Clinical Excellence Scholar Track (CEST)

Overview

In Fall 2013, the Bucksbaum Institute created a hugely successful competitive application program in partnership with the UChicago Careers in Health Professions program that consists of a three-year longitudinal experience for pre-medical undergraduates in the College. The program will enter its fourth year in the fall of 2016, having awarded 20 transcript designations to graduated students and currently supporting 67 undergraduates.

The Institute’s first Master Clinician, Ross Milner, as well as two senior faculty scholars, Dr. Christopher Strauss and Dr. Neethi Pinto, currently provide leadership to the students in the track. Each year, around 70 undergraduate pre-medical students in their 2nd, 3rd, and 4th years participate in the program, organized by year into cohorts led by an individual faculty mentor. As the initial cohort graduated in the spring of 2016, Dr. Milner, their mentor, has graciously offered to mentor the most recent fourth cohort consisting of students from the class of 2019.

Pre-medical students in the CEST program are introduced to clinical medicine, humanism, and compassion in healthcare. The CEST program committee has defined five overarching program goals and has linked these goals to the mission of the Bucksbaum Institute. The five program goals are Academic Programming, Clinical Experience, Communication Skills, Leadership, and Mentoring. Each of the requirements of the program fulfills a core program goal of the Track. As of June 2016, 62 student scholars have volunteered over 4532 hours through the CEST program.

The CEST program is unique to the University of Chicago; to date we have not found a similar program at any of our peer institutions.
Requirements of the Program

In order to receive transcript designation, students in the program must:

1) Participate in the “Joel Schwab, MD, On Being a Doctor” Series.
   Named in honor of Joel Schwab, M.D., Senior Faculty Scholar of the Bucksbaum for Clinical Excellence, this monthly series features a clinician presenting on a selected aspect of effective clinical care. Talks have ranged from medical autobiographies to descriptions of current research and have been given by both assistant and distinguished faculty members.
   (A total of 9 seminars must be attended for transcript designation, one per quarter minimum).

Prior topics have included:
   Community-based health care delivery, a presentation by Dr. Laura Schwab
   Professionalism in medicine, a presentation by Dr. Ross Milner
   Health literacy, a presentation by Dr. Valerie Press

2) Participate in the Bucksbaum Institute lecture series and MacLean center lecture series.
   On average a minimum of 40% of the CEST student scholars attend public Bucksbaum Institute lectures. Additionally, five CEST students were invited and attended the special student Bucksbaum Interest Group dinners with Dr. Perri Klass and Dr. Ranjana Srivastava. These events provided the undergraduates an opportunity to have greater interaction with Pritzker medical students and national guest speakers.
   (4 events must be attended for transcript designation).

3) Successful completion of the Volunteer and Shadowing program at UC Medicine.
   In collaboration with the University of Chicago Medicine, each CEST student is required to complete 100 hours of volunteer and shadow service over one calendar year. Each student attends an information session, receives the required vaccinations, and completes other necessary training to be certified as an official hospital volunteer. As of June 2016, 62 student scholars have volunteer 4523 hours through the CEST program.

   Several attempts at physician shadowing programs have been made in recent campus history, but the new program supported by the Bucksbaum Institute has had by far the greatest response rate from physicians and students alike. During these first years, the CEST program has received nearly 100 faculty volunteers annually.
   (12 hours of shadowing and 25 hours of volunteering per quarter, 1 year of volunteering/shadowing must be completed for transcript designation).
4) Completion of one or more courses within the College that address the doctor-patient relationship.

CEST students have been able to select from over 20 courses each academic year to meet the fourth program requirement of completing one course within the College that addresses the doctor-patient relationship. Additionally, it appears that the majority of CEST students will take at least 2 of the recommended courses over the 3-year CEST program period.
(1 course must be completed for transcript designation).

5) Attendance at Clinical Excellence Dinners and Gatherings.

A newer requirement of the program, there are two quarterly Clinical Excellence Scholar dinners that have a mandatory attendance policy. Students will engage with their cohort leaders at these dinners and often break into small groups as part of a rotating book and journal club. Topics surrounding the doctor-patient relationship will be emphasized as part of the dinner discussion.
(Attendance at dinners is mandatory for transcript designation).

