

UNM

medicine

fall 2019

Lives in the Balance

exploring approaches
to a sustainable career

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO SCHOOL OF MEDICINE ALUMNI MAGAZINE

Why did Dr. Susan Scott establish an endowed scholarship at the UNM School of Medicine?

“I give because minimizing student debt through scholarship support ensures we will continue to provide New Mexico with life-saving services and well-trained providers for generations to come.”

See inside back cover to learn more . . .



UNM medicine

fall 2019

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Dear Friends,

As you may know, I recently announced my intention to retire and transition the UNM Health Sciences Center and the School of Medicine to new executive leadership. I will stay on in my current position while President Garnett S. Stokes commences a search for a permanent replacement.

Going forward, I plan to take on a part-time role working directly with medical students. I'm very much looking forward to spending more meaningful time with them and with my colleagues.

The School of Medicine has been central to my life ever since I arrived here for a family medicine residency in 1976. I have been privileged to help our school enhance its capacity to serve all New Mexicans. And I have greatly enjoyed witnessing the evolution of our school's unique culture, which reflects the diversity and beauty of this state we call home.

Today, we're exploring new ways to enrich the learning experience. We want to stimulate our students' intellectual curiosity and support their passion for medicine – and we hope to illuminate new pathways to lifelong engagement with their chosen profession.

We already have an outstanding undergraduate medical education curriculum – but I believe we can do even better. That's why we created the new Learning Environment Office.

This initiative provides learners with a secure, confidential way to voice their concerns regarding any aspect of their educational experience. It also communicates our openness to hearing about any issues that ought to be addressed in order to further enhance the quality of our medical education.

This reflects a broader paradigm shift in medical school curriculum design and pedagogy. Educational leaders are recognizing the value of a broader, more diverse student body, as well as the need to support the whole person.

The wonderful diversity of our learning community is reflected in the diverse topics covered in this issue of UNM Medicine.

You'll learn about a class introducing the practice of mindfulness to third-year medical students as a tool for enhancing their performance and maintaining their equilibrium amid stressful circumstances.

We also report on the benefits of hypnotherapy in helping students quell their test anxiety, and the innovative steps taken by one of our alumni to promote wellness within his medical group.

I have always believed that we as physicians are given an incomparable opportunity to serve, save lives and improve the circumstances of others. Our School of Medicine embodies these values in so many ways – and for that we can all be proud.

With warm regards,

Paul B. Roth, MD, MS

Chancellor for Health Sciences
CEO, UNM Health System
Dean, UNM School of Medicine

PHOTO BY REBECCA GUSTAF

The wave of migrants seeking asylum at New Mexico's southern border last summer posed an urgent humanitarian crisis, threatening to overwhelm local health care resources. That prompted the New Mexico Department of Health to turn to the UNM Health Sciences Center for help.

UNM's Office for Community Health, the Department of Family & Community Medicine, the Southern New Mexico Family Medicine Residency Program and the New Mexico Primary Care Training Consortium (NMPCTC) are partnering in a pilot project to recruit residents for an elective month-long rotation addressing health and social issues along the border.

"The Department of Health is so supportive of this skilled, professional resource that after this coming pilot year, it has committed to funding border resident rotations for years into the future," said **Arthur Kaufman, MD**, UNM's Vice Chancellor for Community Health.

"The Southern New Mexico Family Medicine Residency faculty have developed the curriculum and will supervise the residents on-site, and the NMPCTC will provide recruiting, logistical and administrative support," he said.

Bolstering Border Health UNM Partners in New Residency Rotation

by Michael Haederle

Las Cruces native **Erin Corriveau, MD '09**, a graduate of UNM's family medicine residency and assistant professor in the University of Kansas Department of Family Medicine, had a preview of what they might encounter when she spent 10 days working in the Deming and Las Cruces shelters in early July.

The shelter, housed in a rusting World War II-era airplane hangar at the Deming Municipal Airport, saw a steady stream of migrants arriving in U.S. Border Patrol vans – many of them families with young children. Conditions were sweltering in the hangar, which had fans, but lacked air conditioning.

"After they were seated, the volunteers used scissors to cut off their detention bracelets," Corriveau recalled. "One woman started sobbing. We let them know we would do our best to feed them, hydrate them, provide medical care and help with transportation planning."

The visitors were able to shower and change into donated clothing. Many spent the night before finding transportation to their destinations. Corriveau treated people for a host of complaints, including dehydration, broken bones and the flu. "We sent one very ill child to the hospital," she said.

Interpreters were on hand to help her communicate with patients, but Corriveau didn't need any help figuring out how to kick a soccer ball around inside the cavernous building with the children. "I think we had fun together, which helped with trust," she said.

Volunteers from around the country were joined by New Mexico Department of Health nurses and staffers, as well as physicians donating their time through the New Mexico Medical Reserve Corps.

John Andazola, MD '97, has headed the Las Cruces-based Southern New Mexico Family Residency since 2009. The program has seen asylum seekers on and off for five years, he says.

The new state funding will provide for two residents to rotate in Las Cruces at a time. "It's not just focused on asylum care," he says. "We're looking at the border health needs of the state and the bi-national health needs with Mexico."

The residents will be asked to record and reflect on their experiences and draft suggestions to bring back to their home programs. Andazola also hopes that the new rotation will lay the foundation for creating a border health fellowship. ▼

Learning to be Present

Mindfulness Training Finds a Place in the Medical School Curriculum by Michael Haederle

One Friday in August, 15 third-year medical students gather at noon in a windowless conference room in the Department of Surgery offices, helping themselves to sandwich wraps, chips and cookies while discussing the benefits of mindfulness.

Rebecca Williams-Karnesky, MD, PhD, a senior resident in General Surgery, leads the conversation. “Have any of you been using the breathing exercises that we’ve talked about?” she asks.

A student raises her hand. “Yeah, I did it yesterday,” she says, describing a pressure-filled encounter with a surgeon who put her on the spot by asking her to describe the layers of the abdominal wall.

“I will think something, but not say the right thing,” the student admits, “so I just paused and did the belly breathing thing.” Having calmed herself, she provided the right answer. “It helps you catch up your words to your brain.”

Williams-Karnesky nods approvingly as another student relates how he used his breathing to quell panicky feelings during a five-hour procedure in a too-warm room that lacked air conditioning.

A working definition of mindfulness flashes up on the screen at the front of the room: “Paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally.”

This is a theme that Williams-Karnesky returns to repeatedly in the mindfulness course, which unfolds in three one-hour sessions. It is mandatory for all third-years as they rotate through their surgical clerkships, drawing on a growing body of research suggesting that mindfulness can mitigate the risk of physician burnout.

She leads students through a variety of meditative techniques, including slow, steady abdominal breathing, which activates the body’s relaxing parasympathetic response, mindful body scans and lovingkindness meditation, a practice shown to promote compassion.

“So much of medicine is about self-sacrifice for others,” she says. “I spend one of the three sessions talking about compassion – and also self-compassion. We forget that we tell ourselves that we’re superhuman and these things don’t affect us, but they do, very deeply.”

Williams-Karnesky brings unique credentials to her teaching role. When she started her MD/PhD program at Oregon Health & Science University in Portland, a nascent interest in meditation led her to visit the Dharma Rain Zen Center, which was located just two blocks from where she was living. “I was just like, ‘This is it, I’m home.’”

