for any medical personnel to present themselves at the front of the plane for a medical emergency.”

Gildin and his wife were quickly directed to a front seat containing a middle-aged woman in clear distress. As he began assessing the patient, who was experiencing severe abdominal pain and felt faint, he discovered that she was lethargic, cool, sweating profusely, and had a thready pulse. “I immediately asked for the flight crew to retrieve the onboard oxygen tank, as well as the first-aid bag,” said Gildin, who was about to receive some welcomed assistance from another passenger, who turned out to be NSU-COM clinical professor of preventive medicine, Charles H. Hennekens, M.D., Dr.P.H., M.P.H.

“Approximately two minutes into my patient assessment, my wife told me there was a doctor who was offering to help,” he said. “I responded jokingly by saying, ‘If it is a marine

biologist, we don’t need the help.’ But I quickly followed that by asking her to find out what kind of doctor he was.”

Fortunately, it turned out to be Hennekens (a renowned internist, researcher, and the first Eugene Braunwald Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School), who was the first to discover that aspirin prevents a first heart attack; reduces mortality when given during a heart attack; and benefits a wide range of survivors of occlusive vascular disease events in the heart, brain, and peripheral arteries.

Under Hennekens’ supervision, Gildin continued to monitor the woman’s vital signs. “We then spoke with each other about the patient’s differential diagnosis,” said Gildin, who admitted to being “immediately smitten with Hennekens’ bedside, or should I say, plane-side manner.”

Because of Gildin’s vast experience as a practicing EMT, he reacted with both skill and alacrity under Hennekens’ watchful gaze. “I placed the patient in a modified shock position by reclining her seat as far back as possible and applied an oxygen mask,” Gildin explained. “After obtaining a medical, family, and social history, I performed an abdominal, cardiac, and lung assessment. The woman had severe abdominal pain, which abated somewhat following my history and physical. After a few well-timed jokes, I could see the color returning to her face.”

For the remaining 30 minutes of the flight, the patient remained reclined in the aisle seat, with Gildin in the middle seat and Hennekens occupying the window seat. “Between



**“There is no feeling like helping an individual in a time of need, he explained. “It is the feeling I live for as an EMT, and it is the reason I decided to pursue a career in medicine.”**

—Joshua Gildin

checkups on the patient, we held a long conversation regarding her continued improvement, her medical history, and the important next steps that needed to be taken after the plane landed,” he revealed. “Once we landed, paramedics boarded the flight, and I provided them with a detailed verbal report. I then gave the patient a squeeze on the shoulder, looked her in the eyes, reassured her that she was in good hands, and returned to my seat.”

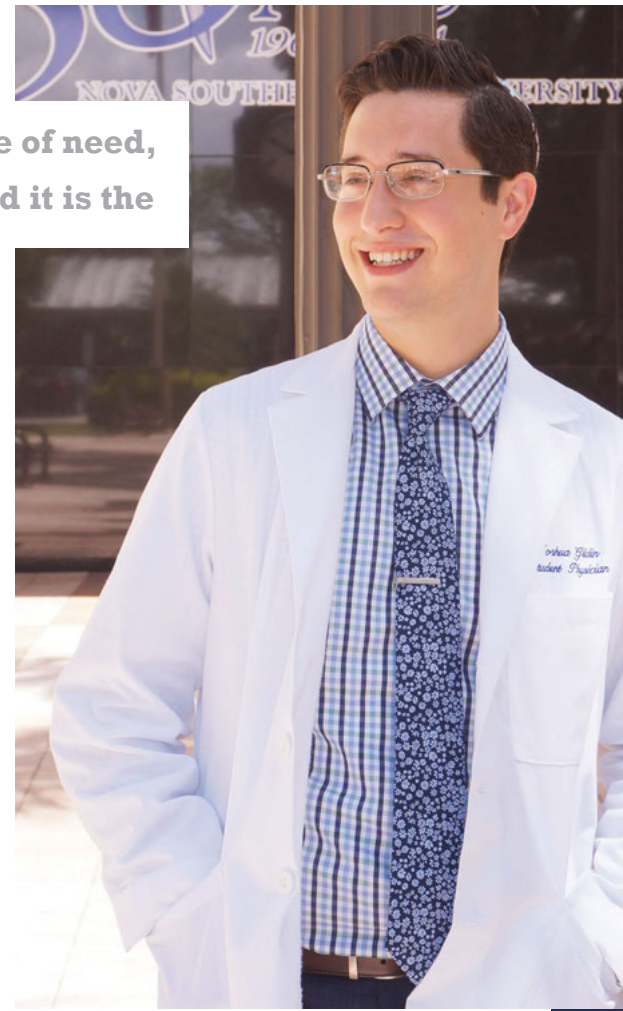
“Gildin exhibited the extraordinary competence and compassion for which every physician should strive,” said Hennekens, who was effusive in his praise of Gildin’s actions. “He was the epitome of grace under pressure and provided expert care and comfort to the patient during the harrowing interval between the onset of her symptoms and the landing of the plane.”

Reflecting on the serene yet swift way he reacted to the mid-flight emergency, Gildin credited both his NSU-COM education and his prior experience as an EMT for his unruffled response. “There is no feeling like helping an

individual in a time of need,” he explained. “It is the feeling I live for as an EMT, and it is the reason I decided to pursue a career in medicine. Sometimes, in the fog of simulated-patient encounters and many arduous exams in the basic sciences, a medical student’s motivation can easily be diminished or entirely lost. Being in a situation where I had the opportunity to assist an individual in a medical emergency renewed my spirits.

“From a professional standpoint, it reminded me of the importance of the career I have committed my life toward,” he added. “It was shocking to me that there were only 2 people on a flight with more than 100 passengers who were qualified to provide emergency medicine for an individual in need. Part of my motivation toward becoming a physician is to drastically change that statistic. I look forward to a career where I will be able to increase public awareness and involvement in emergency medical situations.”

In tandem with his EMT experience, Gildin acknowledged the profound



impact his ongoing NSU-COM training had in regard to how he dealt with the stricken passenger from both a medical and interpersonal standpoint. “NSU-COM emphasizes the importance of being both physically and emotionally present for a patient,” he stressed. “Keeping the atmosphere light with appropriate, well-timed jokes helped to keep my patient’s mind at ease. NSU-COM has instilled in me that treating a whole patient is more than just treating the sum of his or her ailments.”

# **Morton and Geraldine Terry:**

## **Humble Beginnings Build Unforgettable Legacy**

By Aaron Terry, J.D., M.B.A., LL.M.

MANY PEOPLE walk in and out of the Terry Building every day, but just who exactly was Morton Terry?

It was a question my four-year-old daughter (and Mort's first great-grandchild) Madelyn (Maddie) Terry asked me recently. I had the honor to take her to the Fort Lauderdale/Davie Campus on a recent visit to Florida and share her great-grandfather's story.

### **It's a pretty extraordinary tale.**

Interestingly, the Terry Building could have had a different name. Mort's father was born in Bialystok, Poland, and came to the United States through Ellis Island. Our family name at that time was Tartasky. On Ellis Island, the naturalization officer did not think the name was American enough, so he scratched out Mort's father's last name and changed it to Terry. So I suppose the Terry Building could have ended up as the Tartasky Building instead.

Mort Terry, who came from very humble beginnings, grew up in the Great Depression and had very little as a child. Eventually, he worked his way through Brooklyn College and was accepted into the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (PCOM).

Back then, there were no student loans, so Mort attended classes during the day and worked as a waiter at night to afford school. Many times, the food he was able to get from the restaurant kitchen was his only meal of the day.

When we toured the Health Professions Division campus shortly after it opened in the 1990s, Mort was astounded by the cafeteria, which contained things like sushi and all sorts of fresh foods. He told us one of his favorite stories about how as an intern, one of the few things he felt safe eating in the cafeteria was raisin toast—but quickly changed his opinion after one of the raisins got up and walked away.

His first car was a 1929 Chevy with a canvas roof that leaked when it rained. He paid approximately \$50 for it, but talked the owner down a few dollars because it had a broken window. It had so little horsepower that one time he could not get it up the steep incline of a mountain. Consequently, he drove it up in reverse because that was the strongest gear.

He met a fellow PCOM graduate and nursing supervisor, Geraldine Rafferty, and fell for her. They were married in 1948 and spent their honeymoon in South Florida.

They never went back north. While they went on to accomplish many great things, life was not always easy. Times were tough in the beginning as Mort established his medical practice. Money was tight, and in the early years, my grandparents could often afford only one meal for dinner, so they split it. Things improved for Mort and Gerry during the early 1950s, but they were both appalled by one thing in particular—segregation. At that time, most medical practices and hospitals refused to treat patients of color, or maintained separate waiting rooms and treatment areas for anyone who did not look “white enough,” as my grandpa said.

In 1953, Mort and Gerry set out to do their part to change things. They opened Magnolia Hospital in Opa-locka, which was one of the first and only hospitals in the area that would treat white and black patients equally. It was a resounding success.



Once again, it wasn't easy. They received many threats for what they did, but they didn't back down. Mort and Gerry treated everyone equally. One of my favorite stories recalls what happened when my grandparents invited an African American physician and his children to swim in their pool. Someone called the authorities, saying there were "black people" swimming in a pool in the neighborhood. When the police showed up, Mort angrily sent them away and said, "I can have anyone I want swimming in my pool."

Even though he went through a lot in the pursuit of equality for all people, Mort was very humble about it. When questioned about why he did what he did, he would always give a simple reply: "The people needed care."

One of his proudest moments was when we were able to play golf on a course he hadn't been able to play on as a young person because he was a Jew. Another time, I recall the two of us looking at the photos in one of the new NSU-COM yearbooks. He told me, "Aaron, when I was in medical school, my class was all white and had one female student. Look at it now. It was always my dream to be a physician, and look at the opportunities all of these young people have now."

I will always be proud of him for those words.

Mort went on to have a very successful career in internal medicine from 1949 to 1975 before retiring from practice to pursue his dream of starting a medical school. Many people said it was impossible. But SECOM, as Southeastern College of Osteopathic Medicine was called back then, started its first class in 1981—and the rest is history.

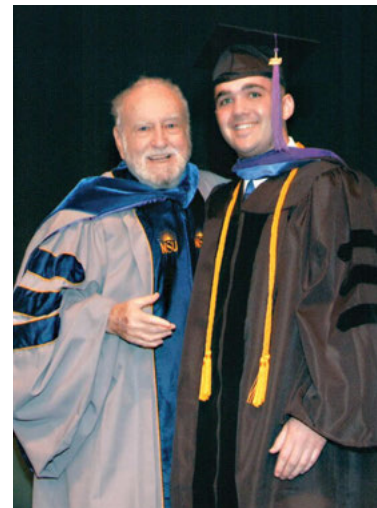
When I saw my daughter laying her hand on my grandpa's memorial, I thought of the quote from Eleanor Roosevelt I had placed in the annual HPD Bal Fantastique ad journal in 2004 to honor him after his passing: "The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."

