

Diversity and Inclusiveness

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In addition, the Council has completed an inventory of statistics, activities and data that support our mission of Diversity and Inclusion. Several areas worthy of mention:

- A scholarship has been set up to send residents or our young faculty to the [Society of Black Academic Surgeons' \(SBAS\)](#) annual scientific meetings. Several individuals have been sponsored to date. (A separate story in this issue of *Surgery Synopsis* discusses the benefits of this scholarship and names the individuals sponsored to date by this scholarship);
- [Dr. Andre Dick](#) received a letter of service acknowledgement letter from UW School of Medicine Dean's Standing Committee on Minority Affairs;
- [Dr. Carlos Pellegrini](#) was nominated for Mentoring of Minority Faculty Award;
- The Department of Surgery residency program matched with 14 Under-Represented Minority (URM) residents in 2014;
- Two residents attended a Diversity Leadership Course sponsored by SBAS and supported by the Department;
- Creation of a database populated with the results of a recently completed Department diversity landscape survey to further identify areas of importance, develop activities and measure progress;
- Development of a UW Department of Surgery Sub-Internship scholarship for medical students from across the US who are contemplating surgery as their specialty. The first three scholarships have been awarded with students to begin in October 2014. (A separate story in this issue of *Surgery Synopsis* enlarges on this goal).

[Dr. Reyes](#) concluded the interview about the Department's Diversity and Inclusion efforts by saying that really building a culture of diversity and inclusion isn't just one project after another, it involves time, intention and attention. "You have to look every day at what you are doing and make diversity and inclusion consciously a part of your thinking. When you are looking at applicants for faculty or trainee positions, you have to push the door open a little wider, take another look through a lens that includes factors beyond grades and MCAT scores. We have to think about cultural competency when designing syllabi, when teaching or interviewing, when conducting research, and most of all when taking care of patients. In other words, you have to make cultural diversity and inclusion intentional decisions every day until they become the fabric of our Department."

Diversity in the Department of Surgery

Creating Diversity Opportunities: The Carlos A. Pellegrini Visiting Internship Program

The Department of Surgery Council for the Promotion of Diversity and Inclusion (the Council) was created in 2013 at the direction of [Dr. Carlos A. Pellegrini](#) (pictured right) and the Department's Leadership Council. The Council functions as the liaison with the Resident Program Directors. Its objective is to increase diversity in our residency program which, among other activities, requires opportunities to be created far upstream, long before residents think about a match. The Council is pleased to announce an opportunity that is now operational.



With the authorization and appropriation of funds by Department leadership, the Council has created the *Carlos A. Pellegrini Visiting Internship Program*, which offers minority medical students from around the country a Sub-Internship (Sub-I) within our Department. The Visiting Internship Program is named for Dr. Pellegrini in recognition of his many contributions to the personal and professional development of minority medical students, residents, fellows and faculty.

The internship program is open to full-time fourth-year students who are in good standing at LCME-accredited U.S. medical schools; demonstrate academic excellence, strong leadership skills, and extra-curricular experience; and are members of a group or groups that are recognized as historically under-represented in the health and science professions, including African American, American Indian, Alaska Native, Hispanic American and Asian/Pacific Islander.¹ At present, we are able to fund three opportunities per year.

The first three Sub-Is are: **Madeline Torres**, University of Utah School of Medicine; **Tarafi Mbadiwe**, Howard University College of Medicine, Washington, D.C.; and **Jonathan Pastrana**, Ponce School of Medicine & Health Science, Ponce, Puerto Rico. This Sub-Internship provides a stipend of up to \$3000 to help cover the airfare, lodging and living expenses in Seattle during the Sub-Internship. The rotations are four weeks in duration. Our first awardees begin in October 2014.

