Greetings from the Medical Humanities Program! We have lots to share with you about another exciting semester full of special events, guest speakers and great happenings. This newsletter brings you news of our second symposium about diversity and disparities in healthcare, which was a great success. You’ll also read about the Family Health Center and Dr. Korteweg’s service learning course, and yet another fabulous Doctor’s Brunch at Homecoming. Additionally, we are making plans for the next Medical Humanities Retreat in January which will feature Dr. Brian Volck, so mark your calendars now!

You’ll also read about our farewell to Dr. Dan Samples, who was so important to this program and whose loss we continue to mourn. It is clear that the best way to honor his memory is to continue to provide experiences and opportunities for Baylor students to excel—both in the classroom and beyond.

As we bring another year to a close, we hope you will celebrate this good work along with us. Many thanks to Omar Sahibzada and Sue Mock for putting this semester’s newsletter together!

With medicine in mind and healthcare at heart,

Lauren Barron, MD
Remembering Dr. Samples: The Contribution of a Consummate Teacher

Dr. William Hoy

The Medical Humanities Department mourned the loss of a dear friend this summer, Dr. Dan Samples. Dr. Hoy shares his reflections on the amazing life of Dr. Samples, and what he meant to Baylor.

My first encounter with Dr. Dan Samples was in the summer of 2013, just before my son, Greg, began his freshman year at Baylor. I knew Greg had registered for freshman bio with this “new guy” named Dan Samples—whom I did not know but who I did know was a physician. That seemed like a safe bet for a biology professor!

You can imagine my excitement when on move-in Wednesday, Greg remarked that he had gotten an email from this “Dan Samples guy” inviting all of his new freshmen to stop by his office before classes began on Monday. I was beyond elated; I knew I already liked Dan Samples—and I had not even met him. I met him in the next few days and that began a friendship that lasted until the day he died almost exactly four years later.

Dr. Samples was a consummate teacher. I saw it in the way he reached out to students, his laboring over choosing just the right book or assignment, in his kindness in offering “open lab” on Saturday morning when most faculty like me were sleeping in, and in the way he threw himself into Medical Humanities projects and even a couple of our classes. Dan and I observed each other’s classes and offered feedback; he was the best of the best in front of students—engaging, kind, firm with unprepared students, and always eager to make sure students got the concept. Since its earliest days, Baylor has prided itself in excellent undergraduate education; Dr. Samples personified that value.

I miss him every day. We had coffee in my office many—if not most mornings. We talked about classes and students who concerned us. He and I discussed the challenges of a health care career in the early 21st century and occasionally swapped stories about our own clinical careers, different as they were. I always felt respected by him and had high respect for him.

Dr. Samples’ life and model will live on in the lives of his students. Just last week as my son finished one of the interviews for an MD/PhD program, he was telling me about the Baylor people he wanted to reach out to and update them. He said as he thought about that list, he thought of Dr. Samples and wished he could tell him. Now that, my friends, is the evidence of the influence on a student’s life of a consummate teacher.
Second Annual Medical Humanities Symposium
Omar Sahibzada

This fall, the Medical Humanities Program hosted the second annual Medical Humanities Symposium. Coordinated by the Medical Humanities department and students from the Honors Council, the event united a diverse array of guests; students, physicians, and educators from institutions across Texas came together to share a day centered around the place of the humanities in medicine. This year, the Symposium was themed around dealing with diversity and disparities in healthcare. Each speaker, coming from their own unique background, provided their own unique perspectives regarding healthcare diversity and disparities, what they are, and why they matter. From religious perspectives to linguistic, speakers connected their areas of expertise to the complex realm of medicine and the roles of diversity and disparities within.

On the topic of diversity, Dr. Arlene Macdonald, a faculty member at the University of Texas Medical Branch Institute for the Medical Humanities, addressed the role of religious inclusivity in healthcare through a case study of a hospital responding to the religious needs of its Sikh community. “Religion includes intimate details in the wider contexts of people’s lives,” Dr. Macdonald said, explaining the relevance of addressing religious identities in healthcare. Elaborating on this idea, she proceeded to discuss both the benefits and challenges of designing health systems that can serve communities in a manner that is driven by diversity.

On the topic of disparity, Dr. Floyd Barry discussed his perspectives on healthcare disparity in the Waco community as seen through his eyes as a Family Health Center physician. His lecture centered around addressing the healthcare needs of communities through remedying the greater, overarching social issues that communities may face. In discussing social solutions for medical problems, he emphasized that it is not enough to fight for medicine. Rather, he explained, to reduce disparities, it is communities that must be advocated for and empowered in order to truly uplift them.