Before long, she was living at the Zen center and joining in daily group meditation.

Dedicated training – including intensive seven-day meditation retreats called sesshin – enabled Williams-Karnesky to manage the stress of medical school and helped her to clarify why she wanted to become a physician in the first place.

“I decided when I was 5 I was going to be a doctor,” she says. Through her Zen practice, she found herself asking, “Why am I doing this? How much is my ego wrapped up in this, and how do I take my ego out of it? How do I tap into that motivation of compassion?”

As she started to take more of a hand in patient care, she also found it was “very helpful in facing those challenging experiences in the clinical context, of feeling helpless or overwhelmed.”

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PHOTO BY JETT LOE





Mind Magic

Using Hypnotherapy to Help Medical Students Manage Test Anxiety

by Michael Haederle

PHOTO BY JETT LOE

at a glance

Like many of her medical school classmates, **Katina Kasscieh** was dreading the make-or-break Step 1 exam – so much so that she delayed sitting for it because her mind would go blank while taking practice tests.

Then a friend told her about undergoing hypnotherapy with **Robert E. Sapien, MD**, professor in the Department of Emergency Medicine and associate dean for admissions in the School of Medicine.

“It was my last-ditch effort to overcome test anxiety, because it can cause you to fail, even though you know all the knowledge,” Kasscieh says.

Over the course of three sessions, Sapien used hypnotic suggestion to induce a deep state of relaxation and asked Kasscieh to visualize taking the exam while feeling calm, collected and focused. The idea was to overcome her paralyzing negative self-talk, she says.

“He kind of just talks you through these lies we tell ourselves as adults,” she says. “You break down these barriers in your subconscious brain that you tell yourself all day long without realizing.”

When it came time to take the exam, the crippling test anxiety was gone. Now, Kasscieh regularly practices self-hypnosis at home to relax and re-center herself. And she encourages her friends to explore it as well.

Sapien says hypnotherapy changed his life when he first encountered it 15 years ago. At the time, he was intrigued by a colleague’s report that hypnosis had eased his child’s anxiety while undergoing a dental procedure.

“I thought it would be good to try in the Pediatric ER,” he says. Sapien enrolled in a class at the Hypnotherapy Academy of America, intending to simply learn basic hypnosis.

But during that weeklong introduction, “I had a really intense emotional connection with a fellow student

during an activity,” he says. “It really got me thinking about the possibilities of connecting with someone on that level.”

The experience that led him to undergo the academy’s full course in hypnotherapy training. Today, he teaches there part-time, treats patients and has founded a professional society for hypnotherapists based on the medical model.

Hypnotherapy is nothing like “stage hypnosis,” where entertainers bring audience members onstage to behave in unusual ways, Sapien says. Hypnosis is simply an altered state of consciousness that naturally induces the body’s parasympathetic “relaxation response.”

Patients in this state still retain their agency and cannot be made to do something that they wouldn’t do otherwise, he says, but the hypnotic trance provides them access to deeply embedded beliefs and long-buried subconscious memories.

“It’s really helping the individual work through limiting beliefs,” says Sapien, who is careful to add, “It’s an adjunct – it’s not to take the place of” more conventional forms of treatment.

Sapien hopes to see greater scientific validation for the technique and recently led a study of hypnotherapy-treated patients with overactive bladder who did as well as – and in some cases better than – those who received traditional medication-only treatment.

Sapien sees about 10 medical students each year, many of whom are referred by their Learning Communities mentors. And while it might seem that highly educated people would be the least susceptible to hypnosis, the opposite is usually the case.

“It’s actually those with a really developed and strong mind who are able to do this work well,” Sapien says. “They’re bright people. It’s fun to work with them.”

Life in the Balance

HOW HARSHINI MUKUNDAN FORGED A STELLAR RESEARCH CAREER ON HER OWN TERMS

by Michael Haederle



PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF LOS ALAMOS NATIONAL LABORATORY

Harshini Mukundan, PhD '03, juggles a dizzying number of responsibilities – while somehow making it all look effortless.

As an administrator in the Chemistry Division at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), she serves as deputy group leader for Physical Chemistry and Applied Spectroscopy and team leader in Chemistry for Biomedical Applications.

She's also a teacher – graduate students and fellows from UNM's Biomedical Sciences Graduate Program work in her lab. And she's a devoted parent and spouse, who, in her spare time, participates in traditional Indian dance.

But in her role as a research scientist, Mukundan is laser-focused on finding solutions to some of the most urgent health concerns facing humanity. At LANL she has developed diagnostic assays for tuberculosis and helped create technology to detect breast cancer and influenza. Her current – highly ambitious – research agenda centers on finding a universal method for identifying infectious disease.

Mukundan's lab has unraveled some of the common methods by which disease-causing organisms interact with a human host in hopes of creating a mechanism to mimic what the body already does naturally.

“All pathogens support or secrete biomarkers that are recognized by our innate immune system,” she says, adding that many of these molecules are highly conserved. **“The body recognizes conserved signatures. It looks at the commonality and uses that to mount a response.”**

These molecules are not easily detected in the bloodstream, but they are carried throughout the body by hitchhiking on HDL and LDL cholesterol proteins. “My buzzword for them is the ‘biological taxi service,’” she says.

Mukundan and her collaborators are working on sensor technology that can liberate these biomarkers from their cholesterol hosts and measure them, providing a rapid readout of what type of infection they're signaling.

While the lab's work has national defense applications, it also has obvious relevance in clinical health care and is already being assessed for its use in diagnosing disease in the field. It has been tested in South Korea, Uganda and Kenya, Mukundan says, and could provide a quick way to distinguish a bacterial from a viral infection.

Mukundan's path to a leadership role at the nation's premier national laboratory started in a small town in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu, where her father was in banking and her mother was a teacher.

Mukundan earned her undergraduate degree in microbiology from the University of Delhi in 1995. “It seemed cool,” she says. “I liked biology and I always wanted to do medicine or biology.” She went on to complete a master’s in microbiology at Barkatullah University in Bhopal, with her thesis research conducted at India’s National Institute of Immunology.

Her lab work there centered on drug-resistant cancer cell lines. “There were pretty awesome researchers working at NII,” Mukundan says. “I got to meet a lot of really cool people. Essentially, it was just the exposure, and then I decided I wanted to do a PhD.”

She and her husband, LANL staff scientist Rangachary Mukundan, came to the U.S. for their doctoral work. He earned his PhD in materials science at the University of Pennsylvania and joined LANL as a postdoctoral fellow in 1997.

Harshini initially was accepted at Penn for her PhD, but transferred to The University of New Mexico when her husband got his job at Los Alamos. As a late arrival in UNM’s Biomedical Sciences graduate program she started by rotating through several labs, where she met Nancy Kanagy, PhD, now a professor in the Department of Cell Biology & Physiology.

“I really liked Nancy,” Mukundan says. “I liked her work ethic and approach to balance. She has this way of making you feel very welcome.”

At the time, Kanagy was working on alpha adrenergic receptors and their role in cardiovascular disease, which Mukundan found interesting. Mukundan started by exploring a hypothesis involving the movement of calcium ions in cells that soon turned out to be incorrect.

“I definitely proved that the hypothesis was wrong,” she says. “We got a paper out of it, but that research was at a dead end. We had to make a project change.”

With Kanagy and fellow Cell Biology professor Thomas Resta, Mukundan devised a new project. “It was looking at gender differences in hypertension and the role of estrogen in erythropoietin regulation,” she says.

