



Charles Drew: Your Pre-Med Lifeline

**Charles Drew
Pre-Medical Society**

Fall 2009
Volume 3, Issue 1

A Letter from Our Co-Presidents, Princess Francois, CC'11 and Brian Lewis, CC'11

Dear Charles Drew Members

This semester, it was our privilege to serve as Co-Presidents of the Charles Drew Pre-Medical Society. We enjoyed helping host events that have broadened your horizons and helped you get even closer to your dream of becoming a doctor. This semester we had a mix of both the old and the new. We had a wonderful new trip to UPenn Medical School, had many doctors come and speak on various topics, and continued our high school pipeline program as well as started new initiatives such as a peer mentoring program, community service projects, study breaks, and auctioned off a discounted MCAT course. All of these events were extremely successful and we cannot thank you enough for your continued support.

This semester we were honored to have so many events and have such great turnouts to all of them. As your co-presidents, we strive to

bring you the best events involving people who can provide the best advice and motivation as well as introduce you to new health fields. All of the wonderful events that took place this semester could not have been done without a great executive board, very hardworking committees, and dedicated members.

We plan to work even harder next semester to bring you bigger and better events and continue all that we do. If at any time you have ideas or topics that you would like to see implemented into events, please feel free to send us an email at: cucharlesdrew@gmail.com.

From the both of us, enjoy the rest of the winter vacation, and remember to relax. We look forward to bringing you many new and exciting events. See you next semester!

Sincerely,
Princess Francois, CC'11
Brian Lewis, CC'11
Co-Presidents of Charles Drew



Princess Francois
Co-President



Brian Lewis
Co-President

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Previous Events Include:

- Pre-Med Basics 101: What Every Columbian Pre-Med Needs to Know!
- Medical Schools Admissions: What's the 411?
- S'mores Study Break
- University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine Trip
- On the Front Lines: Primary Health Care with Dr. Brenda Aiken

Fall 2009 Semester Highlights

During the past semester, the Charles Drew Pre-Med Society has had many exciting events, providing pre-medical students on campus with helpful information about topics such as medical school application process and primary health care. We have also taken initiative to help pre-meds like you through our newly established Pre-

Med Undergraduate Mentoring Program. The following articles are summaries of the special events held this semester.

The Beginnings! NSOP Pre-Health Fair, Activities Fair and Introductory General Body Meeting

By Johanna Miele, CC'12



We kicked the year off at the NSOP Pre-Health Fair for students interested in pre-medical studies. The crowd was enormous as the first years gathered around to hear about our exciting new mentoring programs. This is the second year for the Pipeline program and the first for the Pre-Medical Undergraduate Mentoring Program (PUMP).

The Charles Drew Pre-medical Society has worked very hard this year to increase our presence on campus. During our first general body meeting, many eager pre-meds signed up for the mentoring programs and also joined Charles Drew. We've seen a definite increase in the amount of students that attend our events and make them such a success. The addition of our

Publicity Manager Melvin Manuel Green, CC'11 and our Director of the Organizational Committee Kimberly Laughman, CC'11 to our Executive Board has also been responsible for the amazing growth we've had over the past few months. Thank you for making Charles Drew such a success. We hope to see you at our events next semester!

Event #1: Pre-Med 101: What Every Columbian Pre-Med Needs to Know! (Thursday, September 17, 2009)

By Connie Qiu, SEAS'11

As long as the activity is one that can be a valuable learning experience and is one that the student is passionate about, he or she should pursue it.

Megan Rigney, director of Columbia's Office of Pre-Professional Advising, spoke to members of the pre-medical student body in one of the Society's kickoff events of the academic year.

Ms. Rigney informed students of the requirements all prospective medical school applicants must be aware of including the necessary courses to take and vital parts of the application process. Students can pursue any major they desire as long as they follow the pre-med curriculum. Required courses include General Chemistry, Biology, Organic Chemistry, with their respective labs, Calculus and English. In addition to academic performance in these courses, students will also be evaluated by their score on the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT). If at any point, students feel they are not performing as well as they would like to, they should always know that there are tutoring and advising services

provided by the University to help them excel. Although the pre-med student path appears daunting, Ms. Rigney tried to ease students that academic performance is not the sole factor of medical school admissions.

The environment at Columbia University is, in no doubt, challenging and competitive. Although numbers are a vital part of the applicant's profile, there are other factors that can help an applicant. Ms. Rigney debunked common myths and emphasized that students can spend time doing what they enjoy. There are more factors of the undergraduate experience that define and mold the applicant into a unique individual that medical school admissions committees are seeking. These include how students choose to spend their time outside of the lecture hall during the academic year and the summer breaks. Students should take advantage of all the resources around them such as

participating in organizations, volunteer opportunities, internships, research, travel, etc. As long as the activity is one that can be a valuable learning experience and is one that the student is passionate about, he or she should pursue it.

Overall, Ms. Rigney would like all students to become as competitive applicants as they can be. Students should work to the best of their abilities in order to achieve the best scores they can and continue to pursue their interests to develop well-rounded characters. Most importantly, students should always be aware of the resources provided at Columbia such as Ms. Megan Rigney herself and the Office of Pre-Professional Advising. The office is devoted to helping students gain admission into medical school so students must remember to get themselves acquainted with Ms. Rigney and her staff in order to get help and support whenever necessary.



Event #2: Medical School Admissions: What's the 411? (Thursday, September 24, 2009) *By Nathalie Lissain, BC'12*



Jane Doe: 45 MCAT score, 4.01 G.P.A, President and founder of the do nothing else but homework in your dorm room club.

Would you accept her into your medical school? I think not!

There is a lot to learn about the medical school admissions process. But, as pre-medical students, we often find it difficult to learn about the path to medical school because we spend so much time and effort focusing on trying to get in!—totally understandable!

However, the earlier you begin to explore the medical career, the earlier you will comprehend that fitting into this “typical Jane Doe” standard is not *exactly* what medical schools call a successful and competitive applicant!