Other lecturers included Baylor University’s own Dr. Karol Hardin, an Associate Professor of Spanish, and Ms. Julia Hitchcock, an Associate Professor of Art. Dr. Hardin discussed communication issues in medical interpretation with Spanish speaking patients. In discussing language barriers to communication in healthcare, she shed light onto how patient outcomes can be improved by mediating language barriers, and the challenges of navigating between the cultural realm of language and the biomedical realm of medicine. Ms. Hitchcock spoke about the role of art as a communication device, and the power of images as carriers of meaning. In connecting this to healthcare, she shared some of her latest projects with the audience, including an animation project designed to teach health and improve health outcomes in India.

“Medicine is a gift, because you comfort another human, hold them, or listen to them. When someone is in pain, you must remain humble”

The day ended with Dr. Lauren Barron, Director of the Medical Humanities program, hosting a conversational interview with Family Health Center staff members Ms. Clara Perez and Ms. Imelda Mercado, and Ms. Yoshira Mercado a mental health therapist. As Hispanic women working in healthcare, they openly discussed their perspectives on diversity and disparity in health care from both
personal and professional levels, as health care workers who are also innately tied to their culture and community. This powerful conversation addressed a variety of topics, including barriers to healthcare in the Latino community, the scarcely discussed yet all too real adversities of pathways to immigration and citizenship, and the challenges of caring for minority communities in an increasingly hostile political climate. The interview ended on a powerful note, with Clara calling for those in attendance to always remember and understand the gift of medicine: “Medicine is a gift, because you comfort another human, hold them, or listen to them. When someone is in pain, you must remain humble”

In only its second year, the Medical Humanities Symposium has become a fixture event in the program. Uniting speakers from various backgrounds and their perspectives, the Symposium is a unique event in its ability to connect the Medical Humanities to our greater society, and truly demonstrate and emphasize the interdisciplinary nature of the program. Well received by all in attendance, future events will look to further strengthen the connection of the humanities to medicine, and show just how much medical humanities matters.
Save the Date: 2018 Medical Humanities Retreat

Please join us for the 2018 Medical Humanities Retreat on January 26th and 27th at Truett Seminary on Baylor’s campus. This year’s keynote speaker and honored guest will be Dr. Brian Volck, a writer, pediatrician, teacher and advocate for children and families in poverty. Dr. Volck will reflect on “Christian Hospitality in Hospitals and Other Unlikely Places,” a theme inspired by Jesus’ parable in Matthew 25:31-46.

What do ancient practices of hospitality have to do with modern medicine? What do the words of Jesus about welcoming the stranger have to say to those of us working in healthcare? What does genuine hospitality look like and how can it change us, not just others? How can this passage of scripture inform the work we are called to do and the ways in which we serve? Come explore these questions with us as we consider Matthew 25 in remarks and conversations with Dr. Volck, Baylor faculty, and local medical professionals.

Our retreat agenda includes outstanding talks, breakout sessions, personal conversations with faculty and special guests, Q&A with Baylor alums currently in working in healthcare, meals and worship together. We welcome students and faculty from all disciplines and departments of the university. Please join us for this very special event!

The purpose of Medical Humanities Retreat is to carve out time for reflection and contemplation on the sacred nature of a vocation in medicine. This retreat, first envisioned by Dr. Mike Attas, has become the heart and soul of the Medical Humanities Program.

More about Dr. Volck: He is currently an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics in the Division of Hospital Medicine at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center. His practice and research interests include global child health, Native American child health, medical education, cross-cultural medicine, medical ethics, and the intersection of poverty, justice and health. Dr. Volck is the author of “Attending Others: A Doctor’s Education in Bodies and Words” and the co-author of “Reclaiming the Body: Christians and the Faithful Use of Modern Medicine” among other works. More about Dr. Volck at www.brianvolck.com.

Join the New Baylor Alumni Physician Network!

If you are a Baylor graduate and now in medical school or residency training, or a physician who is already long established in medical practice, please consider joining the new Baylor University Physician Network!

You can connect with us on Facebook, or contact Jon Sisk at the Baylor Alumni Network, where he can help you connect with your fellow Bears. We have already had an event in Houston, with plans for events in Dallas & San Antonio coming soon.
In the Spring 2017 semester, I signed up for Dr. Korteweg’s Family Medicine and Community Health class. I had no idea what to expect; I was familiar with the Waco Family Health Center and had worked with the clinics before, but was not sure where this volunteer experience would lead or what would be expected of me. Overall, taking PPS 1100 was a wonderful experience and I would recommend it to any Medical Humanities student.

