I am always struck by how quickly the semesters start and finish these days. It seems like just a couple weeks ago we had new student orientation. It has been a successful first half of the 2012-2013 year. We have had record attendances at our Research Induction Ceremony, Career Day, and the Holiday Reception. The GSA held its third annual Thanksgiving Lunch and Potluck. I am not sure how many tables fit in the Helen Guinn Adams Atrium, but every seat was taken and it was truly standing room only. GSA president Trey Lowery and I carved turkeys for 45 minutes straight and it was a great event to kick off the holiday season. For many of our international students, this is the first real and uniquely American holiday they get to experience and participate in. For our out of state students who can't get home it is a sharing of an old tradition with new friends. It has quickly become one of our perennial favorites. At our Holiday Reception we recognized a record 12 faculty with mentor awards for the December PhD graduates. As we move into the holiday break and put the fall semester and 2013 in the books, I hope each of you take some time to relax with family and friends. All of us are blessed and have much to be thankful for. I certainly do, and I cannot imagine working with better staff, faculty, and students. If the past is truly a predictor of the future, we have a very exciting spring to look forward to. Happy Holidays!
New Students Attend Orientation

Fall 2013 orientation was held on Wednesday, August 14th in COPH Bruce Commons. New students had the opportunity to visit with campus representatives, have ID badges made, tour campus, and have lunch with the Dean of the Graduate School, Dr. Robert McGehee. The Graduate Student Association (GSA) sponsors the event each year for all new Graduate School students.

New GSA Officers for 2013-2014

The Graduate School welcomes the new 2013-2014 Graduate Student Association officers:

- **President**: Trey Lowery
- **Vice-President**: Serra Ucer
- **Secretary**: Emily Reichard
- **Treasurer**: Wezley Griffin
- **Recycling**: Daniel Sappington & Kevin Howk
- **ASG Reps**: Lee Ann King, Archana Kamalakar, & Anisha Rathi

The GSA offers Graduate School students opportunities to become involved in various community projects such as Habitat for Humanity and the 12th Street Wellness Clinic. They also organize marathon teams and social events.

Many thanks to the 2012-2013 officers for their hard work!
After years of sitting in a classroom and countless hours of studying for exams, 32 graduate students celebrated the next step in earning their doctorate degrees.

The UAMS Graduate School held its annual Research Induction Ceremony on September 23 to recognize students who had passed the qualifying or candidacy exam that students take following their first two years in the graduate program. Family and friends of the honorees represented a good portion of the crowd of more than 200 who attended the event, held in the I Dodd Wilson Education Building auditorium.

"We are here to celebrate the 32 students who have passed. It marks the formal transition of the student from their graduate program director to their major graduate advisor or mentor, under whose guidance they will begin their dissertation research," said Graduate School Dean Robert E. McGehee, Ph.D. "It's a key point in the career of a biomedical scientist."

McGehee outlined the route that a student takes toward earning the degree. Because of the nature of UAMS' small program, he said, being accepted to the program is difficult and competitive. Students receive personal attention under the guidance of their program director before preparing for the intense Ph.D. qualifying exam. This sets the stage for them, and once they have mastered the material on the exam, they can move forward with their dissertation.

The ceremony marks the point when the students have passed the exam and are moving forward with assistance from their mentors. Students were recognized individually, putting on their white coats with assistance from their program directors and mentors. The Ph.D. candidates then recited the Affirmation of Scientists, where they promise to represent their scientific professions honorably and conduct research and their professional lives in a manner that is above reproach.

Ph.D. students recite the Affirmation of Scientists after being presented with their white coats.

The 32 students were from 12 different programs within the graduate school, including biochemistry and molecular biology, bioinformatics, cellular physiology and molecular biophysics, health promotion and prevention research, health systems research, interdisciplinary biomedical sciences, interdisciplinary toxicology, microbiology and immunology, neurobiology and developmental sciences, nursing science and pharmaceutical sciences.
Biomedical Career Day
Shows Students New Career Paths

Nov. 8, 2013 | The UAMS Graduate School drew more than 150 students from 11 different institutions at its 13th Annual Career Day for Biomedical Sciences. The event offered undergraduates, graduate students, and postdoctoral fellows a chance to learn more about career options in biomedical sciences.

The event allowed students to hear from a variety of professionals, professors and scientists and learn more about graduate programs. Session topics included freelance scientific writing, health systems and service research, teaching at an undergraduate college and biotechnology startups.

Attendees came from across Arkansas and surrounding states. Undergraduate students were able to gain not only exposure to possible career choices, but also able to learn more about graduate programs offered at UAMS. Representatives of the different degrees were on hand to talk to students who were interested in the various graduate programs.

Dakota Pouncey, a junior biochemistry major at Hendrix was a participant in the UAMS Summer Undergraduate Research Program to Increase Diversity in Research and came back to campus for this event.

"I’m excited about the different talks to learn more about biomedical research and how it can lead to a career in public health or freelance scientific editing," he said. "There are so many different options in this field, and everything is interesting."

