GREETINGS FROM MEDICAL HUMANITIES

Holiday greetings from the Medical Humanities Program! We are looking forward to updating you with what we’ve been up to—and there is so much to tell. We want to begin with a shout-out to three people in this newsletter who have become special friends to our program—Steve Langan, Ian Sabroe, and Lesa Scholl.

Let’s start with Steve Langan, our featured speaker at the Medical Humanities Symposium. This year our theme was “The Healing Work of Words”. We watched in amazement as he shepherded a room full of students—who didn’t know what they were in for—through writing and sharing their own newly-created lines of poetry. Steve is a brilliant poet and the director of the newly named Kooser Center for Medical Humanities at the University of Nebraska-Omaha. To any and all of our Baylor alumni in Omaha—you’ve got to go and meet Steve!

Dr. Ian Sabroe, a biomedical researcher and pulmonologist from Sheffield, England came to us as a visiting professor. Dr. Sabroe is a 2019 recipient of the prestigious Churchill Fellowship. His project is to learn about the landscape of medical humanities in the U.S. so he can carry what he’s learned home to the UK. He chose three sites in the US to visit: Columbia, Stanford and Baylor University. We can’t wait to read Dr. Sabroe’s report to the Churchill Foundation in which Baylor University will be featured.

Dr. Lesa Scholl is Head of Kathleen Lumley College, University of Adelaide in Australia. This fall, she’s been visiting Baylor University as a research fellow associated with the Armstrong Browning Library. I first met Dr. Scholl when she was editing a book entitled “Medicine, Health and Being Human”. She was kind enough to send me a copy, cementing our friendship. Her scholarship is truly interdisciplinary—at the intersection of theology, medicine, history and literature. Dr. Scholl is headed back home to Australia, but she has a special place in her heart for Baylor (which is also going to be the name of her new puppy when she gets home!).

Collaboration with these three colleagues is symbolic of the growing national and international presence of our program. We are so thankful for great colleagues in this good work. Here’s hoping you can get just a glimpse in this semester’s newsletter.

With healthcare in heart and medicine in mind,

Dr. Lauren Barron and Dr. Bill Hoy
Mayo Clinic’s annual Humanities in Medicine Symposium was held this October at the Mayo campus in Phoenix, Arizona. This gathering is designed to bring artists, humanists, and healthcare providers together to showcase research and best practices surrounding the intersection of arts and humanities with healthcare. The aim is to identify ways in which health, humanities, and the arts can provide valuable teaching tools for healthcare professionals.

Our own Dr. Barron was a keynote speaker at the symposium. Her talk was entitled “Why Day One of Medical School is Too Late to Make a Good Doctor”. Dr. Barron—as always—focused on the importance of the human experience (as opposed to medical science and technology) as central to healthcare. She told stories about how the humanities have shaped her own education and medical practice, about the importance of the humanities in the training of doctors and how Baylor’s Medical Humanities Program is equipping students who want work in and around healthcare. She puts it this way: “If you don’t know about human nature, you’re not going to know how to take care of humans. And if you are not exposed to the humanities, you are missing out on a tremendously rich source of wisdom about human nature.” Dr. Barron believes that the most crucial time to lay this foundation is during the university years.

She goes on to say that “technology and science alone will never solve our patients’ problems. We have to learn from the tradition of the humanities; from literature, religion, philosophy, and history about human nature so that we can understand it well enough to take care of our patients.”

Dr. Barron was joined by two of her students, Jada Rosa and Deborah Otuno, who shared the impact that the humanities have had on their education and preparation for careers in healthcare.

Says Deborah Otuno, “I really enjoyed being able to go to the program because it taught me medicine goes beyond the sciences. Medicine requires that physicians hear and understand their patients. Unless both are done, the doctor-patient relationship won’t work. I also learned that ‘we can only act in the world we see’. How a physician sees the world will impact the care of their patients; therefore, physicians must be willing to understand that medicine is holistic, encompassing several aspects of society, so they can approach their patients with a holistic plan.”

