New students, trainees welcomed to BCM

Baylor College of Medicine welcomed a new class of medical students Monday, July 23. The Class of 2016 includes 185 students who represent 24 states and 63 schools and have an average 3.83 GPA and 11.5 MCAT scores.

The students started their training at the College with a retreat and orientation at the Retreat at Artesian Lakes. Their White Coat Ceremony was held Aug. 10, and Family Day was on Aug. 11.

They aren’t the only new faces on campus. Other trainees who started this summer include:

- **241** new fellows. They will continue their education in a number of clinical areas: from adult cardiothoracic anesthesiology to orthopedic hand surgery. They come to BCM from across the country and internationally to pursue this next stage of their clinical training.

- **171** new residents. They will continue their training in BCM’s 88 ACGME-accredited residency programs.

- **42** physician assistant students in the School of Allied Health Sciences. They started classes in June.

- **42** health care professionals enrolled in the National School of Tropical Medicine’s first diploma course.

- **110** new students in the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences. They represent 26 states, eight countries and 92 different institutions.

- **241** new fellows.

Renowned hand surgeon
Dr. Thomas Hunt to lead BCM orthopedic surgery

Dr. Thomas Hunt, an internationally recognized leader in the field of hand and wrist surgery, has been named Chair of the Department of Orthopedic Surgery at Baylor College of Medicine.

Hunt also joins the Houston Texans as one of the team doctors.

Dr. Hunt is a proven leader and an expert clinician who will provide innovative direction to this important area of patient care, research and education at Baylor College of Medicine. He is an excellent mentor to students and trainees and has provided his expertise to sports teams, as well as his skills to patients from around the world. He will be a force at Baylor and in the community.

Hunt is coming to BCM from the University of Alabama, Birmingham. At UAB, he is Professor of Surgery and holds the John D. Sherrill Endowed Chair of Orthopaedic Surgery. He is the Director of the 26-member Division of Orthopedic Surgery, as well as the Director of the UAB Hand and Upper Extremity Fellowship. He is chief of surgical services at UAB Highlands.

- **42** physician assistant students in the School of Allied Health Sciences. They started classes in June.

In addition, Hunt has served as a team physician for the University of Alabama, Auburn University, and UAB. He is also the hand surgery consultant for a long list of regional colleges and universities. He works very closely with Dr. James Andrews caring for numerous professional athletes from around the United States and serves as a member of the Board of the American Sports Medicine Institute.

He participates as a senior scientist within UAB’s Center for Metabolic Bone Disease, Biomatrix Engineering and Regenerative Medicine Center, Comprehensive Arthritis, Musculoskeletal and Autoimmunity Center, and Center for Outcomes and Effectiveness Research and Education. In addition to speaking to trainees and colleagues internationally, Hunt has recently edited a major textbook detailing the most critical hand, wrist and forearm surgical procedures.

Hunt received his bachelor of science degree from Stanford University and his medical degree from Vanderbilt University School of Medicine. He completed additional graduate medical training at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, the University of Kansas Medical Center, Thomas Jefferson...
Saturday Morning Science expands successful program

After seven successful years serving hundreds of local middle and high school students, the Saturday Morning Science program at Baylor College of Medicine will expand its reach next year by adding a second session of classes that will focus on reproductive medicine and research.

Founded in 2005 by Dr. Jim Phillips, Senior Associate Dean and Professor of Pediatrics at BCM and Director of the Office of Diversity and Community Outreach, Saturday Morning Science is a community outreach program aimed at motivating students from 7th through 12th grades from underserved areas to reach their highest potential. The students come from more than 40 schools throughout the greater Houston area.

The program includes lectures and workshops that are conducted on the BCM campus. The sessions stress the importance of math and science in a creative and fun way and are taught by physicians, scientists, astronauts and BCM medical and graduate students.

The reproductive medicine themed session will be structured a little differently but with the same goal of getting students excited about the sciences. It will start in September, and is open only to high school students who have already completed the original Saturday Morning Science program.

The expanded program was developed by Phillips in collaboration with Drs. Dolores Lamb and Francesco DeMayo, Director and Associate Director of the Center for Reproductive Medicine, after they lectured in the last session of Saturday Morning Science about important leading edge research going on in this field.
**Study shows Berlin Heart device provides life-saving “bridge” for young children and babies**

A tiny heart pump that maintains blood flow in babies and small children with serious heart failure proved effective and life-saving in a pioneering study involving 17 institutions led by Texas Children’s Hospital and Baylor College of Medicine. A report on this study appeared in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

The study looked at the safety and probable benefit of the Berlin Heart® EXCOR Pediatric Ventricular Assist Device (VAD), the only VAD available for babies and children. Patients who received the Berlin Heart lived longer on the device and were more likely to receive a transplant or recover heart function than children who were maintained on more traditional support using extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO), according to the study’s results.

“This study is unprecedented and represents broad collaboration among the top pediatric cardiac transplantation centers in North America, really the who’s who in the field,” said Dr. Charles Fraser, Jr., Surgeon-in-Chief at Texas Children’s Hospital and Professor of Surgery and Pediatrics at BCM. Fraser is also the corresponding author of the report and was national principal investigator of the study. “This study is now the gold standard for VAD therapies in children. Everything going forward will be compared to this.”

**Before the Berlin Heart**

Before the Berlin Heart, physicians used complicated medical therapies to treat children with heart failure, hoping to keep them alive until a suitable donor heart became available. Newborns and small children often died as they waited since no more than 70 or 80 small donor hearts become available each year. ECMO provided only short term support when the child’s heart failed completely. The Berlin Heart offers families a new ray of hope.

“With the Berlin Heart, we have a more effective therapy to offer patients earlier in the management of their heart failure,” said Fraser. “When we sit with parents, we have real data to offer so they can make an informed decision. This is a giant step forward.”

**Prospective study**

“This prospective trial is unprecedented because it was not a look back at how children on the device had fared but instead followed their clinical course from the device’s implantation. The results were compared to those of children who received ECMO, the only other method of treatment,” said Fraser, also Chief of Congenital Heart Surgery at Texas Children’s.

“We thought we knew a lot about this device and how it worked, but the FDA was insistent that we conduct a trial and they were right. We did not know as much as we should about how the device performs in practice.”

**Higher survival rate**

For example, he said the survival rate with the device is higher than anticipated and so was the stroke rate. While the stroke rate was of concern, residual effects from the stroke did not prevent most patients from receiving a transplant, the researchers note.

The Berlin Heart is not totally implanted inside the body. Physicians insert cannulas, or flexible tubes, in the heart and they extend through the skin and connect to a small pump located outside the body. That pump, along with its computerized drive unit, maintains blood flow.

For the full release, visit our [website](#).

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**Saturday Morning Science**

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Lectures will include:

- Genetic engineering using mouse models for understanding female reproduction,” Dr. Francesco DeMayo, Professor of Molecular and Cellular Biology
- There and back again with adult stem cells – Dr. Austin Cooney, Associate Professor of Molecular and Cell Biology
- Science in the clinic – how doctors help patients with assisted reproduction – Dr. William Gibbons, Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology
- What genetics can tell us about male and female fertility and cancer – Dr. Lamb and Dr. Martin Matzuk, Professor of Pathology

Phillips is pleased about the expansion of the Saturday Morning Science program. He hopes that the two sessions now being offered, along with other elements of Saturday Morning Science, such as summer research at BCM for college and high school students, will help alleviate the shortage of minority physicians.

Learn more about Saturday Morning Science by visiting their [website](#).