

ANNUAL REPORT 2008

Hispanic Center
OF EXCELLENCE IN MEDICINE 



UIC COLLEGE OF
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT CHICAGO MEDICINE

Hispanic Center OF EXCELLENCE IN MEDICINE



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1st Year Medical Students



Jimenez Alvarez M2 participating in the College of Medicine Research Poster Forum

The Hispanic Center of Excellence continues to thrive in its mission amidst a difficult economy



Joseph A. Flaherty, M.D.
Dean, College of Medicine

This year has been extremely challenging yet one offering many opportunities for everyone. The current recession has forced many layoffs throughout the country, especially at the state level. In spite of the current financial setbacks of the country, I am pleased to announce that the Hispanic Center of Excellence has continued to thrive and excel in its mission. Through the efforts of Dr. Girotti and his staff, the Latino Legislative Caucus has played a crucial role in securing funding for the Hispanic Center of Excellence. We are fortunate and grateful for the financial support that the State legislators have given us. For the past seventeen years, the Hispanic Center of Excellence had been funded through a grant by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Unfortunately, although the Center had continually met the needed criteria to renew their grant, our funding was cut off due to the government's reallocation of finances toward the war effort.

The quality work of the Hispanic Center of Excellence has been very consistent and thorough as is evidenced by our ever-increasing numbers of Latinos entering into our medical school. The mission of

the Hispanic Center of Excellence consists of not only guiding Latino students in to medical school but also to provide them with means to help them maximize their potential. Through the efforts of the Hispanic Center of Excellence, UIC has maintained a steady retention of its Latino medical students. Not surprisingly, for the third straight year, UIC has been named by Hispanic Business Magazine to be one of the top 10 schools in the country for Latino students. And we want to do more: we want to recruit more outstanding Hispanic faculty to our medical school. It therefore gives me great satisfaction and assurance in knowing that an integral institution such as the Hispanic Center of Excellence will be able to continue its work thanks in large part to the funding of the Latino Caucus. As the Hispanic Center of Excellence now enters its eighteenth year serving the Latino community, I look forward to continually work with its staff and affiliates.



Leslie J. Sandlow, MD
Senior Associate Dean,
Educational Affairs

Global Medicine: A much-needed issue to address

Global medicine is slowly becoming a national interest, as our country is becoming more diverse. The need to create a partnership with Latin American countries is especially crucial in a time when various epidemics and other hardships are taking place. This past May, UIC undertook the first steps to helping cement a partnership with the Universidad Cuauhtémoc Aguascalientes in Mexico. Although the meeting was relatively low key, it was nonetheless a historic and important event. With the first steps undertaken to bridge the gap between the qualities of healthcare of two countries, it is the hope of University that this partnership help set a trend and awareness for all universities throughout the United States of the need to expand our borders to other countries in the research and practice of medicine.

The Hispanic Center of Excellence has played a crucial role in helping make the Latin American affiliation possible. The diligent focus and constant communication that the Center placed on first establishing a relationship with our Latin American colleagues serves as an excellent model for our departments to follow for establishing future partnerships with other countries.

It is unfortunate that current events of disease outbreaks throughout the world must continue to serve as a reminder on why the need to expand our borders to many countries in need. This is another reason why it is especially significant and crucial to share our technologies and our medicines with other countries. We after all cannot truly minimize health disparities in our country, if we do not attempt to cause the ripple, which will minimize health disparities in other countries in greater need.



Jorge A. Girotti, PhD
Associate Dean of the
College of Medicine
Dean of Admissions
Director of Hispanic Center
of Excellence

We are very pleased to present the highlights and accomplishments for 2008. Thanks to various initiatives and the diligent work of our staff, the UIC College of Medicine continues to hold a national leadership role in the education of Latino physicians. For example, in spring 2008, we graduated 40 Latino M.D.s. or about 13% of all our graduates. The other six medical schools in Illinois –combined—graduated 35 Latino M.D.s. This makes UIC a top producer of much-needed Hispanic physicians to address the medical needs of communities across the state and the nation. Over half of these graduates (22) selected residency training programs in Illinois; with 67% choosing primary care fields. Many of the 2008 Latino graduates took part in HCOE-sponsored activities before and during their medical studies: nine had participated in enrichment activities as college students, and 22 were fellows in our Summer Research program.

The class that entered in fall 2008 included 51 Latino students, or nearly 17% of the total. Just as a comparison, the other six medical schools in Illinois (combined) also enrolled 51 Latinos in 2007. It is

significant that HCOE programs and activities had already attracted 50% of the Latino entering students before they even applied to UIC.

