



## Charles Drew: Your Pre-Med Lifeline

**Charles Drew  
Pre-Medical Society**

Spring 2009  
Volume 2, Issue 2

### A Farewell from Our Former President, Victor Thompson, CC' 10

Dear Charles Drew Members,

The end of this past spring semester marked the end of my term as President of the Charles Drew Premedical Society and I'd like to thank you all for your support over the past two academic years. I have now handed over the reins to both Princess Francois and Brian Lewis, and I would like to take this opportunity to wish them both every success in their new roles as co-Presidents. I am very sure that both persons will relish the challenge and take the Society to new heights.

It goes without saying that running the Society would not be possible without the dedication and hard work of a number of individuals. In particular I would like to thank all of the members of this year's executive board for their tireless work helping to organize events and taking care all the administration behind the scenes, their support and encouragement over my

term, and their time, help, and overall advice.

Most importantly, my thanks go out to you, the Members, for all of your support over the years. Without you the Society would not exist. Traditionally, the route to becoming a competitive and successful applicant to medical school is tedious and rigorous, but with the help of the Society, a more comfortable atmosphere can and will be facilitated for those who wish to matriculate into medical school.

I look forward to seeing you all in the near future, and I cannot wait to see what the Society will have in store for us all in the next academic year.

Sincerely,  
Victor Thompson, CC'10  
*Former President of Charles Drew*



Victor Thompson

### A Letter from Our New Presidents, Princess Francois, CC' 11 and Brian Lewis, CC' 11

Dear Charles Drew Members,

We, Princess Francois and Brian Lewis, will like to introduce ourselves as your next Co-Presidents of Charles Drew. Charles Drew has well established models for how a club should be conducted, and we place a high importance on the wants and needs of our members. This year, we had large turnouts to all of our events, and we would like to personally thank you all for making Charles Drew such a success this year.

During the 2008-2009 school year, I, Brian Lewis, has acted as the club's treasurer, dedicating my time to ensure that the club was financially organized and that all of the events were catered with food and drinks. As the treasurer, I was able to establish a relationship with Kaplan Test Preparation so that if you decide to take the MCAT course they offer, you will receive a discount on the pricing.

As both historian and publicity manager, I, Princess Francois have increased the size of the general body and the attendance of members at events by significant numbers. Through the Facebook group that I have reorganized and maintained on a regular basis, all of you have heard about new events, got updates on summer opportunities, and saw photos and videos of our events, among others things. I have also publicized all the events via creating eye-catching flyers and being in charge of the flyer process. It is because of me that this newsletter exists—I have designed and edited this in its entirety.

Beyond all of these things, we have both contributed to the recent success of our club being promoted to a new category and thus more financially supported by Columbia. What this means is that you can expect to see more events that are tailored to your own interests, study breaks sponsored by us, and possibly medical school trips for yourselves, among other things. Obtaining this promotion was not easy, and is it because of your support and dedication that we have obtained this: Congratulations!

This is just the beginning. We recognize the diversity of our clubs members so the entire E-Board plans to ensure that your needs are fulfilled; whether that is with updates on medical advancements, more study breaks to share your interests with others, or more doctor discussions. No organization can be successful without support from its members, and we especially look forward and are committed to working with the entire general body as co-presidents to make Charles Drew the best it can possibly be.

From both of us, have an enjoyable summer and see all of you in the fall!

Sincerely,  
Princess Francois, CC'11  
Brian Lewis, CC'11  
*New Presidents of Charles Drew*



Princess Francois



Brian Lewis

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#### Previous Events Include:

- Overcoming the Odds: Getting into Health Professional School
- Healthy Heart Ambassadors: Recognizing Signs of Heart Attack
- Harvard Medical School Visit
- Columbia Community Outreach Event
- Minority Recruitment Day Conference
- Asian-American Pre-Med Session

## Spring 2009 Semester Highlights

During the past semester, the Charles Drew Pre-Med Society has had many exciting and informative events, providing pre-medical students on campus with helpful information about topics such as getting into health professional school and recognizing signs of a heart attack. We have also contributed to the community via Columbia Community Outreach Event. Furthermore, we have continued to advise and guide the high school students in our pipeline program. The following articles are summaries of the wonderful events held this semester.