Mort and Gerry Terry didn't always have it easy, but they always believed in the beauty of their dreams. Those dreams and values—about respecting all people, fighting bigotry in all its forms, pursuing education as a means to success, and never, ever giving up—have all passed down to their 4 children, 10 grandchildren, and 2 great-grandchildren (and counting).

I am proud of them and honored that I am now able to pass these values along to future generations.



*Maddie Terry evokes a heartfelt image at her great-grandfather's plaque in the Terry Memorial Garden.*



*Morton Terry celebrates with Aaron during his grandson's graduation from NSU's Shepard Broad College of Law.*

(Note: Aaron Terry is the grandson of Morton Terry, D.O., M.Sc., FACOI, the founder of NSU's Health Professions Division, who passed away on January 11, 2004, at the age of 82. Terry left behind an extraordinary legacy that continues to live on through the seven colleges and myriad programs that comprise the Health Professions Division.)



# Nepal Vacation Plans Turn to Earthquake Relief

By Scott Colton, B.A., APR  
*COM/HPD Director of Medical Communications and Public Relations*

When Master of Public Health student Mayur Sharma Banjara made plans to visit his family in Nepal during the spring of 2015, what should have been a joyous occasion turned into a humanitarian outreach effort of the highest order after a mammoth 7.8-magnitude earthquake devastated regions of the country, including Banjara's hometown, on April 25.

Banjara, who was scheduled to visit his family and participate in a four-week Community Health Project elective in Nepal as part of his M.P.H. coursework, had to radically alter his plans as news of the earthquake and its destructive aftershocks reached him. Banjara was relieved to hear that

his family had survived the earthquake's devastation, but distressed to learn that more than 8,880 people had been killed and that upwards of 22,000 had been injured.

Armed with \$2,300 in donations he had collected from various friends and International Health Initiatives, Banjara arrived in Nepal on May 27, ready to help, but unsure of the overall scope of suffering he would encounter as he made his way through the scarred districts of his home country. Because a month had passed since the initial earthquake, Banjara was keenly aware of the many sobering facts that extended far beyond the death and injury toll.



Mayur Sharma Banjara (pink shirt) helps to distribute the corrugated metal sheets he purchased to assist in the relief effort.





In terms of sheer statistics, more than 2 million citizens had been displaced, with an estimated 600,000 million homes destroyed and another 300,000 severely damaged.

Since many of the dwellings had either been demolished or devastated beyond the point of being inhabitable, people were living out in the open, without any protection from the elements, or in makeshift tents. In fact, two of the three homes Banjara's family lived in were destroyed as well, forcing him to live in a tent during his stay in Nepal.

After checking on his family members, which included his four-year-old daughter, and ensuring their safety, Banjara dove into action by traveling to different earthquake-relief organizations and collecting food, medicine, and tents that could be distributed to many of the neediest victims, which included senior citizens, children, and pregnant women.

In his role as an M.P.H. student, he then contacted the Nepal Ministry of Home and Ministry of Health and Population to see how he could best assist with the relief efforts from a governmental perspective.

"I worked as a volunteer for the ministry in the collection and compilation of earthquake related-data from the Kavre district of Nepal regarding the relief distribution of medicine, food, water, clothes, tents, and other emergency support," said Banjara, who felt humbled to be able to assist his earthquake-ravaged nation.

"I am a public health professional with a clinical background that includes working in a Nepal hospital, so I felt compelled to help" he explained. "As you can imagine, it made me extremely sad when I thought about my family, my nation, and the many needy people who required emergency-response

*(Continued on next page)*





**“I was able to make a positive difference in the lives of many needy people, and as a public health professional, that is always going to be my goal.”**

**—Mayur Sharma Banjara**



▲ Banjara stands in the middle of the devastation caused by the Nepal earthquake.

services like water, food, clothes, health care, dealing with the dead bodies, and recovery of the affected areas.”

Additionally, with the money he collected prior to arriving in Nepal, Banjara purchased and helped distribute ample amounts of corrugated metal sheets that could be used to replace the roofs of 42 of the homes that had been severely damaged. He also worked in conjunction with the country’s Department of Health Services to help organize health camps and provide basic medical support.

Although Banjara—who occasionally had to be awake at 3:00 a.m. to participate in his online M.P.H. class while visiting his home country—was not in Nepal when the earthquake initially struck, he almost became a fatality himself one morning as he was biking down the mountainous road to continue his relief work. “While I was on my way to work, a big tremor struck, and the house in front of me suddenly collapsed,” he said. “I really don’t know how I survived.”

After returning to South Florida, Banjara reflected on the lessons he learned following his inaugural experience as



a volunteer relief worker in his homeland. “Initially, I was quite scared because of the continuing aftershocks, and because there was no water, electricity, transportation, or regular food supply,” said Banjara, who admitted that the images of devastation he witnessed will stay with him forever. “I was able to make a positive difference in the lives of many needy people, and as a public health professional, that is always going to be my goal.”





COMMUNITY *and* INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH

# Service Enhances the NSU-COM Educational Experience

By Debbi Cohn Steinkohl, M.H.S.A.

*Assistant Professor of Family Medicine and Public Health and Course Director of Community Service*



Community service is a tradition for NSU-COM students, who shine as dedicated and passionate humanitarians.

**T**he heart of NSU-COM's community service program, which pulses throughout our local and international communities, is palpable and spreading like a highly contagious virus—an inspiration that will hopefully never be eradicated.

Reflecting on the past five years since our students were first required to volunteer in community service, the number of personal accounts highlight how our students' lives have been forever changed because they have gained a newfound understanding of the world around them and discovered their bigger purpose through service to others. The community-service requirement, which began when the class of 2013 was charged with completing 40 hours by the summer following the second year, evolved into an actual 80-hour course requirement starting with the class of 2014.

*(Continued on next page)*





NSU-COM students are ardent participants in numerous medical outreach efforts that stretch across the globe.

The goal is for all students to provide altruistic service of their choice—service that directly and tangibly benefits the local, national, or global community at the time when rendered. The community-service requirement also teaches the students to treat all people from every walk of life with dignity and respect, fostering a habit

of stewardship for people and the environment.

NSU-COM students are fortunate to be in the heart of a community filled with a range of partner not-for-profit organizations, each with a distinct mission in serving the less fortunate among our neighbors. Students who

are passionate about working with underserved Hispanic and other ethnic minority cultures spend much of their time volunteering at Light of the World Clinic, where they are the go-to volunteers for several community outreach events, clinic-based screenings, immunizations, and clinical services.



**Volunteering in the community was certainly nothing new to NSU-COM students, but the diverse range of service activities is what makes them shine as community volunteers. Students benefit from being in a college that leads in school-initiated international medical outreach trips.**

Students committed to working with individuals who possess physical or intellectual disabilities volunteer with Special Olympics Florida, where dedicated students provide wellness screenings, sports physicals, and education services at Special Olympics wellness events and competitions.

Volunteering in the community was certainly nothing new to NSU-COM students, but the diverse range of service activities is what makes them shine as community volunteers. Students benefit from being in a college that leads in school-initiated international medical outreach trips. In fact, anyone who has even casually perused *COM Outlook* would recall the images of students and faculty members making a profound impact in developing and third-world countries.

Less told, however, are the stories of students who play vital roles as the primary volunteer teams for so many community organizations or students who ventured off to faraway lands, independently joining medical outreach trips in countries such as Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, India, Nepal, Nicaragua, and Peru.

### **Fond Memories, Good Times**

Whether it's the 46 students who volunteered at Camp Boggy Creek in Eustis, Florida, as counselors for children living with spina bifida and other conditions; the first-year students who ventured to Rutledge, Georgia, to spend a week at Camp Kudzu for children diagnosed with type 1 diabetes; or the Muscular Dystrophy Camp counselors and Miami Children's Hospital Camp Funrise volunteers, the students readily shared their fond memories and good times.

"I am so grateful for the opportunity to have volunteered for Camp Boggy Creek," wrote third-year student Nicholas Bastian in his community-service journal. "The staff members and volunteers really get in the kid zone and act like kids themselves, so the real kids can forget about their conditions and just experience the joy of being a kid. There were times when the physical pain of the disease limited my camp buddy's ability to participate in activities such as horseback riding, swimming, or dodgeball, and this broke my heart, but then there were many alternatives, such as boating,

woodworking, and archery. I taught my camp buddy how to properly cast his bait, and he was such a trooper."

Third-year student Brittney Tages can still be spotted sporting her sentimental parting gift—a backpack with a deeply meaningful note handwritten in permanent marker by the family of her camper—an eight-year-old girl with spina bifida. "Her brothers and sisters, and even Normandy, her service dog, joined in the fun of camp," Tages explained. "One of the best memories was the big Saturday night dance. Despite my concerns, my buddy's wheelchair was no barrier to us having an absolute blast. I had truly grown close and made a connection with the family members, and I am privileged and forever changed for getting to know them."

In the Sigma Sigma Phi Doctor's Bag outings at local preschools, students interact with the kids while giving their stethoscopes, tuning forks, flashlights, and reflex hammers a good workout. While this program helps young kids to understand the importance of proper hygiene and taking care of their bodies and to feel less anxious about visits to their doctors, it has a similar effect on

**The enjoyment students gain from serving others knows no bounds, but is certainly not restricted to child's play. Through the Senior Soiree Program, students interact and help care for nursing home residents.**

the medical students, who may admittedly feel a bit anxious around kids.

This experience taught third-year student Caitlin LeClaire the value of exposing children to different career paths and sparking an interest in medicine in them at an early age. The laughter and hugs elicited during the exchange reassured LeClaire that she had indeed chosen the correct path. Third-year student Dustin Benyo reflected on his service at a Special Olympics basketball game by saying, "I laughed, I cried, and I even got to bandage a girl giving it her all when she scraped the skin off both knees. Within a few minutes, she was back in the game, modeling great sportsmanship."

The enjoyment students gain from serving others knows no bounds, but is certainly not restricted to child's play. Through the Senior Soiree Program, students interact and help care for nursing home residents. Additionally, through the Sigma Sigma Phi Honor Society's SOS Program, which stands for Support Our Soldiers, but plays off of the international Morse code distress call, students visit United States veterans in retirement homes. Time flies as students forget about service

hours and lose themselves in storytelling, jokes, and, often, a good game of poker. Over the years, the students have shared many touching moments where they sit and really listen to the veterans, who bare their souls and reveal deep-rooted secrets our students treasure as sacred.

