

Herbert W. Nickens Faculty Fellowship

The award recognizes an outstanding junior faculty member who has demonstrated leadership in the United States in addressing inequities in medical education and health care; demonstrated efforts in addressing educational, societal, and health care needs of minorities; and is committed to a career in academic medicine. The recipient receives a \$15,000 grant to support his or her academic and professional activities. Funding for the fellowship begins in November of the year the fellowship is awarded, and it can be used over a two-year period. The recipient will be required to submit a final narrative and financial reports.



**Marcella Nunez-Smith,
M.D., M.H.S.**

Yale University
School of Medicine
New Haven, Connecticut

Marcella Nunez-Smith, M.D., M.H.S., is an assistant professor of general internal medicine and assistant director of the Robert Johnson Clinical Scholars Program at Yale School of Medicine, where she also practices and precepts general internal medicine at the adult Primary Care Center and Yale New-Haven Hospital. She graduated from Swarthmore College, double-majoring in Biological Anthropology and Psychology, where she was inducted into the Sigma Xi research honor fraternity, co-founded the Students of Caribbean Ancestry (SOCA) organization, and was a member of student council. She received her M.D. in 2001 from Jefferson Medical College where she was the president of the Student

National Medical Association (SNMA) and the first woman of African descent inducted into the school's Alpha Omega Alpha chapter. She also received the Eastern Pennsylvania Medical Society's Award for leadership and community service. She completed a residency in internal medicine and primary care at Brigham and Women's Hospital in 2004 where she sat on the intern selection committee and received a grant to develop an ambulatory women's health curriculum for internal medicine housestaff. After her clinical training, she completed the Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholars Program at Yale, concurrently receiving an M.H.S. in 2006 from the Yale School of Medicine.

Originally from the U.S. Virgin Islands, Dr. Nunez-Smith was influenced to enter medicine and work to eliminate health care disparities by her experiences growing up in a federally-recognized health professional shortage area. Recognizing that inequities are not limited to patients, she is also interested in how to systemically support diversity within the health care workforce. Her work addressing health inequities has focused on characterizing the professional experiences of non-majority physicians and improving the health care workplace climate.

Dr. Nunez-Smith is the Principal Investigator on several foundation-supported project grants and has published original research in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* and *The Journal of General Internal Medicine*. She has been invited to speak to national and international audiences about the unique

challenges and experiences of health care providers from diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds. She was recognized as a Hamolsky Junior Faculty Award finalist for a workforce-related abstract at the Society for General Internal Medicine national meeting. Dr. Nunez-Smith has been an invited guest on national radio shows and recently appeared in a documentary on health care discrimination. In her current research, Dr. Nunez-Smith is developing methods to assess the climate of discrimination within health care organizations with the intent to quantify their impact on the retention and satisfaction of diverse health care workers and patients' experiences and satisfaction.

Dr. Nunez-Smith closely mentors medical students, residents, and fellows on a range of health care workforce diversity research projects and plans to support some of her mentees' participation in

national research meetings through the Fellowship. She teaches applied clinical research design, epidemiology and public health, community-based participatory research, and qualitative methodologies. She is a founding member of the Yale Minority Medical Faculty Organization. She received the Harvard Medical School Class of 2004 Outstanding Resident Teaching Award and was a 2007 Yale Bohmfalk Award for Teaching in the Pre-clinical Curriculum finalist. She is also the recipient of two institutional career development awards—the Yale Center for Clinical Investigator Scholar and the Kingsley Medical Research Fellowship.

Herbert W. Nickens Medical Student Scholarships

These awards consist of five scholarships given to outstanding students entering their third year of medical school who have shown leadership in efforts to eliminate inequities in medical education and health care and demonstrated leadership efforts in addressing educational, societal, and health care needs of minorities in the United States. Each recipient receives a \$5,000 scholarship in November of the year the scholarships are awarded.



