

# GSA Reporter

Vol.5 No.3 Winter 2008

Group on  
Student Affairs  
**GSA**



## Greetings From the National Chair

Georgette A. Dent, M.D.

*Ho`omana i ola ma olakino maika`i* or “empowered to live in good health” caught my attention during the GSA Minority Affairs Section (MAS) Program at our most recent AAMC annual meeting when the five most recent Herbert W. Nickens Medical Student Scholarship awardees were recognized. This program recognizes students entering third year who have shown leadership in addressing educational, societal, and health care needs of minorities in the United States. The five students recognized reminded me very much of my own students in their passion for social justice and their compassionate approach to health care. They were a diverse group: African American, Asian American, Caucasian, Latina, and Native Hawaiian attending medical schools across the country. One of the students recognized was a leader in her regional Student National Medical Association and had played an integral role in organizing health fairs and programs focused on eliminating health disparities. The Hawaiian student had started a program entitled *Ho`omana i ola ma olakino maika`i* or “empowered to live in good health.” She conducted a survey of Hawaiian residents, health care practitioners, and community health educators to get their perspective on barriers to obtaining health care in their communities.

A popular theme of the students’ projects was Latino health care issues. One student had raised over \$10,000 to start a program to provide health care to some of the *colonias* in South Texas. *Colonias* are impoverished, predominately Hispanic communities along the Texas-Mexico border that often lack basic necessities

such as potable water, electricity, paved roads, and sewer systems. Still another student volunteered in free health clinics in Guatemala and the fifth student conducted research on the effects of mercury and lead on cardiovascular and neurological functions in communities in the Brazilian Amazon.

As each student spoke, I was struck by their passion and humanity. One of the most gratifying aspects of working in student affairs is having the opportunity to work with such an outstanding group of students. Our students are not only intellectually gifted, but well steeped in altruistic and humanistic values. These students believe they can change the world and I agree with them! I believe part of our challenge as student affairs professionals is to provide them with the skills they will need to navigate our increasingly complex health care delivery system while at the same time maintaining their passion for helping others. While our students work to see that the medically underserved are “empowered to live in good health,” we prepare and empower them to change the world beyond what we have been able to accomplish.

Medical student affairs professionals face many demands and challenges as we try to support and empower our students. We want to do the best by our students in the context of the almost constantly changing environment in medical education, the science of health care, and society at large. We must also deal with finite financial and human resources. Because of the collegial collaboration between the dedicated AAMC staff and the expert and experienced student affairs community, we are well positioned to make the best use of our resources. One example of a collaborative project that will help us work more efficiently and better serve students is the AAMC’s Visiting Student Application Service (VSAS).

The process by which students apply for away or “audition” electives is a process that could benefit from increased efficiency. The popularity of these electives has grown over the years. We estimate that approximately 80 percent of the national senior class applies for electives at other institutions. Many schools handle hundreds of applications and it is not unusual for schools to have a larger number of visiting students than their own senior class. This process can be challenging for students because each school has its own application process, due dates, pre-requisites and documentation requirements.

In 2005, the GSA Committee on Student Records (COSR) asked the AAMC to consider developing a system to handle the application process at other medical schools. A widely representative committee was convened which included input from the GSA Committee on Student Affairs (COSA), the GSA-MAS, the Organization of Student Representatives (OSR), Group on Educational Affairs (GEA), as well as representatives from COSR and AAMC staff. The goals of the project were to standardize the application process, develop an efficient method for sending and receiving applications, define clear deadlines, enhance communication and information flow between schools and students, and provide assistance in the timely turn around of grades. VSAS is scheduled to be piloted this spring. For the pilot program, ten schools have agreed to serve as a “host” school and any of our schools may serve as home schools. We are excited about this pilot and believe it is another example of the student affairs community, the AAMC, and the OSR working together to help student affairs officers make the best use of their resources as well as provide better support and empowerment for our students, who indeed can change the world!