#### **Paying It Forward**

"Once I was in their shoes, and now I made it," said Benyo about his experiences with Sigma Sigma Phi COMPals—from the wide-eyed responses of premed students getting their first exposure to osteopathic medicine by hearing the cracks of necks and demystifying muscle energy to frank discussions about their path to medical school admission. Benyo's mentoring continues well after the events, since he freely shares his contact information with students from local universities. He and other COMPals feel so much pride when their premed mini-me mentees are seen around the HPD campus on interview days.

NSU-COM students are involved in many other projects, all with the common goal of serving as role models to inspire future physicians, as well as other HPD students. In October, 15

newly trained CPR instructors were closely monitored by the college's Department of Emergency Medical Services and Education Training while taking the reins and teaching their first American Heart Association Heartsaver Course to 30 students from Stranahan High School's health magnet program.

COM students are involved with several other pre-health mentoring projects, such as Sigma Sigma Phi's Medical Explorers program with local high school students, the Student Osteopathic Medical Association's Pre-SOMA at local colleges, and the AHEC Health Careers Camp for underserved high school students. Student mentors even help to supplement science curricula through their service in excellent programs such as Anatomy Academy and Science Alive. This is service learning at its best because it allows students the opportunity to learn and grow as much as the young adults they are mentoring.

#### **Hobbies for Humanity**

It was no coincidence that third-year student Anna Babaie was serving as music chair of the NSU-COM Cultural and Fine Arts Club last year when she



Second-year students Ashley Van Putten (left) and Kristina Gemayel share a fun moment with a child at the Museum of Discovery and Science Anatomy Academy in Fort Lauderdale.

shared how music had been such a big part of her life before medical school. She was encouraged to rekindle that love and play her violin and oboe to serve the community. As a result, other medical students decided to share their love of music and unite in song to lift the spirits of hospitalized children and their families at Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital in Hollywood, Florida. "This experience showed me a way to combine two things I love—music and medicine—and reaffirmed the healing power of music both for the patient and the performer," Babaie stated. "It is truly a universal way to connect to others."

In September, the Cultural and Fine Arts Club members conducted a program through the college's Lifelong

Learning Institute where they taught seniors to connect with distant family and friends through the art of storytelling, sending ecards, and other ways to use technology and social media to help seniors rediscover vital purpose and be seen in a new light as wise and super-hip old sages. The club has now become interdisciplinary in nature, which is why nearly every month there is a new service event where students get to enjoy the practice of their art to benefit the community.

Because there are so many noteworthy ways our students give back to the community, it is impossible to list each and every activity that has personal importance and value. As a result, since community is an NSU Core Value, the goal is to feature additional exam-



First-year student Michelle King was just one of many students who participated in a Dr. Seuss-inspired paint event, which was sponsored by both the Pediatrics Club and the Cultural and Fine Arts Club. Once the artworks were completed, they were generously donated to local hospitals and clinics.

ples of NSU-COM students' heartfelt community service in future issues of both *COM Outlook* and the Student Government Association newsletter—*SGA Rounds*.





# Research Projects Inspire Future Physician Scientists

By Robin J. Jacobs, Ph.D., M.S.W., M.S., *Director of International Medicine and  
Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine, Biomedical Informatics, and Public Health*

STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES can have a positive influence on their intellectual growth, as well as their cognitive, personal, and professional development. Participating in scholarship provides osteopathic medical students with the chance to pursue scholarly projects not only in osteopathic-specific topics, but in other areas of interest. Preclinical medical students can learn more about an area they are considering for a career, while undecided ones are introduced to new areas that might spark a chord of interest. Moreover, given the relevance of research to competitive residency applications, more students will be seeking involvement in research—particularly research that leads to publications.

*(Continued on next page)*



## **Demand for D.O. Scientists**

While there has been an increase in the osteopathic physician workforce, there is a critical shortage of D.O. scientists who are vital members of the medical research community. The demographics of physician researchers have shifted dramatically over the past decade, with the proportion of NIH-funded principal investigators in their 60s and 70s increasing and the portion below 60 years old declining. This can cause serious problems, because as those at the older end of the spectrum retire or die, the number of physician scientists will continue to shrink.

## **Mentors Serve as Role Models**

Evidence suggests that physicians involved in clinical research who were awarded funds for the percentage of their research time were more likely to report that research carried out in medical school had positively influenced their current involvement in clinical research. Participation in mentored research activities may be under-recognized as a determinant of future involvement in clinical research. One of the major benefits of undertaking a scholarly project is the opportunity to work closely with, and learn from, a research faculty mentor. Mentors serve as both teachers and role models and are essential partners in a student's development.

## **Tailored Mentoring Program**

Medical students interested in conducting research are offered a variety of opportunities, including partnering with faculty researchers through ongoing research programs or continuing to explore their own research interests. Research projects available at NSU-COM include clinical and health informatics, but students are also encouraged to pursue rigorous scholarly projects that may not fit into these categories, such as behavioral and medical humanities research.

The purpose of this tailored mentoring program is to train osteopathic medical students to conduct research by adapting projects to fit their personal interests and logistical needs.

A good way for students to demonstrate involvement and interest in research is by publishing articles in academic journals and presenting at local and national meetings. Students are also advised that they can publish articles without spending time in a formal research position. This can involve case reports, review articles, or other publications in academic journals.

Medical students at any level of training, and those with or without previous research experience, can participate. The job of a research mentor is to help students learn how to formulate a hypothesis, develop a research proposal, conduct the actual study, analyze the resulting data, and communicate the results to the scientific community. In addition, mentors evaluate student progress by helping students make decisions about future research and providing information for career planning.

During international medical outreach trips to South America and Asia 2011–2014, students were trained by experienced research faculty members and participated in a musculoskeletal research study of adults receiving care. Students administered a questionnaire on musculoskeletal pain, self-reported health status, and health care-seeking behavior.

Students were instructed on research methods, ethical concerns, survey administration, statistical analysis, interpretation of findings, and dissemination of results. Mentees were required to be certified in the protection of human research subjects through the proper channels, done on their own, prior to commencing with a project. They were then added to the study's protocol as coinvestigators or research assistants, depending on their level of involvement.

Other research studies not conducted during international medical outreach trips, but in which students were involved, included developing an Internet-based health literacy intervention for Hispanics with HIV and developing a



◀ Robin Jacobs works on a research project with third-year student Hassan Iqbal, M.S., who began his NSU-COM Predoctoral Research Fellowship studies in July, and second-year student Amy Tran.

smartphone app to promote medication adherence in individuals with chronic illnesses. These mixed-methods studies enable students to learn additional skills in qualitative and quantitative research methods, such as building statistical databases and conducting analyses using statistical software. The students also learned how and when to apply a mixed-method approach to clinical research. All project involvement occurs on the students' own time; it is not part of the school curriculum.

### Research Outcomes

As a direct result of this ad-hoc mentorship program, 18 mentored students delivered 12 poster presentations at the Bureau on International Osteopathic Medicine International Seminar, Annual American Osteopathic Association Research Conference, and Osteopathic Medical Conference and Exposition, where an NSU student won first prize in the poster competition. Also notable was an article published in the *Journal of the American Osteopathic Association* for which students served as coauthors.

In addition to publications and presentations, these experiences solidified students' interest and involvement in future research activities. Moreover, several students reported that they were told by residency interviewers that their research experience was a discerning factor in them being matched to their first-choice residency program.

### The End Game

The goal of this tailored mentoring activity is to provide meaningful research education and experiences to osteopathic medical students and help them develop well-designed and intellectually sound research projects suited to the students' time considerations, interests, and needs. It is important for medical faculty members to demonstrate intellectual curiosity and scientific skepticism, as well as improve the performance of medical care through the application of the scientific method.

Most graduates find careers in medical colleges, universities, or major medical research centers. These physician scientists help unite science and clinical practice. Students should be encouraged to use their creativity and enthusiasm to produce scholarly work while developing important critical-thinking skills in not only conducting research, but appraising the medical research literature.

Medical colleges might offer predoctoral research fellowships, but they are limited in number, require a longer time commitment, postpone graduation, and are costly to the institution. Less intensive, yet comprehensive, mentoring opportunities using a tailored approach might be a better and more practical alternative for increasing the number of trained clinical researchers.



◀ Robin Jacobs poses in front of her research poster entitled, "Mentoring First-Year Medical Students to Be Physician-Scientists Through Meaningful Student Involvement."



## Student COMMunications

### Student Named to AOA Board of Trustees



IN JULY, fourth-year student **Carisa Champion-Lippmann, J.D.**, received the loftiest of honors when she was named to the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) Board of Trustees as its sole student representative at the AOA 95th Annual House of Delegates

meeting held July 17–19 in Chicago, Illinois.

“Carisa is an ideal representative for her fellow osteopathic medicine students throughout the United States as a member of the AOA Board of Trustees,” said Elaine M. Wallace, D.O., M.S., M.S., M.S., NSU-COM dean. “She has a good understanding of issues facing the field and has achieved so much at such a young age. We can only imagine the possibilities Carisa has in store for her future.”

The AOA Board of Trustees, which is the association’s administrative body, has authority to conduct all business when the House of Delegates is not in session, and when such policies are essential to the management of the AOA. These duties include administration of the association’s finances; appointments to bureaus, councils, and committees; decisions on all questions of ethical/judicial issues; and review and approval of amendments to the constitution, bylaws, and regulations of affiliated organizations.

Champion-Lippmann, a class of 2016 NSU-COM student and Master of Public Health candidate, was the inaugural student in NSU’s pilot parallel D.O./J.D. program and received her Juris Doctor degree from NSU’s Shepard Broad College of Law in May 2015. She was also appointed as the national Student Osteopathic Surgical Association ambassador and was named cochair of the AOA’s Bureau of Emerging Leaders.

### Welcome Class of 2019

ON AUGUST 9, the class of 2019 was officially welcomed into the osteopathic profession at the 35th Annual White Coat Ceremony, which was held at the Arena at NSU’s Don Taft University Center. For the 248 students comprising the class of 2019, the White Coat Ceremony served as an auspicious experience that officially marked their entry into the medical vocation.

In the presence of family, guests, and faculty members, the students were welcomed into the medical community by leaders of the osteopathic profession and ceremonially cloaked with their white coats. By establishing this meaningful ritual at the beginning of medical school, the intent is to make students aware of their responsibilities from the first day of training and convey the message that doctors should care as well as cure.



During the ceremony, NSU-COM faculty members cloak students in the white coats they will wear throughout their medical school experience.

## Medical Outreach Trip: Panama City, Panama



Ashley Van Putten (left) and Kristina Gemayel provide comfort to a postoperative pediatric patient in Panama.

In June, second-year students **Kristina Gemayel, M.S.**, and **Ashley Van Putten, M.S.**, accompanied the Children's Heart Center of Nevada on a medical outreach trip to Panama City, Panama. Over the course of 10 days, the student duo participated in cardiac catheterizations and prescreenings of children being considered for heart repairs and were present in the operating room during open-heart surgeries.