At the beginning of the semester, students are able to choose the clinic that they would like to volunteer at. The semester I took this class, students volunteered at a variety of clinics, including MLK, Austin Avenue, MCC, and Bells Hill. I chose the Bells Hill location; I felt I could be most useful there, as they had never had a volunteer before and were a much smaller clinic. Bells Hill also sees primarily Spanish-speaking patients, so it seemed like a good opportunity to work on my Spanish skills and learn to communicate in a medical setting.

While volunteering at Bells Hill, I had several responsibilities. These responsibilities mostly included office work, such as making copies, sending letters to patients, and helping file insurance claims. While that might seem tedious and uninteresting, it was actually a very valuable experience. In most of my clinic experiences up until this point, I was either shadowing doctors or conducting research; I did not have much insight into the “behind-the-scenes” of a clinic. I quickly realized that the tasks the clinic staff has to deal with are not easy; patients can be unfriendly and difficult, billing is complicated, and keeping doctors on schedule can be challenging. By engaging in these tasks, I was able to gain an appreciation for all of the work that goes into making a clinic run and all of the team members who work to make that happen.

When the clinic was slow or all of my duties were complete, the providers welcomed me to shadow them. While shadowing, I was able to learn more about primary care in Waco, including common health problems faced and social issues that contributed to the patient’s wellbeing.

Dr. Korteweg would meet with our class once a week to discuss our volunteer experiences from the previous week and a discussion topic. I found all of the topics we discussed to be interesting and beneficial, as Dr. Korteweg challenged our knowledge and preconceptions about many issues and provided eye-opening anecdotes and information from his experiences practicing in Waco and on international mission trips. Several lectures stick out in my mind, such as one in which we discussed childhood trauma, including screening measures, approaches to dealing with the effects of childhood trauma, and the long-term effects that childhood trauma can have on one’s life. Another discussion that I found particularly impactful was one in which we discussed poverty issues and how they affect healthcare by engaging in a poverty simulation activity. It was important to talk about these issues because, as future healthcare providers, we must understand the social factors that will go into a patient’s health and how to approach...
those problems. As a medical humanities student, understanding a holistic approach to care is essential.

In addition to these discussions, we would have guest speakers; these included a representative from the Centering Pregnancy program and Dr. Kelley, a psychologist at the FHC. Listening to their perspectives and experiences, in addition to Dr. Korteweg’s, provided a greater understanding of the healthcare system in Waco and for underserved populations.

If you are considering taking Family Medicine and Community Health, I would highly recommend it. The experience will give you a new appreciation for all team members of a clinic and provide you with new insight into family medicine that you can take with you on to your future career path.

Medical Humanities Welcomes Back Alumni for Homecoming!

Michael Davis

Baylor University is home of the biggest and oldest (and dare I say, the best) collegiate homecoming tradition in the state of Texas, dating all the way back to 1909. The entire weekend was packed full of events celebrating Baylor and the Baylor spirit, from the University Bonfire and Extravaganza to the Homecoming Parade on Saturday morning. All the events built up to the Homecoming football game that afternoon against the University of Texas. While some of the campus homecoming traditions may have changed over the years, the Bears have remained consistent in the level of spirit and energy dedicated to the university.

In between the campus-wide homecoming events, the Medical Humanities office partnered with the Office of Pre-Health Studies to host a Doctor’s Homecoming Brunch. Baylor alumni (and especially graduates of the medical humanities program) who have entered the medical field in practice or in training were invited back to reconnect with each other and update the program on where they were in their medical career. There were lots of old faces here who we were so excited to welcome back to campus. We love hearing about your stories and your updates – come back soon!

During the brunch, Dr. Barron presented Dr. David Pennington with the 2017 Medical Humanities Lifetime Achievement Award for his dedication to, commitment, and passion for helping build the program to achieve its full potential. He received this award upon his retirement as a huge and special thank you from the medical humanities department for all of the years he spent alongside us. Dr. Pennington will be dearly missed around the office!

With medicine in mind and health care at heart, glory be to God. Happy Homecoming, and sic ’em, bears!
Dr. Barson Published in the Journal of Medical Humanities

Dr. Lauren Barron’s article, “The Impact of the Baccalaureate Medical Humanities on Subsequent Medical Training and Practice: A Physician-Educator’s Perspective” was recently published in the Journal of Medical Humanities. This article is a reflective essay that organizes student feedback into five domains in which medical humanities at the university level affects students’ subsequent healthcare professions training and practice. These five domains are context and complementarity, clinical relevance, reflective practice, professional preparedness and vocational calling. The same issue includes a perspective piece by Mr. Gilbert Ruiz, a Baylor University graduate in 2016, now working in health care policy in Washington DC on Capitol Hill with Senator Kirsten Gillibrand. Several other comments from Baylor Medical Humanities students are also included in this issue!