Jada Rosa adds that “the Humanities in Medicine Symposium was an eye-opening experience. We connected with physicians, artists, and professors from around the world who were dedicated to humanizing health care. The Symposium gave me a vision of what health care can be, if we only let the human side of medicine flourish.”
The Medical Humanities Program was joined by many students, staff, faculty, physicians, alumni and their families to celebrate Baylor's Homecoming on Saturday, October 12th, 2019. After the legendary Baylor Homecoming parade, we were able to escape the chilly morning to gather in the BSB atrium for a wonderful brunch. Students, staff, faculty, physicians, and alumni were able to meet each other and build connections while enjoying warm food and coffee. Many laughs, stories, and ideas were shared by this wonderful group of people who were able to come together through their shared involvement in Baylor and healthcare. 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!

DR. DAVID FLEEGER, TMA PRESIDENT, VISITS BAYLOR By Megan Feikema

The Medical Humanities Program had the pleasure of welcoming BU alum Dr. David Fleeger for a wonderful visit and lecture on Monday, October 21st, 2019. David C. Fleeger, MD is a board-certified colon and rectal surgeon and managing partner of his group practice in Austin, Texas. He was installed as the Texas Medical Association’s 154th president on May 18, 2019 in Dallas.

Dr. Fleeger’s lecture, “Who Will Protect the Patient-Physician Relationship?”, focused on the way that organized medicine use political power to advocate for preserving the partnership between patients and physicians that is under threat in today’s healthcare system. He encouraged students to join TMA, or similar associations, while in medical school in order to become involved in physician advocacy early in their careers.

Dr. Fleeger believes TMA’s greatest strength lies in advocating for physicians so they can focus more on their patients and less on filling out forms and other bureaucratic tasks. He has expressed how important it is to “remove barriers between physicians and the patients who need their care”.

The lecture was followed by a reception in which attendees were able to meet and speak with Dr. Fleeger. He was able to give students advice on academics, career choices, and much more. Listening to and speaking with Dr. Fleeger certainly opened our minds to an area of healthcare that many of us had not yet considered.
FLING YOUR GREEN AND GOLD!

Let’s face it—we know you are inundated with—shall we say—philanthropic propositions at this time of year. For those of you who have invested in the Medical Humanities Program, we say THANK YOU! Every dollar in donations to our Excellence Fund is used for what you see in this newsletter—the special events, opportunities and activities that make this program so extraordinary. **If you’ve ever thought about giving, we ask you to keep the Medical Humanities Program in mind.** Gifts (of any size at all!) send a signal to our administration about the significance of this program. One of the most important ways you can help Baylor University reach the goal of becoming a Tier 1 institution is with a donation of any amount. The metrics that compare Baylor to other institutions have to do with the percentage of our alumni who are giving and not the actual amount. So whether it is $5.00 or $50.00 or $500.00—any gift of any size means we do a happy dance right here in the office! We know that the generosity of alumni and supporters of the Medical Humanities Program will speak for itself!

Giving is easy! Find the **Giving** icon at the top right on our website or click here: [GIVE LIGHT to MEDICAL HUMANITIES](#). Our most recent gift is from BU alum Dr. Laura White Baer, now a pediatric resident at in Austin. This is why she gives: “Medical Humanities shaped the doctor I am and the doctor I’ll become. I’m so glad to contribute for the benefit of future students.”

If end of year giving is not the right time for you, please **be on the lookout for the 2nd Annual Baylor Giving Day in February**…we’ll have a chance to match a generous challenge gift that will literally double your donation! This year we’ve had a tremendous increase in giving and much of this is thanks to Stephen Sullivan. He’s the Director for Annual Giving and a HUGE supporter of the Medical Humanities Program. He’s going around the country speaking with fans and friends of Medical Humanities about the significance of annual giving and helping us lay the groundwork for the Baylor Medical Network. We’d love to put you in touch with Stephen if you have ideas about how to invest in Medical Humanities. Your contribution is an incredible blessing to us in ways that we can best thank you for by investing in the lives of our students.
WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST TEAM MEMBERS

Please help us welcome Mrs. Sheila Towner as our new administrative associate. Sheila has been with Baylor for several years, working in the Honors Residential College. We are delighted to have her now as part of our team in Medical Humanities. Sheila has been our go-to person for the planning of the special events and activities that you’ll be reading about. “I have enjoyed seeing the different connections that this program makes with departments all over the university and the way they all come together for our students. Even though we are a small program we have a big presence on campus. I feel like my purpose at Baylor is to do anything I can to help our students reach their goals”.