### Event #1: Overcoming the Odds: Getting into Health Professional School (Thursday, January 29, 2009)

*"We need to listen  
to our life before we  
are able to pursue.  
Just stand still. "*

Nowadays, getting into health professional school is not an easy feat for any college pre-medical student to accomplish. Unfortunately, the American medical school application process has become increasingly competitive. Thousands of talented and motivated young pre-medical students are consistently rejected and thus find themselves at a point of no return. According to Mr. Morrison, drawing in more anxiety and apprehension over the application should not be the focus of an undergraduate. Rather, it is always better to create a healthy, positive and reasonable outlook on the health professional school application and seek as much guidance as possible from medical students, pre-professional advisors, and medical school deans alike. At the "Overcoming the Odds: Getting into Health Professional School" event, Mr. Morrison—a life coach and executive director of "Mentoring in Medicine," bestowed his words of wisdom and shared his inspiration on how he hoped to increase the number of underrepresented health professionals, to spark an interest in the health field in students, and to support students in health professional school. He spoke, he listened, and he inspired. We need to listen to our life before we are able to pursue. Just stand still.

### Event #2: Healthy Heart Ambassadors: Recognizing Signs of Heart Attack (Thursday, February 12, 2008)

The Charles Drew Society welcomed a panel addressing the leading cause of death in the United States but also one of the most preventable: heart disease. The panel included Doctor Icilma Fergus, Assistant Professor of Clinical Medicine and Attending Physician at New York Hospital Medical Center of Queens, and Doctor Lynne Holden, 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 as well as coordinator for the Emergency Department Clinical Exposure and Mentoring Program.

In this informative session, students had learned the essentials about cardiovascular diseases including what it is, what causes it, risk factors, and how to prevent and to treat

it. By the end of this very interactive and engaging workshop, everyone left a more knowledgeable person on the disease and its impact, especially on minorities. The lesson taken from the workshop is: live a healthy life. We also learned that it is important for all of us to be informed citizens on this topic in order to prevent the disease and to raise awareness about heart disease recognition and prevention.



## Event #3: Harvard Medical School Visit (Thursday, February 26-Friday, February 27, 2009)

In February, the Charles Drew Executive Board members went to visit Harvard Medical School as prospective students. We had a chance to stay with first-years, who gave us an in-depth look at life in medical school. The highlight of the trip was a meeting with Dr. Poussaint, professor of Psychiatry and Faculty Associate Dean for Student Affairs at Harvard

Medical School. Dr. Poussaint gave us an overview and helpful hints about the medical school application process and shared his years of experience at Harvard. The Office of Recruitment and Multicultural Affairs was established by Dr. Poussaint in the late 1960s to promote minority representation at the medical school and has since continued to serve the

needs of minority applicants and enrolled students. The trip culminated with a tour of Harvard's beautiful campus and its renowned hospitals.

For more information on Harvard Medical School, visit their website:

<http://hms.harvard.edu/>.



Harvard offers many summer opportunities for undergraduates who are under-represented minorities in the sciences. Some include:

- 1) **Summer Honors Undergraduate Research Program:** 10-week summer research program for underrepresented minority undergrads who are considering careers in biological or biomedical research  
Website: [www.hms.harvard.edu/dms/diversity/shurpintro.html#overview](http://www.hms.harvard.edu/dms/diversity/shurpintro.html#overview)
- 2) **FAS Center for Systems Biology Undergraduate Research Internships:** 10-week internships providing opportunity to learn techniques in systems biology, genomics, or bioinformatics; attend weekly group meetings and faculty lectures and go on field trips  
Website: <http://sysbio.harvard.edu/csb/jobs/undergraduate.html>
- 3) **Summer Research Trainee Program at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH):** provide 8-week overview of opportunities available in biomedical research and clinical medicine; take on original research projects and prepare presentation of work under mentorship of MGH investigator  
Website: [www.massgeneral.org/mao/summer.html](http://www.massgeneral.org/mao/summer.html)