In putting together the research proposal that would lead to her dissertation on how estrogen regulates of erythropoietin gene expression during hypoxia, “Nan and Tom were heavily involved and helped a lot, obviously, and we got it,” she says, adding that the setback taught her a valuable lesson.

“It looks like a big bummer when your original project doesn’t work, but in retrospect, I learned how to write,” she says. “It made me altogether much more confident. Sometimes you have what appears to be a big tragedy, but it actually works out for the better.”

Mukundan had some encounters when she first came to the U.S. that were “a little bit racist,” and she sometimes felt she was treated differently because she was a woman. But at UNM she felt supported.

“In Nan and Tom’s team I found acceptance,” Mukundan says. Kanagy, who was starting a family, became a friend and mentor. “I think it kind of subconsciously does teach you that women can be great scientists, good mothers – and perpetually tired.”

Mukundan and her husband lived in Santa Fe while she was doing her lab research, requiring a daily commute to the UNM campus in Albuquerque. “She stayed at my house,” Kanagy recalls. “Sometimes it was really late to drive back to Santa Fe.”

Mukundan was unflappable in the face of the failure of her first research project, Kanagy says. “‘Courageous’ might be the right word – or at least unintimidated by difficulty,” she says. “When we she had to switch gears she was very resilient. She developed a whole bunch of new methods to answer this question.”

Kanagy, who now heads UNM’s Biomedical Sciences Graduate Student program, also appreciates her friend’s ability to keep the many commitments in her life in balance.

“She’s very human and cared very deeply about her family and cared about my family,” she says. “Even then, she was doing traditional Indian dance while commuting an hour each way. When I think of Harshini, she has a great smile and she just invites people in – she’s just a pleasure to have around.”

When Mukundan defended her dissertation in 2002, soon after having her first child, Kanagy urged her to pursue postdoctoral research at another university, but Mukundan instead took a job at QTL Biosystems, a Santa Fe biotech startup, where she worked for two years on biosensor technology.

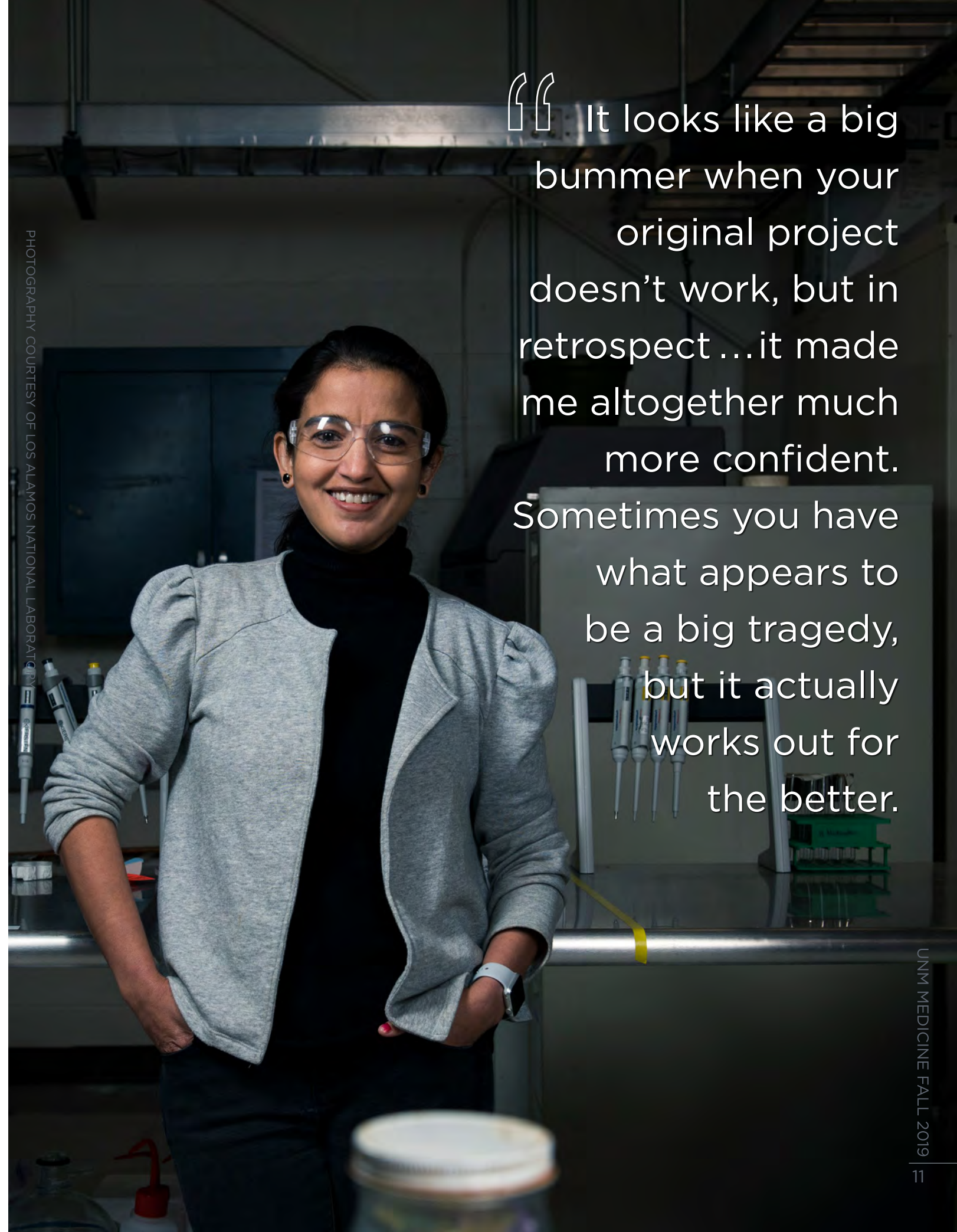
In 2006 Mukundan won a postdoctoral position at LANL in the lab of Dr. Basil Swanson, where she wrote a National Institutes of Health grant for research on developing a diagnostic tool for tuberculosis. “We got that proposal and I still work on TB today,” she says. “That’s how we got started.”

After graduating to become a full member of the LANL faculty, Mukundan has become a mentor in her own right. Earlier this year, she was recognized as one of 125 IF/THEN Ambassadors by the American Association for the Advancement of Science for her support of young women in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) at LANL.

IF/THEN is an initiative of Lyda Hill Philanthropies that seeks to further women in STEM fields by recognizing innovators and inspiring the next generation of researchers.

Although scientific careers can be incredibly demanding, Mukundan says she learned from her UNM colleagues “you can have a good career and have a family and have work-life balance. That makes people want to go into science.”

“It looks like a big bummer when your original project doesn’t work, but in retrospect ... it made me altogether much more confident. Sometimes you have what appears to be a big tragedy, but it actually works out for the better.”



PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF LOS ALAMOS NATIONAL LABORATORY

Extending a Helping Hand

Telehealth Technology Enables Psychiatrist Duane Chase to Counsel Native Americans in Rural Communities Across the Country

by Emily Monteiro Morelli



Duane Chase, MD '03, can practice psychiatry in rural areas throughout the country without ever leaving his office in Gallup.

Through his work with the U.S. Indian Health Service, Chase provides telehealth psychiatry sessions to Native Americans at remote clinics.