On Thursday September 24th, 2009, Columbia University Charles Drew Pre-Medical Society welcomed two very inspiring and motivational doctors, Lynne Holden, and former Columbia University graduate, Carlyle Miller.

This very informative mini-panel was a unique way to gain a different perspective on what exactly medical schools are looking for, along with essential tips for gaining admission to the medical school of your dreams. Both doctors shared their secrets to success and now I must share them with you!

First and foremost, *keep it up!*

Medical school is challenging yes, however, the road to medical school has proven to be even more challenging. College is a time to explore new things, a time for new freedoms, and most importantly, a time for academics. It's all about prioritizing. Keep your goal in sight and remember that you will get there regardless of the obstacles you may come across (like that grade that you wished you hadn't received in Biology or General Chemistry).

Remember to pick a major that is of great interest to you, and not study Biology just because you think it will benefit you most in medical school. All medical students are not Biology or Chemistry majors! Also, every single subject that you are taking right now will serve you

as a future physician somehow, so keep that in mind.

Second, *do you!*

You have four years to grow as an individual and to take part in activities that you have interest in. “Dancers should continue to dance and singers should continue to sing.” Don't provide medical schools with a false description of who you are because they will find out the truth somehow! Admissions counselors, wish to envision “you” when looking at your application, so sell yourself (not someone else) and don't forget that they will check your Facebook. Remember, first impressions are the most significant! *Take a deep breath and remind yourself that you did it*, when preparing for your interviews. Don't be nervous. No one wants a nervous doctor during surgery. Just think about what could happen!

Finally, *believe that you will become a doctor!*

At the end of the day, you are in control of what you want!



Event #3: On the Front Lines: Primary Health Care with Dr. Brenda Aiken (Thursday, October 8, 2009)

By Kwanza Price, GS'11

Dr. Brenda Aiken, BC'77 devoted an evening to talking to premeds about the importance of primary health care. Dr. Aiken shared her personal story about growing up in the Fort Greene/Bedford Stuyvesant neighborhood of Brooklyn and being the first person in her family to obtain a high school diploma before going off to college at Barnard and later medical school at Columbia's College of Physicians and Surgeons. Dr. Aiken also shared her own encouraging "list of

lessons on life for young people" for encouragement about achieving success and overcoming barriers to success. Students posed questions about primary health care, Dr. Aiken's personal life, as well as the med school application process. Dr. Aiken is an Assistant Professor of Clinical Medicine at Columbia University Medical Center/Presbyterian Hospital and a primary care physician with Columbia University Health Services. Prior to joining the university's

health services, Dr. Aiken was an Assistant Professor of Clinical Medicine at Albert Einstein College of Medicine and a faculty member with the Residency Program in Social Medicine at Montefiore Medical Center. For several years, Dr. Aiken had an independent private practice in Sugar Hill Harlem. Dr. Aiken is a sweet-natured woman with a youthful spirit and beauty. She is married to a Bahamian-American and they have two children.



Event #4: MCAT Preview Class and MCAT Auction (October–November 2009)

By Brian Lewis, CC'11

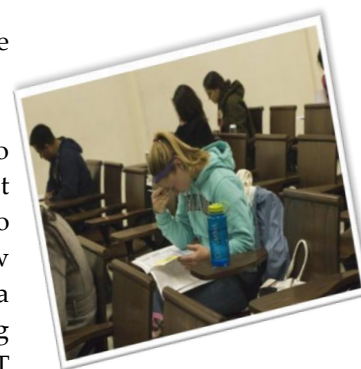
This semester, Charles Drew and Kaplan partnered up to bring you two major events. The first was an MCAT preview class where Kaplan representatives gave students the chance to experience exactly what a Kaplan MCAT course was like as well as to learn many of the techniques that have helped other students get the score they want. The second event was an MCAT auction which gave

students the chance to bid on and win a full MCAT class taught by Kaplan for a discounted price. This semester, the auctioned class sold for \$1060, nearly half the amount of the actual class.

We are proud to announce that Brianna Désiré, CC'11 won the MCAT auction for this semester. Remember, next semester we will also be hosting another auction for a

full MCAT class, and we hope that you all will bid.

Next semester we plan to continue our joint efforts to host many more events tailored to your interests. Just a few examples of events to come are a session dedicated to financing medical school, another MCAT auction, more preview classes, and medical school interview panel where students can get ideas for preparing for medical school interviews.



Event #5: Looking Ahead: A Visit from New England College of Optometry (Thursday, October 22, 2009)

By Lacey Gleason, CC'12

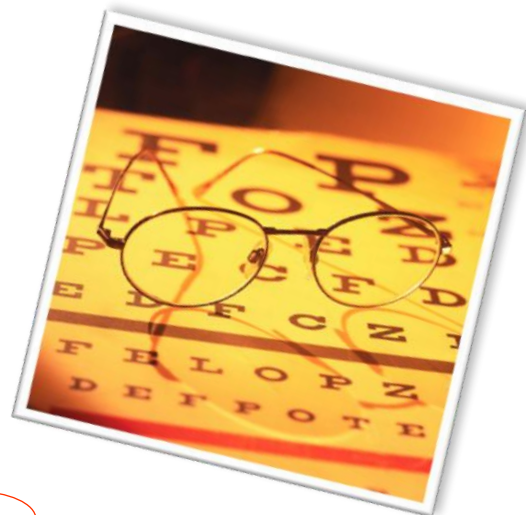
On October 22nd, a representative from one of the nation's premier colleges of optometry, New England College of Optometry, held an intimate workshop for the members of the Charles Drew Pre-Medical Society. The presentation was both an introduction to the field of optometry and an info session for prospective applicants. The informal setting allowed Charles Drew members to ask many questions about a medical specialty that is sometimes overlooked.