### Quick Facts about Harvard Medical School:

- 22% of students come from minority groups underrepresented in medicine
- 33% of students come from other minority groups
- Applicants for M.D. program per year: 5,138; Number of positions in first-year class: 165
- Applicants for M.D.-Ph.D. program per year: ~500; Number of positions in first-year class: ~12
- 66% of students entering in 2008 majored in the sciences



## Event #4: Columbia Community Outreach Event (Saturday, March 28, 2009)

Several members of Charles Drew came out on Saturday, March 28, for Columbia's Community Outreach (CCO) event. This student organized, student run undergraduate service event was created in 1997 in order to bring students, faculty, staff, alumni and their families together on a day dedicated to volunteering. The day began at 9 a.m. with volunteers checking in, getting a t-shirt, and eating free breakfast provided by CCO. This was followed by an early Opening Ceremony on Low Steps with some keynote speakers from the Columbia community. The crowd broke off into their groups and each was assigned a community service project for the day. The projects varied from distributing food to the elderly to planting trees in local parks. Some of the other projects included:

- Working with youth in homeless shelters and educational support programs
- Visiting, and making cards and decorations for nursing home residents
- Improving facilities for youth's educational, cultural and athletics programs
- Planting flowers in parks
- Painting murals in schools
- Packing and distributing goods in food banks

The Charles Drew group shipped out for their community project early and headed downtown during the Opening Ceremony. After getting across town we were all greeted by the Meals on Wheels director at a local Upper East Side church. We broke into groups of three and headed on to our assignment delivering hot

and cold meals to the elderly in the neighborhood. All of the recipients were very happy to see their food delivered by us and gladly took their meals for the day. Even just by looking at the level of mobility for many of the recipients it is clear that the Meals on Wheels is an integral part in the community. Since it only takes maybe three hours to go there, help out, and come back it has become a great opportunity for Columbia students to volunteer. When we returned to campus, there was a party with pizza, drinks, and ice cream for all the volunteers who participated. We hope the Charles Drew presence at CCO more than quadruples for semesters to come! It is a great time to explore new avenues of volunteer jobs. See you next year.

For more information, check out the website: <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/outreach/>  
or e-mail at [outreach@columbia.edu](mailto:outreach@columbia.edu)



## Event #5: Columbia's College of Physicians and Surgeons' Minority Recruitment Day Conference (Saturday, April 25, 2009)

As many of you may or may not know, the Office of Diversity of the College of Physicians and Surgeon of Columbia University holds an annual Minority Recruitment Day Conference every spring. This year, it was held on Saturday, April 25 at Columbia P&S Alumni Auditorium. The goal of the conference is to "provide underrepresented and disadvantaged pre-medical \*high school, undergraduate, and postgraduate students with pertinent information about medical school." Many pre-medical and post-graduate students attended as well as some high school students. The high school population at the conference mainly consisted of inner-city high school students in the SPREP programs, who are also our mentees in the Pipeline program.

After a delicious continental breakfast was served, a few

speakers ran through the medical school requirements as well as financial aid process. After the main event the attendees broke off into smaller workshops based on interest that included, "Life as a Pre-Med", "Life as Medical Student", research opportunities and other related topics. The conference provided excellent opportunities for networking with physicians, medical students, and administrative officials at Columbia P&S.

After being in SPREP for her junior and senior years of high school, Johanna Miele, our current co-chairperson of Charles Drew Pipeline Program, was asked to be a panelist for the "Life as a Pre-Med" workshop. Along with three medical students at P&S and one of the pre-med advisors from Columbia, they were asked some very interesting questions. The high school students were very concerned with the medical

school application process to the point where they were almost by-passing their interest in their undergraduate education. As soon as the floor was opened to questions, the focused became on the medical school curriculum and interviews. This revealed that there was a small group of students who were very serious about their choice to join the health care community. Therefore, it is through our pipeline program that the Charles Drew Pre-Med Society can facilitate, support, and help high school students follow the path to medicine. We look forward to seeing all of you at next year's MRDC and hope you can take advantage of this opportunity.