"I work with people from all over," he says. "I've worked with a clinic in northeastern Maine, near the Canadian border, and in South Carolina, South Dakota and Arizona, among other places."

Telehealth enables him to reach Native patients who might not otherwise be able to receive the help they need, especially when it comes to battling addiction.

"Medication can do a lot and can help people with some addictions, but if you don't work at understanding the nidus, which is usually childhood trauma, it's difficult to treat," Chase says. "It's hard work to get to the 'why' of how substance abuse starts with someone, and medicine can't do all that work."

The child of a Bureau of Indian Affairs employee, Chase experienced life in different places, a bit like an Army brat, but his childhood experiences were almost exactly like those of his patients growing up on different reservations.

"I can relate to my patients in that way," he says. "Reservation life can lend itself to isolation and trauma."

Chase's own journey on the path to psychiatry was perhaps as winding as the rural roads his patients traverse.

He always knew he wanted to be a doctor, but not necessarily a psychiatrist. "I had severe asthma and spent a lot of time with a pulmonologist who was a role model, and I was interested in going into the field," he explains.

Chase spent his last two years of high school living with his Hopi grandparents in the village of Moenkopi, near Tuba City, Ariz. "My family was supposed to move to Tuba City because of work, and I went ahead of my parents," he says. "But something happened and the position for my father didn't pan out, so I ended up staying."

The experience was eye-opening.

"I learned to appreciate my grandparents, who lived with very few material things. The only thing I had was what I brought with me – a boombox and cassette tapes . . . I learned a lot of family wisdom, and took part much more in Hopi culture and ceremonies."

His education took a detour when he left The University of New Mexico after his first year. He had planned to study engineering (he didn't like it), and joined the Navy for a three-year stint.

"I learned pretty quickly that I didn't want to work in radar, which was what they had me doing, and that I wanted to go into medicine," Chase says. "I grew up a lot over those three years."



"I work with people all over. I've worked with a clinic in northeastern Maine, near the Canadian border, and in South Carolina, South Dakota and Arizona, among other places."

When he returned to UNM, Chase threw himself into his studies. In medical school, he considered pulmonology or endocrinology and started an internal medicine residency in Phoenix. But he found the pace grueling and it left him with little time to parent small children. "I lived at the hospital," he says. "I realized it wasn't for me."

Pursuing psychiatry instead was the best decision he could have made. "It's made me a better parent and a better person in general," Chase says. "When you are counseling people to examine their decisions, it forces you to examine your own."

Chase wants medical school students to know that they will make a difference if they choose to work in a rural community and should consider the idea when they are ready to settle down. He remembers well his time in UNM's Practical Immersion Experience and his first taste of practicing in rural settings.

"There's a great need here in Gallup and other rural communities for health care providers," he says. "You have the opportunity to really give back to the community where you live in multiple ways."

Chase's career choice has also changed his philosophy on life.

"I tell my kids material things don't make you happy," he says. "Just live life. Memories with family and friends are what sustain you. Work hard. Don't forget to enjoy yourself. And life happens – reach out to other people and make connections."

"That's what will make for a satisfying life. I try to promote that to my patients as well." ▼

Native Healing

Nicole Lee, MD '19, stepped on the stage of the Kiva Auditorium at the Albuquerque Convention Center this past May and history unfolded as she recited the Declaration of Geneva in the Navajo Language. It was the first time the Declaration, a modern-day version of the Hippocratic Oath, had ever been said in Diné.

The event was historic in another way as well. Lee, originally from Sweetwater, Ariz., is one of a record five Navajo students who graduated from UNM School of Medicine on May 10. Other graduates included Leslie Neher (from Tsaile-Wheatfields), Tyler Laurence (Smith Lake) and Joshua Sheak (Fruitland).

"It was an important moment because UNM attracts a lot of medical students, but it's still in an area that is very diverse and still culturally intact," says Jaron Kee, UNM School of Medicine. "I'm proud to graduate with another member of our community in honor that."

Kee, who is fluent in Navajo, was instrumental in translating the Declaration, which begins, "I solemnly pledge to dedicate my life to the service of humanity."

Both Kee and Lee (along with Sheak) completed the Combined BA/MD program, designed to train physicians who will eventually help overcome the physician shortage in New Mexico, especially in rural and underserved areas.

The duo are currently pursuing residencies at UNM. Kee in family medicine and Lee in internal medicine. (Neher will be doing a family medicine residency at the University of Minnesota; Laurence lands at Alaska Family Medicine and Sheak will do pediatrics at Cincinnati Children's Hospital.)

Lee was born at an Indian Health Service hospital and spent the first few years of her life on the reservation. Her family then moved to Farmington, where she attended high school. Her grandmother stayed on the reservation about two hours away and would visit. "We spent a lot of time going back and forth."

Growing up in two worlds helped shape her decision to be a physician. "Farmington is far more urban than [Sweetwater] so you see a difference in the health of the community," she says during a break from her hectic pace as a first-year intern. The reservation, she recalls, had electricity and "technically" running water, but the family still had to haul some water and gather firewood. "There was no other way to heat the house," she says. In Farmington, she relates, "You turn on the faucet and the water is there."

The disparities extended to health care. "Access to health care living on the reservation is difficult," Lee remembers. "The ambulance would get lost looking for a patient on the reservation, and it would take hours before they would be found, if at all." She also saw people die after car accidents because help couldn't get there in time.

Difficulties with accessing health care also affected Lee's family directly. Her grandmother had to travel five hours to Albuquerque to receive chemo treatments for cancer. Other family members faced similar challenges.

Kee, originally from Crystal, N.M., points to similar disparities as influencing his decision to become a doctor. In a speech he gave at the National Institute of Neurological Diseases and Stroke, where he was a summer intern during his first two years, he pointed to the lack of running water on the reservation as the gaps in health care. But it was the opportunity to shadow a Navajo doctor at a hospital while he was in school that cemented his

Nicole Lee & Jaron Kee Weave Insights From Their Navajo Upbringing Into Their Medical Practice

By Amanda Gardner

It was interesting to see the perspective of a Navajo physician and the possible implications I could make because I speak Navajo," Kee says. "Sometimes, the kids came in with grandparents and I had the opportunity to translate what was being said at the encounter." (Kee, too, was partly raised by his grandmother.)

Kee considered several different universities, but he settled on UNM because of his family, which owns land and raises sheep and cattle in Crystal, N.M. "I really see the importance of being close to home."

Both Kee and Lee plan to stay close to home after completing their residencies. Lee would like to return to Farmington, where she still has family, either as a primary care physician or a hospitalist while also pursuing palliative care. Her interest is in more than just practicing the technical skills of medicine.

"I always try to understand the patient's perspective about things, because if they don't understand what's going on I think we've failed as medical providers," says Lee, who also speaks Navajo, although not only about "half of [Kee's] fluency." Kee is going back to the reason why he chose medicine in the first place: "I decided to do family medicine more from a public health perspective and being able to treat a community."

And how does he see Native and Western medicine blending? Kee, whose grandmother was an herbalist, doesn't draw a clear line between the two.

"I think they complement each other. It's important to have more Native physicians because it breaks the barrier down in the communication between patients and physicians," he says.

"Patients are far more open with me about traditional stuff and we talk about whether it's herbal medicine or just spiritual things we do, and I am able to be more open about whatever treatment modalities."

May 10, 2019 - UNM School of Medicine Convocation: Nicole Lee (center) prepares for her historic recitation of the Declaration of Geneva in Diné.

