



Latino Medical Student Association at UC Irvine

Winter 2009 Newsletter

A LETTER FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

This is another exciting year here at UC Irvine, and we're pleased to have started out the gates with a bang! Coming off some very strong momentum last year, our club leadership & membership continue to grow in both numbers & intensity, representing one of the most active student bodies at UC Irvine. As you can see with our updates, our membership has already participated in a wide variety of events this year. These range from participation at regional LMSA leadership conferences, to co-hosting our annual UCI Pre-Health conference, to direct mentorship of dozens of local underrepresented pre-health students. Our organization continues to serve as the forum for students with varied ambitions, including promotion of greater diversity in graduate health education, solutions for health inequities amongst the surrounding communities, and working towards resolving the social injustices that currently exist. We welcome the continued collaboration with all of you, appreciate your influx of ideas & energy, and look forward to what remains to be achieved this year & beyond.

Sincerely,

Yasser Giron, Carlos Rodriguez & Craig Harrison
LMSA Co-Chairs

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

PRE-HEALTH CONFERENCE:

ACHIEVING UNITY THROUGH DIVERSITY

The UCI chapters of LMSA and SNMA held their 8th Annual Pre-Health Conference on October 25th, 2008 with the theme "Achieving Unity through Diversity in Healthcare."



The conference committee, made up of both undergraduates and medical students, brought in excellent speakers to motivate and educate over 450 high school and undergraduate pre-health students. We had over 34 exhibitors representing various medical schools and other health professional schools from around the country. The overall conference ran smoothly and it was very inspirational to see so many students interested in medicine and the issues affecting underserved populations. LMSA would like to thank SNMA, UCI CCM, UCI MAPS and Aspiring Black Physicians for your hard work in planning such a successful conference.



Latino Medical Student Association at UCIrvine

Winter 2009 Newsletter

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (cont.)

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

During the fall quarter the Mentorship program kicked off the year with a Mentorship Mixer to welcome our new 2008-2009 mentees, as well as our two new 1st year Mentorship Co-Chairs, Juan Rendon, and Katia Sanchez.

HARBOR-UCLA SUMMER URBAN HEALTH FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Last summer three LMSA members – Tatianne Velo, Carlos Rodriguez, and Yasser Giron – participated in the Harbor-UCLA Summer Urban Health Fellowship Program through the Department of Family Medicine. The project consisted of three components: mentorship, research, and clinical training. Our LMSA medical students were mentored by physicians and, in turn, they mentored undergraduate and high school students from underrepresented backgrounds. In addition, our LMSA medical students helped plan two health fairs in the underserved community of Wilmington, a predominantly Latino community. The community is located next to a port that is surrounded by polluting installations of various oil companies. The health fairs served over 500 uninsured and underinsured people, many of whom suffered from negative health effects caused by pollution and poverty. For the research aspect, the medical students helped investigate the severity of illness at three clinic sites in Wilmington that are facing

potential closure. The research was presented at a Health Summit where members of the media and the community came out to hear about the results and participate in creating solutions. If you are looking to spend your summer mentoring and advocating, this is the program for you! Applications for the Summer Urban Health Fellowship are due in March 2009. For more info you can contact Dr. Gilberto Granados at: ggranado@ucla.edu



HIGHLIGHT ON THE CHIAPAS PROJECT: A Report from LMSA Secretary Chris Brown

Continuing a relationship established by John Rose, a current PRIME student in his MPH studies at Harvard, Farah Karipineni, Anna Morgan, Jackie Ho, and I travelled to Chiapas, Mexico last summer, to work in partnership with the historically marginalized people of the Highlands. We worked with Fernando Gomez Hernandez, the coordinator of health promotion for Las Abejas, a community-based



Latino Medical Student Association at UCIrvine

Winter 2009 Newsletter

organization that advocates for legal, social, and health rights for the indigenous people of the Highlands surrounding the central city of San Cristobal de las Casas. Some of the serious health issues that affect the people of the communities are attributed to the use of open fires to cook indoors. Women, the primary cooks of each household, are constantly exposed to the smoke from burning firewood, and are at high risk for developing respiratory illnesses, watery eyes, and burns. To address this problem, we installed the ONIL ecological stove in 38 households in several of these communities. The ONIL stove has an internal center of combustion and an aluminum chimney that diverts smoke outside of the house while preventing burns through its insulation and thick clay frame. The increased efficiency of wood burning reduces the need for firewood, saving money and time spent acquiring wood and preventing further deforestation of the surrounding environment.

In order to test the efficacy of the stoves, we performed spirometry to assess lung function in the primary cooks of each household receiving a stove, measuring both forced expiratory volume in one second (FEV1) and forced vital capacity (FVC). To assess the drop in indoor air pollution in the kitchens, we measured airborne particulate matter with a diameter of 2.5 micrometers (PM2.5). In December we returned to take post measurements after 5 months of stove use.

In addition to the epidemiological study, the crew and I learned about the health promoter system in these semi-autonomous communities with rare access to other forms of medical care.

This system of highly-trained, community-elected individuals who work on a voluntary basis gave us insight into community-based medicine, and the intimate relationship between provider and patient that is rarely seen in our medical system. Pushed into a marginalized society by years of oppression by the state and federal government and international markets, the Tzotzil Maya people of Quexhalukum, Acteal, Colonia Puebla, and Chuchtik face many hardships we never imagined. Our partnership with them, which has been truly amazing and life-changing, is by no means over. We hope that future UCI SOM students will carry on this tradition and work in solidarity with the people of Chiapas for years to come.

A SPECIAL MESSAGE FOR PRE-HEALTH STUDENTS, from the Mentorship Committee

As you think about your premedical education over the coming years, we'd like to offer some words of encouragement and advice! First, broaden your horizons. Remember that what makes a good healthcare provider is life experience, and broad interests. Choose courses that interest you, outside of your prerequisites for medical school. Tip #2 goes right along with that- don't pack on the sciences. Science is a subject that deserves



Latino Medical Student Association at UCIrvine

Winter 2009 Newsletter

respect, dedicating time and energy to it, so don't overdo it. And thirdly, read, read, read! There is no better way to prepare for the ominous Verbal section of the MCAT, than to read alongside your favorite dictionary, (if you don't have one, buy one) and Cliff's notes, or to discuss your assigned readings with classmates. Being a physician means being a communicator, an advocate, a partner, and a scientist. And as we go further into our training it becomes very obvious that to make real change in healthcare, we need to be powerful communicators, challenging current policies and ideas, arguing convincingly, and speaking effectively. This requires writing, reading comprehension and effective public speaking skills. Now is the time to work on this folks; this is a great opportunity to use the variety of courses at your disposal at UCI to build these skills. Adelante, si se puede!

THANKS TO OUR 2008-2009 LMSA OFFICERS!

Co-Chairs:

Yasser Giron, Carlos Rodriguez, Craig Harrison

Treasurer:

Merisa Piper and Karen Ambert

Mentorship Coordinator:

Tatianne Velo, Juan Rendon and Katia Sanchez

Medical Student Representatives:

Gaspar Riversa & Nancy Anaya Navarro

Community Affairs:

Gaspar Rivera and Jennifer Alloo

Outreach Coordinator:

Kareen Espino & Tania Portillo

Undergraduate Representative:

Ernesto Gonzales and Jerry Ngo

Newsletter Editor/Historian:

Aislinn Bird, Megan Tan & Paola Case

Secretary:

Chris Brown

Web Master:

Ruben Paul

Post-Bac Admissions Liaison:

Maria Robles-Rosales