

On the Same Page

“Our Health Science Center Students” November 3, 2009

One of the most humbling—and inspiring—realizations about the work of our Health Science Center colleges and their faculty is that we are educating tomorrow’s health professionals and scientists. Who will they be 5 and 10 years from now? This is not so much a question about the kind of health care or science they will practice or conduct, but rather, who our students will be as people caring for other people. Quite apart from the influence of their education at the UF Health Science Center and any subsequent training as a resident or fellow, a major part of the answer to that question is rooted in who they are when they arrive.

The first year in any of our colleges is quite exciting for our students, but it can be quite daunting at the same time. We are all here to guide their education, and to help them connect with one another and with all of us in the broader HSC community. Since there are six distinct colleges, I thought it would be interesting to profile the entering students in each one. I therefore asked each dean to summarize the characteristics of the entering class and to select one representative student to tell the story of how he or she became interested in their chosen field, and in UF.

Here is the profile of the entering classes of our six HSC colleges—I think you will indeed find it to be both humbling and inspiring:

College of Dentistry—Teresa A. Dolan, DDS, MPH

The College of Dentistry’s Class of 2013 has 83 students who range in age from 21 to 43 years. The average age is 24; there are eight students over the age of 30. Florida residents make up 89 percent of the class with nine non-residents who hail from North Carolina, Georgia, Texas, Kansas, Michigan, Utah, Indiana and Wisconsin. At 52 percent, the women slightly outnumber the men. The class has a diverse background with 17 Hispanics (21 percent), seven African Americans (8 percent), 11 Asian/Pacific Islanders (13 percent), and five classifying themselves as “other” (6 percent).



Hugo Galdos

This is my second time in dental school. I graduated in 1993 from dental school at the Medical Institute of Higher Education in Cuba and practiced for 11 years there until 2004 when I was sent to Venezuela as part of an exchange between Castro and Chavez. Cuba sent doctors to Venezuela to bolster Chavez’s political standing and Chavez sent oil in exchange to Cuba. They also asked us to do political work when we arrived and, because I disagreed, I defected. It was a long way from there to the United States but I made it and when I crossed the bridge from Mexico to Texas, I knew I was safe and home.

As a child I’d been interested in dentistry because my uncle is a dentist. But when I started school I fell completely in love with the profession. Even in Cuba, I had heard of the dental school at UF and once I arrived in the United States it was always my wish to come here for my US dental education. I worked at different jobs in Miami for a while then began assisting a dentist in Miami and studying for my national boards. After I received my acceptance from UF, I cried.

Currently I am a legal resident and will become a citizen next year. My family, including my wife and mother, are still in Cuba and I hope to have them join me soon.

College of Medicine –Interim Dean: Michael L. Good, MD

The UF COM class of 2013 consists of 135 individuals, 12 of whom join the class via the Junior Honors Program (JHP). The class ranges in age from 20 to 36, with 111 from age 22 to 29. Seventy-five are male and 130 are Florida residents. Thirteen individuals self describe as an under-represented minority. The entering grade point averages are 3.72 for science and 3.78 overall. The average entering MCAT score is 31.8, distributed approximately 10 verbal, 11 biological sciences and 11 physical science. The national average for all entering medical students is approximately 30. The most common undergraduate majors include biology 19, interdisciplinary biomedical science 12, biochemistry 12 and psychology 11. There were 54 other majors.

We received a total of 2611 applications via AMCAS, 556 of which (21%) came from University of Florida undergraduates. We evaluated 1371 secondary applications and interviewed 344 individuals, 240 of whom (70%) were offered acceptance. Some of those not offered acceptance withdrew before we could do so.

Thirty-nine entering class members came from Barron's tier 1 undergraduate institutions; 76 attended tier 2 schools, including 69 from UF, 12 of whom entered via the JHP. Other Florida undergraduate schools represented: Miami 4, USF 3, New College 2, FAU 1, FIU 1, Stetson 1, and UWF 1.