Today, optometrists play a vital role in providing quality clinical vision care and in educating the public about vision and eye health. Since optometrists are at the frontline of health care, they are often the first providers to examine, diagnose, treat, and manage diseases and disorders of the visual system. They can even play a vital role in diagnosing diabetes, glaucoma, hypertension, and arteriosclerosis.

The New England College of Optometry is dedicated to providing its students with the education and skills necessary to perform many different types of eye care. During the workshop, the presenter emphasized New England College of Optometry's connection with its surrounding community. In addition to participating in scientific research and providing eye care in a variety of settings, students have the opportunity to immerse themselves in the heart of Boston's community by working in neighborhood clinical health centers. The College also focuses on small group instruction and learning through the integration of basic sciences and clinical observation. In fact, new students have the opportunity to perform visual screenings within a few months of arrival and will perform screenings on over 1,500 patients by graduation. The College also provides students with the opportunity to study optometry in an international setting and pursue interdisciplinary specialization areas such as business management and world

health. Overall, these opportunities for interdisciplinary study and varied clinical encounters help promote the needs of the public by training well-rounded optometrists.

New England College of Optometry's visit to Columbia provided our members with a greater understanding of the field of optometry and the paths available for students entering into the field. The small setting gave Charles Drew members an extraordinary opportunity to engage with a staff member and find out as much as possible about how to make themselves ideal candidates for entrance into the New England College of Optometry and other leading institutions.



Event #6: Current Issue in Health Care Today: A Discussion on Asthma (Thursday, November 5, 2009)

By Kimberly Laughman, CC'11

On Thursday, November 5th, 2009, Dr. Benjamin Ortiz, CC '92, returned to his alma mater to discuss an issue that affects many underserved communities. He began by telling us about, how growing up in Washington Heights, the issue of asthma came to be of such importance to him. Dr. Ortiz spoke about his history with asthma and his work with the Harlem Children's Zone's asthma initiative, where he now serves as assistant medical director. The initiative has worked to improve quality of life for children suffering from asthma, as well as the important role of pediatricians in public health and asthma

awareness, he said. Dr. Ortiz informed us of all of the startling statistics about asthma in urban communities and told us of how his work on battling this chronic disease began with a 4-week summer camp known as SuperKids, but the discussion soon turned into a Q&A session on how he came to be where he is today.

As a former member of the Columbia Charles Drew Pre-Medical Society, Dr. Ortiz was more than happy to share his wealth of knowledge with current members. He spoke about his struggles and successes transitioning from an urban community to an Ivy

League institution and offered advice on how current Columbia pre-meds could make the most of their four years here. Dr. Ortiz told us about some of the important factors that he thought about when choosing medical schools and offered tips on how to make ourselves more desirable medical school candidates. Her reminisced about his days as Charles Drew president and even asked about some of our current events, offering his support wherever needed. Dr. Ortiz's short visit in 203 Math was at the same time informative and inspiring for the all Charles Drew members in attendance.



Event #7: First Annual Toy Drive (Monday, November 30—Friday, December 4, 2009)

By Kimberly Laughman, CC'11

For the 2009 Christmas season, the Charles Drew Pre-Medical Society brought back a long, lost Charles Drew tradition. Picking up the torch from former Charles Drew member Dr. Benjamin Ortiz, CC '92, who came to speak with us on the issue of asthma, we held a toy drive for children in the pediatric wing at Harlem Hospital Center. Toy collection began on November 23rd at the S'mores and Smiles Study Break,

continued on Lerner ramps and ended on December 4th. Over 30 toys were donated and delivered to the hospital.

On December 5th, 2009, a group of Charles Drew members traveled uptown to 135th St. and Lennox Ave. to deliver the toys to Harlem Hospital. We spent some time with some adorable and very appreciative kids. They each were allowed to pick

out 1-2 toys, and they all seemed quite pleased with their choices. We visited some at their bedside while others joined us in the playroom as we all laughed, colored, raced trucks, and watched Dora the Explorer. All in all it was a great way to spend a Friday afternoon and the Charles Drew Pre-Medical Society will surely be back there.



Event #8: S'mores Study Break (Monday, November 23, 2009)

By Christina Ortiz, CC'12

The S'mores and Smiles Study Break turned out to be just what a bunch of stressed college students needed. The chance to make your own s'mores and hot chocolate –

accompanied by candied apples, cupcakes, and apple cider – proved irresistible! Students gathered with their snacks to relax, talk, listen to music, and even dance.

Overall, it proved to be a very successful event, one which should definitely be brought back in the near future.



Event #9: University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine Trip (Saturday, November 21, 2009) *By Christina Ortiz, CC'12*

Early on the morning of November 21st, a group of 30 Columbia Pre-Meds met in front of the gates at 116th street to take a bus to Philadelphia. Several hours later, we arrived at the beautiful campus of the University of Pennsylvania, which houses the undergraduate school, the medical school, and several of Penn's other graduate schools. The day's agenda was full of events. We began with a tour of the school, which was followed by an exciting game of

Brain Jeopardy. Later, we attended several student led sessions, which included topics such as: "Strengthening GPA/MCAT," "Non-Traditional Paths to Medical School," and "The Importance of Extracurricular Activities," among others. Finally, we were able to choose between two interactive workshops, "Learning the Penn Med Way: Clinical Cases in Cardiology," where students experienced firsthand how the medical

students practice their case solving skills, and "Simulation Suite Demo: CODE Call!" where students had the chance to simulate experiences in the ER. Overall it was a really great trip that left many of our students inspired and more motivated than ever.