For more information please visit the website:

<http://www.odaps.cumc.columbia.edu/programs/mrdc.html>



## Event #6: Asian American Pre-Med Information Session (Wednesday, April 29, 2009)

On April 29th, the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons Chapter of the Asian Pacific American Medical Student Association (APAMSA) presented an information session for premedical students at Columbia University. The information session was a part of Asian Pacific American Awareness Month (APAAM)

and co-sponsored by the Charles Drew Pre-Medical Society. Members of APAMSA, who are medical students at Columbia P&S, shared their experiences of applying to and attending medical school. These medical students shared valuable wisdom about the medical school admissions process and experience from an Asian

American perspective. In addition to engaging in a conversation with premedical students, members of APAMSA will serve as mentors for premedical students in order to provide further advice and help these students achieve their goals of becoming medical students themselves.



## How the E-board is Spending its Summer

The summer is a wonderful time to gain some meaningful experience, whether it is volunteering in a hospital to get some clinical exposure, participating in a summer pre-medical preparatory program or taking part in exciting research. Check out the amazing things that members of our e-board are doing this summer. It will give you some great ideas of things to do next summer!

### **Princess Francois, CC'11, Historian/Publicity Manager/Newsletter Editor**



I will be attending the Summer Premedical Academic Enrichment Program at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine from May 31 to July 18. In this seven week program, I will be studying five diseases that have a significant impact in minority communities: AIDS, hypertension, smoking, sickle cell anemia and diabetes. This will be done through talks, small-group discussions, and labs such as blood glucose measurement, urinalysis, heart dissection, identification and growth of bacteria, and PPD test. In addition, we will be learning about these diseases through clinical lectures by physicians who will provide information on diagnosis and treatment. In clinical pathology lab, we will read the clinical summary of a case with a disease we are covering and we will learn the medical vocabulary involved. Then we will see the internal organs of the patient we had talked about and will look at normal organs and pathological ones.

Furthermore, we will engage in various activities such as shadowing physicians, touring the morgue, viewing surgery in the operating room and participating in a community health activity. Moreover, we will attend learning skills seminars on note-taking, test-taking, problem solving and memorization techniques as well as weekly "brown bag lunch" in which minority physicians will give informal presentations on their backgrounds, preparation, interests and goals. The program concludes with all the participants giving a presentation on an independent project. When I return, I will continue working as a bibliographic assistant at Butler Reserves.

Benefits: free transportation, housing, & meal costs; \$1000 stipend

Website: [http://www.medschool.pitt.edu/future/future\\_03\\_spaep.asp](http://www.medschool.pitt.edu/future/future_03_spaep.asp)

Contact: 412-648-8987 or [diversityaffairs@medschool.pitt.edu](mailto:diversityaffairs@medschool.pitt.edu)

### **Komal Kothari, CC'12, Public Relations Chairperson**



This summer, I will be a participant of the 2009 Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship Program (SURF) of Columbia University from May 26<sup>th</sup> through July 31, 2009. I will be working at Columbia University Medical Center in the Department of the Physiology and Cellular Biophysics, studying mechanisms to reduce tumor growth in different types of skin cancer. SURF is a program that allows undergraduate students to do hands-on biology related laboratory research in areas such as biochemistry and molecular physics, pathology, psychology, pharmacology and physiology. We work either on the Morningside Heights Campus or at Columbia's Health Sciences Center. In the program, I will be attending weekly discussion groups to develop the scientific communication skills, attend lectures on lab safety and areas of biological research as well a work 40 hours/week on independent research projects alongside a research scientist. In the end, we will submit a research paper and present on our research in a symposium during the Spring semester.