6) Creative Capstone Project

Upon completion of the program, students must develop a creative project of their choice that reflects on their time in the program, and expresses what they have learned or what this experience has meant to them. The project can be whatever they choose, but may include a poem or collection of poems, essay, photo or series of photos, painting, drawing, collage, etc.
(Submission of the Capstone Project is required for transcript designation).
Testimonials For the Program:

Mattie Renn, Class of 2016, Major in Biological Sciences, first cohort
"More than any other experience in College, The Clinical Excellence Scholars Track provided me with the resources and the knowledge to decide that I was truly interested in a career in medicine. By speaking with physicians, others in my cohort, and through interacting with patients, my understanding of the medical profession was able to develop in incredibly unique and rewarding capacities."

Andrew Song, Class of 2016, Major in Biological Sciences, first cohort
"The Bucksbaum Master Clinicians not only helped me to discover the joys and tribulations of a career in medicine, but they also taught me just how complex and nuanced a successful doctor-patient relationship can be. Going into medical school, I feel more than prepared to work together with my first patients as I bring the lessons the Master Clinicians taught me."

Jon Sussman, Class of 2017, Major in Biological Sciences, second cohort
“"The CEST has given me unprecedented access to medicine related activities on campus and has inspired a love of medical education that I hope to retain for the rest of my life. Through connections built with faculty scholars, attendance at optional seminars and lectures, and the cohort dinners, medicine no longer appears as the unwieldy behemoth that my freshman self encountered.”

John Yoon, MD, Junior Faculty Scholar and Undergraduate Course Leader
On “The Good Physician”, a course by Dr. John Yoon, MD, Junior Faculty Scholar
“"Back in the day when I was an undergraduate pre-medical student considering a career in medicine, I realized that I had no clue what it meant to be a doctor, or what it meant to establish a good doctor-patient relationship. Later toward the end of my clinical training, I became gradually aware of the various interdisciplinary perspectives out there that informed and enhanced the process of good doctoring. Much of this material, however, was often left out from the already over-crammed traditional biomedical curriculum.

One day I mused whether I should start a "What-I-Wished-I-Knew-About-The-Doctor-Patient-Relationship-Before-Entering-Medical-School" course for pre-medical undergraduates. The goal would be to expose students to a representative "taste" of the vast interdisciplinary literature out there on the doctor patient relationship -- while at the same time inspiring students with individual life narratives of role model physicians who each had their own unique story in becoming "good physicians". Therefore with the support of the Bucksbaum Institute, the "Good Physician" course was birthed! And I must say that teaching this course in the last 4 years has been one of the most meaningful and rewarding activities I've done here at the University of Chicago. What a joy it has been to share this journey through medicine with the next generation of "good physicians"!
From the graduation survey (anonymous):

“CEST helped me gain a deeper understanding of what it's like to be a clinician, and I do think that has impacted my decisions regarding my career. It has allowed me to make a more informed decision.”

“Participating in CEST helped me refine my beliefs and opinions surrounding my career choice and clarify what that particular choice suited me.”

“I am confident my CEST experience has made me a stronger candidate for medical school.”
Cohorts of the Program

Class of 2016:
Abigail Huntley, Religious Studies
Alice Mukora, Biological Sciences
Andrew Song, Biological Sciences
Andrew Rapoport, Biological Sciences and Public Policy
Anika Jain, Anthropology
Caryssa Lim, Biological Sciences
Cynthia Avila, Biological Sciences
Erin Dominici, Biological Sciences and Romance Languages and Literature
Gabrielle (Gabby) Wimer, HIPSS
Jacqueline Wang, Biological Sciences
Jennifer Qin, Biological Sciences and Public Policy
Margot Pierluissi, Romance Languages and Literature
Martha Renn, Biological Sciences
Michael Warren, Biological Sciences
Rachelle Koch, Comparative Human Development
Roberto De Loera, Biological Sciences
Sarah Watanaskul, Biological Sciences
Stephanie Bi, Biological Sciences and English Language and Literature
Yueqi Wan, Biological Sciences
Kevin Yang, Biological Sciences