Following the surgical procedures, Gemayel and Van Putten assisted the physicians in translating the children's words for the health care staff and comforted the children as they recovered from their surgeries. "Having the ability to apply our knowledge from the classroom, and seeing the amount of care involved in pediatric postoperative intensive care units, has made us passionate about the importance of caring for our future patients," Gemayel stated.

Van Putten serves as president of the college's Pediatrics Club, while Gemayel is the club's health fair chair. Because they are committed to combining their passion for community service and pediatrics, they frequently volunteer at local health fairs and at various Broward County schools, where they promote the importance of proper nutrition and exercise.



Champion-Lippmann



Leiva



Murugan



Wells

## NSU-COM Students Garner AOF Honors

On October 16, a number of NSU-COM students were honored at the American Osteopathic Foundation (AOF) Honors ceremony in Orlando, which recognizes excellence among osteopathic physicians, educators, students, and other individuals. Listed below are the recipients, as well as the scholarship amounts they received.

**Carisa Champion-Lippmann, J.D.** (*class of 2016*)

Welch Scholars Grant (\$2,000)

**Daniel Leiva, M.S.** (*class of 2016*)

Human Touch Student Leadership Project 2015 (\$1,060)

**Rajeswari Murugan** (*class of 2017*)

Human Touch Student Leadership Project (\$1,060)

**Chelsea Wells** (*class of 2016*)

Human Touch Student Leadership Project (\$1,060)

**Jessica Mahon** (*spouse of Justin Mahon, D.O.*)

Donna Jones Moritsugu Memorial Award



# Student COMmunications

## News Briefs

Third-year students **Debra Cheng** and **Nhan Do** were awarded National Health Service Corps (NHSC) scholarships to help them pursue primary care in underserved areas. The NHSC received more than 5,100 applications in 2015 and made 196 offers to future health care professionals who plan to work in disadvantaged areas for at least two years. The scholarship covers two years of tuition and provides a modest living stipend.

Third-year student **Devin Collins** and second-year student **Oliver Fowler** had their video project, “Iliopsoas Tendon Release Following Total Hip Arthroplasty: Surgical Technique,” accepted for presentation at the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons 83rd Annual Meeting, which will be held March 1–5, 2016, in Orlando, Florida. The video will be presented as part of the symposium’s Orthopaedic Video Theater.

Third-year students **Tiffany Crider** and **Karin Hwang** were appointed as national committee chairs to the Student Association of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians’ Clinical Preparations and Research committees, respectively.

In August, third-year student **Sofia A. Funes** and first-year student **Samantha Stewart** were recipients of the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM) 2015 Sherry R. Arnstein Minority Student Scholarship. Awardees are selected based on a rigorous evaluation of their credentials, applications, and personal essays. Named after former AACOM executive director and minority civil rights leader Sherry R. Arnstein, this scholarship program aims to recognize and support underrepresented minority students at AACOM’s member colleges of osteopathic medicine.

Second-year student **Leanne M. Iorio**, M.S., and fourth-year student **Jason A. Levy**, M.S., had their article, “Effects of Stem Cell Treatment in Human Patients with Peyronie Disease,” published in the October issue of the *Journal of*

*the American Osteopathic Association*. Iorio and Levy found statistically significant results in treating Peyronie’s patients with placental matrix–derived mesenchymal stem cells.

Third-year student **Hassan Iqbal**, M.S., who began his one-year NSU-COM Predoctoral Research Fellowship studies in July, received a \$4,910 Health Professions Division Research Grant for his project titled, “Osteopathic Medical Students’ Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behaviors Toward Health Information Technology.” Third-year student **Zaid Rana** is serving as the grant’s coinvestigator.

Third-year student **Ariel S. Lee** coauthored an article, “The Long Tail and Rare Disease Research: The Impact of Next-Generation Sequencing for Rare Mendelian Disorders,” that was published in the September issue of *Genetics Research*.

Second-year students **Romeena Lee** and **Estefania Niewialkouski** presented a poster, “International Medical Outreach Mission Trips: Parallels to Caring for the Underserved on the Homefront,” at the 17th Annual Bureau on International Osteopathic Medicine International Seminar held in conjunction with the American Osteopathic Association’s Annual Osteopathic Medical Conference and Exposition on October 17 in Orlando, Florida.

Fourth-year student **Daniel F. Leiva**, M.S., was awarded a \$1,500 scholarship to attend the National Outdoor Leadership School Wilderness Medicine Institute’s Medicine in the Wild wilderness medicine elective—a 26-day expedition focusing on effective medical education and leadership in wilderness medicine and expedition skills.

Second-year students **Jennifer Maning**, **Amy Tran**, **Claudia Vallin**, **Stephanie Montarroyos**, **Stephanie Cardona**, and **Loan Lee** joined third-year students **Hassan Iqbal**, M.S., and **Zaid Rana** in presenting three posters at the 17th Annual Bureau on International Osteopathic Medicine International Seminar held October 17 in Orlando, Florida.

The posters covered the following topics: “Students Conducting Research During International Medical Outreach Programs: Lessons Learned”; “Perception of Personal Health and Social Support in Rural Ecuadorians with Chronic Conditions”; and “Health Care Provision and Access to Medical Care in a Sample of Rural Ecuadorians with Chronic Illness.”

Third-year student **Kristi Ray** was selected as a Paul Ambrose Scholar by the Association for Prevention Teaching and Research during the 2015 Student Leadership Symposium held June 26–28 in Washington, D.C. The Paul Ambrose Scholars Program prepares public health and clinical health professions students from across eight health professions to address population health challenges at the national and community level. Ray, who is the first NSU-COM student to be named a Paul Ambrose Scholar, will be working on a community

research project called “HEALTHFUL: Helping Establish Academic Learning Through Health Fairs in Underserved Locations.” In addition, she was awarded first place and named the overall grand prize winner at the 17th Annual Bureau on International Osteopathic Medicine International Seminar Innovation in Osteopathic Education and Outreach poster competition for her project titled, “How Does Your Garden Grow: Incorporating Public Health on Medical Mission Trips.”

Third-year student **Saamia Shaikh**, who is also a first-year student in the NSU Shepard Broad College of Law, was recently elected to the Student Bar Association Elections Committee. Shaikh will be representing both law and medical students while also serving as the administrator of public affairs for the NSU-COM Executive Board Student Government Association. She is the second student to pursue NSU’s dual D.O./J.D. degree program.



On July 17, 2015, a large contingent of first- and second-year students volunteered at the Museum of Discovery and Science Anatomy Academy in Fort Lauderdale to teach more than 60 children about topics such as nutrition, anatomy, and what to expect when they visit their physicians. To make the learning experience fun, the students brought organ vests, which provided the children with a visual on where exactly the organs in the body are located. At another station, the children were able to play doctor by putting on small white coats and stethoscopes to listen to each other’s heartbeats. Additionally, the fascinated youngsters had an opportunity to view boxes of bones and X-rays so they could learn about the different bones in the body.



## Faculty/Staff COMmunications



**Renee Alexis**, M.D., M.B.A., M.P.H., FACOG, associate professor and vice chair of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, received the 2014–15 NSU-COM Professor of the Year Award in October. The award is conferred upon a full-time faculty member who has served the university for at least 10 years, has achieved national and/or international prominence, and has earned a distinguished reputation through significant contributions to research and scholarship and exceptional instruction. Evidence of excellence was judged on scholarly productivity and in teaching/instruction. The accolade includes a one-year NSU Faculty Club membership and a \$2,000 honorarium.



**Paula Anderson-Worts**, D.O., M.P.H., associate professor of family medicine and public health, was named as one of South Florida's Top Black Educators by *Legacy South Florida*. The publication, which is distributed through partnerships with the *Miami Herald* and the *Sun Sentinel*, provides people of color in South Florida's professional community with insightful information on business, careers, politics, lifestyle, education, religion, culture, and social commentary.



**Barbara Arcos**, D.O., associate professor and chair of the Department of Family Medicine, received a significant honor during the 35th Annual Florida Society of American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (FSACOF) Convention and Family Medicine Update, held July 29–August 2 in Orlando, when she was named as the recipient of the Educator of the Year Award. Established in 2006, the FSACOF Educator of the Year is selected by the FSACOF Board of Trustees to honor an individual who has significantly enhanced the academic credibility of osteopathic family medicine in the state of Florida by a sustained, long-term commitment to osteopathic family medicine in academic settings.



**Cyril Blavo**, D.O., M.S., M.P.H.T.M., FACOP, professor and director of the Master of Public Health Program, was invited to be the keynote speaker at the University of San Francisco School of Nursing and Health Professions' Population Health Sciences Day that was held on August 26. Blavo was selected based on his renowned background in medicine and public health and esteemed reputation as a global advocate for children.



On October 22, the college organized a farewell reception for **Nadine Chipon-Schoepp**, D.O., and **Victor Jaffe**, D.O., who served as assistant professors of family medicine and joined the college as faculty members in 2010. As they continue to build their careers, Chipon-Schoepp will be working in a private practice, while Jaffe has accepted a position at UnitedHealthcare.

*Nadine Chipon-Schoepp (center) accepts well wishes from the college's dean, Elaine Wallace, D.O., M.S., M.S., M.S. (left), and Barbara Arcos, D.O., chair of the Department of Family Medicine.*



**Joseph S. De Gaetano**, D.O., M.S.Ed., FAAFP, FACOF, professor of family medicine, was named Mentor of the Year by the Broward Health Medical Center Family Medicine Residency Program. The residents award the honor each summer to a faculty member who has been singled out as an exceptional educator, mentor, and role model for the academic year.



**David Boesler**, D.O., M.S., associate professor and chair of the Department of Osteopathic Principles and Practice, and **Roberta Duenas**, who serves as administrative assistant to the director of budgeting and grants management, were the recipients of the NSU-COM Faculty and Staff Achievement Awards in July. The faculty member award is presented annually, while the staff member accolade is awarded twice yearly. Boesler received a one-week vacation to Mexico as his prize, while Duenas earned a weekend stay at a Marriott hotel of her choice.



**Marie Florent-Carre**, D.O., M.P.H., assistant professor of family medicine and public health, was named director of the Department of Rural and Urban Underserved Medicine. In this role, she will be assisting James Howell, M.D., M.P.H., assistant dean and chair of rural and urban underserved medicine, in the efficient operation of the department.



On August 17, the college coordinated a farewell reception for **Andrew M. Kusinski**, D.O., assistant professor and chair of the Department of Sports Medicine, who spent 10 years as an NSU-COM faculty member. Kusinski, who relocated to Germany with his family, accepted a position to practice as a civilian physician for the U.S. Department of Defense. In this new role, he is treating active duty military service members and their families.