The day’s events not only opened the eyes of undergraduate students, but also were beneficial for graduate students.

"Today was important. It targets undergraduates, but there is a lot for graduate students as well," said LeeAnn King, a graduate student who serves as a leader of the Graduate Student Teachers of Central Arkansas and an ambassador for the Graduate School. "I’m considering teaching but also research and even scientific editing on the side."

Many speakers were from UAMS, but the event also featured professionals from other states. They included:

- Jennifer Schnellmann, Ph.D., associate professor, College of Pharmacy, Medical University of South Carolina
- J. Mick Tilford, Ph.D., professor and chair, health policy and management, Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health, UAMS
- Elvin Price, Pharm.D., Ph.D., assistant professor, College of Pharmacy, UAMS
- Tim Lindholm, Ph.D., associate professor of biology, Lyon College
- Suzie Scales, Ph.D., senior scientist, molecular biology, Genentech
- Tom Grammatopoulos, Ph.D., assistant professor, Boston University School of Medicine
- Tom Pilgreen, Ph.D., associate dean of student success, College of Health Professions, UAMS

Schnellmann was honored to be back at UAMS where she graduated from Graduate School in 1997. "It’s so special to come back here," Schnellman said. "Coming back and helping these students is a gift. I love this place and everything about it."
2013 Career Day Photos
McGehee Receives Leadership Award from Jackson State

Oct. 25, 2013 | Robert McGehee, Ph.D., dean of the UAMS Graduate School, was awarded the Visionary Leadership Award from Jackson State University for his work to increase diversity in the Basic Science Graduate Programs at UAMS.

Through the combined efforts of McGehee, Assistant Dean of the Graduate School Kristen Sterba, Ph.D. and Vice Chancellor for Diversity Billy Thomas, M.D., UAMS has been able to partner with Jackson State University (JSU) in Jackson, Miss., in their Bridge to Doctorate program sponsored by the National Science Foundation and the Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation.

“One of the biggest challenges for new graduate students is the transition from undergraduate colleges and universities to graduate school,” McGehee said, “If students don’t make the transition well, their odds of finishing their degree diminish.”

McGehee and the UAMS Graduate School have worked to make this transition period easier for students through partnering with other universities at an undergraduate level. Through this program they have been able to help students successfully make the transition and also increase diversity among students in the UAMS Graduate School.

McGehee, Thomas and Sterba direct two National Institutes of Health grants, the NIGMS Initiative for Maximizing Student Development (IMSD), and the NHLBI Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP) that they leverage with partner institutions. The transition program identifies students with interests in basic science Ph.D. programs and they participate in the SURP Program under the supervision of a UAMS faculty mentor. If the students matriculate to UAMS, this summer research activity serves as one of their required graduate research rotations. Upon successful completion of the JSU Bridge to Doctorate program and their bachelor and/or master degree, students are given automatic acceptance to the Interdisciplinary Biomedical Sciences program in the UAMS Graduate School. These IMSD scholars arrive on campus in June where they participate in an intensive 10-week pre-matriculation program and also complete another research rotation. Their JSU Bridge to Doctorate research advisor becomes a member of their dissertation advisory committee at UAMS. When classes start in

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Dr. McGehee Receives Leadership Award

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August, these students know the campus very well, they have met many of the faculty and fellow students, and they have increased confidence in their academic potential, they have completed two of the three required research rotation, and they have a start on their dissertation advisory committee. The goal is to make the undergraduate to graduate transition as seamless as possible.

The UAMS Initiative for Maximized Student Development (IMSD) Program now has 20 students with more than half of those passing their qualifying exams. Three of those are from Jackson State University.

There have also been seven students from JSU participate in the Summer Undergraduate Research Program. The increased diverse student population was noted at the UAMS Graduate School’s recent Research Induction Ceremony with many minority students being recognized. There are three pending grants between the two universities to keep the program moving forward.

“It’s really been a grassroots effort to build the program,” said McGehee, who also thanked key JSU faculty members instrumental in the program, including Abdul K. Mohamed, Ph.D., dean Emeritus of the College of Science, Engineering and Technology; Paul Tchounwou, associate dean and presidential distinguished professor; Ashton Hamme II, Ph.D., associate professor in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry; and Martha Tchounwou, Ph.D., associate director of the JSU Bridge to Doctorate program.

Tchounwou presented McGehee with the award.

IMSD Students Receive Awards

Four IMSD (Initiative for Maximizing Student Development) students received awards at a luncheon held in the Hamlin Board Room of the Stephens Spine Institute at the end of the 2012-2013 academic year. Students receiving plaques were Cemeka Agugbuem, Tonisha Kearney-Ramos, Danielle Fortune, and Emmanuel Williams.

The IMSD program is in its fifth year and is funded by a grant from the National Institute of General Medical Sciences. Students selected for the program must be accepted into one of the seven biomedical science Ph.D. programs which includes Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Cellular Physiology and Molecular Biophysics, Interdisciplinary Biomedical Sciences, Interdisciplinary Toxicology, Microbiology and Immunology, Neurobiology and Developmental Sciences and Pharmacology.