For more information on the University Of Pennsylvania School Of Medicine, visit their website: www.med.upenn.edu



Quick Facts about University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine:

ENTERING CLASS OF 2009

- 161 Matriculants
- 45% Female and 55% Male
- 24% PA Residents and 76% Out-of-State Residents
- 33% Black, Hispanic, Asian, or Native Americans
- 62% Non-traditional students
- 15% Combined Degree (MD/PhD)
- Average Age is ~23 (21-28)
- Median MCAT:
 - Verbal Reasoning 11; Writing Section Q
 - Physical Sciences 12; Biological Sciences 12
- Median GPA 3.84
- 61% Science Majors
- 39% Non-Science Majors



University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine offers many summer opportunities for undergraduates who are under-represented minorities in the sciences. Some include:

- AAMC Summer Medical and Dental Education Program
 - <http://www.smdep.org>
- Other Summer Enrichment Programs
 - <http://services.aamc.org/summerprograms/getprogs.cfm>
- University of Pennsylvania Summer Mentorship Program
 - <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/aap/>
- Health Management and Policy Summer Enrichment Program
 - <http://www.sph.umich.edu/sep/>



Charles Drew High School Pipeline Program

This has been an exciting semester for the Charles Drew High School Pipeline Program. This mentoring initiative was created in the Fall of 2008 as a way to positively impact the community and increase the number of underrepresented minority and economically disadvantaged persons in the medical field. The program pairs each high school student with a mentor, a Columbia or Barnard premedical student, who helps to guide them through the college application process and offer advice about academic issues. The overall goal of the Pipeline Program is to create a strong support network for each of its mentees and help ease their transition from high school to college.

In our second year of sponsoring the program we have hosted a number of fun and informative events and reached out to more high school students throughout New York City. Our participants come from various schools including Cathedral High School, Manhattan Center for Science and Mathematics, and Fredrick Douglas Academy VII. Our program currently consists of 38 mentees and 32 mentors. Pipeline is unique in that in addition to pairing each student with their own premed mentor we also host a number of events throughout each semester.

This semester we hit the ground running and in October started the program off by hosting our annual orientation dinner. The orientation dinner provided the high school students and their parents with an opportunity to meet their mentors for the first time and to experience the social

atmosphere here at Columbia. The dinner also included a student panel about college admissions. College admissions/applications being the theme for this semester, we hosted several events focusing on that topic including: a college admissions workshop with Maude Bond, Director of Multicultural Recruitment, and Pamela Mason, Associate Director of Financial Aid; an SAT Workshop sponsored by Kaplan Test Prep; and a College Life Student-led Discussion.

In addition to the academic activities we hosted, we also invited our high school students to a Columbia Lions football game and a Sabor sponsored dance workshop. This was a very productive and successful semester for the Charles Drew High School Pipeline Program and would not have been possible without the hard work of the Pipeline Planning Committee which includes Johanna Miele, *Pipeline Co-chair*; Christina Ortiz, *Director of Internal Affairs*; Randy Subramany, *Director of External Affairs*; and Brittany Martin, *Pipeline Co-chair*. We are also grateful for the efforts of our mentors, general body members, executive board members, and university faculty. Next semester we plan to host more events including: a trip to see the Bodies Exhibit and community service projects as well as physician panels just to name a few. If you would like more information about the Pipeline Program or want to get involved please contact Brittany Martin at bam2155@columbia.edu or Johanna Miele at jcm2179@columbia.edu.



Pre-Medical Undergraduate Mentoring Program

The Premedical Undergraduate Mentor Program (**P.U.M.P.**) -- is a new initiative sponsored by the **Charles Drew Premedical Society** and **Social Justice Medicine** (an auxiliary group of the Premedical Association of the Postbaccalaureate program) of Columbia University.

The idea behind **P.U.M.P.** is to make use of peer resources to improve both *recruitment* and *retention* of historically underrepresented minority students in the premedical curriculum at Columbia University.

The program equally seeks to educate and recruit students who may not have considered medicine as a potential career field, or students who know little about what it takes to become a doctor.

In the future, we hope to expand activities to include a summer premed readiness program for incoming freshman and sophomores as well as minority post-baccalaureate students.

This fall, nineteen experienced upperclassmen premedical students and one post-baccalaureate volunteered to be **P.U.M.P** mentors. Mentors were paired with 20 freshmen and sophomores who expressed an interest via formal application for becoming **P.U.M.P** protégées. Mentors and mentees are students from Columbia College, the School of General Studies, SEAS, and Barnard College.

The first **P.U.M.P.** activity was a "meet n greet" in **October** where mentors were introduced to their respective mentees. We served pizza at this informal event and played a popular ice-breaker, Two Truths and One Lie. Participants also got a chance to introduce themselves to other mentors and mentees and state which premed classes they were taking, had taken, or were considering. Lastly, PUMP mentors were given a tips sheet on how to be a good mentor or mentee.

In November, Junior and Biology Major, Chris Travis, organized a registration workshop for **P.U.M.P** mentees. The purpose of the workshop was to allow upperclassmen students to share their experiences in organizing their premed course schedules. This was a PowerPoint presentation that took place in Lerner on Friday, November 13.

Next spring, we hope to organize more **P.U.M.P.** educational and social events. This includes a possible trip to the Bodies Exhibit, at least one community service event, and a formal presentation on mentorship. We are also working with area med school students to organize a speed-mentoring workshop.

Anyone interested in helping to organize these events should contact Kwanza Price. If you would like to become a **P.U.M.P.** mentor or mentee next year, please contact Kwanza Price at kwanzaprice@yahoo.com or kop2101@columbia.edu.



Columbia Alumni Corner

Interview with Current Cornell Med Student

Maritza T. Harper

Kwanza Price, GS'11



1. What was your major at Columbia?

Chemistry and Biomedical Engineering. I was Chemistry in the College and Biomed in the Engineering School.

2. Where did you live while you were at Columbia?

On campus, in Hartley, Wallach, Carman, and Watt.

3. What activities were you involved in at Columbia?

Community Impact (HEAL), Columbia University Emergency Medical Services (CAVA), Gospel Choir, Women's Squash Team, Kappa Alpha Theta, RA in Carman and Watt.