*Pictured (from left) are daughter Melinda; wife Yennifer; Johneta Goodwin, director of administrative operations; Andrew M. Kusinski; and Elaine Wallace, NSU-COM dean.*



**Norman Rose**, D.O., FACOS, FICS, clinical professor of surgery, received the American College of Osteopathic Surgeons' (ACOS) Orel F. Martin Medal on October 5 at the ACOS Ceremonial Conclave held in Chicago, Illinois. The Orel F. Martin Medal, which is the organization's highest honor, is awarded to an ACOS member who has made outstanding contributions to the organization or to the osteopathic profession.



**David Thomas**, M.D., J.D., Ed.D., professor and chair of the Department of Surgery and the Division of Correctional Medicine, was honored by the American College of Correctional Physicians in October with the Armond Start Award of Excellence. The award, which was presented at the American Osteopathic Association's OMED symposium in Orlando, Florida, is given to the physician whose lifetime achievement has done the most to improve correctional health care for the incarcerated.



## Faculty/Staff COMmunications

### Dean Honored with Founders' Award

During the Health Professions Division Commencement Ceremony held August 21 in the NSU Don Taft University Center, **Elaine M. Wallace**, D.O., M.S., M.S., M.S., NSU-COM dean, was presented with the Morton Terry Founders' Award, which honors inspirational leadership in education and health care administration.

"Your commitment to the community—including our university and the many organizations you have served—is a tribute to the high standards that govern your life," said George L. Hanbury II, Ph.D., NSU president and chief executive officer. "Throughout your career, both personally and professionally, you are looked upon by your colleagues and friends as a person of high integrity who is driven by impeccable principles and ethics."

The award, which was last presented to a recipient in 2008, has been accorded to four other individuals over the years: Barry Silverman, M.D. (2008); Sylvia Urlich, M.A. (2006); Ray Ferrero, Jr., J.D. (2005); and David Rush (2004).



Elaine Wallace accepts her award from Frederick Lippman, R.Ph., Ed.D., Health Professions Division chancellor (far left), and George L. Hanbury II, Ph.D., NSU president and CEO.

### Trio of Accolades

**Angela S. Garcia**, Pharm.D., M.P.H., CPH, assistant professor of public health, received three awards during the 125th Annual Florida Pharmacy Association (FPA) Convention in St. Augustine on June 27. Below is a summary of the awards she received.

**FPA Presidential Award of Excellence**—This award was presented in recognition of Garcia's commitment to the Florida Pharmacists' Legislative Days and Health Fair, which she has coordinated for the six schools of pharmacy in the state over the past seven years.

**Roman Maximo Corrons Inspiration and Motivation Award**—Presented by the Interamerican Pharmacists Association, this award honors pharmacists who actively participate in their profession and advance the profession by providing guidance and support that encourages visionary leadership and increases membership and engagement within the profession.

**FPA James H. Beal Pharmacist of the Year Award**—This is awarded to a Florida pharmacist in recognition of outstanding service to the pharmacy profession.



Angela S. Garcia poses with her three awards.

## Research/Scholarly COMMunications



**Robert B. Contrucci**, D.O., who recently reached his 30th year as an NSU-COM clinical professor, had his article, "Sweet Syndrome: A Case Report and Review of the Literature" published in the July issue of the *Ear, Nose, and Throat Journal*.



**Nicole Cook**, Ph.D., M.P.A., received a \$29,253 grant from D. Loer Consulting to conduct evaluation of telepsychiatry services in Cape Cod, Massachusetts, as well as a \$38,245 award from the Health Choice Network of Florida, Inc., (HCNFL) to support the coordination and implementation of several scientific protocols established by the HCNFL and its partners.



**Hilda M. De Gaetano**, D.O., FACOP, FAAP, presented a lecture on "Pediatric Immunizations" at the Florida Society of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians 35th Annual Convention held July 29–August 2 in Orlando, Florida.



**Marti Echols**, Ph.D., M.Ed., was named program chair for the Association of Behavioral Science and Medical Education conference held October 15–17 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The interprofessional conference focuses on integrating the humanities into medicine. In addition, Echols and third-year students Karin Hwang and William Gunther received a \$5,000 Health Professions Division grant toward their research project, "Relationship Between Board Score and Number of Board Exams Taken by Second-Year Osteopathic Medical Students."



**Jay M. Fleisher**, Ph.D., M.S., M.S., coauthored a paper with researchers at the NSU Halmos College of Natural Sciences and Oceanography and the University of Miami, "Using Logistic Regression as a Method to Determine Probabilities of Enterococci Exceedance Levels at South Florida Recreational Beach," in the *Journal of Water and Health* in September. Fleisher was also selected to serve as a reviewer for the publication.



**Angela S. Garcia**, Pharm.D., M.P.H., CPH, received a \$25,000 grant from the Broward Regional Health Planning Council, Inc., to fund the Partnerships Transforming Our Community's Health project.

### M.P.H. Faculty Members Receive Kenyon Cancer Grant

**Alina M. Perez**, J.D., M.P.H., LCSW, associate professor of public health, and **Gabriel Suci**, Ph.D., M.S.P.H., associate professor of biostatistics, received the 2015–2016 NSU-COM Kenyon Cancer Research Grant.

Suci is conducting a study titled, "Prognostic Factors of the Survival of Women with Locally Advanced Breast Cancer with  $\geq 10$  Lymph Nodes at Diagnosis Who Undergo Multimodality Therapy." Perez is managing a study titled, "Assessing Knowledge and Attitudes of South Florida Minority Population on End-of-Life Care."

Since 2001, NSU-COM has offered the Kenyon Cancer Research grant, which is provided by an endowment created by the late Franklin Kenyon and Frances Kenyon Agneski. The program helps support faculty members who engage in primary care cancer-related research with an award of up to \$15,000 for one year.



From left: Gabriel Suci; Leonard Levy, D.P.M., M.P.H., associate dean of research and innovation; and Alina Perez



## Research/Scholarly COMMunications (*cont.*)



**Elizabeth Hames**, D.O. (left), and **Kenya Rivas**, M.D., presented a lecture, "Adult Immunization Update," at the Florida Society of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians Annual Convention in Orlando on July 30.



**Janet Hamstra**, Ed.D., M.S., was invited to serve as a peer reviewer for the 2015 Student Poster Competition at the American Osteopathic Association's Osteopathic Medical Conference and Exposition (AOA-OMED). Hamstra and David Boesler, D.O., M.S., received an NSU Health Professions Division Research Grant for a five-year longitudinal study, "The Development of Empathy: Peering into the Black Box of Osteopathic Medical Education." In addition, Hamstra and 2013 NSU-COM alumnus Adam Quinney, D.O., coauthored a paper, "Unipolar and Bipolar Disorder: A Primary Care Perspective," that was published in the September issue of the *Osteopathic Family Physician Journal*.



**Robin J. Jacobs**, Ph.D., M.S.W., M.S., presented her project, "Mentoring Osteopathic Medical Students to Be Physician-Scientists Through Meaningful Student Projects," on October 22 at the Mentoring Institute 2015 Mentoring Conference—New Perspectives in Mentoring: A Quest for Leadership Excellence and Innovation in Albuquerque, New Mexico. In addition, she coauthored a paper with Raymond Ownby, M.D., Ph.D., M.B.A., "Motivational Factors Related to Medication Adherence in Spanish-Dominant Hispanics Living with HIV," that was published in the *Journal of HIV/AIDS and Social Services*.



**Doris Newman**, D.O., FAAO, presented a lecture and hands-on OMM demonstration, "Osteopathic Considerations in the Lower Extremity ... for Health" in July at the 2015 American Podiatric Medical Association's Annual Scientific Meeting held in Orlando, Florida. She also presented a second lecture, "The Upper Half of the Body: Headaches and Their Relationship to Sinuses, TMJ, Neck Pain, and Posture," at the American Osteopathic Association's Regional Osteopathic Medical Education conference held in Mashantucket, Connecticut, in August.



**Naushira Pandya**, M.D., CMD, FACP, was invited to join the National Quality Forum Physicians Advisory Board in Washington, D.C. In addition, she gave the keynote address, "Diabetes Management in the Elderly," at the University of Missouri Columbia Caring for the Frail Elderly conference on August 14 in Columbia, Missouri.



**Janet Lynn Roseman**, Ph.D., M.S., R-DMT, was the guest speaker for a conference on Joan of Arc sponsored by Loyola University's Department of Medieval Studies in New Orleans, Louisiana, in September. In addition, she presented a workshop for staff physicians and nurses at the Ochsner Medical Center in New Orleans and a workshop for female survivors of breast cancer.



**Elliot M. Sklar**, Ph.D., M.S., authored a paper, "Body Image, Weight, and Self-Concept in Men," that appeared in the *American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine* in July.



**Jill Wallace-Ross**, D.O., presented a lecture, "Do Medical Professionals Take Their Patients' Health Care More Seriously Than Their Own?" at the 35th Annual Florida Society of American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (FSACOF) Convention and Family Medicine Update held July 29–August 2 in Orlando, Florida.

## Investigating Gulf War Illness



**Paula A. Faria Waziry**, Ph.D., assistant professor of clinical immunology at NSU-COM's Institute for Neuro-Immune Medicine, and her research team recently were awarded an \$805,882 grant from the U.S. Department of Defense's Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs to investigate the genomic and cellular mechanisms that cause Gulf War illness.

"Little is known about what causes the onset and progression of Gulf War illness," said Waziry of the project, called An Integrated Genomics and Cell Biology Approach to Correlate Novel GWI Indicators of Infections and Neuroinflammatory Mechanisms with

Targeted Drug Therapy. "Our aim is to identify specific disease targets that will lead to improved diagnosis and more effective therapeutic interventions for patients. It is our duty to help those who served their country in any way we can, and this is one way we can make a major difference."

In addition to Waziry, who will serve as primary investigator, the research team consists of several other NSU faculty members, including Lubov Nathanson, Ph.D., assistant professor and genomics expert; Nancy Klimas, M.D., professor and director of the institute; Mariana Morris, Ph.D., professor and director of Gulf War illness research; and Gordon Broderick, Ph.D., professor and director of computational biology.

*(This work was supported by the Department of Defense Gulf War Illness Research Program under Award No.W81XWH-15-1-0163.)*



# \$4.29-Million Grant Boosts Marine Safety Training

The Deepwater Horizon (BP) oil spill, which occurred on April 20, 2010, was the largest disaster of its kind in history, as its negative impact on the economy ran in the tens of billions of dollars and caused irreversible damage to the environment.

To help preventable disasters like this from occurring again, the NSU-COM Institute for Disaster and Emergency Preparedness (IDEP) created Project SEAMIST (South East Area Marine Industry Safety Training) in 2010, which was funded by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) of the National Institutes of Health.

“Project SEAMIST provides training so that vessels and seaports can function safely and efficiently, supporting an important economic component of Florida and the Gulf Coast,” said Stephen Grant, Ph.D., primary investigator of the grant and associate professor of public health.