## Greetings From The GSA-MAS National Chair

*Cynthia E. Boyd, M.D., FACP,  
MBA*

There is a quote from John F. Kennedy that says: “Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.” As you know, the AAMC has embarked upon a new strategic thinking process [ “strategic thinking and positioning” (STP) ] which involves evaluating the AAMC mission, vision and strategic priorities in an effort to better position itself and prepare for the many challenges that lie ahead for medical education. The AAMC’s Executive Committee, under the leadership of Dr. Darrell Kirch has charged the organization’s leadership with some new and challenging questions while seeking newer ways and opportunities to make a difference and improvement in the health of our nation. In this regard, the GSA-MAS and other AAMC affinity groups are being critically examined with respect to structure, function and governance. For me, assuming the role of National GSA-MAS Chair is both an honor and a privilege, but particularly so during this time of transformation within the AAMC and the GSA-MAS. I am looking forward to serving as your GSA-MAS National Chair during this exciting time of change to help lead the GSA-MAS towards making diversity a key priority throughout the organization, while also maintaining the important relationship shared between the GSA and MAS these past many years.

Change has certainly been the buzzword of this year’s presidential campaign thus far, and the repeated and perhaps overuse of the word [change] has left many wondering and asking just what does change really mean? It was a year ago when the GSA-MAS Coordinating Committee first became aware of the new changes that the AAMC was seeking to make. At the time, this news certainly left many of us wondering and asking just what this change really meant, particularly for the GSA-MAS. But now, looking back a year later, it is clear from the efforts and

strong commitment of the MAS Coordinating Committee and GSA-MAS leadership that the changes to come will incorporate and include some of the constructive feedback and recommendations provided by MAS constituents at their regional meetings over the course of this past year. Many of you have been very excited about the strategic thinking and positioning process and you have assumed an active role in helping to shape the future. I believe this process represents an opportunity for all of us as stakeholders to make a difference and change for the better.

Making an attempt to anticipate what the next several years may bring for the GSA-MAS is a daunting task to say the least. But despite what the future may bring, it is nearly impossible to not look back and reflect on the true evolution and maturation of the GSA-MAS relationship these past several years. There have been many issues on which we have collaborated and shared our collective wisdom to make a difference. Indeed, the GSA-MAS history is rich; it provides continuity and gives us roots. However, as much as may have been accomplished in the past, there is still much work to be done and we therefore must continue to grow. History and time has a way of rendering the past prologue as the future moves front and center. The GSA-MAS must therefore look to the promise and potential that the future holds and develop newer strategies and newer ways to achieve our goals.

Change gives us branches, allowing us to stretch and grow and reach new heights. I look forward to the opportunity to interact, collaborate and learn from such an experienced and talented group of individuals as represented by the GSA-MAS. This is indeed an exciting time for us all to take advantage of our strengths and participate in the strategic thinking and positioning process as set forth by the Executive Committee of the AAMC. Diversity in medical education is vital and necessary across the entire continuum of medical education. It is vital for the health and well being of all Americans in this country. It is my intention to seize this opportunity with all of you and challenge

ourselves to work towards the development and implementation of strategic priorities that will honor our [GSA-MAS] rich history and ensure the future. The future is ours to channel in the direction we want to go.

I would like to conclude with a quote from an author, John Newburn, which I find befitting to where we all [GSA-MAS and AAMC] stand at this moment in time. The quote says: “People can be divided into three groups: those who make things happen, those who watch things happen, and those who wonder what happened.” I look forward to working with all of you to make things happen!

## GSA-MAS Career Fair Registries

The GSA-MAS Coordinating Committee is proud to present the final career fair registries report from the 2007 Minority Student Medical Career Awareness Workshops and Recruitment Fair, held in Washington, D.C.

The report is in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet with the first row identifying the columns. This spreadsheet has been posted to the private, restricted GSA-MAS Web site ([www.aamc.org/mas](http://www.aamc.org/mas) under “Hot Topics”) for the MAS. You will need your AAMC log-in and password to access the information. The GSA-MAS Coordinating Committee asks that you only share this information with the appropriate personnel in your office or institution. There is an obligation to protect the privacy of the registry participants.

The Minority Student Medical Career Fair Registry and Parents, Counselors, and Pre-health Advisors Medical Career Fair Registry are direct outcomes of the GSA-MAS Strategic Plan. This new tool will help with the recruitment and enrollment of more underserved/underrepresented applicants in medical schools.

For questions, please contact Juan Amador at 202.862.6149, Angela Moses at 202.862.6203, or e-mail [CareerFair@aamc.org](mailto:CareerFair@aamc.org).