4. What Charles Drew events did you go to and what were the most memorable?

I went to their introductory meeting, but I was intimidated by the overachieving freshman crowd, so I didn't go to any other events. I wasn't really sure about being premed. Besides, I never have considered myself a premed anyway- I just did activities and classes that interested me, and all of those things have lead me to medical school.

5. What made you ultimately decide to be premed?

As a sophomore, I wasn't sure about a major. I thought about psychology. I wanted to be a teacher. I liked chem, but I didn't want to major in chem. I just kept taking science classes. When I got to my mid sophomore year, I realized I wasn't interested in any major in the college. I wanted to transfer to biomed in the Engineering School. So I started that. And I finished my chem concentration. The tech industry and the health industry really got me jazzed. But I realized that interacting with patients was what I really wanted, so I decided that being a doctor was the best fit for me.

6. Was there anyone who inspired you?

I kept to myself a lot at school. My mom was a big influence. I also spoke to someone at Columbia about my interest in going to med school... She said maybe you should take a year off. Maybe wait till senior year.

7. Did you feel like you were being discouraged?

I wouldn't say that, but I didn't feel like I was definitely being told to "go for it." I was being counseled about the risks.

8. Why do you think Charles Drew is important?

I didn't participate in many events. But after attending the PUMP meeting (Martiza is a mentor for PUMP, the first peer mentor program for premeds sponsored by Charles Drew that started this year), I was really impressed. Everyone there had the same goal. It wasn't competitive, more educational. Support is great. I think it's necessary because support is necessary....Having people you trust, who you can lean on, asking advice. Instead of "let's freak out about med school grades."

Columbia Alumni Corner

Interview with Current Cornell Med Student Maritza T. Harper

9. How has the transition to med school been?

Good. Different. A lot of material. More in depth. Way more in depth. I like it.... A little stressful. But good. I live on campus. There are 100 students in my class.

10. What do you like most about Cornell?

I really like the environment. They truly are supporting you and really helping you know what you need to know. Everyone is super nice and super supportive. They just try to make it what it needs to be so you can become a really amazing doctor.

11. What other activities are you involved in while at med school?

I attend lectures sponsored by the school where people from global organizations present and talk about how to improve health as a whole in the world.

I'm Class President. I have monthly meetings with Dean Miller. I talk to him from a student's perspective: about financial aid, admin stuff....I also organize a weekly meeting. There are a bunch of committees: Housing, Community Service...

I'm an Educator at a Homeless Shelter on 33rd and Madison. I teach people how to take care of themselves. What it means to be healthy. I'm also organizing a clothing drive.

12. Tell us about your med school classes.

First and 2nd year is basic science, how to read labs, how to do a physical—first bloc is biochem, biophysiology.... More of the molecular side of the human body. Spring will start with anatomy from the neck down. Next year, it will be from the neck up. The brain, the mind, memory and thinking...

My class schedule is from 8 to 1pm. I may have a seminar in the afternoon. It will get busier as the year continues.

13. What quick advice do you have for our Charles Drew members about applying to medical school?

First and the biggest thing is, don't let anyone tell you what you can't do. Oh you don't have the right GPA. You don't have research experience... You won't get in. First, believe in yourself. Don't listen to that. It really breaks my heart. I'm really glad you (Charles Drew) started PUMP. I heard about so many people being turned away from premed classes... Young people really need that support.... Don't give up!

At the end of the day, it doesn't matter where you go to school. You are going to be a doctor.

It's stressful, but you can't let it get to you. You have to find an outlet. I learned this too late. I wish I had someone to show me. Tell me not do 115 percent. I started dancing again in senior year, and played squash. Ballet. It was a good outlet for me.



House Call: Ask the Doctor

Interview with Dr. Carlyle Miller, Associate Dean of Student Affairs and Equal Opportunity Programs at the Weill Medical College of Cornell University

Kwanza Price, GS'11

1. Where did you grow up?

South Bronx. The real South Bronx. In the 1950s. It was really mixed back then. Black, Hispanic, Irish, Italian, Jewish,...not just Black and Hispanic like it is today.

2. Do you have siblings?

I have three brothers and was the third of four. We were poor and my mother was on welfare.

3. When did you graduate from Columbia?

1971

4. What was your major at Columbia and how did you decide upon this major?

Biology. Very easy decision. I wanted to be a doctor since I was 8. If not a medical doctor, I would have gotten a PhD in the natural sciences. Conservation science. Columbia had mammalian science back then. I even applied for a PhD program. I would have written for the Museum of Natural History. I practically lived there when I was in college. There and the Bronx Zoo. (*Dr. Miller has mounted butterflies on his office wall at Cornell*).

5. How big was the Black student population at Columbia when you were there?

First, it was all males. We had maybe 750 students then. There were very few Blacks. Maybe 5 or 7 percent. There were about 3 or 4 Black students in Biology with me.

6. What was going on at Columbia when you were a student there?

I came to CU in 1967. The Civil Rights movement was in full force. I was on campus during the school takeover...There were issues of education. Just public education. White flight really caused schools to crumble academically. Whites fled the city to go to the suburbs and took their resources with them... I graduated from Theodore Roosevelt High School in the Bronx. I came to CU with a lot of AP credits. But two years later, after I was already at Columbia, my high school really went down because of White flight...

7. What inspired you to become a doctor?

When I was 8, I read a book on pneumonia and then made a diagnosis of someone I knew. That person went to the hospital and got better. Everyone was telling me how brilliant I was...I didn't know anything about what it took to be a doctor. But I decided early on that I wanted to help people. Also, my family had been very community service oriented.

House Call: Ask the Doctor (Interview with Dr. Miller)

8. How did Columbia support your desire to become a doctor?

There were no programs back then to recruit minority physicians. In fact, there was even discouragement. People did not think that Blacks could do medicine. We were scoffed at.