Benefits: \$4000 stipend

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

## How the E-board is Spending its Summer

### **Brian Lewis, CC'11, Treasurer**



From May 26 to August 1<sup>st</sup> of this summer, I will be working at the Duke Institute for Genome Science and Policy. The lab that I have joined is mainly focused on a better understanding mammalian gene expression regulation at the genome scale. In particular, I will use large-scale sequencing technologies to investigate functional features that control the transcription, splicing of cellular transcriptome. I will mainly be working together with Han Wu, a graduate student who recently found a novel function of splicing factor SF2/ASF in miRNA biogenesis. We will develop either CLIP-Seq or in vitro processing assay to further characterize the underlying molecular mechanism.

This entire experience is only possible because of the Duke SROP program. The *Duke Summer Research Opportunity Program (SROP)* is a ten-week training program designed to give motivated undergraduate students hands-on experience in graduate-level biomedical research. The Program is designed for students who are seriously considering joining a Ph.D. Graduate Program following the completion of their undergraduate degree. Participants learn lab research techniques, attend lab meetings, and meet members of other labs as well as attend weekly research seminars and a workshop on applying to graduate school. In the end, participants will present on their research in a symposium.

Benefits: \$5000 stipend used to cover housing cost of \$1,250 and food costs; also \$500 stipend to use just for flight transportation or, if the student is driving a car, the cost of gas.

Website: <http://www.duke.edu/web/srop/>

### **Patricia Rojas, CC'11, Vice President**



For the summer 2009, I plan to go to *SEE-U Brazil program through the Center of Environmental Research Center (CERC)*. In Brazil, I will be taking a 6 pt environmental class studying the biodiversity, conservation and human impact on the Amazon Forest. To further my understanding, I will conduct my own research project during my 5 week stay. The SEE-U course in Brazil is hosted by the Instituto de Pesquisas Ecológicas (IPE) at its Center for Conservation Biology. It gives students the opportunity to take an introductory ecology and conservation biology lecture, field, and lab course in Brazil, the Dominican Republic or the Black Rock Forest of New York. During the course, we will become familiar with an ecosystem, ecological theory, conservation practice, and a variety of field and analytical tools such as the scientific method, statistical tools, and animal and plant identification by doing field work and lab/class work. During the five weeks, each of us will be working on an individual project in which we will come up with a question and hypothesis, gather some field data, statistically test and interpret that data, and then present our results in a conference at the end of the course.

Benefits: Upon completion of the SEE-U Abroad program, you receive 6 Columbia University credits, which fulfill two core-curriculum science requirements

Website: [http://www.cerc.columbia.edu/education\\_seeu.html](http://www.cerc.columbia.edu/education_seeu.html)

Contact: Desmond Beirne at [djb2104@columbia.edu](mailto:djb2104@columbia.edu) or 212-854-0149

## How the E-board is Spending its Summer

### Johanna Miele, CC'12, High School Pipeline Program Co-Chairperson



I will be volunteering as a patient escort in Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center on 68<sup>th</sup> street and 1<sup>st</sup> avenue. I will also be rejoining a summer program for asthmatic inner city children ages 7-11 called The Superkids Summer Experience, as a counselor. This program runs in partnership with the American Lung Association, NYC Health and Hospitals Corporation, the NYC Parks Department and local hospitals to provide asthmatic children with education on managing their asthma, the effects of smoking, and the importance of proper nutrition as well as teach them manageable physical activities such as swimming.

Website:

[http://www.alany.org/site/c.kmKWJbNTJtF/b.4339779/k.B3E8/SuperKids\\_Summer\\_Experience.htm](http://www.alany.org/site/c.kmKWJbNTJtF/b.4339779/k.B3E8/SuperKids_Summer_Experience.htm)

Contact: Liz D'Imperio at 212-889-3370 x 32.