¹For International Medical Students outside the US, our Department already offers a Certificate Program for International Medical Graduates (IMGs) which is one of very few in the country. After successful completion of the program, IMGs may then apply for a two-year preliminary position in the residency program, which serves as a springboard for obtaining a categorical position and successful completion of surgical residency training at UW and other programs around the country. To date, numerous IMGs have gone through this program including but not limited to IMGs from Argentina, Italy, Japan, Colombia, Greece, Nigeria, India, China, Korea and Mexico.

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Diversity in the Department of Surgery

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We join only a handful of similar programs in the country. Within the UW Medicine system, the Department of Pediatrics has had a similar program for several years and report their efforts have resulted in more applications from students from backgrounds historically under-represented in medicine. They have matched a number of exceptional candidates who participated in their program. We believe this effort will help attract under-represented students to our residency program, and will greatly contribute to excellence in patient care through more diverse teams.

Many people deserve credit for bringing this concept into reality. Along with the members of the Council, this project needed and received substantial support from others in the Department, something that will continue to be needed as it matures.

Special thanks to [Dr. Karen Horvath](#), Professor and Associate Chair of Education for the Department who was immediately supportive and enthusiastically offered her help and expertise. As she expressed it, “We care and are interested in the diversity of our applicants. I see that the Council can do a lot here to welcome the visiting students and connect with them, and mentor them while they’re here doing their Sub-I.”



Horvath



Tatum

[Roger Tatum, MD](#), Associate Professor and Director of the Department’s Medical Clerkship program was also key in developing and implementing this program. Dr. Tatum and medical clerkship program specialist [Josh Powell](#) guided the Council in the process of defining the rotations and clarifying the myriad of details associated with this

program. We also extend a big thanks to the team at the [Center for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion \(CEDI\)](#) of the School of Medicine for their help and support.

The Council members describe their role as enhancing minority student awareness of the opportunities in academic surgery by creating a strong relationship with the applicants and providing them mentorship and guidance during their time with us.

More information about the Carlos A Pellegrini Visiting Internship Program can be found here: <http://uwsurgery.org/education/2014-06-03-22-25-22/diversity-internship>

Department of Surgery Building Relationships with the Society of Black Academic Surgeons (SBAS)



Oyetunji

[Dr. Lara Oyetunji](#), fourth year General Surgery resident recently attended the Annual Meeting of the [Society of Black Academic Surgeons \(SBAS\)](#) hosted by Temple University in Philadelphia Pennsylvania and reported back on her experiences over the years with SBAS. She presented *Surgery Synopsis* with the opportunity to discuss our connections and bonds with this impressive organization.

The SBAS began to address the felt need of the role of African-American surgeons in academic surgery. As late in the 20th Century as 1987, it was clear that few African-Americans were involved in academic surgery, there was no organized network of African-American academic surgeons, few young surgeons pursuing academic careers received tenure, and graduates from surgery residency programs other than Meharry or Howard could not easily identify African-American surgeon role models to inspire them to pursue academic careers. An initial group met in New Orleans, LA in 1987 and from that gathering the first SBAS meeting was planned for 1989. The goal for the meeting was to assemble as many African-American surgeons as possible and discuss the essentials of building academic careers. Subsequent annual meetings have continued to address important issues and have included strong scientific programs. To learn more about SBAS, please visit the website: <http://www.sbas.net/about/>

The UW Department of Surgery has progressively strengthened its ties with the SBAS. Dr. Carlos A. Pellegrini became an Honorary Fellow of the SBAS in 2007. In 2009, the SBAS held their annual scientific meeting at the University of Washington. Dr. Pellegrini, as the Department of Surgery Chair, was the local host for this event. That year’s meeting, as is customary, featured a number of UW Department of Surgery faculty presentations. By all accounts, it was one of the most successful meetings of the SBAS in recent years. This event helped to bring SBAS into greater prominence within the Department, generated more membership from our Department, and the SBAS Annual Scientific Conference and attendant programs became a regular part of the Department’s annual cycle of events.