Let me tell you a story...When I was in organic chemistry, it was the policy that two lab partners got the same grade for the work they completed together. Whatever your partner got, you got. We waited for our midterm grade. My partner told me he got an A. I approached the grad student who was responsible for giving the grades and asked him what I got. He told me I got a C. I laughed. I didn't take him seriously. But he wasn't joking. He said that *someone* had to get a C and since I was so different from the rest of the class (he confirmed when I asked him that "different" meant Black), I would get the C...I took the issue to the head of Organic Chemistry and got my grade changed from a C to an A. But only after I threatened to make the issue a big deal if it wasn't changed....

In terms of support, I ended up doing a summer research internship at Cornell. The Traveler's research program (but it had a different name back then). This was the summer after my junior year. I had mentors in the program and got a lot of guidance. I had relationships with Black male doctors from elite schools like Cornell and Harvard. I didn't have mentors at Columbia and was only advised about my academic performance.

9. Tell me about your career, what residency you did, and how you progressed to your current position as Dean at Cornell?

I came to Cornell after Columbia. I thought about neurology. But I wanted to be a good diagnostician. I wanted to cure. All the neuro patients were just sick and not getting better. I wanted to cure. Play God so to speak...I found myself listening to a lecture given by a Nobel Laureate. He talked about the immortality of the gastrointestinal cell. This was something I could study to help people actually get better. So I did GI and internal medicine at New York Hospital. I was the first Black intern in internal medicine in history of New York Hospital.

After my residency, I became a Chief Resident at Memorial Sloan Kettering and did a fellowship there. I finished my fellowship and opened up a private practice in 1980 in New York. I was affiliated with Cornell. I did this for 15 years. In the mid 90s, I become the president of the Cancer Prevention Research Institute. But the money for this ran out. I went back to teaching. I wrote a curriculum for an alternative medical school called Pacific College of Oriental Medicine. I became the biomed chair of this school, then academic dean. In 2006, I came back to Cornell as Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Equal Opportunity Programs.

10. How critical do you think it is that the number of minority physicians be increased?

It's more critical than anyone would tell you. It's scary...Studies show that the people who take care of patients from minority populations, where we see the health disparities, are people of that group. I remember hearing a report from an AAMC meeting in November 2009 that 76 % of the patients White physicians take care of are White. Blacks and other minorities take care of a more diverse patient population. By 2050, minorities will be in the majority and the research shows that we just can't count on White physicians to take care of minority patients.

11. What do you think the barriers are to increasing the number of minority physicians?

These days, there are no barriers. There are tons of programs out there focused on increasing the percentage of minority physicians... The AAMC is being very open now about "holistic" admissions and not just focusing on grades and MCATs...But you may have to sacrifice a little.

House Call: Ask the Doctor (Interview with Dr. Miller)

12. **But what about institutional barriers?**

Those may still exist...You know, the AMA issued an apology in 2008 for keeping Blacks out of medicine for a 100 years. ..We are so behind because we were purposefully kept out of medicine.

13. **What can citizens, students, deans, government officials do about it?**

The Black middle class needs to give more of themselves. They should go to the ghetto and other neighborhoods every week and find a child to mentor.

I think pipeline programs are very effective. Funding should be increased and continued. Functioning organizations need to get together and figure out what are the best practices from these programs. The public education system needs to be fixed as well. And let's acknowledge the huge role Black universities like Howard, Meharry, and Morehouse as well as other traditionally black colleges and schools have played in training Black and other minority physicians.

14. **Was the Charles Drew Premedical Society around when you were at Columbia?**

No. There was nothing like Charles Drew when I was at Columbia.

15. **Beyond academic acumen, what qualities MUST a physician possess?**

Compassion. A desire to really want to help people in a meaningful way. They must do community service. If you are not doing some sort of community service before you become a physician, then you should not be a doctor...They must always want to help. A physician must have a lifetime of curiosity. Because science is always changing and developing. And they shouldn't just be curious about medicine. They need to have a curiosity about other intellectual realms... I also think a physician has to have faith in the system they are working in. And if they want to change it, don't just talk about it, take action.

16. **What physician, alive or dead, famous or not, have you admired the most and why?**

Lloyd Barnes. He was compassionate. A very good doctor. He had all the qualities I would look at as a doctor. Also James I. Curtis and Bruce Ballard who were both in my position as dean long ago.

17. **How do you think the field of medicine is changing?**

It's changing on a lot of levels. Economically, socially, politically, technologically...But right now Biology is outpacing physical technology. At some point, physical technology will have to catch up. Unfortunately, when it does, it might leave some doctors in the dust.

On the political and social side, the changes will be about who should benefit from new ways of treatment. When genetics really blows up, there will be a lot of moral questions to address about who lives or dies...Procedures...Genetics will play a huge part in this. Look at quantum theory in physics. The same thing is happening in biology. It's going to smack a lot of people. It will be controversial and society may not be prepared...

The healthcare system is changing too and medicine may be the animal we can't tame...

18. **What advice do you have for minority premeds?**

Have a seamless application. Good grades. Do well on the MCATS. Do research. Do your community service. You must have all the elements that people want so you don't get shut out. Realize that you will have to make sacrifices. And when you get a bad grade, don't deny it. Face it and fix it.

Something you may not know about Dr. Miller...

Dr. Miller is a published poet who once frequented Adrienne Rich at her apartment on 93rd street where she hosted private civil rights meetings.

Meet the Advisory Board for 2009-2010 School Year

Meet our advisory board for the 2009-2010 year. We are very excited to have these individuals supervise the events that we have planned for the year as well as offer advice and share experiences with members of the Charles Drew Pre-Medical Society. We hope to have a very successful year due in large part to the time put in by the advisory board in efforts to further the impact that the Charles Drew Society has both on and off campus. The advisory board members are inspirational individuals, motivating us to work hard and strive towards our goals of becoming medical professionals.

Hilda Y. Hutcherson, M.D.



Dr. Hutcherson was born and raised in Tuskegee, Alabama. From Stanford University as an undergraduate majoring in Human Biology, she matriculated into Harvard Medical School. She then completed a medicine internship at the University of California in San Francisco and her residency in obstetrics and gynecology at Columbia University Medical Center. She is now a Clinical Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology and Associate Dean for Diversity and Minority Affairs at Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons.