## ERAS Prepares for Scramble 2008

B. Renee Overton, MBA

Over the past few years, technological advances have changed the way in which we communicate with one another. No one has felt this shift more acutely than our medical school community during what is known as the “Scramble” period. This change is due, in part, to the technology; but the influx of profit making entities flooding residency programs’ e-mails, telephones and fax machines with IMG application materials has also had an impact. As a result, residency programs are responding by ignoring the traditional modes of communication previously used during the Scramble period. This deafening silence from residency programs has created a conundrum for Student Affairs offices trying to determine how best to support their applicants during this process. It is within this context that the GSA requested that ERAS and the NRMP work together to develop a plan to improve the Scramble experience.

Technical limitations in previous years prevented ERAS from playing a major role in Scramble because we did not have the capacity to ensure a successful outcome. However, swayed by the GSA’s request to improve the Scramble experience, ERAS has reconsidered its prior position and has employed a multi-pronged approach to improve Scramble 2008:

- We’ve upgraded our equipment to improve high volume processing of applications during a short period of time;
- Based on user feedback, we’ve made some modifications to the MyERAS application to enhance the applicants’ experience; and
- ERAS and NRMP have collaborated on the development of a Scramble document to help programs prepare for Scramble.

The ERAS system upgrades will reduce the timeouts experienced in previous years and will provide more capacity for improved backend processing and delivery of applications. Our goal is to make applications available within a half hour of applicants applying to programs.

New Scramble functionality has been added to the MyERAS application to allow applicants the ability to reapply to training programs to which they’ve already applied during the regular season. In addition, ERAS will allow applicants to review the disposition of the applications submitted during Scramble using a modified version of ADTS called *ADTS Lite*. While ADTS Lite cannot display document-specific statuses, it will display when an application is available for download and when programs have received the application.

Finally, ERAS and the NRMP teamed up to create and distribute *Leveraging Your Scramble Experience*, a checklist offering specific suggestions to help programs prepare for Scramble. This document was posted on both the ERAS and NRMP Web sites in mid-February. Visit the Scramble page on our Web site, [www.aamc.org/eras](http://www.aamc.org/eras) to view this document as well as other general Scramble information. A Scramble advisory was also sent to applicants and schools in mid-February.

We are committed to working together with medical schools to streamline the residency application process. We believe the changes we’ve made will improve and enhance the Scramble experience for our users; but you are the final authority. Please let us know how this year’s Scramble worked for you and your applicants. Contact me at [broverton@aamc.org](mailto:broverton@aamc.org) or (202) 828-0508 with your comments.

## New Debt Management Information and Education Program

The AAMC is excited to announce the upcoming launch of a new debt management information and education

program. This multi-faceted program is designed to provide support to our financial aid constituents and to educate our students to better manage their debt and make sound decisions about financing their medical school education.

In collaboration with the Organization of Student Representatives (OSR), the GSA Committee on Student Financial Assistance (COSFA), and based in part on the recommendations of independent consultants we will be developing a new financial aid web resource within the AAMC site.

The new site will be organized by audience and task, and designed to provide easy access for FAO’s and students. Although many of the new materials, tools and information will be available to the public, expanded features allow individualized functions, record keeping and customized repayment and loan scenarios for FAOs and medical students.

The financial aid materials and support that the AAMC provides will be significantly expanded.

**For Students:** Students will have access to information and tools to assist them in making informed and responsible decisions about their medical student loans. They will also have the ability to create and maintain personal protected information in a centralized secure location, a resource the OSR has specifically requested.

**For FAO’s:** In addition to our current offerings, we have planned the development of broad multi-faceted financial aid materials, including an educational curriculum that coordinates with the information and resources available on the student portion of the site. Services that support the new curriculum will include training for FAO’s in the use and delivery of the materials developed by the AAMC debt management team.

Watch for the May launch of the first phase of this multi-phase project.

## Share Your Career Planning Resources with the Careers in Medicine Knowledge Base

Careers in Medicine® (CiM) staff are creating a knowledge base to share information and ideas about what schools are doing in their CiM programs. We envision the knowledge base as a clearinghouse for workshops, templates, program outlines, curricula, and other successful career planning resources.

To make this endeavor a reality, we need your help. We are soliciting contributions to the knowledge base that you are willing to share with your colleagues. Do you have an outline or description of your CiM program that might help a school who is just starting to implement the program? Do you have a workshop or course materials to share or booklets and handouts that other schools might find useful? Do you have an advising program that is working well? Share your information, tools, and resources through the CiM knowledge base.