As a result of its initial successes, the NIEHS has awarded an initial \$590,000 to IDEP and recommended a total award of \$4,289,274 over a five-year period (2015–2020) to continue the program and enhance its offerings.

During the first five years (2010–2015) of Project SEAMIST, the program developed a set of safety training curricula specifically targeting the unique hazards of the marine industry and environment. It provided 120 training sessions to nearly 3,000 workers throughout the Gulf Coast states (Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, and Mississippi) and Virginia, including law enforcement officers, port workers, safety trainers, vessel operators and crew members, cruise ship employees, and medical personnel.

This new addition to Project SEAMIST is being spearheaded by co-collaborator Kristi Messer, M.S.W., M.P.H., IDEP assistant project manager, and assistant professor of public health and disaster and emergency preparedness. Messer developed the complementary Hazardous Material Maritime Industry Response Training Safety Initiative to enable workers in the industry to reduce injuries and death related to all disasters and emergencies involving hazardous materials.





### Professor Honored with Provost's Award

IN OCTOBER, **Nancy Klimas**, M.D., professor and director of the college's Institute for Neuro-Immune Medicine, was honored with the NSU Fifth Annual Provost's Research and Scholarship Award. The award recognizes a faculty member who has demonstrated significant achievement in support of NSU's mission to foster scholarship, intellectual inquiry, and academic excellence.

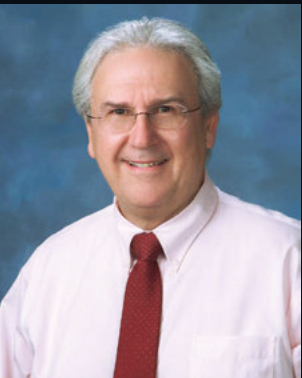
"I am humbled by this honor and accept this award on behalf of my team of world-class researchers in the hopes that our discoveries will make a true difference in the lives of those facing neuro-immune disorders," said Klimas. "I am proud to be a part of the NSU family and work with researchers in a diverse array of fields."

Klimas has achieved international recognition for her research and clinical efforts in multisymptom disorders, myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS), Gulf War illness (GWI), and fibromyalgia. She is currently funded by the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Defense, and the National Institutes of Health to study these complex disorders using a systems biology approach with a strong focus on illness models that lead to therapeutic targets and clinical trials.

In addition to receiving the Provost's Research and Scholarship Award, Klimas was appointed to the national Institute of Medicine's committee that is charged with comprehensively evaluating the current criteria for diagnosing myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome.

**"Project SEAMIST provides training so that vessels and seaports can function safely and efficiently, supporting an important economic component of Florida and the Gulf Coast."**

**—Stephen Grant, Ph.D.**



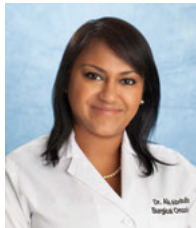
Grant



Messer



# Alumni *in the News*



**Alia Abdulla, D.O. ('07)**, recently accepted a position as the medical director of surgical oncology at North Shore Medical Center (NSMC) in Miami. She currently practices at NSMC and Palmetto General Hospital in Hialeah as part of the Center for Advanced Surgical Oncology.



**Fred Fridman, D.O. ('12)**, is serving as chief resident in the Sinai Hospital of Baltimore Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Residency Program in Maryland, which trains physicians to care for people with disabling conditions.



**Bret T. Ackermann, D.O., FAAEM, FACEP ('92)**, relinquished control of the 18th Medical Command (Deployment Support)—the U.S. Army's Medical Theater Enabling Command for the Indo-Asia Pacific region, on July 10. Ackermann, a colonel and a past president of the Association of Military Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons, now serves as the deputy command surgeon for U.S. Army-Pacific. In recognition of his service, he was awarded the Army's Legion of Merit. His wife of 27 years, Donna B. Ackermann, was recognized with the Commander's Award for Public Service and the Department of the Army Outstanding Civilian Service Award for her volunteer service to the soldiers and families of the 18th Medical Command.



**Inaki Bent, D.O. ('09)**, was selected by *Legacy South Florida* as one of South Florida's Top Black Health Care Professionals in October. The publication, which is distributed through partnerships with the *Miami Herald* and the *Sun Sentinel*, provides people of color in South Florida's professional community with insightful information on business, careers, politics, lifestyle, education, religion, culture, and social commentary.

**Ronald P. Cramer, D.O. ('90)**, serves as the program director of the gastroenterology fellowship at Arnot Ogden Medical Center in Elmira, New York. The osteopathic specialty training program takes three years and accepts two residents per year.

**Doede Donough, D.O. ('04)**, has accepted a full-time position with a new clinic called Mango Medical in Ocean View, Hawaii. She is officially the southernmost D.O. working in the United States.

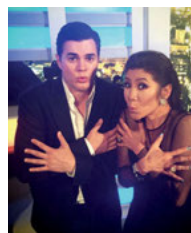
**Victoria M. Dreisbach, D.O., DFAPA ('97)**, traveled to Vienna, Austria, in July to present a lecture titled, "Regret, Retraumatization, and Hopelessness as Barriers to Discharge," at the International Academy of Law and Mental Health. She also presented a similar lecture at the 24th Annual Conference of the International Association of Forensic Psychotherapy at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. Dreisbach is employed as a forensic psychiatrist at Connecticut Valley Hospital, Whiting Forensic Division, and serves as president-elect of the medical staff.

**Michael Jackowitz, D.O., CPT ('90)**, who has carved out a successful dual career as an osteopathic internist and savvy Broadway producer, has two plays hitting both the Broadway and Off-Broadway stages in New York. *Daddy Long Legs* opened Off-Broadway on September 28 at the Davenport Theatre, while *Tuck Everlasting* is opening on Broadway at the Broadhurst Theatre on April 17, 2016. In addition, he is developing *The Hawaiian Goddess* musical for the Hawaii Opera Theater in 2017.



**Gregory James, D.O., M.P.H., FACOFP dist. ('88)**, who is the senior medical director for Optum Care for Florida, was elected treasurer of the American Osteopathic Board of Family Physicians, which certifies all D.O. family physicians in family medicine and osteopathic manipulative treatment.

**Claude L. Jones, D.O., M.P.H., FACOI ('05)**, who was elected to serve as a member of the NSU Health Professions Division Board of Governors last summer, was selected to participate in the Health Policy Fellowship, which is a yearlong program designed for individuals who are preparing for leadership roles in the osteopathic profession and positions of influence in health policy. The New York Institute of Technology College of Osteopathic Medicine sponsors the program in collaboration with the Ohio University Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine and the American Osteopathic Association, the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM), and AACOM member colleges.



Will Kirby and *Big Brother* host Julie Chen mug for the camera.

**Will Kirby, D.O., FAOCD ('00)**, who has crafted a multifaceted career in medicine, television, and business, hosted the jury roundtable discussion on the season finale of CBS' *Big Brother 17* reality program on September 23. Kirby rose to national prominence in 2001 when he was named the winner of *Big Brother 2*.



**Joshua D. Lenchus, D.O., R.Ph., FACP, SFHM** ('00), was elected vice speaker for the Florida Medical Association (FMA) House of Delegates at its annual meeting held July 31–August 2 in Orlando. "It is an incredible privilege to be the first D.O. elected to office since the FMA began in 1874," said Lenchus, who set a similar precedent in 2012 when he became the first osteopathic physician to be named president of the Jackson Health System medical staff.



**Karolyn Kay Moody, D.O., M.P.H. ('09)**, who serves as the emergency department medical director at Indian Path Medical Center in Kingsport, Tennessee, was appointed to the American College of Emergency Physicians' Federal Government Affairs Committee. Her responsibilities as a committee member involve advocacy for health policy reform in emergency care, such as ensuring that required federal quality measures add value for patients. Moody is also president-elect of the Tennessee College of Emergency Physicians.



**Jaclynn Moskow, D.O. ('13)**, who serves as an NSU-COM clinical instructor of public health, was the lead author of a manuscript, "Identifying Opportunities in EHR to Improve the Quality of Antibiotic Allergy Data," that was accepted for publication in the *Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association*. Moskow coauthored the article with Nicole Cook, Ph.D., M.P.A.; Angela Garcia, Pharm.D., M.P.H., CPH; and fourth-year student Carisa Champion-Lippmann, J.D.

**Merideth C. Norris, D.O., FACOFP ('00)**, who is serving as president-elect of the Maine Osteopathic Association, was appointed to the Maine Task Force on the Opioid Epidemic by the state attorney general's office. Norris is serving on the task force's treatment section with 11 other medical providers in Maine. She was also appointed to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Methadone Reform Commission.



**Andrea Palestro, D.O. ('15)**, left; **Elyse Julian, D.O. ('15)**; and **Jacqueline Thomas, D.O. ('05)**, coauthored an article, "Pediatric Sunscreen and Sun Safety Guidelines," that was published in the online version of *Clinical Pediatrics* on June 29, 2015.



**David Pizzimenti, D.O. ('02)**, was named as the American College of Osteopathic Internists' Teacher of the Year and earned the Lincoln Memorial University–DeBusk College of Osteopathic Medicine's Preceptor of the Year Award during the past year. Pizzimenti currently serves as director of medical education and internal medicine program director for Magnolia Regional Health Center in Corinth, Mississippi.

**Robert Searles, D.O. ('92)**, a radiologist and nuclear medicine physician, was named chief of staff at Aiken Regional Medical Centers in Aiken, South Carolina.

**Lawrence J. Shapiro, J.D., D.O. ('88)**, was asked to compose a chapter on nutrition for the second edition of the *Asian Hair Loss Textbook*. He presented a lecture, "Hair Transplants: FUT vs. FUE and Hair Loss from Anabolics," at the Society of Dermatology Physician Assistants' 13th Annual Fall Dermatology Conference, held November 12–15 in Orlando, Florida. In addition, he is scheduled to present the same lecture at the North Carolina Dermatology Association Annual Meeting being held January 15–17, 2016.



**Dean M. Wieczorek, D.O. ('12)**, who completed a family medicine internship and residency at Palmetto General Hospital in Hialeah, recently joined the professional staff of Lee Physician Group—Family Medicine in Cape Coral, Florida.



**Fawn Winkelman, D.O. ('10)**, who completed a family medicine residency at Broward General Medical Center in Fort Lauderdale, recently opened her own practice, Elite Medicine and Aesthetic Institute, in Boca Raton. Additionally, she was selected to serve on the Florida Osteopathic Medical Association Board of Trustees and was appointed as an NSU-COM clinical assistant professor of family medicine. Winkelman also coauthored a two-part article on linear guttate psoriasis that was published in the peer-reviewed journal *Consultant for Pediatricians* in April and May and wrote two book chapters on the topics Halo Nevus and bed bugs that were published in the *5-Minute Clinical Consult 2016 Edition*.



