Allied health students celebrate commencement, show off research

BCM allied health students were busy at the end of the year with the annual research competition, followed by the school’s awards ceremony and then commencement.

Research Day

Allied Health Student Research Day was held Nov. 27. Thirty-seven physician assistant students presented their master’s paper research projects via poster presentations. Twenty-eight judges, chosen from the BCM faculty, critiqued the posters. Each poster was evaluated by three judges.

The first place winner of the 2012 poster competition was Amy Robker. Amy will receive a check for $500 for her research on “Pediatric Fluid Management and Cerebral Edema in Diabetic Ketoacidosis.”

Kelsey Young earned second place for her research on “Motivational Interviewing Skills Utilized by First-Year Physician Assistant Students.”

The third place winner was Stella Meusch for her research on “Physician Assistant Students’ Self-Perceived Knowledge of Breastfeeding Before and After Completion of Web-based Curriculum and Lactation Shadowing Experience.”

Gift funds innovative education technology at Baylor College of Medicine

In a world of “apps,” upgrades and social media, educational institutions have to keep up and stay connected. With a new $6.24 million gift from the Huffington Foundation, Baylor College of Medicine is doing just that through its Innovative Education Technology Roadmap initiative.

The first step in the roadmap is developing a customizable software that allows the management of courseware, an evaluation system, assessment tools, registration and more. Also referred to as the Academic Management Platform (AMP), this software will eventually allow BCM students to connect with other students at medical institutions across the world.

In the first year of the initiative, we hope to establish the base system and provide collaborative tools. We also plan to further develop the AMP environment by integrating it into the BCM website, which will allow students to work with one another internally and ultimately with other students and institutions outside of BCM. All of this collaborative data will also be available through mobile devices.

The Huffington Foundation has had a longstanding history of support for Baylor College of Medicine. Roy M. and Phyllis Gough Huffington established the Huffington Center on Aging at BCM in 1988. The Center is now one of the premier centers on aging in the world. Roy Huffington served as a BCM trustee from 1986 to 1999, and the Foundation established the Huffington Foundation Endowed Chair in Aging for the Center director in 2010.

Huffington’s daughter, Terry Huffington, and her husband, Dr. Ralph Dittman, a graduate of BCM’s class of 1973, are continuing the legacy of supporting BCM through the Foundation’s latest gift.

“We wanted to support Baylor during this period of growth and refocus, and this was an area that looked as if it could really help the college,” said Terry Huffington, a BCM trustee emerita.
STUDENT CORNER: Emily Rutledge and Kathleen Mundy
Second-year medical students

Hectic seems like an understatement when describing the life of a medical student. On top of studying and rounding in all of the hospitals, it’s essential for medical students to care for their health as role models for the patients they work with.

With this idea in mind, Rutledge and Mundy, second-year medical students at BCM, campaigned to get FitDesks installed into student areas on campus. A FitDesk is a low-impact, low-resistance stationary bike with a desk on top, allowing students to combine fitness and studying at the same time. The goal is not to be sweating or short of breath while using the FitDesk, but rather to increase energy and improve health while studying.

The idea is a part of a bigger campaign focused on improving BCM’s community wellness and encouraging wellness in the Houston community as a whole.

“They want to send a message to their patients to be more mindful of what they eat and how active they are in their daily lives.”

Graduate student group helps non-English speakers communicate more effectively

Medical terminology can often seem like a foreign language but for those in the field of medicine for whom English is their second language, communicating at work and in their daily life can be an especially daunting task. For those at Baylor College of Medicine and the Texas Medical Center who struggle with this, graduate students at BCM’s Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences have developed the Enhancing English Communication Skills group.

The group started under the guidance of Dr. Gayle Slaughter, Senior Associate Dean of Graduate Education and Diversity at BCM’s Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences. Now under the leadership of BCM graduate students Stephen Murray and Tabassum Majid and Rice University student Katie Bachman, the program allows people for whom English is their second language to practice their skills with one another, along with some structured teaching and activities.