Aretha Delight Davis

Harvard Medical School
Boston, Massachusetts

Aretha Delight Davis is a third-year medical student at Harvard Medical School (HMS). Aretha's parents emigrated from Guyana, and she was born in Washington D.C. and raised in Michigan. Community service has been the cornerstone of Aretha's professional and personal development. At Harvard College, she worked with low-income children in Cambridge and Boston and served as an executive board member of the Phillips Brooks House, Harvard's student-run, nonprofit public service organization. Her work was recognized with the Stride-Rite Post Graduate Fellowship, Helen

M. Taylor Scholarship, Lisa Schnitzer Prize, and Lastfoegel Award. After graduating in 1993, Aretha spent a year in Guyana, where she conducted research on breastfeeding patterns and infant nutrition. She assisted health policy officials to revise nutritional guidelines for pregnant women and lactating mothers and volunteered at the Red Cross Convalescence Home for Abandoned and Malnourished Children and Davis Memorial Hospital.

Aretha returned to study law at the University of Pennsylvania Law School where she was awarded the Arlin Adams Public Interest Fellowship, the Dean Jefferson B. Fordham Human Rights Award, and the William Hastie Award. While there, Aretha served as Class President and President of the Black Law Students' Association. She was also a Board Member of the Equal Justice Foundation and the Custody and Support Assistance Clinic. After law school, Aretha received a Philadelphia Bar Foundation Fellowship and served as a staff attorney at the Pennsylvania Health Law Project (PHLP) where she advocated on behalf of low-income persons before state and federal

executive-level health administrators and provided direct representation. Aretha also prepared position papers, helped develop state health care regulations, and testified before state legislators regarding managed care.

Her fellowship concluded, and Aretha joined the Philadelphia office of Morgan, Lewis, and Bockius, LLP. As a litigator, Aretha represented corporations in connection with federal criminal prosecutions and co-authored a book on health care investigations. She also represented pro-bono clients in family, criminal, and death penalty matters; served as a board member to the AIDS Law Project and the Barristers' Association; and Co-Chaired the Philadelphia Bar Foundation Pro-Bono Task Force. She received the Craig M. Perry Community Service Award for her contributions to the legal and larger-Philadelphia communities. Moreover, the University of Pennsylvania Law School named her one of its "Five All Stars Under 40."

Now at HMS, Aretha has served as Academic Liaison for the Harvard SNMA, a member of the BHO's Black History Month Planning

Committee, and Co-Chair of the "A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words" Live Auction and Exhibit, an annual event that supports non-English language study at HMS. She has received several university-wide scholarships. Aretha intends to combine law and medicine for a career in health care administration focused on delivering care to the underserved. She is particularly interested in helping develop and improve cost-effective and compassionate health insurance plans.



Nereida Esparza

University of Chicago
Pritzker School of Medicine
Chicago, Illinois

Nereida Esparza is currently a third-year medical student at University of Chicago's Pritzker School of Medicine. She graduated from the University of Chicago in 2006 with a B.A. in biological sciences. As an entering medical student, she was awarded the Department of Medicine's Exceptional Promise Scholarship.

During her undergraduate studies, her interest in the intricacies of science fueled her work in a basic

science urology lab. Her research on stress urinary incontinence in females resulted in publications in the *Journal of Rehabilitation Research and Development*, *Journal of Urology*, and the *American Journal of Physiology*. Through her work, she gained an understanding not only of the importance of research in defining the pathophysiology of a disease, but also of the effects on patients' quality of life.

As a medical student, she became inspired to follow a different path – health care disparities. As part of a week long course on the topic, she grew in her awareness of the impact health disparities has had on her life, her family's life, and her community's health. She now focuses her research on the health care received by minorities in her community. She also returned the following year as a teaching assistant for the course, hoping to share with others the knowledge that had so inspired her.

As a second-year medical student, Nereida was elected co-president of the University of Chicago's Pritzker School of Medicine's chapter of the National Network of Latin American Students (NNLAMS) and president of the Multicultural Community for the Academic Advancement in Medicine (MCAAM). Through these groups, she focuses her interests on raising awareness about Latino health issues and promoting the academic success of minority medical students.

A daughter of Mexican immigrants, and the first to pursue a professional degree in her family, Nereida is honored to work to eliminate health

care disparities. Through volunteerism and mentorship, she hopes to inspire others to believe in their potential and promote their academic success within medicine. She is committed to a career researching health care disparities, practicing medicine in an inner city, and teaching those that come after her.