We also want to introduce our new partner on campus—Mr. Adam Contreras. Adam graduated from Baylor in 2017 with a BA in Medical Humanities and is now working at Baylor’s Career Center where he serves as a Career Success Professional. Adam is a whiz at resume building and helping students think through their career choices. He has been fantastic at reaching out to our students and helping prepare them for success after graduation. Even for our freshmen, it’s never too early to meet with Adam! It’s also never too late...if you are still in the market for a job and looking for opportunities, please reach out to Adam. You are part of the Baylor family for life and the Career Center serves our alumni as well!

STEVE LANGAN VISITS FROM NEW MEDICAL HUMANITIES CENTER at the UNIVERSITY of NEBRASKA-OMAHA

By Emma Wilkinson

We were thrilled to welcome Steve Langan to Baylor University in November as our featured speaker for the Medical Humanities Symposium. Langan, whose background is in creative writing and public health administration, serves as the director and advisor for the Kooser Center for Medical Humanities at the University of Nebraska-Omaha. He currently teaches a course titled Writing About Sickness and Health.

Langan also founded the Seven Doctors Project. At the University of Nebraska Medical Center, Seven Doctors Project serves to encourage mid-career physicians to sustain projects through creative writing. Langan stated, “Confronted by the power of poems and stories—their own and others—the doctors have been forced to pause to make a variety of evaluations—about themselves and their profession, primarily.”

It was wonderful to hear the impact that the project has made on physicians that have worked with Langan. We heard many impactful stories in the Medical Humanities Office where students were able to speak one-on-one with Langan and at our Medical Humanities Symposium 2019 where he served as our keynote speaker. Langan, reflecting on his time at Baylor, says: “It’s clear from my recent visit to Baylor that the future of healthcare is bright. The Medical Humanities students whom I met and worked alongside in Waco are engaged, flexible, nimble, thoughtful, full of deep feeling, and smart as whips. And why
would this be surprising? Leadership, starting with Dr. Barron and Dr. Hoy, understand how valuable, how necessary, this course of study is, to the individual and the group and the future of healthcare in America. I’m so grateful for the Medical Humanities Program at Baylor University. Because of their example and guidance, we took the leap of faith, here at the University of Nebraska Omaha, and it’s working!”

MEDICAL HUMANITIES SYMPOSIUM 2019

This year’s Medical Humanities Symposium, “The Healing Work of Words” was held on Saturday, November 9th, 2019. The event included an incredible group of speakers and a room packed full of students. After a welcoming breakfast, the group first heard from Steve Langan, the Director of Medical Humanities at the University of Nebraska-Omaha.

Dr. Helen Harris from the Diana Garland School of Social Work gave the group an intimate glimpse into the “healing work of words” by sharing excerpts from her journals about working with hospice patients. Many of our students were deeply moved by her remarks, aptly titled “Lessons from Those Living on the Brink of Everything”. Dr. Barron’s topic was “Speech as Scalpel: Talking as a Tool of the Trade” in which she discussed the importance of learning to communicate carefully and with precision as we listen to patients. Instead of “taking a history” from a patient, she encouraged us to think of the medical history we build up with a patient as a collaborative act. And finally Dr. Dan Walden, Associate Professor and Undergraduate Program Director from the English Department, spoke to the group about making career decisions and how significant the study of literature can be for any career path. Each speaker had an incredibly unique experience to share with the group and the symposium was a great success.

Dr. Barron and students from History of Medicine (extra credit may or may not have been offered)
For two weeks during November 2019, the Medical Humanities Program welcomed Dr. Ian Sabroe to Baylor University. Dr. Sabroe is a pulmonologist who focuses on severe asthma and pulmonary hypertension, and a professor of inflammation biology at the University of Sheffield. His research focuses on airway and vascular inflammation and the biology of the innate immune system. He has recently developed an interest in Medical Humanities and is also the co-director of Medical Humanities at the University of Sheffield Medical School in the United Kingdom.