Dr. Barron and Professor Julia Hitchcock presented together at the 2017 Humanities in Medicine Symposium at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester Minnesota.

The theme of the symposium was “Crossing Disciplines: Strategies for Humanizing One Another”. They discussed their curricular design and collaboration on the Visual Arts and Healing course in a session entitled “Exploring the Visual Arts as a Vehicle for Interdisciplinary Dialogue”. One of the highlights of the trip was touring the outstanding art collection distributed throughout the offices and hospitals of the Mayo Clinic. Additionally, one of the keynote speakers was Dr. Jay Baruch who we hope to have as a guest speaker at Baylor University soon. (Dr. Barron says to read anything you can find by Jay Baruch!)

BUMEDS Hosts Dr. Jessica Moore

Dr. Jessica Moore spoke at Baylor on November 9th, 2017 on “The Role of the Ethicist in the Healthcare Setting”. Dr. Moore is a proud alum of Baylor and currently works as a clinical ethicist at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. Her presentation focused on how ethicists function in clinical settings, and understanding integrated ethics as a combination of philosophy, law, social science, theology, and medicine. At MD Anderson, Dr. Moore works in the Section of Integrated Ethics in Cancer Care.
Dr. Hoy Published in the Omega Journal of Death and Dying

Dr. Hoy published his article, “Review of Suzanne Kelly’s Greening death: Reclaiming Burial practices and Restoring our Tie to the Earth” in the Omega Journal of Death and Dying. This article presents a comprehensive review of Suzanne Kelly’s Greening Death, a book that discusses environmentally friendly death practices in today’s society.

Dr. Hoy Presents Across the Country

Dr. Hoy traveled across the country this semester, making several presentations, including:

- “Making Sense of Traumatic Loss” at the Trauma Intervention Program with the Orange County Fire Authority in Irvine, California.
- “Dealing with Grief in the Workplace” at Hospice Compassus in Santa Ana, California
- “Making Sense of Rituals When Life Ends” at Ohio Health Hospice in Columbus, Ohio
- “Making Bereavement Ministry More Meaningful.” at Heartlight Center Grief Support in Aurora, Colorado

Medical Ethics Seminar

On September 8, 2017, Baylor University hosted Raymond Barfield, M.D., Ph.D., Associate Professor of Pediatrics and Christian Philosophy from Duke Medical School and Duke Divinity School. The Medical Ethics Seminar is sponsored by the Institute for Faith and Learning together with the Medical Humanities Program and our local medical society. This annual seminar—now in its fourth year—invites physicians, nurses, administrators, chaplains, and other health care professionals to come together to reflect on ways in which their shared Christian faith might inform the practice of medicine. The title of this year’s presentation was “Why We Should Listen: Patient Satisfaction, Burnout, and Ethical Medicine”.

Save the date! For all you docs out there, this will count as CME toward your ethics requirement. The Medical Humanities Program is PROUD to help sponsor this event, getting bigger every year. Hope to see you there.

New Introduction to Medical Humanities Course

New Introduction to Medical Humanities Course with Dr. Barron. Attention freshmen and sophomores! Whether you are already a pre-major or Medical Humanities major, or would just like to explore medical humanities, you are welcome to sign up for this course! This course offers an introduction to the interdisciplinary and wide-ranging field of medical humanities, its subjects, and its scope.
Colonel (Dr.) Walter “Sparky” Matthews is a Baylor alumni who has many achievements to his credit. He graduated from Baylor University in 1992 with a BA in biology and later received his MD at Baylor College of Medicine. He is a Diplomate in Aerospace Medicine and in Public Health and General Preventive Medicine, and an Associate Fellow of the Aerospace Medical Association. Last semester, Col. Matthews visited Baylor to lecture on one of his favorite topics—the history of medicine.

About his recent visit, Colonel Matthews says "I am always honored to come back home to Baylor to mentor pre-medical students and AFROTC Cadets. This event was particularly honoring and pleasing, in that I was able to pass on to Baylor students the love of medicine and history that started during my days as a Baylor Pre-Med student. My mentor was Dr. Bill Hillis; my lecture was given to a group of pre-med students including Hillis Scholars. That is truly the mentoring circle of the Baylor Family in its truest form! I was also humbled to have three of my former professors (Dr. Pennington, Dr. Wilkins, and Dr. Tatum) attend the lecture...and they took notes! What an humbling honor for this former Baylor student!"

A story about Colonel Matthews and his current assignment is currently featured on the Baylor homepage. Read more at http://blogs.baylor.edu/artsandsciences/2017/10/05/sparky-matthews/