Lynne M. Holden, M.D.



Dr. Holden attended Temple University School of Medicine and completed her residency in Emergency Medicine in 1995 at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine-Jacobi/Montefiore Emergency Medicine Residency Program in the Bronx, NY. For the past six years, Dr. Holden has served as a Co-chairperson of the Admissions Committee at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and as Montefiore Residency Site Director of the Jacobi-Montefiore Emergency Medicine Residency Program. Holden is also the coordinator for the Emergency Department Clinical Exposure and Mentoring Program.

Jeannine M. D'Armiento, M.D.,Ph.D.



Dr. D'Armiento attended Rutgers University, where she received her Bachelor's degree. She then applied and was accepted to the prestigious M.D./PhD program at UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson. After receiving her M.D./PhD, she completed her residency and fellowship in pulmonology at Columbia University Medical Center. She is now an Assistant Professor of Medicine and has her own biomedical research lab in the Department of Medicine at the Columbia University Medical Center.

Icilma V. Fergus, M.D.



Dr. Fergus received her B.A. from Barnard College in 1988 and continued on to earn her MD. in 1992 at the SUNY Health Science Center at Brooklyn. In 1999, she completed her fellowship in cardiology at the Weill-Cornell Medical Center and joined Cardiovascular Associates. She has served as Associate Director of Echocardiography at New York Hospital Queens since 2001. She was awarded the Lang Center grant in 2001 for research involving measurement of mitral regurgitation and cardiac volumes in heart failure patients. She is now the head of cardiology at Harlem Hospital Center.

Meet the Advisory Board for 2009-2010 School Year

Brenda Aiken, M.D.



Dr. Aiken, who grew up in the Fort Greene/Bedford Stuyvesant neighborhood of Brooklyn, attended Barnard College (BC'77) and later medical school at Columbia's College of Physicians and Surgeons (MD'81). She has held various positions throughout her career so far including the position of assistant professor of Medicine at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and an assistant attending physician at Allen Pavilion. She has also worked as a faculty member with the Residency Program in Social Medicine at Montefiore Medical Center. For several years, Dr. Aiken had an independent private practice in Sugar Hill Harlem. In the Fall of 2000, she joined Health Services at Columbia. In addition to working for Health Services right now, she is also an assistant professor of Clinical Medicine at Columbia University Medical Center.

Carlyle H. Miller, M.D.



Dr. Miller attended Columbia University, earning a Bachelor's degree in Biology. After graduating from Weill Medical College in 1975, Dr. Miller completed his residency at New York-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell and a fellowship in gastroenterology at Weill Cornell's affiliate Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. Miller has been a member of the Weill Medical College faculty since 1980 and is an active member of the Admissions Committee. Most recently, he has served as chairman of the biomedical sciences and Academic Dean at Pacific College of Oriental Medicine. Currently, he is assistant attending physician at New York-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell as well as has just been named new Associate Dean of Student Affairs and Equal Opportunity Programs at the Weill Medical College of Cornell University.

Daniel L. Beckles, M.D./Ph.D.



Dr. Beckles received his B.A. in Biochemistry and M.S. in Chemistry from Stony Brook University. He went on to receive his M.D. and Ph.D. in Molecular Biology from SUNY Downstate Medical School and then became a resident of cardiothoracic surgery at the University of Texas. He has since then served as the Associate Surgeon of the Division of Thoracic Surgery at Brigham and Women's Hospital, Diplomat on the American Board of Thoracic Surgery, and Assistant Professor at Mt. Sinai Medical Center.

Benjamin Ortiz, M.D.



Dr. Ortiz, born in Washington Heights to immigrants, attended Columbia University starting in 1988. During his time at Columbia, he was part of various organizations, including the Charles Drew Pre-Medical Society. Afterwards, he earned his M.D. from the Mount Sinai School of Medicine and completed his pediatric residency in 2001. Since then, he has given back to the community by serving as the assistant medical director of the Harlem Children's Zone's asthma initiative and starting a pilot program in Harlem called Superkids, 4-week summer day program for asthmatic children. Dr. Ortiz is currently an assistant attending pediatrician at Harlem Hospital Center and is assistant professor of clinical pediatrics at P&S.

Summer 2010 Opportunities

Are you looking forward to summer yet? Want a meaningful summer experience in New York City? If you want to get some clinical exposure or participate in exciting research, check out the following list of opportunities for Summer 2010. Be sure to check individual websites for application deadlines!

1. Bioethical Cross-cultural Educational Program (BioCEP)

BioCEP is a two week intensive summer internship program designed to promote educational and cultural exchange in Bioethics and Public Health (medical tourism, emerging infections, stem cell research, reproductive medicine, HIV, abortion, etc) with students from Mahidol University in Bangkok, Thailand. The program includes lectures, student discussions, professional visits to clinics, research labs, hospices, and cultural tours. An additional optional two-week clinical internship is also available. All undergraduate students are encouraged to apply. For more information:

<http://www.columbia.edu/~jdl5/>

2. Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowships (SURF) and Amgen Scholars Program

The Department of Biological Sciences at Columbia University offers the opportunity for hands-on biology related laboratory research. This is a chance to experience the joys of discovering something completely new while learning to overcome the challenges inherent in scientific research. Most students work either on the Morningside Heights campus or in the biomedical labs at Columbia's Health Sciences Center. You may apply to SURF if you are currently a junior, sophomore, or first-year student in Columbia College, Barnard College, the School of Engineering and Applied Science, or the School of General Studies. For Amgen, you must be a sophomore or junior. No previous research experience is necessary, and you do not need to be a biology major to apply. Students are expected to work full-time for the duration of the program. The programs run for 10 weeks, from May 26th through July 31st, 2010.