GIVING

School of
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Philanthropy
Figures
2018-2019



\$366,253
in scholarships awarded



788
unique donors

2,283
total # of gifts

\$21.8m
in gift commitments

by the numbers



DEAN'S FUND
\$21.2k
in gifts

BEQUEST PLEDGES
\$7m **2 new**
est. value



ENDOWMENTS
\$1.3m **\$71.6m**
in gifts current value

Molecular Maestra

life's work

Biochemist Karlett Parra Unravels the Hidden Impact of V-ATPase in Health and Disease

By Yamhilette Licon Muñoz



The ‘potential of hydrogen’ – commonly known as pH – is defined as the concentration of hydrogen ions in a solution. It is a measure of acidity or basicity.

In cells, pH is extremely regulated, and it turns out that many normal cellular processes rely on particular pH concentrations. Accordingly, its deregulation contributes to (or causes) various diseases.

But what controls pH levels inside the cells?

Karlett Parra, PhD, professor and chair of UNM’s Department of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology, has devoted her life to studying one of the key players in pH regulation: an enzyme called vacuolar-H⁺-ATPase (better known as V-ATPase).

“V-ATPase is a very interesting nano-motor,” Parra says. “It uses the energy of ATP [adenosine triphosphate] to pump protons, generating and sustaining different pH levels inside the cell.”

“The regulation of pH by V-ATPase is crucial for several physiological processes, such as sperm maturation, urinary acidification, lysosomal acidification and the uptake of iron and cholesterol, among others.”

Born and raised in Venezuela, Parra is the first scientist in her family.

“Ever since I discovered science, it became my passion,” she says. “My family was confused about how committed I was to pursue a career in research.”

Parra earned her PhD in biochemistry and molecular biology from SUNY Upstate Medical University in Syracuse, N.Y. There, she started studying V-ATPases under the mentorship of Patricia Kane, PhD. “It was the best decision of my life,” she says.

Parra joined The University of New Mexico School of Medicine in 2007. There, her research has centered on the different roles of V-ATPase in

physiology and pathophysiology. Moving to Albuquerque from the Northeast was a welcome transition, she says.

“I love how blue the sky is, and the Sandia Mountains,” Parra says. “They remind me of my hometown.”

Parra was named chair of the Department of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology in 2012. It was a fresh challenge.

“Being in charge of a department is like trying to move forward a big mountain,” Parra explains. “It’s working with a group of very talented professionals toward a shared goal. It needs the work, focus and engagement of everyone. I’m very proud of the department and it has been very satisfying to see it grow.”

In her laboratory, Parra studies in yeast models (*Saccharomyces cerevisiae* and *Candida albicans*) the molecular mechanisms that regulate or are regulated by V-ATPase, as well as breast and prostate cancer cell lines.

She has found that the pharmacologic or genetic inhibition of V-ATPase diminishes the virulence of the fungal pathogen *C. albicans* and disrupts several tumorigenic processes, such as invasion and metastasis in breast and prostate cancer cells.

She believes that several important pathological processes involve pH regulation – and that the study of V-ATPase may one day lead to the development of novel therapeutic targets.

As a scientist and mentor, Parra finds that one of her greatest rewards comes from working with students.

“There are great students at UNM,” she says. “Seeing some of them grow and become successful scientists is a great satisfaction. Working with women of different backgrounds – including women from a culture similar to mine – and watching them follow their own path is priceless.”

Point of Pride

Gordon Research Conferences
frontiers of science

2019 "Frontiers of Science" Meetings will be held September 29th and August 1st, 2019, in Albuquerque, NM. The meeting topics, and interesting speakers, are: **ATP Synthesis Structures and Mechanisms** (Haydn Fresh / John Walker / Masakiyo Yoshida); **Approaches to Bioenergetics Research** (Michael Branch / Joshua David / Peter Fromme / Karin Buehler); **V-ATPase Motors at Work** (Shigehito Murata / Patricia Kane); **Drug Targets in Bioenergetics** (David Michalek / Roberto Soriano / Douglas Wallace / David Clark); **Respiratory Complexes and Bioenergetics** (Robert Gahan / Harshad Mehta / Ulrich Brandt / Karen Dawid); **At the Crossroads Between Health and Disease** (Susanne Arnold / Sybilie Bibson / Michael Forgas / Vanessa Moritz); **Mitochondrial Function and Regulation** (David Michalek / Roberto Soriano / Douglas Wallace / David Clark); **Young Investigator Presentations** (Lara Garcia / Jennifer Hest / Emerging Concepts in Bioenergetics (Harold Malsbende / Roberto Zorici / Paolo Bernardi)).

ATP

Parra was the elected chair and organizer of the 50th Bioenergetics Gordon Research Conference, the premier international forum for the presentation of cutting-edge advancements concerning molecular and cellular aspects of energy-converting processes.



From Bedside to Bedtime Stories

Learning to Navigate the Roles of Parent and Provider By William Mithoefer

I am a second-year physician assistant student and I am a father. Many things define who I am, but these two identities are foremost in my life – and each can feel like an all-consuming task unto itself.

Technically, PA school starts at 8 a.m. and ends at 5 p.m., but the truth is most of my days are filled from wake to sleep in a Sisyphean attempt to catch up on the tidal wave of information we’re required to learn. Being a single father who shares custody means the normal challenges of parenthood are multiplied by the struggles and pains of a split household.

And yet, both roles bring me immeasurable happiness. But how to integrate them?

At first, I tried to separate my life as a student from my fatherhood. I would use the three-hour commute from Albuquerque to where my daughter lives as a transition period.

I could mentally distance myself from being a student, letting go of the constant buzz of information running through my mind and reenter the joyful role of fatherhood.

Likewise, when returning to Albuquerque I would use the drive to resume the role of PA student, welcoming the catharsis of a clearly defined goal within a well-structured environment after the uncertainties of split custody.

For a while, compartmentalizing my fatherhood to northern New Mexico and my student-hood to Albuquerque seemed like a good idea. It enabled me to engage with the positive aspects of each identity while allowing the harder parts of being a father or a student to be, while never truly forgotten, at least transiently suppressed.

With my daughter I could be a father, playing trains and dress-up all morning, while also conveniently ignoring the mountain of work due the next day. At school, I could dive deep into the material, gaining satisfaction from learning while also distracting myself from the gnawing pain of being distant from my child.

A little over a year into taking on the role of aspiring health care provider, I now find myself uncomfortable with an implicit assumption buried within how I have juggled these two identities; that various parts of my life can be separated, turned on and off when convenient.

This is of course a fallacy, born from a fear that taking on a new role necessitates letting go of another. I see now that the opposite can be true.

Studying and practicing health care is a part of my life that brings me joy and it can be shared with and enrich my daughter’s life. So now, I try to embrace my role as a student when I’m with her in the hope that I can use my experience in health care to teach her and help her grow.

When she sits next to me while I study and asks, “Why do you have to study so much?” I talk to her about lungs and hearts and bones and muscles, sharing my amazement at how truly astonishing the human

body is while hopefully instilling that learning can be fun.

When she asks, “Why do you have to live so far away?” In the language of a 5-year-old, I tell her about sacrifice and how, though I am far from her now, it is in the hopes of creating a better future for us.

My daughter is the best part of me. My love for her and the struggles I have experienced raising her are fundamental to my life story, so just as sharing my studies with my daughter can strengthen our relationship, embracing the realities of being a father can complement my medical practice.