[Leah Backhus, MD](#), (pictured on page 3) Assistant Professor, Cardiothoracic Surgery, has been a member of the SBAS for several years. In 2011, recognizing the importance joining this organization had made in establishing her career, Dr. Backhus hypothesized that a scholarship allowing other junior faculty

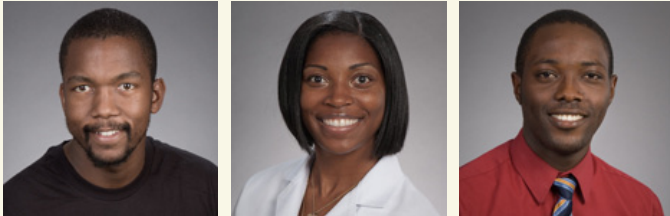
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or residents to attend would be equally advantageous. She believed in this idea so strongly that she developed the concept, presented it to Dr. Pellegrini and Department leadership and received approval to establish the SBAS Annual Meeting Scholarship funded by the Department of Surgery.

This scholarship allows one to two under-represented minority (URM) faculty or surgical residents to attend the annual meeting of the SBAS. This has proven to be a highly successful venture and has enhanced our efforts to foster diversity and inclusion in our faculty and trainees. Awardees since its inception have been: **Damien Carter, MD**, Chief resident, graduated in 2013; **Estell Williams, MD**, currently R-2 General Surgery Resident; and **Edo Bedzra, MD**, R-3 Cardiothoracic Resident. **Dr. Elina Quiroga**, (pictured on page 3) Assistant Professor, Division of Vascular Surgery, has recently completed the Leadership Training Institute associated with SBAS.



Carter

Williams

Bedzra

Below is an account from Dr. Oyetunji of her recent experience at the annual SBAS conference as well as photos from previous conferences that chronicle the growth of the Department's involvement with this group.

"I was at the SBAS conference in April and wanted to give you my report. As usual, it was a great conference and perhaps the only one of the last five conferences that came close to rivaling the 2009 conference that UW hosted. At that time, Dr. Andre Dick (Associate Professor, Transplant Surgery) and I were the only UW surgery minorities in attendance. (Well really, it was just Andre at that time since I had just matched into my residency here.) Six of us were present this year: simply amazing! Only the Children's Hospital of Los Angeles and Howard University topped our numbers.

We were able to promote the new sub-internship for fourth year medical students and passed out flyers about it to program directors, chairs and faculty that were in attendance.

I am also pleased to tell you that I had my first podium presentation this year and was awarded third place in the Claude Organ Resident

²Dr. Claude H. Organ, Jr. (1926-2005) was a world renowned academic surgeon, a giant in the field of surgery and medicine, and a major force in shaping and supporting the lives and careers of thousands. In 1989, Dr. Organ and several other black academic surgeons founded SBAS and held its first meeting at Duke University. Throughout his career he oversaw the training of dozens of surgeons, including several African-American women. His lifelong dedication to mentoring young surgeons and encouraging diversity in the field of surgery is represented in the annual Claude H. Organ, Jr. MD, FACS Resident's Award, which is given to residents with the best podium presentations at the SBAS annual meeting.

Delos "Toby" Cosgrove, MD, President & CEO, Cleveland Clinic, committed the Cleveland Clinic's endowment of this prestigious award. Starting in 2008 and continuing, Cleveland Clinic's sponsorship of the Dr. Claude H. Organ, Jr. Resident Award helps to ensure the success of the future generations of surgeons.

Award². I will definitely be aiming for first place next year."

Following are photos from this year and representative photos over the years to show how far the UW Department has come. These photos are a testament to the unwavering support and determination to increase diversity in the Department of Surgery.



2014 SBAS Annual Scientific Meeting

From left to right: Drs. Leah M. Backhus, Edo Bedzra, Estell Williams, Andre Dick, Lara Oyetunji, Damien Carter



2010 SBAS Annual Scientific Meeting

From left to right: Drs. Andre Dick, Lara Oyetunji, Damien Carter