In March of this year, Dr. Sabroe was granted a fellowship by the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust to investigate ways in which the humanities can change medical education. Dr. Sabroe visited three centers in the US to learn more about the landscape of the humanities and medicine in the US: Columbia, Stanford and Baylor University. Through this, he plans to take ideas back to the UK about how to incorporate principles and training in the humanities for the undergraduate and postgraduate education of physicians.

Dr. Sabroe visited classes, gave guest lectures, had lunches and dinners with faculty and spent the better part of his time soaking up everything he could learn about Baylor’s approach to medical humanities. He was particularly interested in the way that spirituality and faith are integrated into both the curricular and extracurricular experiences we offer our students.

Dr. Sabroe was incredibly popular with our students. Garrett Burton, a current MH student remembers his time with Dr. Sabroe: “Just to sit and have dinner with someone as experienced and knowledgeable as Dr. Sabroe and talk about everything from medicine to jazz music; that’s the kind of unique, wonderful experience that I love so much about Medical Humanities.”

Of his time at Baylor, Dr. Sabroe says: “I was delighted and honored to be able to visit one of the first medical humanities courses established in the US. I was inspired by wonderful teaching, and by wonderful students. Studying medical humanities at Baylor University provides an exceptional opportunity to engage with the fundamental questions of what it means to be a clinician. The balance of science and humanities available at Baylor gives a strong foundation to pre-med students, and the values of Baylor in terms of commitment to care and service also shone through in the students I met.”
SAVE THE DATE for our 2020 RETREAT

Mark your calendars for the next Medical Humanities Retreat on March 20th and 21st, 2020 at DaySpring Baptist Church! This retreat is open to students and faculty from all over the university—and to our alumni!

This year we will be discussing “Taking a Spiritual History” and the retreat will involve keynote speakers, activities, and meals.

We encourage all Medical Humanities alumni to come to this event! More information regarding registration will be provided as we approach the spring semester.

MEDICAL HUMANITIES HONOR COUNCIL

The Medical Humanities Honors Council is made up of a select group of our highest achieving students. These students are invited to participate in the leadership, programming, and infrastructure of the Medical Humanities Program by serving as ambassadors and assisting us with the planning and implementation of our activities. Members of the Honors Council are afforded additional opportunities for professional development, since the members often function as extensions of the faculty in helping to host our guests, and as liaisons to the local medical community.
This semester I’ve been visiting the Armstrong Browning Library (ABL), researching the conversations that were occurring between medical doctors and theologians within nineteenth-century Britain, and the way in which these conversations impacted understandings of social responsibility and public health, as well as spiritual and moral wellness. Most of my research engages with the way in which nineteenth-century doctors and theologians were thinking about the relationship between the body and the soul, and the way that relates to the social body: how does our impetus to care for our physical bodies affect the way we think about the bodies around us?

As well as conducting my research, I had the opportunity to give a public lecture for the ABL Benefactors’ Day and also run an interdisciplinary workshop for undergraduates that looked at historical examples of the ways in which food security has been talked about, and how they might be relevant today. The students came from a range of programs, from English and History, to Business and Medical Humanities.

Baylor is exceptional in having such a strong Medical Humanities program, which helps prepare future health professionals to recognize the whole person in the patient. The ethical and humane emphasis in their learning means that these future professionals will powerfully embody Baylor’s foundational goal of equipping students to make the world a better place.

Watch Dr. Scholl’s presentation online here: [Benefactor’s Day 2019](#)
VITAS HOSPICE & BAYLOR MEDICAL HUMANITIES PARTNERSHIP

Former students say that the Baylor Medical Humanities Program has a broad and deep influence. Daniel Truesdale (BS, 2017), an MS2 at Texas Tech School of Medicine majored in both Medical Humanities and Biology. About his experiences, Truesdale said recently, “Studying Medical Humanities at Baylor not only taught me what it means to care for patients, it gave me the foundation I will need for guiding my patients in end-of-life discussions, making ethical principles in morally gray situations, and finding balance in my life.” Truesdale spent the summer of 2017 with Chalat Rajaram, MD, medical director of VITAS Hospice in Irvine, California, an internship opportunity first envisioned and created by Dr. Bill Hoy, Clinical Professor of Medical Humanities.