There is happiness in seeing my daughter grow and thrive, fear and helplessness when she is sick, sadness from a split household, and above all the general uncertainty and mayhem of figuring out how to raise a child.

Though I have experienced these moments and emotions through the lens of parenthood, they are universal. Remembering to bring their lessons to my practice can make me a better provider – more empathetic, more patient, more joyful, more understanding of differences, more human.

I still struggle every day to find the correct balance when mixing the varied aspects of life. Parent, student, sibling, friend, neighbor – countless roles exist. Each competes with the others for energy and attention while also contributing to who I am.

In the end though, there is only one of me. So, I strive to give each part of my life its due reverence and try to incorporate these ostensibly disparate parts into a more harmonious whole, bringing the realities of my humanity into my practice, and in turn, making room for my practice to enrich my humanity. ▼

William Mithoefer is a second-year student in the UNM Physician Assistant Program



PHOTOS BY JETT LOE



THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO SCHOOL OF MEDICINE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

president's letter

Dear Friends,

I'm so excited and proud to serve as your Alumni Association president for the next two years. As a 1997 graduate from UNM's Main Campus and a 2001 School of Medicine graduate, I am truly a Lobo for life!

I'm from Los Lunas, where my mom is still a practicing family doctor and the medical director at First Choice Community Health Center. Growing up in rural New Mexico has shaped how I see our mission as a medical school.

We graduate well-trained health professionals, many of whom stay in the state – but not enough. Over the past several years, we have worked to bring our graduates back to New Mexico with our “Coming Home” campaign.

We give out many La Tierra Sagrada Society scholarships each year, some of which are based on a medical student's commitment to serve in places of need and impact for New Mexico. I'd like to increase these scholarships by increasing donations to the UNM Foundation and the Alumni Association.

We have UNM campuses in Gallup, Los Alamos, Rio Rancho, Taos and in my hometown of Los Lunas. How can we create health campuses? How can UNM Health deliver on the promise to deliver more all over New Mexico? Let's do it!

In January, Dr. Roth will ask the New Mexico Legislature to make our medical school tuition-free. What we will ask of our graduates in return? Not only will they be needed in certain specialty areas and primary care but they will be needed in the rural parts of our state.

Teams are more sustainable than individuals working alone, so we also have to think about how we can train students and residents in multiple specialties who will learn and grow and stay in rural communities because they have already become a part of the team there before they graduate.

We want to keep our residents, as well as our students, connected to our mission as a medical school and a university. We will also connect our Alumni Association with our new Community Faculty board so we can continue to learn and grow as a service organization.

We want to hear from you about how we can better serve New Mexico through serving our students, residents and alumni better. Please share your ideas with us over the next two years. We can't do this alone. It's all about the team, in which each of us defines all of us.

In closing, I am sad to report that **Amanda Bassett, MBA**, who has done an incredible job as the School of Medicine's Chief Advancement and External Relations Officer over the past few years, will be leaving us to explore a new opportunity.

Amanda has brought tremendous vision and energy to the task of engaging our alumni, building a statewide network of community faculty and growing our scholarship program. We are deeply grateful for her service.

Amanda will be greatly missed in Fitz Hall and all over New Mexico, but I know she will thrive as she moves on to an exciting new chapter in her career.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Phillips, MD '01
Professor and Associate Chair of Community and Family Medicine
President, Alumni Association
UNM School of Medicine

Board Report

UNM SCHOOL OF MEDICINE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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- Deanna Gonzales, MS '21
- Jessica K. Benally, MS '22

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- Paul B. Roth, MD, MS
Chancellor for Health Sciences
CEO, UNM Health System
Dean, UNM School of Medicine

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Willing to be Well

Lance Wilson Wants Physicians to Take Better Care of Themselves

by Amanda Gardner



As a competitive gymnast throughout his youth, **Lance Wilson, MD '98**, prepared for meets by playing U2's Under A Blood Red Sky on his headphones with his eyes closed.

“I listened to it hundreds of times in between gym sessions and before competitions,” says Wilson, who recently joined the management team at CHRISTUS St. Vincent Health System in Santa Fe. “You get quiet. You go inside. I'd stand there, my head might be moving, my body might be moving. I would be doing my routine in my head like a mind movie.”

That ritual spurred him to excel, so much so that he was recruited to UNM as an undergraduate on a gymnastic scholarship.

Medical school, also at UNM, followed a BA in biology. Then came stints as an emergency physician at UNM, Lovelace and Presbyterian hospitals, as well as Sandoval and San Juan Regional Medical Centers.

The work, though, was arduous, and now Wilson was spinning a different kind of narrative in his head. “I was stuck in the stories of, ‘Am I really making a difference. Do I matter?’” he says. “There was a lot of repetitive conditioned thoughts that created a feeling of desperation, exhaustion and futility.”

PHOTO BY ELIZABETH EVANS

He was seeing the same patients with the same problems over and over again. Electronic health records required that he provide ever more documentation. He saw health care costs rising with no end in sight.

“I started to lose hope, a little bit, in medicine,” says Wilson. “I felt like people are getting sicker and we’re working harder and we’re not making a difference. I know we are, but it’s hard to see.”

Meanwhile he says, he knew that “there are things that are free or nearly free, that if you do them consistently as an individual your health will improve. If everybody walked around, ate some vegetables, drank water, had a spiritual practice and focused on healthy relationships, many of these things would be fixed.”

But Wilson himself wasn’t doing many of these things and he could feel it. He was approaching burnout in a field famous for burnout. According to one survey, 78% of physicians report symptoms of burnout. Emergency medicine has one of the highest burnout rates among medical specialties: 48%.

Wilson left emergency medicine and took a leadership role at DaVita Medical Group, formerly ABQ Health Partners. Over six-plus years, he reduced his patient load to virtually nothing. Instead, he was able to turn inward again and then outward in a different way.

“I was fortunate to be included in some leadership development programs, and that is where I started to do some internal work I had not done in my life,” he says. “I got the opportunity to slow down and reflect and learn more about myself.”

He studied the placebo effect and how our mindset can shift not just our feelings but help people get better more quickly. He learned that patients who have strong relationships with their clinicians and feel cared about also do better.

He delved into the Stanford Medicine model for physician wellness, which focuses on three domains for professional fulfillment: culture of wellness, efficiency of practice and personal resilience. He read Deepak Chopra and books on mindfulness.

“I started getting really excited about what I do have control over and what I have inside of me,” Wilson says. He used his excitement to create a well-being

program intended to combat burnout and foster resiliency among DaVita employees.

About 200 people participated in the program. “Burnout rates are consistently going down,” Wilson says. Fulfillment is going up.” The problem was that 200 was only 10% of DaVita’s total workforce. “It was successful, but on a small scale,” Wilson says.

In October, Wilson and his wife, Jana, an integrative coach who teaches how to build emotional, physical and mental resiliency, hosted their first “Healing the Healer” retreat geared specifically to health care professionals.

Participants took part in a Wheel of Life assessment to identify which areas of their life (health, career, love, spirituality, friends, fun, family, money) they would like to improve. They were asked to focus on what they do want, instead of what they don’t want – and were introduced to BJ Fogg’s “Tiny Habits” strategy of behavior change.