Tamika E. Smith

Northwestern University
Feinberg School of Medicine
Chicago, Illinois

Tamika E. Smith is a third-year medical student at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. She graduated *summa cum laude* from Northwestern University with a B.A. in psychology, and she hopes to use what she has learned about human motivation and emotion to promote health and wellness for her future patients. As an undergraduate, her passion for HIV/AIDS advocacy and activism led her to found HALO, the HIV/AIDS Literacy Organization. The group's activities increased AIDS awareness on campus and provided volunteer opportunities with HIV/AIDS agencies in Evanston and Chicago.

As a medical student, Tamika has focused much of her time and energy on establishing a health clinic in rural Jamaica, her native country. Medical students now take week-long trips to Hagley Gap, Jamaica, twice a year to provide much-needed free primary care to hundreds of people in a small mountain community. Tamika also enjoys making an impact locally by coordinating the Student National Medical Association's renowned pipeline programs designed to get Chicago teens excited about science and the profession of medicine. She still has the privilege of mentoring some of the program's graduates and is thrilled by their stories of academic and personal achievement.

Tamika took time off from medical school to reignite her commitment to grassroots community development by becoming a volunteer program coordinator with Chicago Cares, Inc. She created many new volunteer programs aimed at meeting hunger, education, nutrition, and wellness needs of fellow Chicagoans. One of her favorite programs was the "Veggie Variety Cooking Class" that taught residents of a low-income housing development how to prepare nutritious and affordable meals in a fun, team-based setting. Her experiences on her break from medical school helped to remind her of how much she loves working with people to help them create better health for themselves.

She hopes to discover which field in medicine is right for her personality and intellectual curiosities as she completes her third-year clerkships. At this point of her training, she feels that family medicine will be a

good fit given her desire to create strong doctor-patient relationships based on continuity of care and education and empowerment of her patients.

Tamika is starting a new chapter in her life: She is the wife of the loving Eric Smith and the mother of a new beautiful baby girl! All of these exciting life changes have encouraged Tamika to take better care of her mind, body, and spirit. She finds peace through the practice of yoga, riding her bike, and in fellowship with friends and family.



Jorge A. Uribe
University of Pennsylvania
School of Medicine
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Jorge A. Uribe is currently a third-year medical student at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. He received his B.A.S. in Biological Sciences and Spanish from Stanford University.

Jorge and his family moved from Guadalajara, Mexico when he was eight years old. His interest in border health, research, and public health had two influences. The first

was the significant inequalities in medical care and a lack of culturally diverse physicians he witnessed in Mexico and the border city of El Paso, Texas. The second was his father, a foreign physician, who dedicated a large part of his career to helping an immigrant-serving clinic. Jorge began preparing in high school by volunteering at an immigrant-serving clinic and the El Paso County hospital, where he worked with large populations of underserved patients. As an interpreter, he quickly learned of the need for both Spanish-speaking and culturally competent physicians. He continued volunteering at free clinics for Latino immigrants while at Stanford—and continues now in medical school.

While at Stanford, Jorge took on several leadership positions, including as co-chair of Chicanos in Health Education (CHE), as a Peer Health Educator, and as an NIH Academy Fellow. He organized several health fairs where he disseminated health information to Latinos, including school children, college students, and new immigrants. Additionally, through CHE, he helped coordinate a large premed conference, the *Dia de los muertos* (DDLm) conference at Stanford, which provided medical school preparation and admissions process for over 500 Latino undergraduate and high school students from all California.

Understanding the importance of mentorship and education, as a first-year medical student, Jorge organized a twice weekly G.E.D. program taught in Spanish for the

rapidly growing Mexican immigrant population in South Philadelphia. He mentors students and their families, providing them with health education materials and information about where to obtain free health care. Jorge is helping his wife, Lindsay, a second-year medical student at the University of Pennsylvania, with implementing an English-as-a-second-language curriculum in the community. Moreover, Jorge has been instrumental in establishing a free clinic, *Puentes de Salud*, for Latino immigrants of South Philadelphia. Jorge helped coordinate volunteers for the clinic and volunteered to organize health education classes, provide interpreting services, and organize educational theme nights on diabetes and back pain.

