GREETINGS FROM MEDICAL HUMANITIES

We have had a **fabulous** fall and have so much to tell! The semester started out with an amazing trip to Padua, Italy where I attended a medical humanities symposium hosted by the Fondazione Lanza. The week included wonderful lectures, a tour of the 2nd oldest medical school in Europe (founded in 1222) which houses the oldest anatomical operating theatre in the world, a visit to the incredible botanical gardens where new plants and herbs were brought in from the new world and which served as the earliest form of pharmacy, and a side trip to one of the most beautiful medical libraries I’ve ever seen in Venice. If you ever have a chance to see Padua…GO!

On the very first day of the course in the introductory lecture, one of the greats in medical humanities—Dr. Eric Cassell—was extensively quoted. Imagine my pride, knowing that Dr. Cassell would—in a few short weeks—be visiting our own Baylor University! You can read more about Dr. Cassell’s visit in this newsletter and I cannot recommend his writing to you highly enough. I also met Dr. Susan Ball, an HIV/AIDS specialist at Cornell who has just written a book called *Voices in the Band: A Doctor, Her Patients, and How the Outlook on AIDS Care Changed from Doomed to Hopeful*. Dr. Ball has training in narrative medicine under Dr. Rita Charon and her book is definitely next on my reading list.

Let me also recommend to you the wonderful selection of medical humanities articles (most with full text available) that Fondazione Lanza has assembled at the following link: [www.fondazionelanza.it](http://www.fondazionelanza.it). I’d also like to bring a quote from Sir William Osler to your attention, which I was introduced to by my new friends and colleagues in Italy: “The spirit of the Humanities is the greatest single gift in education.” With the trip to Italy, the CME ethics event with Dr. Farr Curlin, Dr. Eric Cassell’s visit, a great turnout at the Homecoming Brunch, a reception for our new Provost at the Family Health Center, and plans underway for the next medical humanities retreat, you can see we have a lot to share in this newsletter—for which we are very grateful.

Lauren Barron, MD
MEDICAL HUMANITIES LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE!

This semester, the program is proud to announce the launch of its new website. Features of the website are improved resources such as a media page, advising information, and an academic resources page to provide students with helpful information. The site also provides a way for students, faculty, and alumni to remain connected to the program through the program’s magazines, newsletters, and videos.

MEET & MINGLE RECEPTION at the FAMILY HEALTH CENTER

On Thursday, October 29th, our program partnered with the Office of Prehealth Studies and the Family Health Center to host a “Meet & Mingle” event to celebrate the arrival of Dr. Ed Trevathan, Baylor’s new Executive Vice President and Provost (whose background is pediatric neurology) to the medical community and to showcase the work of Baylor student volunteers.

The event was a tremendous success and included physicians, faculty and residents from FHC, key members of the medical community and members of the Family Health Center’s boards, members of Baylor’s administration, and Baylor faculty with involvement in projects that partner with FHC. Other guests included officers and members of Medical Service Organization (MSO), AED, AMSA and other premed/prehealth student organizations, together with the Medical Humanities Honors Council who have served as volunteers and had the opportunity to shadow at the Family Health Center.

Dr. Rich Sanker, the Director of the Office of PreHealth Studies and Dr. Jackson Griggs, the Associate Program Director, spoke at the event, commenting that “we are delighted to host Dr. Ed Trevathan at the Family Health Center to celebrate our past shared successes and future aspirations. His leadership reinforces Baylor University’s commitment to academic and educational excellence, and we are thrilled he has joined the Waco community.” In addition, he mentioned that “we want to recognize the student volunteers who have collectively donated hundreds of hours to directly and indirectly aid FHC patients. We feel tremendous gratitude for their service.”

Dr. Roland Goertz, FHC’s CEO, is “looking forward to working closely with Dr. Trevathan and Baylor University. The Heart of Texas Community Health Center and Baylor have many overlapping interests and working together on them will be most beneficial to us both and the community.” You can read more about the event and Dr. Trevathan’s comments in an article from the Waco Tribune Herald here: http://www.wacotrib.com/news/higher_education/new-baylor-provost-plans-to-expand-graduate-research-programs/article_48cc83e9-4eee-5772-a17d-b60f93ed435a.html
In a compelling September 11 lecture entitled “What Does Suffering Have to Do with Medicine?” Dr. Farr A. Curlin engaged a group of more than 100 physicians, faculty, students, and friends of the university. The Medical Humanities Program was proud to help sponsor the event, along with Baylor’s Institute for Faith and Learning, the McLennan County Medical Society and Baylor’s Office of Constituent Engagement. Illustrating ethical challenges through case presentations from his practice as a palliative care physician, Curlin challenged attendees to reflect on the nature of suffering and the ways in which the resources of the Christian tradition might help physicians as they determine their obligations to patient pain. Curlin, the Josiah C. Trent Professor of Medical Humanities at the Duke University Divinity School, has practiced internal medicine for more than 15 years, first at University of Chicago Medical Centers and now in the palliative care program at Duke.