Of the 112 students who declined their acceptance, 57 came from tier 1 undergraduate schools and 40 from tier 2. Non-Florida medical schools chosen by these 112 applicants include: Duke 6, Emory 6, Johns Hopkins 5, Vanderbilt 5, Harvard 4, Northwestern 4, and NYU 4. In-state medical schools selected by this group include Miami 16, UCF 10, USF 6 and FSU 1.

Recruiting under-represented minority applicants remains a challenge. This year we accepted 14 Black or African American applicants, only 2 of whom chose to attend UF. We accepted 24 Hispanic students and retained 10.



Whitney Stern, MS 1

I admire every doctor I have known. Unfortunately, I've had a lot of experience with doctors. At 10, I had knee surgery, my sister has had six back surgeries and my mother is a cancer survivor. I grew up in New Jersey and always told people I wanted to be a doctor. I came to UF on a diving scholarship and majored in pre-med. But it wasn't until my sophomore year that I realized if I was serious about going to medical school, I had to focus on that goal or rethink my future. At the time, I was practicing almost three hours a day. How would I find the time for extracurricular activities that would expose me to patient care and medical research? That year, my older sister became very sick and fell into a coma for eight days. She is fine now, but her illness solidified my determination to enter medical school. You just never know what's going to happen in this one life that we are given. I told myself "It's now or never." I couldn't believe my eyes when I received my acceptance to the UF College of Medicine. I am very happy and proud to be here with so many amazing people that make up our class. There is nowhere else I'd rather be.

College of Nursing – Dean: Kathleen A. Long, PhD, APRN

The University of Florida College of Nursing Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree program prepares graduates to enter professional positions in primary, secondary and tertiary care settings, caring for patients of all ages and from diverse backgrounds. Undergraduate nursing students at all levels have excellent opportunities to explore nursing research and science, be professionally involved with student and professional governance, and access clinical experiences with patients across a wide variety of settings. As of Fall 2009, the College enrolled a total of 55 students in the Accelerated BSN program, ranging in ages from 21 to 60. Of these 55 students, 90% hailed from Florida and 20% are from an under-represented minority group. The Generic BSN program enrolled 125 students ranging in ages from 19 to 44, with 94% from Florida and 40% from an under-represented minority group. UF BSN graduates consistently exceed national and state norms for NCLEX-RN licensure examination pass rates, averaging above 95 percent. The majority of those completing a BSN at UF advance to graduate degree programs in nursing.

The UF College of Nursing offers the oldest graduate degree programs in Florida and is among the most respected of such programs in the nation. The College offers three options at the graduate level: Master of Science in Nursing (MSN), Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP), and PhD in Nursing Science. Graduate students are actively engaged in nursing research and in a variety of leadership roles. In Fall of 2009 the College enrolled a total of 26 new students in the MSN program ranging in ages from 22 to 52. These students are preparing for the innovative Clinical Nurse Leader role, an advanced *generalist* nurse who oversees and directs care for a group of patients, leads interdisciplinary teams in care delivery and serves as the client's advocate in the health care system. Of the 26 students, 92 percent are from Florida and 15 percent are from an under-represented minority group. The BSN to DNP program enrolled 50 new students this past fall. They ranged in ages from 22 to 56, with 96 percent from Florida and 20 percent from an under-represented minority group. The post-master's DNP program enrolled 24 additional students ranging in age from 28 to 60 with 100 percent from Florida and 21 percent from an under-represented minority group. The DNP degree is a practice-focused doctorate designed to prepare expert nurses to practice at the highest levels of specialized advanced practice. Finally, the PhD program enrolled a total of 8 new students with ages ranging from 28-60 with 100 percent of the students from Florida and 25 percent from an under-represented minority group. The PhD Program currently has 32 students. Graduates of this program go on to academic roles, as well as executive leadership in health systems and health policy settings.