Fogg, a researcher at Stanford University, believes small changes now can lead to big results down the line. “It gets back to the cycle,” says Wilson. “If you’re not getting the results you want in life, let’s track back to what behaviors and what core beliefs are driving that.”

“This is potentially a way to impact health care in a bigger way, if I can get more clinicians to believe it and take care of themselves in a holistic way,” he adds. “If I could teach people and they would be open to the possibility of changing themselves, they would become healthier.”

And, yes, the program includes a Mind Movies Creation Kit.

The tools have worked for Wilson. “I’m healthier than I was 10 years ago physically” he says. “I have a consistent spiritual practice. I’m in an amazing co-committed relationship. I’m highly fulfilled and happy in my life. All that stuff about electronic medical records and those struggles still exist, but the way I think about them and the choices I make are different.” ▼

“It gets back to the cycle. If you’re not getting the results you want in life, let’s track back to what behaviors and what core beliefs are driving that.”

PHOTO BY VERONICA CASAS



2019 Reunion Snapshots

Congratulations, Alumni Awardees



Distinguished Alumna
Denise Gonzales, MD, MS
Class of 1998

Denise Gonzales is a pulmonary and critical care specialist who serves as the medical director for Adult Medical Specialties at Presbyterian Medical Group. She was the founding medical director of Presbyterian Rust Medical Center and has been inducted as a Fellow in the Society of Critical Care Medicine. She earned her medical degree from UNM and completed her residency in internal medicine at the University of Texas Health Science Center. She then completed the joint National Institutes of Health and Johns Hopkins Pulmonary and Critical Care fellowship program.



Distinguished Alumna
Sheila Hickey, MD
Class of 1989

Sheila Hickey is an infectious disease specialist and professor of Pediatrics in the UNM School of Medicine, where she also serves as associate dean of student affairs. She completed her pediatrics residency at UNM, followed by an infectious diseases fellowship at University of Texas Southwestern in Dallas. As a UNM faculty member, she has served as the Phase II Pediatric Clerkship director, as a Phase I course director and as chair of the Committee on Student Promotions and Evaluation. She also led the formation of the Learning Communities mentoring program.



Leonard Napolitano, PhD Award
Erika Garcia, MD
Class of 2008

Erika Garcia is a board certified family medicine physician who also serves as medical director of Roosevelt General Hospital in Portales, N.M. Garcia, who was born in Mexico and came to the U.S. at the age of 5, graduated from Clovis High School before earning her undergraduate degree in biology and Spanish at UNM. She went on to complete her MD and family medicine residence at UNM. Garcia, who joined the hospital in 2012, earlier this year opened Roosevelt General's new primary care clinic in Clovis. She serves as a preceptor for UNM premed and medical students.

ABOUT THE AWARD
The true measure of the UNM School of Medicine's greatness is found in the achievements of its alumni. The **Distinguished Alumnus Award** recognizes an alumnus who has made significant contributions to society, and whose accomplishments, affiliations and career exemplifies the School of Medicine's legacy of excellence.

ABOUT THE AWARD
Leonard Napolitano was the School of Medicine's third dean, whose many contributions included development of the nationally recognized Primary Care Curriculum. The award recognizes an alumnus who has built strong public and private partnerships while advocating for the School of Medicine through innovation and commitment to education.

Congratulations, Visionary Sites of the Year



ABOUT THE AWARD
Visionary Site of the Year awards recognize New Mexico health systems that embody the mission of the UNM School of Medicine in their dedication to education, creating a diverse network of health care professionals and providing compassionate care to all New Mexicans.





photos by Raymond Mares



2019 La Tierra Sagrada Society scholarship dinner highlights

To say UNM medical student **Fermin Prieto** has come a long way is an understatement.

Imagine leaving behind everything and everyone you know to come to a new country with only your sister and precious little money or material possessions.

Now imagine doing that at just 14 years old.

This is how Prieto's path to the UNM School of Medicine began. And what started as a personal quest for a safer and better quality of life has grown into a lifelong mission to do the same for entire communities.

Having experienced first-hand the transformative power of altruism and philanthropy through the support he received as he faced the many challenges of building a better life for himself in the United States, the La Tierra Sagrada Society (LTSS) scholarship recipient is determined to pay forward what he received.

Prieto, who emigrated from a small town in Chihuahua, Mexico, told his story at the annual La Tierra Sagrada scholarship dinner on September 19. "Thank you," he said, to a room filled with generous patrons and grateful scholars.

He spoke of his desire to bridge language barriers and bring particularly scarce specialty care in orthopedic surgery to rural communities with high Hispanic populations.

The first in his family to attend college, Prieto described how critical the help he received from mentors, programs and organizations was in his successful completion of a bachelor's degree in biomedical engineering from the University of Arizona.

"Once again," he said, "the generosity of people in this country and support from incredible mentors allowed me to fulfill my dream to go to medical school."

More than 20 years ago, **Paul B. Roth, MD, MS**, Chancellor for Health Sciences and dean of the School of Medicine, gathered a small group of like-minded faculty, alumni and community donors to create La Tierra Sagrada Society with the primary purpose of allocating funds raised by its members toward student scholarships.

La Tierra Sagrada has since awarded more than \$1 million in scholarships, and this year it distributed more than \$180,000 to 47 students in UNM's medical, physical therapy, occupational therapy and physician assistant programs.

Making medical school in New Mexico more affordable has been a cornerstone of Roth's life's work. At no time has he been more poised to realize his dream than now.

During his address to the scholarship dinner audience, he said, "I began cutting tuition by 1 percent per year about five years ago, and today, we remain the only medical school in the country that's actually cut tuition."

Being the most affordable medical school in the U.S. is a beginning, not an end for Roth. His ultimate goal is much more ambitious.

"When the Legislature meets in January, I will be going forward with a step to catapult my dream of eliminating tuition costs for all medical students," Roth said. "With the support of Governor Lujan Grisham, I will be proposing free tuition for all medical students."

If he is successful, UNM will become the first and only public medical school in the country to provide free tuition.

"The mission of La Tierra will only intensify," Roth said, "because all of those other expenses related to attending medical school – the other two-thirds of the cost – will need help from LTSS to address." ▼

To join or learn more about La Tierra Sagrada Society, contact Erika Anderson, emanderson@salud.unm.edu, 505.272.1913 or visit goto.unm.edu/latierra



continued from page 4



While in Portland, Williams-Karnesky taught meditation classes to youngsters in the Zen center's family program. When she came to UNM for her surgical residency, she approached John Russell, MD, chair of the Department of Surgery, about offering a mindfulness course for medical students.

"Dr. Russell is very supportive," she says. "From the time I said I wanted to do this, he said, 'Great!'" He also paid to buy the students copies of "The Mindful Medical Student: A Psychiatrist's Guide to Staying Who You Are While Becoming Who You Want to Be."

Third-year medical school students seem to be especially receptive to what the course has to offer, Williams-Karnesky says.

"When they hit third year, I think they start to recognize how difficult the clinical part is," she says. "They see those challenges of working with patients and their hours are much worse. They're integrating knowledge and practical experience, and doing that emotional work. It becomes much more relevant."

Williams-Karnesky shares her own experience as a resident to highlight ways in which mindfulness can be put to practical use. One example is the need to carry a pager (or two or three) while on call, and how an alert elicits a "Pavlovian" response of "instant frustration, anxiety and anger." The trick, she says, is to find the space between stimulus and response.