With support from Dr. Gail Morrison, Vice Dean of Education, Jorge produced *The Chronicler*, the first annual yearbook of underrepresented minority Penn Med students showcasing students' photos, backgrounds, and interests. The Offices of Admission and Diversity and Community Outreach have used this publication as an introduction to the active minority community at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine at recruitment fairs and informal gatherings of premedical students visiting the school. Jorge has also interviewed applicants, welcomed students to *Puentes de Salud*, advocated for students underrepresented in medicine, and helped the medical school understand how best to recruit Mexican-American students.

Jorge is interested in improving the quality and quantity of medical and public health research conducted on the U.S.-Mexico border and in improving the quality of care for underserved populations living in these communities. As an academic physician, he hopes to increase the number of minority physicians and in creating mentoring programs for underserved youth interested in medicine and science.



Bryant Cameron Webb
Wake Forest University
School of Medicine
Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Bryant Cameron Webb is a third-year medical student at Wake Forest University Health Sciences (School of Medicine). Originally from Fredericksburg, Virginia, Cameron conducted his undergraduate studies at the University of Virginia where he was selected to participate in the Echols Scholars Program and completed an Echols Interdisciplinary Studies major in Medical Anthropology. After graduating from the University of Virginia in 2005, Cameron completed the Post-Baccalaureate Premedical Program at

Wake Forest University School of Medicine and began medical school in 2006.

Since his matriculation Cameron has been actively involved in extracurricular activities. He was elected President of the Wake Forest Class of 2010 and served as the Vice President of the Wake Forest chapter of the Student National Medical Association (SNMA). In these roles, Cameron has advocated for students at Wake Forest and promoted greater student participation in serving the Winston-Salem community.

In the spring of 2007, Cameron was selected as a North Carolina Albert Schweitzer Fellow, receiving a one-year fellowship to design and implement a community service program. Working with his fellow SNMA members, Cameron designed Project T.E.A.C.H., a teen mentorship program with a focus on educating high school students on diseases that disparately affect minority communities. Additionally, Cameron began working with a group of students to create the school of medicine's burgeoning student-run free clinic, "DEAC" – Delivering Equal Access to Care.

Cameron also joined the SNMA's Health Policy and Legislative Affairs Committee in spring 2007. In his first year on the committee, he served as the Political Advocacy Liaison for Region IV and completed a number of projects aimed at increasing medical students' interest in and awareness of health policy advocacy. He is now Co-Chair of the Health Policy and Legislative Affairs National Committee, and as such he works on projects that include creating the

National Health Policy Institute, a nationwide SNMA membership health policy education campaign, and planning for the SNMA National Lobby Day on Capitol Hill in March of 2009.

In the summer of 2007, Cameron completed a research project, "From Politics to Parity: Using a health disparities index to measure the efficacy of health legislation," with Wake Forest's Maya Angelou Research Center on Minority Health. In this endeavor, Cameron combined his interest in medicine and the law to analyze two newly introduced pieces of Congressional health legislation for their potential to eliminate disparities in health care. The project received third place at the Wake Forest University Medical Student Summer Research Day and first prize at Harvard Medical School's New England Science Symposium. In the fall of 2007, Cameron was awarded the National Association of Minority Medical Educators (NAMME) Scholarship and named the Wake Forest University recipient of the McGraw-Hill/Lange Medical Student Scholarship.

To round out his preparation for a career as a champion of minority health legislation, Cameron will begin the law school portion of his combined MD/JD degree program at Wake Forest in the fall of 2009.

Down the road, Cameron sees himself as an advocate for the health of underserved communities on two intricately related fronts. As a physician, he will work directly at the patient-physician interface to provide competent and sensitive care for all of his patients. As an advocate, he will work tirelessly to improve the quality and reach of health legislation and policy specifically written to end disparities in health care and improve access to care for all.

For more information about these awards, contact:

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