This November, Drs. Hoy and Rajaram, who are long-time hospice colleagues and friends, joined in a public conversation in front of an audience of more than 60 at Temple Beth El in Aliso Viejo, California entitled, “When Dying is Prolonged.” During the evening, Rajaram and Hoy discussed ethical challenges facing patients and families, especially considering California’s 2015 adoption of the End of Life Options Act permitting physician assistance in patient choice to hasten death (physician-assisted suicide). The pair also offered ideas about how friends and family members can be supportive to patients, especially in light of the isolation often encountered by dying persons in American society. The conversation was moderated by Becky Lomaka, director of Grief Support and Education for O’Connor Mortuary in Laguna Hills, California.

Having taken care of the dying and bereaved for more than 35 years, Dr. Hoy has taught at Baylor since 2012 following 17 years at the helm of the counseling program at Pathways Volunteer Hospice in Long Beach, California. He teaches the ever-popular medical humanities course, End-of-Life Care & Bereavement for Health Care (MH 4372).

CONGRATS, GRADS!

Congratulations to this semester’s graduates from the Medical Humanities Program! Best wishes to the class of 2019!

Erin Carroll  Antoinette Grantham  Raymond Payette
Diana Diosdado  Ashton Huth  Kayla Perez
Karina Farias  Kristen Koehler  Halleigh Thompson
Jocelyn Garcia  Cristina Martinez

Special thanks to our student workers for all they do! Esther Jeong (not pictured), Megan Feikema, Emma Wilkinson, and Karina Farias shown above with our administrative associate Sheila Towner. Congrats to Karina who is graduating in December!
INFORMATION SESSIONS FOR UNDERCLASSMEN

We’ve started having information sessions for our freshmen and are trying to connect earlier with underclassmen who are Medical Humanities majors. In addition to telling students about courses and helping them understand the MH degree plan, students can meet our faculty, staff and hear from the Medical Humanities Council about all the special events, activities and opportunities that the Medical Humanities Program offers! We currently had 83 students enrolled (mostly freshmen!) in Dr. Hoy’s Introduction to Medical Humanities course and Dr. Barron will have over 50 students in the same class this spring—so it’s exciting to have earlier and stronger contact with incoming students.

EXCITING COURSES TO LOOK FORWARD TO THIS SPRING!

**New Class | Spring 2020 | MH 4V98**

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3 hours  
Dr. Lassiter  
T: 6:30-9:15  
CRN 40959

**Topics Include:**  
- Preaching vs Healing  
- Short vs Long Term Missions  
- Medical Missions in Disasters  
- Is it Magic or Medicine? (Worldviews on Medicine)  
- When Medical Missions Hurt  
- What is the Gospel?  
- Medical Missions in Dangerous Places  
- Global Medical Missions Needs & Opportunities

Terry Lassiter, DDS, MAgl is a practicing dentist with more than 30 years of experience in both the United States and abroad. Now practicing in suburban Waco, Dr. Lassiter and his family served with the International Mission Board as a missionary dentist from 1989 to 2015 in the West Indies, Suriname, Ecuador, and Peru. Dr. Lassiter has the passion of sharing Christ's love to a hurting world, meeting both physical and spiritual needs and equipping others to do the same. In this course, he will help students gain a vision for health care ministry with both short-term and career opportunities.
Lauren O’Connell, recent BU medical humanities grad, was the featured speaker at the FALL EVENT sponsored by the Baylor University Women’s Council, hosted at the Royal Oaks Country Club in Dallas. Dr. Barron was invited to introduce Miss O’Connell, who was featured on the 38th season of “Survivor: The Edge of Extinction”. She spoke about her experience competing on the popular reality TV show, shot on location in Fiji. Seen here are Lauren O’Connell and Dr. Lauren Barron meeting for the first time this fall!

AND FINALLY! WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS & A HAPPY NEW YEAR!