Sara Nowlis

My journey toward a career in professional nursing began in 1997 as a health science education major at UF. After graduation, I spent two years as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Niger, West Africa. It was during this time that I learned firsthand about the importance of public health nursing. Hoping to provide hands-on health care to people in need—those suffering from poverty, famine and tropical diseases—I decided to pursue nursing education.

After returning from Niger, I was admitted to the Accelerated BSN Nursing program at the University of North Florida and earned my BSN. After graduation, I began work as a tuberculosis case manager with the Anchorage, Alaska Health Department. It was a good learning experience and put my public health nursing skills to the test. However, my desire to return to global humanitarian health care led me to apply for Doctors Without Borders, an international medical humanitarian organization. Soon after that I was off to

Uganda, East Africa. For seven months, I worked in a regional referral hospital's HIV/AIDS project. Gaining confidence in my personal and professional abilities, I decided to seek an advanced nursing degree. I researched graduate nursing programs and chose UF because it clearly has the best nursing program in the state. Even though it meant taking my GRE's and completing the application process in Uganda, I was determined to become a Gator Nurse!

I am excited to be part of the new DNP program, and look forward to my future career. I am studying to become a Family Nurse Practitioner. I know this program will prepare me well for interdisciplinary work and significant contributions to global humanitarian health care.

College of Pharmacy—William H. Riffe, PhD

For the 2009 entry-level PharmD class:

- 1612 applications were received from which 302 individuals were successful in gaining admission for the fall semester at the four campuses
 - Gainesville 133;
 - Jacksonville 56;
 - Orlando 59;
 - St. Petersburg 54).
- The science grade point average for the 302 admitted students is a 3.48
- The average composite score on the Pharmacy College Admission Test is at the 80th percentile.
- The entering pharmacy class is composed of:
 - 98% Florida residents
 - 49% of the admitted class has a baccalaureate degree
 - The average age of students admitted in 2009 is 26 years.
 - Minority students represent 44% of the class
 - Black 6%,
 - Hispanic 15%,
 - Asian 19%,
 - Other 6%.
 - 50% of the class completed most of their pre-professional coursework at the University of Florida and 31% completed coursework at other four-year colleges and universities. 19% of admitted students completed pre-professional coursework at community colleges.



Ryan Haumschild

Ryan Haumschild

I grew up in Clearwater, Florida and first became interested in pharmacy back in high school. I shadowed my father at the hospital, as he is a pharmacist and graduate of UF's College of Pharmacy (Class of '76). I realized then how the field of pharmacy was evolving, with the Doctor of Pharmacy degree and many residency programs available throughout the county. Being able to improve therapeutic outcomes through pharmacotherapy and medication management sharpened my interest in the field. I conducted my undergraduate coursework at UCF receiving a bachelor's degree in health services administration. I completed my MBA before being accepted into UF's Doctor of Pharmacy program. I chose to attend

pharmacy school at UF over schools like UNC and Michigan, because of the strong clinical curriculum and nationally recognized faculty. I wanted to attend a top ten pharmacy school

with a prestigious on campus teaching hospital like Shands. Being able to have access to a wide array of institutional pharmacists from Shands and the VA will help solidify my interests within the field of pharmacy. I knew that by choosing UF, I would not only develop as a future pharmacist, but as a leader in the healthcare system.

College of Public Health and Health Professions—Dean: Michael G. Perri, PhD

PHHP has over 2000 students across a diverse array of programs including seven Ph.D. degrees, two professional doctoral degrees, eight master's degrees, and a bachelor of health science degree offering 2 majors. This year's entering class of 601 is as diverse as the college's choice of majors. PHHP students range in age from 18 to 66 and represent a broad range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Almost 25% of the entering class is comprised of students from underrepresented minority groups. The entering class is 9% African-American, 9% Latino, and 6% Native American or Pacific Islander. One of PHHP's primary objectives is collaboration between disciplines within public health and health professions, and this is reflected in the opportunity for students to complete more than one degree. Kathryn Ross is one student taking advantage of the breadth of education offered in the college by completing both a Ph. D. in clinical and health psychology and a master's degree in public health.