From June to August I will also begin taking classes to become an EMS. Through CAVA's sponsorship the \$1000 course fee is taken care of. By the end of the summer I should be a certified EMS and will begin my probationary period in CAVA in the fall semester. CAVA is a program that works closely with Primary Care Medical Services and is part of Health Services at Columbia and the Department of Public Safety. CAVA volunteers are required to take one 12-hour weekday shift every week and one 12-hour weekend shift every month. We must also attend weekly meetings and various training sessions that are held during the week.

Benefits: \$1000 course fee fully covered

Website: <http://www.health.columbia.edu/docs/services/pcms/cava.html>

Contact: (212) 851-1394 or [cava@columbia.edu](mailto:cava@columbia.edu)

### Lacey Gleason, CC'12, Secretary



I will be traveling to Uganda with Columbia's Engineers Without Borders Uganda Group. My team is working with the Ugandan NGO, Pilgrim, on a sustainable engineering project in the rural district of Soroti. While we are in Uganda, our team will be surveying land, conducting water tests, and shadowing health workers to assess needs and work with the community to develop health and water initiatives for next year. The Columbia University chapter of Engineers Without Borders aims to address the problems facing people both locally and abroad by using original, sustainable, engineering solutions. Currently, they are working on programs in Ghana, India, and Uganda. After I come home from Uganda, I will be working as a research assistant at a lab in Columbia's Department of Biological Sciences.

Website: <http://www.cuewb.org/uganda/p3#more-226>

<http://www.cuewb.org/about/uganda>

Contact: Janelle Heslop, Program Manager, [jnh2111@columbia.edu](mailto:jnh2111@columbia.edu)

## How the E-board is Spending its Summer

### Herbert "Chip" Thornhill, CC'12, Lead Web Developer



This summer, I will be working as an intern for the Commodities Futures Trading Commission. The CFTC is an independent government agency that prohibits fraudulent conduct in the trading of futures contracts. I hope to combine my interests in business and technology at the internship while learning about a brand new field of work.

### Brittany Martin, CC'11, High School Pipeline Program Co-Chairperson



This summer, I will do some preparation for the MCAT. I will also be volunteering at a local hospital back home in Detroit, Michigan in order to expose myself various health practices, to meet new physicians, and to give back to my community.

## 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 volunteered at CCO, 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. Next year, we promise to hold new, informative, exciting events. Have a wonderful summer and see you all in the fall!

## Check Out Our New Website:

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

## Join our Facebook Group!

Charles Drew Pre-Medical Society  
Contact Information:

E-mail Address:  
cucharlesdrew@gmail.com

Blog address:  
<http://cucharlesdrew.blogspot.com>

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

Just in case you did not know, we have a Facebook group. It will be updated regularly with information about our upcoming events. It will also have information of importance to you such as volunteer opportunities and information about applying to medical school. 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 established in the early nineties by Columbia University undergraduates. They firmly believed that they had the duty to serve their fellow peers in order to establish a strong network off minority and non-minority pre-medical student population on Columbia's campus. Ever since then, as an executive board, we have taken greater lengths to provide the similar services we give our Columbia students beyond the gates of 116<sup>th</sup> street through community service, undergraduate/medical school student mentoring, and nor our High School pipeline program. 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:** Charles Drew Pre-Med Society is an organization that works to increase the number of minorities and under-represented persons in the medical field, while offering valuable guidance and resources to pre-med students throughout campus. We continuously encourage students to delve into the sciences not because engineers, physicians, research scientists and surgeons are members of honorable fields, but because these are the persons who aid mankind in some of the greatest ways possible.

## E-board Members

Victor Thompson CC'10, *Co-President*

Patricia Rojas CC'11, *Vice President*

Princess Francois CC'11, *Historian/Publicity Chairperson/Newsletter Editor*

Brian Lewis CC'11, *Treasurer*

Brittany Martin CC'11, *High School Pipeline Program Co-Chairperson*

Johanna Miele CC'12, *High School Pipeline Program Co-Chairperson*

Lacey Gleason CC'12, *Secretary*

Komal Kothari CC'12, *Public Relations Chairperson*