IMSD students pictured are Ashley Rich, Haliegh Eubanks, Joey Graham, Centdrika Dates, Gwendolyn Carter, Lindsey James, Kimberly Cooney and Tonisha Kearney-Ramos.
Summer Undergraduate Research Program

The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences Graduate School and Center for Diversity Affairs offer a NHLBI (National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute) funded program entitled the UAMS Summer Undergraduate Research Program to Increase Diversity in Research. This 9 week program was designed to provide students with experiences in cardiovascular, pulmonary, or hematologic research. To increase interest in research careers, students are provided with research, mentoring and networking experiences, real-life surgical observations, simulated cardiovascular demonstrations, leadership skills and a lecture series on various research topics and responsible conduct of research training.

During the summer of 2013, SURP student participants conducted a research project with a UAMS faculty mentor. At the end of the summer, students presented their summer research and developed a 2-page paper summarizing the research project and results. They also attended lectures throughout the summer.

2013 SURP participants were Tirra Braddy, Jasmine Collins, Britany Martin and Precious Cooper all of Jackson State, William Davenport, University of the Ozarks, Erika LaTorre-Castillo, Central Baptist College, Dakota Pouncey, Hendrix College, Katelyn Robillard Southeastern Louisiana University, Javier Silva, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, Kate Slaybaugh, Grambling State University, and Chasity White, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff.
Student Awards

Lacy Lewis—Communication Sciences and Disorders Received Members Honors from the National Student Speech Language Hearing Association

Serra Ucer—Interdisciplinary Biomedical Sciences Received a Young Investigator travel grant from the American Society for Bone and Mineral Research Conference

Christina Pettey—Nursing Science Received an international travel award from the American Heart Association

Daniel Sappington—Interdisciplinary Biomedical Sciences Received 2nd place for his platform presentation at the Society of Toxicology South Central Meeting

Alex Alund—Interdisciplinary Biomedical Sciences Received the R. H. Miller Graduate Award for Outstanding Oral Presentation in Environmental Toxicology at the Society of Toxicology South Central Meeting

Outstanding Achievement Award

Christopher Moore Pharmacology Awarded an American Heart Association Predoctoral fellowship

Outstanding Achievement Award

Neil Detweiler Pharmacology Awarded an American Heart Association Predoctoral fellowship
Student Awards

**Rakesh Bam—Interdisciplinary Biomedical Sciences**  Received an abstract achievement award at the American Society of Hematology Conference

**Tonisha Kearney-Ramos—Interdisciplinary Biomedical Sciences**  Received a travel award to attend the Organization for Human Brain Mapping Conference

**Stephanie Ryan Williams—Health Promotion and Prevention Research**  For having received a Gates Millenniums Scholarship

**Ben Lieblong—Pharmacology**  Received a travel award for Radiation Research Society Meeting

**Archana Kamalakar—Interdisciplinary Biomedical Research**  Received a ASBMR Young Investigator Travel Grant

**Naeem Patil—Interdisciplinary Toxicology**  Received a Jerry J Buccafusco travel award to attend the 2013 Experimental Biology conference, received 1st place in the Graduate Student Poster Presentation competition in the Integrative Systems, Translational and Clinical Pharmacology division of ASPET at Experimental Biology, received 2nd place in the Graduate Student Platform Presentation category at the 2013 PharmForum.

**Aaron Storey—Biochemistry and Molecular Biology**  Paul L. Day award for Outstanding Academic Achievement in the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology.

**Joshua Eichhorn—Biochemistry and Molecular Biology**  Alan D. Elbein Award for Research Excellence in the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology.
Mentor Awards - December, 2013

Michael Owens, Ph.D.  
Michael Hambuchen  
Pharmacology

Nancy Rusch, Ph.D.  
Asif Pathan  
Pharmacology

Frank Simmen, Ph.D.  
Ahmed Al-Dwairi  
Cellular Physiology and Molecular Biophysics

Giulia Baldini, Ph.D.  
Faith McDaniel  
Interdisciplinary Biomedical Sciences

William Fantegrossi, Ph.D.  
Andrew Norwood  
Interdisciplinary Biomedical Sciences

Robert Griffen, Ph.D.  
Lauren Bailey  
Interdisciplinary Biomedical

Mick Tilford, Ph.D.  
Michael Preston  
Health System Research

Jean McSweeney, Ph.D.  
Christina Petey  
Nursing Science

Mick Tilford, Ph.D.  
Sharla Smith  
Health Systems Research
Upcoming Dates & Events

Last day of class for Fall Semester                     December 20
Degrees Conferred for December Graduates              December 21
2014 Spring—1st Day of Class                          January 6
2014 Spring Tuition & Fees Due                        January 6
Martin Luther King Day                                 January 20
Graduate School  2014 Spring Break                    March 24– 28
Research Day 2014                                      April 16

University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences
Graduate School
4301 W. Markham Street
Slot 601
Little Rock, AR  72205
Phone:  501.686.5454
Email:  graduateschoolUAMS@uams.edu
Graduate School Web Site