Kathryn Ross (Kat), M.S.

I am a first-year Master of Public Health (MPH) student in the College of Public Health and Health Professions. What makes me unusual among my MPH student cohort is that I was already a student here at PHHP—I am in my third year of studies for a PhD in clinical psychology. I moved here from Virginia, where I did my undergraduate work in psychology at Virginia Commonwealth University and where I became interested in pursuing graduate studies while working in a research lab. I chose to pursue graduate education in the College of Public Health and Health Professions because PHHP allowed me to integrate training in clinical psychology with public health. I enrolled in the MPH program primarily to receive

training in biostatistics so that I might be better prepared to design and analyze the results of longitudinal clinical trials. I believe that having a PhD in clinical psychology combined with an MPH will prepare me to work well on multidisciplinary research teams and to communicate effectively with other health professionals.

College of Veterinary Medicine—Dean: Glen F. Hoffsis, DVM, MS

The UF CVM Class of 2013 is comprised of 88 individuals, including 72 females and 16 males. The class, which ranges in age from 20 to 53, includes 82 Florida residents and fifteen individuals who self describe as an under-represented minority. The entering grade point averages are 3.56 for science courses and 3.51 overall. The average entering GRE score is 1203, including average scores of 524 and 679 in verbal and quantitative sections, respectively. All members of the class earned bachelor's degrees with the most common undergraduate majors being animal science (39), biology (20), zoology (5) as well as 14 other majors. In addition, ten members of the class earned graduate or professional degrees, including six with Master's degrees and three with MPH.

The final class of 88 was selected from 878 VMCAS applications of which 19% came from University of Florida undergraduates. Members of the entering class came from 28 undergraduate institutions with the greatest number (50) earning degrees from the University of Florida. Other state institutions represented in the entering class include FAU, FIU, FSU, Rollins College, UCF, UM, USF and UWF. Non-Florida undergraduate institutions were represented widely in the entering class, including Columbia, Dartmouth, Duke, Princeton, Smith College, VPI and William & Mary. All ten students who declined the offer of acceptance, matriculated at other colleges of veterinary medicine. Recruiting of under-represented minority applicants remains a high priority. This year was successful insofar as 16 of the 17 applicants who were offered acceptance are members of the class, including both African American applicants and 10 of 11 Hispanic applicants.



Nicole Compo

Deciding to become a veterinarian was an easy choice, albeit a recent one compared to my classmates. While attending marine science magnet programs before college and as a marine biology major in college, I always envisioned a career that centered on marine life and the complex ecosystems of the ocean. In college, I participated in varied research projects, including studies of sea turtle populations and tracking great white sharks off the coast of South Africa. However, in spite of my strong passion for marine biology, I was uncertain about my ultimate career path. That all changed in the spring of 2007, when I enrolled in an advanced training program at Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution (HBOI), where I

encountered for the first time a wide range of cutting-edge marine science studies. From aquaculture to drug discovery, I worked with and learned from researchers who were exploring diverse and exciting topics, such as the cancer-killing capabilities of bacteria living symbiotically with sponges or evaluating the interactions between near-shore communities and large-scale fish culture systems. However, one course taught by a veterinarian, profoundly impacted me and started me on the path to become a veterinarian. While listening to a talk by Dr. Greg Bossart, a marine mammal veterinarian who was studying infections in marine populations of the Indian River, I finally came to the realization that I had at last found a path for my passion...marine mammal veterinarian. The rest was history. I set my sights on the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine in view of their unique program in Aquatic Animal Medicine and the excellent reputation of the college. I broadened my veterinary experience to become more competitive as an applicant and knew that I would have to be persistent. While teaching high school science classes and volunteering at veterinary clinics, I received my acceptance to UF. I couldn't be happier anywhere than where I am right now.