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/biology/ug/surf/>

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/biology/ug/amgen/index.html>

3. Summer Medical and Dental Education Program (SMDEP)

This is a FREE (full tuition, housing, and meals) six-week summer academic enrichment program that offers freshman and sophomore college students intensive and personalized medical and dental school preparation. The program takes places at several universities each summer, including Yale, Duke, Yale, UMDNJ, and Columbia.

<http://www.smdep.org/>

4. Mount Sinai Summer Undergraduate Research Program.

Open to sophomores and juniors. The program begins on the first Monday of June and lasts 10 weeks. Program highlights include access to over 200 cutting-edge laboratories, networking opportunities, and a housing stipend.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.mountsinai.org/>

5. Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP) at NYU School of Medicine

The Sackler Institute of Graduate Biomedical Sciences of New York University's School of Medicine offers a Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP) for qualified sophomores and juniors who are interested in pursuing research careers as PhD or MD/PhD candidates.

<http://www.med.nyu.edu/sackler/programs/summer.html>

Summer 2010 Opportunities

6. Montefiore Medical Center's Health Opportunities Program (Monte-HOP)

This program is for college freshmen and sophomores who are Hispanic/Latino-American, Black/African-American or American Indian. It promotes, educates, and encourages underserved youth to pursue careers within the health fields by providing valuable knowledge and professional skills through interactive workshops, mentorship by physicians, observation of physician-patient interactions, lecture activities and independent learning

<http://www.einstein.yu.edu/uploadedFiles/admissions/Maternal%20and%20Child%20Health%20Program%202010.pdf>

For more NYC programs or summer opportunities in your home state, check out:

- a) Columbia University's Pre-professional website
<http://www.studentaffairs.columbia.edu/preprofessional/health/>
- b) Health Professions Advisory Program website
<http://hpap.syr.edu/spstate.htm#toc>

Thanking All of You!

The Charles Drew E-board would like to thank all of you, the members of the general body, for making this year a success. We appreciate anyone who attended an event, who participated in our auction or who joined our facebook group. We would like to give a special thank you to anyone who was a mentor this year in our pipeline program or P.U.M.P. Program as well as the new members who join our Organizational Committee. Next year, we promise to hold new, informative, exciting events. Have a wonderful winter break and see you all in the spring semester!

Charles Drew Documentary

The Charles Drew Premedical Society is interested in completing a **documentary** about the organization and its fascinating alumnae. To do this, we need your help. Specifically, we are looking for experienced artists who could help us put together a treatment plan, prepare a budget, and carry out the actual filming (not to start before Summer 2010). We also need Charles Drew Alumnae to interview for the documentary. Alumnae could talk about their experiences in Charles Drew, later experiences in medical school, and/or life as a physician. We also need money! If you have any ideas about how to acquire funding for the Charles Drew Documentary, please contact Project Leader, Kwanza Price, at kop2101@columbia.edu or 646-824-3500.

Look Out for Our Updated Website:

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/charlesdrewsociety/>

2010 Conference for the Minority Association of Pre-Medical Students (M.A.P.S.)



Join the Charles Drew Pre-Medical Society for:

Minority Association of Pre-Medical Students Conference

at Mount Sinai School of Medicine

Saturday January 23, 2010

For a day filled with

- various info sessions (medical school interviews and personal statements, MCAT, summer programs, study skills/stress management, black men in medicine, optimizing first two years of college)
- tour of Mount Sinai School of Medicine
- networking with over 250 pre-meds from New York and New Jersey as well as medical students and physicians
- Medical School Recruitment Fair

Breakfast and Lunch will be served.

**Email us at cucharlesdrew@gmail.com with name, school and year,
and cell phone number if you wish to come with us.**

Charles Drew Pre-Medical Society
Contact Information:

E-mail Address:
cucharlesdrew@gmail.com

Website address:
<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/charlesdrewsociety/>

Join our Facebook Group!

It will be updated regularly with information about our upcoming events. Go to the link below to join our group or just search Charles Drew Pre-Medical Society on facebook :

<http://www.new.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2216987581&ref=ts>

facebook

History and Mission Statement

The Charles Drew Pre-Medical Society was originally established in the mid 1970s by a small group of minority pre-meds from Columbia College and Barnard College who firmly believed that they had the duty to serve their fellow peers in order to establish a strong network of minority and non-minority pre-medical student population on Columbia's campus. Over these past couple of years, the Charles Drew Pre-Medical Society has been improved and revitalized through the efforts of several hardworking students, helping Charles Drew establish a strong presence on campus. As an executive board, we have taken greater lengths to provide the similar services we give our Columbia students beyond the gates of 116th street through community service, discussion panels, medical school visits, regional conferences, and various levels of mentoring. As an organization, we are dedicated to maintain the high and premier standard of Dr. Charles R. Drew and hopefully apply such standards within ourselves and for our future generations.

Mission Statement: The Charles Drew Pre-Medical Society is an organization that strives to guide, support, and encourage pre-medical students, with a special emphasis on underrepresented minorities, in their various endeavors to become members of the medical field.

2009-2010 Executive Board Members

Princess Francois, CC'11, *Co-President/Newsletter Creator*
Brian Lewis, CC'11, *Co-President*
Komal Kothari, CC'12, *Vice President*
Victor Thompson, CC'10, *Senior Advisor*
Patricia Rojas, CC'11, *Junior Advisor*
Connie Qiu, SEAS'11, *Treasurer*
Christina Ortiz, CC'12, *Secretary*
Britney Martin, CC'11, *High School Pipeline Program Co-Chairperson*
Johanna Miele, CC'12, *High School Pipeline Program Co-Chairperson*
Kimberly Laughman, CC'12, *Director of Organizational Committee*
Kwanza Price, GS'11, *Director of P.U.M.P.*
Chris Travis, CC'11, *Publications Editor*
Lacey Gleason, CC'12, *Historian*
Herbert "Chip" Thornhill, CC'11, *Webmaster*