Class of 2017:
Anase Asom, Biological Sciences and East Asian Studies
Ryan L. Beckner, Biological Sciences
Lisa Bonsignore-Opp, Biological Sciences, Neuroscience Specialization
Sneha Chebrolu, Public Policy
Lena Chen, Biological Sciences
Justin Jia, Biological Chemistry
Timofey A. Karginov, Biological Sciences
Kris Lee, Biological Chemistry
Aliya Moreira, Biological Sciences and Psychology
Jamila Picart, Psychology
Saieesh A. Rao, Biological Chemistry
Aminah Sallam, Biological Sciences, Genetics Specialization
Bonnie Song, Biological Sciences
Jon D. Sussman, Biological Sciences
George Tsourdinis, Biological Sciences
Andrew Wang, Biological Chemistry and Chemistry
Elizabeth Woo, Economics
Stephen Yu, Biological Sciences and Economics
Erica Zheng, Biological Sciences and HIPSS
Lucy Zhuo, Biological Sciences

Class of 2018:
Adeoluwa Ayoola, Biological Sciences
Andrew Sohn, Biological Sciences, Immunology Specialization
Annie Albright, Psychology
Chinye Ijeli, Biological Sciences, Neuroscience Specialization
Daniel Ahn, Biological Sciences and Sociology
Ellen Harris, Biological Sciences
Helena Zhang, Biological Sciences
Jacqueline Deirmenjian, Chemistry
Jacqueline Ortiz, Biological Sciences
Joseph Waller, Humanities
Katherine Mott, Biological Sciences
Kyle Wickham, Biological Sciences
Liam Philiben, Cinema and Media Studies
Margaret Gadek, Biological Chemistry
Maud Jansen, Biological Sciences
Preethi Raju, Economics
Ryan Miller, Biological Sciences
Salman Arif, Biological Sciences and Economics
Santhoshini Ramani, Biological Sciences
Yaerin Song, Biological Sciences and Psychology
Yangtian Yi, Biological Sciences

Class of 2019:
Anita Pershad, HIPS
Brian Deng, Undeclared
Christine Ervin, Undeclared
Courtney Cook, Biological Sciences
Danielle Grubb, Gender and Sexuality Studies
Dianne Kim, Psychology
Elizabeth Cordell, Biological Sciences
Esperance Mutoniwase, Comparative Human Development
Fidel Haro, Biological Sciences
Isa Alvarez, Undeclared
Jacqueline Kloos, Biological Sciences
Jason Xiao, Biological Sciences and Economics
Katharine Ross, Psychology
Katherine Reis, Psychology
Khadija Snowber, Undeclared
Madeline Kim, Undeclared
Makayla Kochheiser, Biological Sciences and Public Policy
Megha Patel, Public Policy
Meron Ferketa, Undeclared
Naoman Arif, Molecular Engineering
Nila Ray, Biological Sciences and Psychology
Samantha Okere, Undeclared
Shruthi Basireddy, Comparative Human Development
Simon Cui, Economics
Tyler Chan, Biological Sciences
Zainab Aziz, Undeclared
Leadership of the Program

Faculty Leadership

Dr. Ross Milner, cohort leader for the class of 2016 and the class of 2019
http://bucksbauminstitute.uchicago.edu/master-clinicians-and-senior-faculty-scholars/
http://www.uchospitals.edu/physicians/ross-milner.html

Dr. Christopher Straus, cohort leader for the class of 2017
https://radiology.uchicago.edu/directory/christopher-straus

Dr. Neethi Pinto, cohort leader for the class of 2018
http://www.uchospitals.edu/physicians/neethi-pinto.html
Administrative Leadership (photos pending)

Angela M. Pace-Moody  
Bucksbaum Institute Center Director

Joni Krapec  
Senior Program Director, UChicago Careers in Health Professions

Martha Burla  
Assistant Director, UChicago Careers in Health Professions