Over the last few years, Curlin maintains, medicine has redefined its role to be primarily concerned with “relief of suffering.” Historically, however, medicine’s focus has been on helping patients regain whatever measure of health they can. This distinction becomes particularly sharp when physicians are asked to perform tasks that work counter to the restoration of health, an example of which is the growing request for physician assistance in dying. The current debate emanates from an over-emphasis on the role of patient autonomy in the patient-physician relationship.

Throughout his lecture, Dr. Curlin offered thoughtful insights, leaving students and physicians alike to ponder long-held assumptions of a physician’s true purpose. Perhaps most provocative was the question Curlin asked near the end of the evening: even if assisted suicide is to be deemed morally acceptable and widely legalized, why must the practice include the involvement of physicians? Dr. Curlin then posed, “Why not let the funeral homes make a place for this practice?” Dr. Curlin’s thought provoking questions made the evening one of critical discussion and thoughtful fellowship.

The intersection of bioethics, spirituality, end-of-life care, and the practice of medicine has long-intrigued Dr. Curlin, author of dozens of peer-reviewed articles in such prestigious journals as New England Journal of Medicine, Journal of Religion and Health, American Journal of Bioethics, and Journal of the American Medical Association. Dr. Curlin’s address is a perfect illustration of the way in which Baylor University and the local medical community can partner together.

For more information about Dr. Curlin and the Trent Center at Duke University, visit http://trentcenter.duke.edu.
Dr. Eric Cassell, physician, clinical professor, and author is the most recent recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award in Medical Humanities. Dr. Cassell was chosen for this honor because of his outstanding contributions to the field of medical humanities. He has been a prolific contributor to many fields, including medical ethics, philosophy and the clinical practice of medicine. Few physicians have thought more deeply or written more articulately about the practice of medicine at its noblest and how a rich understanding of the humanities is necessary to take care of patients – in every sense of the word ‘care.’

Dr. Cassell’s 3-day visit was a huge success during which he had the opportunity to meet with Baylor students, faculty, deans and Dr. Ed Trevathan, Baylor’s new provost. He also visited medical humanities and philosophy classes and participated in an afternoon seminar with faculty and graduate students from the department of philosophy.

After being presented with his award on Thursday evening, Dr. Cassell addressed an audience of over 200 on “The Place of the Humanities in Medicine”. He has spoken eloquently about the relationship of the humanities to medical practice. What physicians are taught in medical school has mostly to do with pathophysiology, not with the person of the patient. During his presentation, photographs of the face of a patient played in the background. Dr. Cassell took a photo of the patient at each clinic appointment, hospital visit and house call and was given permission by the patient and his family to share these images, which functioned as a constant reminder for the audience that these ideas matter and have real implications in the individual lives of the patients we care for.

Dr. Cassell’s visit to the Baylor campus is a great honor and having him here exposes the current generation of Baylor pre-health students to his work, his rich clinical experience, his engaging personality, his ready wit and sense of humor and the joy he has found in a lifetime of practicing medicine. I believe students came away from their encounter with Dr. Cassell more educated and enlightened, more inspired and informed about the nature of clinical medicine and the challenges we face today.

A graduate of the New York School of Medicine, Dr. Cassell trained in internal medicine at Bellevue Hospital in New York City. He has been published extensively and has had numerous clinical and academic appointments, including Emeritus Professor of Public Health at the Weill Medical College of Cornell University, Adjunct Professor of Medicine on the Faculty of Medicine McGill University and Attending Physician at New York Presbyterian Hospital.

Dr. Cassell is a celebrated author with numerous books including “The Nature of Clinical Medicine,” “Doctoring: The Nature of Primary Care Medicine,” “Changing Values in Medicine,” “The Place of the Humanities in Medicine,” “Talking with Patients,” “The Healer’s Art” and “The Nature of Suffering and the Goals of Medicine.”
JOIN US FOR OUR 17TH ANNUAL RETREAT

Mark your calendars now for the 17th Annual Medical Humanities Retreat on February 5-6, 2016 at Truett Seminary on Baylor’s campus. This retreat is open to students and faculty from all over the university—and to our alumni! For only $15, you will receive all meals, sessions and activities. Free T-shirts for the first 50 registrants!

What does genuine love look like and how do we hold fast to what is good? How can this scripture inform the work we are called to do and the ways in which we are called to serve? Come and explore these questions with us as we consider Romans 2:14-16 and Romans 12:9 in remarks and conversations with our guest Dr. Hélio Angotti-Neto, the Medical Humanities faculty and local medical professionals.