"My pager goes off, and I feel tightness in my chest, I feel angry," she says. "But with mindfulness I'm able to feel that and allow it. I take a breath, relax and pick up the phone and say, 'How can I help you?'"

Mindfulness also offers an alternative for those times when a physician has done all she can for her patient – and it's still not enough. "A lot of times, it's just being present to that person," Williams-Karnesky says.

She has received national recognition for her work, including the Resident Teaching Award at the Association of Surgical Residents meeting in Chicago, and an invitation to present at the 2019 American College of Surgeons Clinical Congress.

Williams-Karnesky also has joined the School of Medicine's newly created Learning Environment Office as a research fellow.

Thanks to a growing awareness of the dangers of burnout, medical students now start learning about the importance of physician wellness early in their training. "Wellness is certainly on the radar," she says.

"Figuring out what works for wellness for surgeons, what parts are institution-driven, what are personal factors – that's certainly been part of the conversation." ▼

class acts



Albert Kwan, MD '83, serves as president of the American Society of General Surgeons, which represents all general surgeons in the U.S. It sends a delegate to the American Medical Association, and appoints a governor to the American College of Surgeons. The society also has a seat at the Current Procedural Terminology council, which affects all general surgeons' practices in policy-making and reimbursement.

Aaron Jacobs, MD (House Staff), has been appointed associate medical director for population health management at the UNM Medical Group, Inc. Jacobs, who completed his pediatric residency at UNM in 2003, has served in leadership positions for the past 12 years within the Department of Pediatrics and at UNM Children's Hospital, as well as in his most recent role as chief medical informatics officer for UNM Hospital.



Corinn M. Sadler, MD '07, is an endocrinologist at the Presbyterian Medical Group clinic in Rio Rancho. Sadler completed a residency in internal medicine and an endocrinology fellowship at UNM and is board certified in internal medicine, as well as endocrinology, diabetes and metabolism.



David J. Fitzgerald, MD '15, is a pediatrician at the Presbyterian Medical Group clinic at 401 San Mateo Blvd. SE. Fitzgerald earned his medical degree and completed his pediatric residency at UNM.

John Brandt, MD (House Staff), has been promoted to associate chief medical officer for UNM Children's Hospital. Brandt is a pediatric nephrologist with more than 25 years of experience at UNM. He joined the hospital as a pediatric resident in 1988 and has been on faculty since 1997. He most recently served as vice chair in the Department of Pediatrics. During his time at UNM, he has served as a division chief, medical director and member of the MISSION: Excellence steering committee and Physician Advisory Group. In his new role, Brandt will collaborate with all children's services throughout the organization and the chief medical and nursing officers at UNM Hospital, as well as the executive nursing directors for pediatric inpatient and ambulatory services, to improve care coordination and quality for children being treated at UNM.



F. Kiko Torres, MD '96, is the chief medical officer for True Health New Mexico. He has more than 20 years of experience in clinical, administrative and supervisory positions in the health care industry. He has been recognized for his work in quality improvement, innovation and collaboration. He is a certified physician executive and has served on the boards of the Coalition for Health Care Value, the New Mexico Primary Care Association and the New Mexico Medical Society, among others.



Timothy S. Moore, MD (House Staff), is a rheumatologist based at Presbyterian Kaseman Hospital. He has a medical degree from the University of Colorado School of Medicine and completed his rheumatology fellowship at UNM. He is board certified in both internal medicine and rheumatology.

Barbara L. McAneny, MD, (House Staff), a board certified medical oncologist/hematologist practicing in Albuquerque, became the 173rd president of the American Medical Association in June 2018. She is one of the founders of the National Cancer Care Alliance. She built New Mexico Cancer Center as the first physician-owned multidisciplinary cancer center in the state and also founded the New Mexico Cancer Center Foundation. She graduated with honors from the University of Iowa College of Medicine. She completed her residency in internal medicine at the University of Iowa and her fellowship in hematology/oncology at The University of New Mexico.



Julene Rae Moore, MD '02, has joined Petroglyph Pathology Services as staff pathologist. Moore, who previously worked as the laboratory medical director for the Miner's Colfax Medical Center in Raton, N.M., is board certified in anatomic and clinical pathology by the American Board of Pathology. She completed residency training at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center for Anatomic and Clinical Pathology and completed a fellowship in cytopathology at the University of Washington Medical Center.



Orthopedic spine surgeon **Anthony Yeung, MD '70**, retired this year from his Phoenix, Ariz., practice. In 2014 he established the Anthony T. & Eileen K. Yeung Center for Endoscopic Spine Surgery at UNM with a \$2.5 million grant. He also serves as director of the International Intradiscal Therapy Society, a non-profit organization that promotes endoscopic spine surgery.

the art of listening to yourself

By Yolandra Gomez Toya, MD, MPH

A few times a month, as I drive north, either to Dulce to see my family or to see patients at the clinic in Jemez Pueblo, I consider myself lucky to be able to live and practice in one of the most beautiful areas of this country.

I've lived on both coasts for undergraduate and graduate education. I've sweltered in the hot, muggy New Jersey weather, and fought with the endless traffic jams of the Bay Area.

Now, as I speed along U.S. 550 amid brown and red mesas and hilltops dotted with piñon trees below an ever-blue sky, I am always amazed at how the landscape can change in beauty and intensity from one day to the next. These solo drives are one of few times that I get to relax and enjoy solitude outside of a busy practice schedule.

But this process is something that I have to work on. As a mother of two children, I hold two jobs, not out of necessity for me but for the communities I practice in.

I find thoughts ruminating in my head in sometimes overwhelming fashion. "Did I do enough for that complicated patient? Maybe not, so later I'll do a quick search on a medical database, and maybe catch up on that latest medical journal. Is my son ready to run his best time in cross-country at an upcoming meet? Will my daughter's application to medical school lead her across the country, or will she stay here, close to her family? Did someone feed and water the cats? Is there milk in the fridge?"

At the end of the day, when we talk about physician burnout, I wonder if what we really need is that moment when we stop and listen to ourselves. I experienced this firsthand three years ago, when I suffered a pulmonary embolism and almost died. Physicians know the gory details of this condition, with a possible outcome being sudden death.

The internist taking care of me remarked, "You must have a guardian angel to have survived this." At that time, I swore I would never say that to any of my patients, because until he said that, I had never had an anxiety attack.

But I realized that my body was trying to take care of itself. I changed my life. I started running, I became vegan, I took more time off from work to do fun things with my kids, and I removed as many negative influences in my life as I could. In short, I did what I was telling my patients to do to lead a healthier lifestyle.

When we talk about the art of listening to patients, we should also remember to listen to ourselves. So on occasion, on these long drives, I listen to myself. And my advice to my fellow practitioners is, once in a while, to slow down, take a deep breath and let yourself feel the wind and sun on your face.

Yolandra Gomez Toya, MD '03 is a pediatrician who practices in Rio Rancho and at Jemez Pueblo.

Tenzin Desel, a Class of 2022 medical student, is the 2019 recipient of the Susan M. Scott and Gilbert "Mick" Plazola Endowed Scholarship.

Born a Tibetan refugee in Dharamsala, India, Desel says her childhood experiences inspired her to "advocate for the health of medically underserved populations and work to increase the quality of their lives through health education."



"I am happy to support Tenzin. She is quite dedicated and I look forward to watching her as she embarks on a very promising future."

— Susan Scott, MD, JD

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