**Jason A. Zell, D.O., M.P.H. ('01)**, was promoted, with tenure, to the position of associate professor of medicine and epidemiology at the University of California—Irvine School of Medicine. He has served as a UC Irvine School of Medicine faculty member since 2007 and will continue as program director of the Hematology/Oncology Fellowship Program.



# Alumni Corner

## NSU-COM Featured at FSACOFPP Convention

NSU-COM preceptors, alumni, students, faculty members, and guests convened at the 35th Annual Florida Society of American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (FSACOFPP) Convention held July 29–August 2 in Orlando, Florida. Throughout the symposium, the Office of Student and Alumni Affairs' exhibit booth offered information for visitors and served as a perfect gathering location for the cadre of individuals in attendance.

Several events during the convention combined collegiality and camaraderie. These included informative presentations, participation in the annual golf tournament, and an early morning fun walk and run. In addition, the college coordinated the alumni, student, and preceptor reception, which was held at the House of Blues on July 31 and attracted about 65 attendees.

Bruce Rankin, D.O. ('85), was elected FSACOFPP president during the convention; Elizabeth Gunter, D.O. ('98), is the outgoing president.



# Alumni *spotlight*

## Dynamic D.O.s

**Pair Successfully Blends Marriage and Medicine**



By Scott Colton, B.A., APR  
COM/HPD Director of Medical Communications and Public Relations

WHEN IT COMES TO ANALYZING the art and science of what makes a marriage work, the explanations can often be as expansive as there are stars in the heavens. For some, the key to marital bliss is a healthy dose of togetherness mixed with an equally beneficial measure of independence that allows each partner to pursue different personal and professional interests.

*(Continued on next page)*



## Dynamic D.O.s (*cont.*)

For others, however, the key to fruitful coupledness is found in a personal and professional merger that allows each partner to intertwine career interests and spend an optimal amount of time together in both the home and office environments.

Two individuals who epitomize the latter scenario are 2009 alumna Tiffany Sizemore-Ruiz, D.O., and 2007 alumnus Camilo Ruiz, D.O., FACOI, who have been married since 2011 and own and operate a general internal medicine practice in Fort Lauderdale called Choice Physicians of South Florida.

According to Sizemore-Ruiz, who met her life and work partner in 2009 when they were in different stages of completing their internal medicine residency training at Palmetto General Hospital in Hialeah, the decision to work together seemed practically preordained. “On almost a daily basis, someone says to me, ‘How do you do it? How do you work with your husband every day?’” she said. “But the truth is it just comes naturally. We met and worked together every day in our residency program, so it’s all we know. It’s not rainbows and butterflies all the time, but we work really well together in business and in marriage.”

### Convergent Paths to NSU

Although they did not know each other while they were NSU-COM students—Sizemore-Ruiz was a first-year student when Ruiz was already doing his clinical rotations as a third-year student—they already shared an unwitting connection, as they were both raised in Florida.

Sizemore-Ruiz, who grew up in Fort Pierce, credits her parents for always stressing the importance of education. “My mother used to say, ‘People can take anything away from you—your house, your car. But no one can ever take your education away from you.’ Those words always stuck with me,” she said.

As she progressed through high school, Sizemore-Ruiz worked as a pharmacy technician at a retail store as well as at a hospital, making IV chemotherapy infusions and IV antibiotics. “During this time, I was pretty certain that I wanted to be a pharmacist,” she explained. “One day, however, a close friend of mine, who was a pharmacist, told me to consider medical school over pharmacy school because I was ‘good with people and could make a huge difference.’ I began volunteering in the emergency department at a local hospital and fell in love with medicine—and my patients.”

Ruiz, who was born in Miami and spent his early teenage years living in Colombia, said he possessed an innate love of science and math that was nurtured by several mentors throughout his childhood. His desire to pursue a career in medicine, however, was triggered by the death of his father, who unexpectedly succumbed to cancer at a fairly young age. “Medicine is the only profession that combines scholarly pursuits and the opportunity to improve upon the human condition,” he said. “It’s this applied science that, I believe, attracts many people to our noble profession. I also think my interest in medicine and desire to become a doctor were due to my genuine love of understanding how things worked.”

Sizemore-Ruiz, who graduated magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychobiology from Florida Atlantic University at the age of 19, based her decision to attend NSU’s College of Osteopathic Medicine on several factors, including her desire to remain close to home. “When I began medical school, I was only 19,” she said. “I had never lived outside of South Florida and did not believe I was ready to do so. I wanted to be close to my family and friends, as they were my backbone of support.

“The other reason I was drawn to NSU-COM was the immediate patient-care experiences it provides from day one,” added Sizemore-Ruiz, who is the youngest graduate in the

college's history. "I feel now, looking back, that these early experiences with patients, even as a first-year student, helped to shape who I am as a physician today. Most allopathic schools do not offer any patient experience until the third year of medical school, and this bothered me. Also, I am a very hands-on type of learner, and I felt that NSU, and osteopathic medicine as a whole, fit my learning style."

For Ruiz, his exposure to an NSU-COM alumnus while he was pursuing his Bachelor of Science degree in Biological Sciences from Florida International University convinced him that NSU was going to be his medical school of choice. "I shadowed various physicians, including anatomical pathologists, family doctors, and emergency-room physicians, during my undergraduate training," he explained. "It was during my experience in the ER where I met a proud NSU graduate, which prompted my interest in osteopathic medicine. His excitement for the D.O. profession was palpable, and his knowledge base was outstanding. That's when I decided to attend NSU-COM. After I was extended an early acceptance offer, I immediately said yes to the fantastic opportunity."

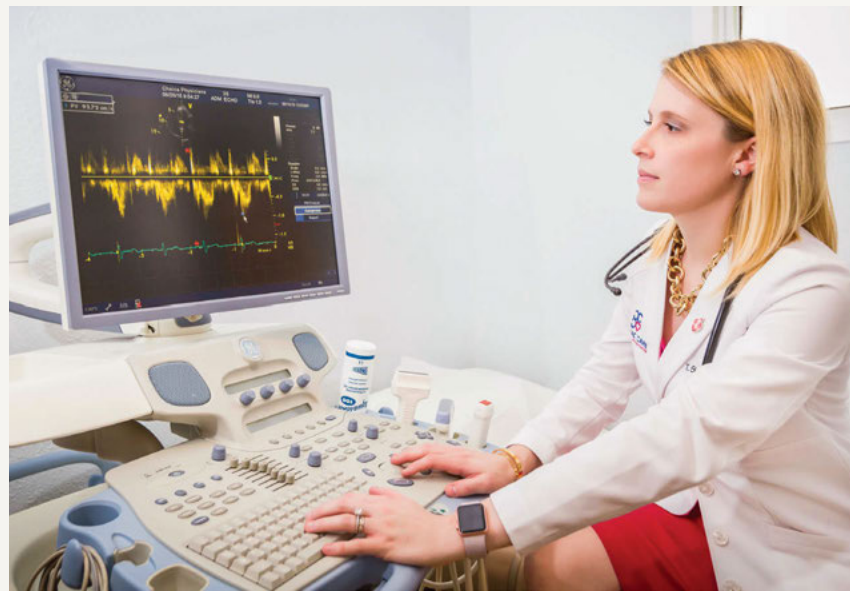
### Career Success Meets Personal Fulfillment

After completing their residency training and exploring various employment opportunities, the D.O. dynamos made the bold decision to open their own practice, called Choice Physicians of South Florida, which offers a range of services that includes general internal medicine, concierge medicine, weight loss, sleep medicine consultations, and cardiology care.

"Making the decision to open your own practice is not an easy one," admitted Sizemore-Ruiz, who serves as president of the Fort Lauderdale/Miami chapters of the American Heart Association and American Stroke Association Board

*"We met and worked together every day in our residency program, so it's all we know. It's not rainbows and butterflies all the time, but we work really well together in business and in marriage."*

—Tiffany Sizemore-Ruiz, D.O.



Tiffany Sizemore-Ruiz reviews the results of an echocardiogram.

of Directors and teaches second-year students in NSU-COM's Cardiovascular System course. "It's funny, because people who do not have their own practices are pretty clueless as to what is involved in them. There is at least a year's worth of work—and about half of a medical school tuition—before the doors can even open.

*(Continued on next page)*



## Dynamic D.O.s (*cont.*)

“After careful consideration, Camilo and I basically said: ‘This is our dream; let’s do it.’ One reason I went to medical school was because I didn’t want a boss,” she added. “I know that sounds terrible, but it’s the truth. I am very particular and like things done a certain way. I understand aesthetics and marketing and know what people like and want. I knew we could do it.”

Ruiz, who completed a sleep disorders fellowship and opened an accredited, full-service sleep lab as part of Choice Physicians, said his decision to open a private practice was rooted in several factors. “It’s obvious that medicine is undergoing changes that many of us find hard to understand—much less predict,” he said. “I found that being an employed physician did not provide or allow for my personal growth as a physician. Hence, entering private practice was a natural decision for me and has been one of the most rewarding experiences in my life.”

Since opening its doors in June 2013, the practice has become quite successful because of its dedicated D.O. duo and its unique approach to medical and patient care. “From the beginning, I knew we had to stand out,” said Sizemore-Ruiz, who completed a cardiology fellowship to add to her curative skillset. “We had to be different, which is why we offer evening and weekend appointments. We also offer a special concierge service to patients, which includes 24/7 access and same-day appointments.”

Recently, a cardiac-specific component was added to the practice with the establishment of Cardiac Care, which offers in-house echocardiograms and exercise and nuclear stress tests, as well as all forms of ultrasound. “I try to do everything I can in my office to cut down on referrals and increase patient satisfaction,” Sizemore-Ruiz said.

So what are the keys to defining what makes this personal and professional partnership fulfilling on so many levels? For Ruiz, it’s a combination of causes. “My enjoyment stems from the rewarding relationships I have formed with my office patients over the last three years, and the chance I’ve had to see them either become healthier or sleep better,” said Ruiz, who is a frequent commentator on nationally syndicated television shows on Univision and CNN. “Moreover, working with my wife allows us to spend extra time together. Although some might find this unusual, we both find it to be pleasant, as it helps us cope with the day-to-day stresses of work—and there is always someone to vent to.”

Because she has mostly mastered the art of balancing her multifaceted life and derives immense joy from her various pursuits, Sizemore-Ruiz has become an extremely self-actualized person at the age of 30. “I enjoy every single day of my life,” admitted Sizemore-Ruiz, who gave birth to the couple’s son, Harrison Jason Ruiz, on July 7, 2014. “If you enjoy what you do, then it is not technically work, right?”

Interestingly, one of her favorite professional activities involves giving back to her osteopathic alma mater as a clinical assistant professor of internal medicine in the college’s second-year Cardiovascular System course. “I am, by no means, your typical professor,” she acknowledged. “I encourage my students to interact with me during the lecture and ask questions. I walk up and down the stairs, and I am known to carry a pocket full of candy for students who participate. I find the students to be eager, yet still humble, and I enjoy their energy.”