This year’s keynote speaker will be Dr. Hélio Angotti-Neto, an ophthalmologist and dean of UNESC Medicine School in Brazil. We encourage all Medical Humanities alumni to come to this event! Those interested should contact Sue_Mock@baylor.edu.

Congrats Grads!
Congratulations to this semester’s graduates from the Medical Humanities Program! Best wishes to the class of 2015!

Alfred Arocha Jr.  
Rachel Ruth Boren  
Natasha Pleshette Burks  
Breanna D. Davis  
Christina Elizabeth Fojtik  
Kristina Marie Hagerman  
Lakeisha Shiree Hall  
Sheena A John  
Haley Noelle King

Rosa Isabel Lopez  
Katelyn Anne Martin  
Youjin Na  
Shannon Rose O'Day  
Gilberto Ruiz  
Graham Thomas Shadwick  
Stanley Jan Vazquez  
Carina Alexi Yebra
This year’s homecoming brunch was another outstanding success, despite the downpour. It was wonderful to have so many students, staff, faculty, physicians, alumni and their families gather together in the atrium of the BSB to celebrate Homecoming and to honor of Dr. William Hillis, commemorating the inaugural year of the Hillis Scholars Program. This distinction is awarded to select students who are committed to outstanding academics and biomedic research, following Dr. Hillis’ example.

The Hillis Scholars program was launched in 2014 and has already been able to raise $1 million, enabling the 12 students selected to pursue their dreams of participating in biomedic research on their way to becoming healthcare professionals. Dr. Rich Sanker, Director of the Office of Pre-Health Studies, remarked that Dr. Hillis “inspires so many undergraduates to pursue their gifts and talents” with a “grace and care and a kind of inspiration that is just awesome.”

Dr. Elaine Hardwick Lambert, BS ’79, a rheumatologist practicing at Stanford and a dedicated member of the Board of Advocates, described Dr. Hillis as “exceptional, a superstar, and a living legend,” and encouraged donations to help reach a goal of $3 million. Jonathan Siktberg, a Hillis Scholar, shared that Dr. Hillis changed his life even before he decided to attend Baylor. Because of Dr. Hillis’ influence, we are challenged to “live our lives with some of that ‘Dr. Hillis spirit.’”

Dr. Hillis concluded with the belief that “those who have been richly blessed are obliged to help those in need” after which he received a standing ovation.

Dr. Edwin Trevathan, Baylor’s Executive Vice President and Provost, commented on the amazing dedication to service through the healthcare professions represented in the crowd, and observed that the morning’s event was a “foreshadowing of Baylor’s future.”

We hope you will make plans to attend next year’s Homecoming Brunch for friends, fans, and former and current students alike of the Medical Humanities Program and the Office of Pre-Health Studies!
CONGRATULATIONS TO DR. MICHAEL ATTAS

Congratulations are in order for Dr. Michael Attas, BA ‘69, who was recently presented with Baylor’s prestigious Medal of Service, marking his meritorious contribution to the medical profession. Dr. Attas, whom many of you know, is not only a cardiologist and an Episcopal priest, but also the founding physician faculty member of the Medical Humanities Program. For more information, check out Baylor Magazine’s article on Dr. Attas!
Dr. James Marcum’s book Thomas Kuhn’s Revolutions: A Historical and an Evolutionary Philosophy of Science was recently published. It is an exploration of the influence of Thomas Kuhn on the boundaries of philosophy of science. Dr. Marcum provides both conceptual and historic background to this remarkable man.

Dr. Marcum’s other publications this fall include: “Caring for patients during challenging encounters” in the Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice and “Healthcare personalism: a prolegomenon” in the European Journal for Person Centered Healthcare. He also published an article with Baylor student Niloy Shah as the lead author: “Can virtues be taught in medicine? Aristotle’s virtue theory in medical education and clinical practice” in Mirabilia Medicinae.

Dr. Bill Hoy presented “Meeting Spiritual Challenges in End-of-Life and Bereavement Care” on October 1, 2015 at the Intermountain Healthcare Hospice workshop in Salt Lake City, Utah. The workshop helped prepare healthcare professionals to adequately approach spiritual challenges with patients coping with death and grief. He also presented “Developing Critical Thinking Skills among Pre-Med Students in an End-of-Life Care Course” on October 25 at the American Society for Bioethics and Humanities annual conference in Houston. Look for Dr. Bill Hoy’s latest book Bereavement groups and the role of social support: Integrating research, theory, and practice which will be published by Routledge in March 2016.

Dr. Jeff Levin’s most recent book is Upon These Three Things: Jewish Perspectives on Loving God with a foreword by Samuel E. Karff. This book centers on the famous words of Rabbi Shimon the Just who teaches that the world stands on these three things: learning, worship and acts of loving kindness. This book adds to Dr. Levin’s nearly 200 publications!