The submission form and instructions are available on the advisor Web site at [www.aamc.org/programs/cim/](http://www.aamc.org/programs/cim/). Only an electronic version of your resources will be accepted.

Once we begin receiving submissions and see what types of resources we are getting, we will begin organizing, categorizing, and loading them on the advisor Web site for everyone to peruse. We are planning to eventually create a CiM version of MedEdPORTAL. MedEdPORTAL is an online publication that offers peer review to help faculty publish and share educational resources. Because it will be over a year until we have the resources to build a CiM version, a knowledge base on the advisor site is the best temporary solution. We do encourage you to submit any educational resources that you

feel may be peer-reviewable to MedEdPORTAL. You can get more information on publishing your resources through MedEdPORTAL at [www.aamc.org/mededportal](http://www.aamc.org/mededportal).

If you have any questions, please contact Jeanette Calli at (202)862-6270 or [jcalli@aamc.org](mailto:jcalli@aamc.org).

## Upcoming Careers in Medicine Workshops: Register Now!

Join us for one of the 2008 Careers in Medicine Regional Training Workshops. We currently have three sessions scheduled. You still have time to register for the March 5-6 session being held at the Keck School of Medicine at USC in Los Angeles or join us in beautiful Puerto Rico, June 3-4 at the Universidad Central del Caribe School of Medicine. Our fall session will be held September 22-23 in Washington, DC at the AAMC headquarters.

The sessions are interactive and focus on counseling skills, advising students on career development and decision-making, using the CiM web site, and implementing the program. In addition to learning some valuable skills that can be used in career planning with students, participants are also provided with case study experiences and opportunities to exchange ideas with their fellow attendees. Seats are limited so register early. Further information and registration can be found on the AAMC Web site at [www.aamc.org/meetings](http://www.aamc.org/meetings).

## Call for Nominations for 2008 Herbert W. Nickens Awards

### *Herbert W. Nickens Award*

The award is given to an individual who has made outstanding contributions to promoting justice in medical education

and health care for people in the United States. The recipient receives a \$10,000 award and presents the Nickens Lecture at the AAMC Annual Meeting. Nominees may come from a wide range of fields, including medicine, education, law, nursing, public health, and social sciences.

### *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.

### *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.

### *Nominations Deadline*

The deadline for all nominations is **Friday, May 2, 2008**. For more information, visit [www.aamc.org/about/awards](http://www.aamc.org/about/awards). You can also contact Juan Amador at 202.862.6149 or e-mail [NickensAwards@aamc.org](mailto:NickensAwards@aamc.org).

# *Mark Your Calendar!*

**Minority Student  
Medical Career Awareness  
Workshops and Recruitment Fair**

**Saturday, November 1, 2008  
Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center  
San Antonio, Texas**

For questions, please contact Juan Amador at 202.862.6149, Angela Moses at 202.862.6203, or e-mail [CareerFair@aamc.org](mailto:CareerFair@aamc.org).

## GSA Meetings of Interest

### 2008

#### **NEGSA Spring Meeting**

April 3 - 6, 2008  
Baltimore, MD

#### **Joint CGSA/SGSA Spring Meeting**

April 10 - 13, 2008  
Sandestin, FL

#### **WGSA Spring Meeting**

April 27 - 30, 2008  
Asilomar, CA

#### **Careers in Medicine Regional Workshops**

June 3 - 4, 2008  
Universidad Central del Caribe School of  
Medicine  
Bayamon, Puerto Rico

September 22 - 23, 2008

AAMC Headquarters  
Washington, DC

#### **Student Affairs Officers Professional Development Conference**

June 19 - 22, 2008  
Tucson, AZ

### 2009

#### **Admission Officers Professional Development Conference/Student Records Officers Professional Development Conference**

June, 2009  
Location TBD

1958-2008 **50** years  
**GSA**  
Group on Student Affairs

## GSA Reporter

2450 N Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20037

The GSA Reporter is published three times annually by the Section for Student Affairs and Programs of the Association of American Medical Colleges.

**Associate Vice President**  
Henry Sondheimer, MD

**Editor**  
April A. Morrow

For additional copies, contact the Section for Student Affairs and Programs at 202 828 0494.