Achieving so much at a relatively young age has been a long and arduous process for this D.O. dream team, but the fruits of their labors serve as an example that no goal is unattainable



*“Medicine is the only profession that combines scholarly pursuits and the opportunity to improve upon the human condition.”*

—Camilo Ruiz, D.O., FACOI

Camilo Ruiz takes great pride in helping patients gain a better night's sleep by undergoing comprehensive sleep testing at his cutting-edge lab.

if you possess a distinct vision—and an unrelenting work ethic. “I am proud to have accomplished so much at 30 years old. It is pretty difficult to find a female cardiologist, much less one that just turned 30,” Sizemore-Ruiz stated. “At the age of 30, I was quadruple board certified, had my own business, served as the president of the board of directors for the American Heart Association and the American Stroke Association, and had a baby. I feel like my life is just starting. I cannot wait to see what the future holds for my career, because I am not even close to reaching my long-term goals.”

As a fairly recent osteopathic graduate who has only been an NSU-COM alumnus for eight years, Ruiz imparted these final words of wisdom to the future generation of physicians. “Medicine is a trying, but rewarding, profession,” he said. “In order to find the joy in it, we must practice it in the manner in which we see fit. For some, punching a time clock makes them happy from a financial standpoint; however, the true love and engagement in medicine occur with established patient bonds, knowing patients on a first-name basis—and empathizing with their human condition.”



## NSU-COMmunications

### NSU-COM Welcomes New CEME Affiliate

In July, the inaugural group of residents began rotations at Ocala Regional Medical Center—the newest Florida affiliate in NSU-COM's Consortium for Excellence in Medical Education. The program, which became fully accredited by the American Osteopathic Association in January 2015, incorporates a community hospital, a federally qualified health care center primary care clinic, a dedicated faculty, and a family-oriented town. Curriculum highlights include comprehensive didactics, yearly community projects, a comprehensive nursing home

curriculum, an emphasis on home visits, and methods to help residents learn how to incorporate osteopathic manipulative therapy into continuity practice.

“Our community-based, hands-on osteopathic family medicine residency program is built on the foundation of bringing ‘family’ back to family medicine,” said Cynthia Gomez, B.S., Ocala Regional Medical Center's family medicine residency program coordinator.



The inaugural group of Ocala Regional Medical Center residents, along with several of the center's administrators, pose for a commemorative photo.

### NSU-COM Hosts Cancer Treatment Specialist

Pamela Crilley, D.O., chair of the Department of Medical Oncology at Cancer Treatment Centers of America® (CTCA) and chief of medical oncology at Eastern Regional Medical Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, visited the college on September 29 and spoke with first- and second-year students about a range of issues.

Crilley provided a unique perspective, given that she majored in English literature and art history during her undergraduate studies and translated that background to a career in medicine. She compared a blood smear from a leukemia patient to art and mentioned that patterns in the blood prompted her

interest in hematology. She also indicated that her studies of Shakespeare helped her understand how to be more empathetic with her patients.

Crilley encouraged students who wish to pursue a career in hematology/oncology to determine an area of focus and to heavily research an area of medicine before deciding on a specialty. She even talked about how she watches international soccer and does Zumba to prevent burnout. Later, she met with a small group of students, faculty members, and researchers to discuss clinical research projects.

# *In Memoriam*

**Andrew J. Cohen**, D.O., M.P.H. ('93), of Ocala, Florida, who is the son of Stanley R. Cohen, Ed.D., M.Ed., HPD executive vice dean for educational support, passed away on September 7 at the age of 48 after suffering a fatal heart attack. Cohen, who had recently retired from active medical practice, worked as an internal medicine specialist.

**Theron G. Harrison**, D.O. ('99), of Milledgeville, Georgia, passed away on May 29 at the age of 45.



**Kimberly LaShae Bolden-Johnson**, D.O. ('08), of Miramar, Florida, passed away on August 11 at the age of 41.



**Bo Michael Rowan**, D.O., M.S. ('08), of Marquette, Michigan, passed away peacefully on August 28 at the age of 34 following a three-year battle with a rare form of cancer. Rowan, a family practitioner who was born in Fort Myers, Florida, also practiced obstetrics, delivering more than 100 babies during his short career. According to those who knew him best, he will be remembered for his quiet confidence, loving heart, determination, and strength.

## Club Provides Health Screenings

On October 16, the college's Pediatrics Club collaborated with students from the New York Institute of Technology College of Osteopathic Medicine to provide health screenings at the Orlando Union Rescue Mission to help kick off the American Osteopathic Association's OMED symposium. Thanks to the assistance of Bruce Peters, D.O., FACOP, FAAP, professor of pediatrics, the students provided health screenings to more than 1,000 adults and children with support from the national Student Osteopathic Medical Association and the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority.

During their visit to the rescue mission, children and their families were able to receive height, weight, body-mass index, scoliosis, blood pressure, vision, and other preventive health screenings. After the children completed their screenings, they received gift bags; healthy snacks; and a choice of toys, books, and clothing. Each adult received a new pair of shoes, food baskets, and his or her own special health screening.

## Lifelong Learning Institute Expands Reach

After almost 40 years of providing lifelong learning on the NSU Fort Lauderdale/Davie Campus and 10 years of bringing classes to independent living communities, NSU-COM's Lifelong Learning Institute (LLI) has a new direction. In July, the City of Coconut Creek was the first South Florida municipality to provide university-affiliated and humanities-based lifelong learning classes for residents of all ages. In January 2016, the LLI will begin a partnership with the City of Coral Springs. The LLI's off-campus expansion continues in a collaboration with NSU's Abraham S. Fischler College of Education in a program inaugurated this fall in North Miami Beach.



## NSU News of Note

### Dental College Earns Nearly \$3.4-Million Grant

Dentists and other health care providers who treat patients with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) require special training to understand the skills and techniques needed to care for this growing population. To assist in this effort, NSU's College of Dental Medicine received a nearly \$3.4-million grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to provide training to pediatric dentistry and advanced education in general dentistry residents over a five-year period.

The program will include the development of a curriculum addressing the transition of children and adolescents with ASD to adult dental care and aims to increase access to dental care for children and adolescents with special health care needs such as ASD. Currently, NSU's College of Dental Medicine has pediatric special needs dental clinics at NSU's Mailman Segal Center for Human Development in Davie, NSU Dental Care at Kids In Distress in Fort Lauderdale, and



Oscar Padilla, D.D.S., associate professor (left), and Sirisha Giovindaiah, D.D.S., pediatric dental resident (right), treat pediatric patient Silas Golubchik.

Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital in Hollywood, along with an adult special needs dental clinic in North Miami Beach.

*This project is 100% financed by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under grant number D88HP20126 and Postdoctoral Training in General, Pediatric and Public Health Dentistry and Dental Hygiene for \$3,398,452. This information or content and conclusions are those of the author and should not be construed as the official position or policy of, nor should any endorsements be inferred by HRSA, HHS, or the U.S. Government.*

### NSU Lands on Google Maps

Earlier this year, there were strange things occurring on NSU's Fort Lauderdale/Davie Campus, which became evident when students and faculty and staff members reported seeing people wielding odd-looking contraptions and riding around in bizarre-looking vehicles.

The strange sightings turned out to be a team from Google that was mapping NSU's campus to be part of its popular Street View program. To capture the needed footage, a Google Trekker spent several days at NSU to record nearly every square foot for Street View, which means visitors or those interested in taking a virtual tour can now use their cell phones or computers to navigate their way around the campus.

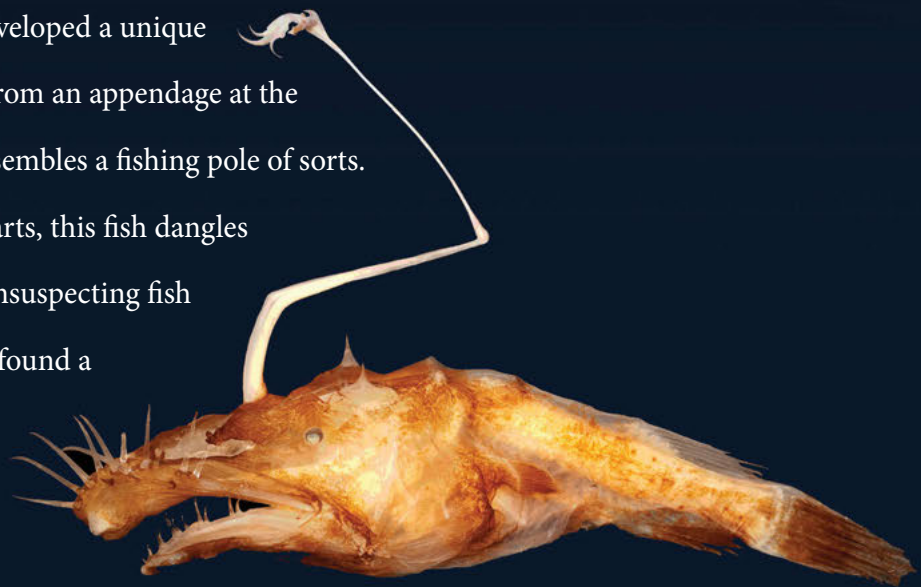


# Deep-Sea Fish Species Discovered

**AN NSU RESEARCH SPECIALIST** from the Halmos College of Natural Sciences and Oceanography recently discovered a never-before-seen anglerfish species from the deep waters of the northern Gulf of Mexico. The three female specimens found ranged in size from 30 to 95 millimeters in length.

Because of the ocean's depth where this species was found, there is no sunlight, which means the only available radiance emanates from creatures that produce bioluminescence (generate their own light source). Additionally, because the fight for food is incessant, they have developed a unique way of attracting prey—from an appendage at the top of their heads that resembles a fishing pole of sorts.

Like its human counterparts, this fish dangles the appendage until an unsuspecting fish swims up thinking it has found a meal—only to quickly learn that it has become the actual meal.





## NSU-COMmunications

### M.P.H. Program Lands in Top 50

NSU-COM's Master of Public Health Program was ranked among the 50 Most Affordable Online M.P.H. Programs in 2015 by the Top Master's in Healthcare Administration website.

"NSU is proud to be ranked among the best online Master of Public Health programs in the nation," said Cyril Blavo, D.O., M.S., M.P.H.T.M., FACOP, who serves as professor and M.P.H. program director. "A value deeply entrenched in our university is providing services to those who may not otherwise have

access, and educating community leaders and health care providers in the tenets of public health is a proven way to achieve this goal."

In addition to the Top Master's in Healthcare Administration ranking (number 36), *Public Health Online* ranked the college's M.P.H. program number 17 in the United States in its list of the Best Online Master of Public Health (M.P.H.) Programs for 2014–2015.