Depending on the day, somewhere between four and 30 members attend the sessions, which are held Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays every week. Activities vary and can range from practicing tongue twisters to playing a game of Jeopardy! with categories such as irregular plurals and prepositions. Group members are sometimes tasked with giving a one-minute speech on a specific topic and are then given feedback.

Although about 90 percent of the class consists of postdoctoral students at BCM, group members also come from throughout the Texas Medical Center. Countries of origin include various countries in Asia and Latin America as well as Iran, Sweden and Russia.
Awards Ceremony

The annual awards ceremony for the School of Allied Health Sciences was held Nov. 30 in Cullen Auditorium. Winners included:

2012 Allied Health Excellence in Teaching Awards
- Dennis O’Brien, Instructor, Department of Anesthesiology and School of Allied Health Sciences
- Rachel Davis, Instructor, Department of Anesthesiology and School of Allied Health Sciences
- Brian Lassinger, Instructor, Department of Surgery
- Elizabeth Elliott, Assistant Professor, School of Allied Health Sciences

Alumni Association Lehmann Outstanding Student Award
The Office of Development and Alumni Affairs presented an award established by resident alumnus Dr. Robert Lehman to one student from each Allied Health Program who demonstrated outstanding leadership in professional and community activities. Ashley Black of the Nurse Anesthesia Program and Kristine Logan of the Physician Assistant Program received the 2012 award.

Physician Assistant Student Award for Excellence in Psychiatry
Sarah-Ann Pike

Physician Assistant Student Award for Excellence in Psychiatry
Sarah-Ann Pike

J. David Holcomb Achievement Award
Quentin W. Smith, Associate Professor in the School of Allied Health Sciences and Assistant Director of the Center for Collaborative and Interactive Technologies

Nurse Anesthesia Student Awards
Thomas James Hale - Nurse Anesthesia Spent Bullet Award
Maryanne Mongtrang Nguyen - Virginia Apgar Award

Armed Forces Commissioning
Caitlin Hoover was commissioned as an officer with the rank of Lieutenant Junior Grade in the United States Navy

Allied Health Commencement

The annual commencement for the School of Allied Health Sciences was Saturday, Dec. 1, at St. Luke’s United Methodist Church. Master of Science degrees were conferred by Dr. David Holcomb, Dean of the School of Allied Health Sciences, to 37 physician assistant and 15 nurse anesthesia students. Holcomb also conferred 12 Doctor of Nursing Practice degrees to the first graduating class. The commencement address was given by Dr. Linda Harrington, Vice President and Regional Chief Nursing Informatics Officer at Catholic Health Initiatives.

Commencement Student Award Recipients
- Sarah-Ann Pike – Lewis A. Leavitt Award
- Jeffery Fox – Henry D. McIntosh Award
- Xiaobin Wang – Helen Lamb Award
- Thomas James Hale – Alice Magaw Award
- Ashley Ann Black – Agatha Hodgins Memorial Award
- Debbie Barber – John F. Garde Distinguished Graduate Award

Student Group

Murray, who has no formal training in teaching English, is the president of the Association for Graduate Student Diversity at BCM. He enjoys seeing group members improve in their ability to communicate and sees that with more practice, they gain confidence in their spoken skills.

Each of the leaders commits a significant amount of time to the group, including planning activities for the meetings and even meeting with group members individually to practice for interviews or look over papers or emails for grammar.

Workshops are held every other month or so that focus on topics that both English and non-native English speakers find useful, such as how to give a presentation.

Hongmei Xu has been a member of the group since it first began this summer, and is truly appreciative of the time that Murray, Majid and Bachman commit to working with group members.

“I know that it is not always easy or convenient for them to assist us and yet they give so very generously of their time, knowledge and patience,” she said. “I have learned so very much from them. They correct my pronunciation and grammar. They teach us how to use correct vocabulary to communicate with others.”