There is no question that much more work remains to be done. We believe that just increasing the number of Latinos in medicine may not be enough to take care of the long-term needs of the Hispanic community in Chicago and across the nation. It will also take additional effort from us so that those individuals that pursue medicine fully understand the social, cultural and economic needs of their future patients. To that end, our programs focus on leadership, research experiences and cultural competence as key elements in the development of truly competitive applicants. We welcome partnerships with individuals and organizations that share our interest in making sure that Latinos have access to quality medical care.

We aim to improve the medical care of Latinos by providing programs that strengthen the pipeline of medical school applicants; enrich the education of Latino medical students, with an emphasis on producing culturally-competent physicians; and building global partnerships with others that share the same vision.

The center supports the following goals:

- » Provide faculty development to train, recruit and retain Latino faculty, including payment of stipends and fellowships.
- » Focus on Latino health issues in information resources, clinical education, and curricula.
- » Facilitate faculty and student research in Latino health.
- » Provide community-based clinical training in which students care for significant numbers of Latino patients.
- » Enhance the overall experience of Latino medical students.
- » Develop a competitive applicant pool (in conjunction with several partner organizations).
- » Promote awareness and raise funds for scholarship support.
- » Develop international partnerships with medical schools in Latin America.
- » Collaborate with College of Medicine departments in providing Continued Medical Education (CMEs) for Latino physicians in the Chicago area.

The program objectives are to:

- » Increase the number of tenured Latino faculty at UIC, and raise the number of Latino faculty on the tenure track.
- » Introduce and expose students to Latino medical health issues and needs and improve resources for education.
- » Expose Latino students to the ambulatory care of Latino patients during the course of an academic year by increasing the percent of Latino preceptors in the Longitudinal Primary Care (LPC) component of Essentials of Clinical Medicine (ECM courses) and adding one elective clinical rotation that focuses on the care of Latino patients in community-based settings.
- » Raise the number of Latino student research opportunities on Latino health-related issues.
- » Enhance Latino student performance in medical education by increasing the number of Latino students passing the USMLE-1, and increasing the number who graduate on time.
- » Increase the pool of eligible Illinois Latino applicants to the UIC College of Medicine.

The Hispanic Center of Excellence's commitment to the Latino community can best be measured through the various programs it offers. This past year the programs have continued to expand and further reach out to new Latino students. The successes of our programs have generated enough interest amongst students and parents to prompt us to begin a program, which will reach out to students entering high school. The new program, Medicina Scholars will not only expose students about the medical field at an earlier age but it will also serve as feeder to the Medicina Scholars program.

The HCOE Network has continued to expand even as the Hispanic Center of Excellence enters its eighteenth year in existence. Currently there are over 2035 members. In this past year, there were over 300 participants in attendance over the course of three Grand Rounds, which focused on Admissions 101, Family Medicine, and Robotics Surgery. In addition to the Grand Rounds seminars, numerous HCOE Network members have continued to make use of the pre-med advising provided by the HCOE staff. Some major components of the pre-med advising have consisted of the following: giving mock interviews, proofreading personal statements, mentor pairing, and informing individuals about crucial upcoming deadlines and events.

The Medicina Scholars program, which continues to introduce applicants to a medical career through its three-year curriculum, has now entered its fifth season. Two cohort groups have now graduated from the program and have begun the process of applying to medical school. Consequently, the Hispanic Center of Excellence has begun to evaluate its program by tracking the progress of its Medicina Scholar alumni.

The evaluation of the Medicina Scholars program is being performed in order to help maximize the benefits of the Center and see if the needs of the students are being met. Currently, three Medicina Scholars have already matriculated into Medical School, while another seven are in the processing of applying.

The Medicina Scholars program currently has three cohorts, which consists of 94 students. This year the Medicina Scholars program continued to feature some wonderful physicians who taught classes on Professionalism, Cultural Competence, History of Medicine, and Public Health Policy. The student input of the classes has been crucial. Students have not only given positive evaluations of the classes, but they have also taken the initiative in helping create a volunteer committee, which will help steer students to complete their volunteer hours.

The Medicina Scholars program has been made possible through the leadership of its program coordinator Carlos Martinez.

Special thanks to:

Pilar Carmona, MBA
Dr. Marina Claudio
Dr. Adrian Cordovi
Dr. Evelyn Figueroa
Dr. Carlos Galvani
Dr. Jorge Girotti
Dr. Claudia Lora
Dr. Mercedes Martinez

Juan Pablo Mosqueda
Dr. Victor Muñoz
Dr. Sonia Oyola
Dr. Jorge Sfeir
Dr. Ricardo Senno
Raul Vasquez
Dr. Alicia Vazquez
Dr. Vanessa Villacorta

Special thanks to everyone who has continued to support HCOE.

The Leadership Development Conference traditionally has signified the end of the first year of the Medicina Scholars. However, as the program has expanded and evolved, the Leadership Development Conference now includes the graduation ceremony of the third year Medicina Scholars. The graduation ceremony this past year featured State Representative Edward Acevedo as a keynote speaker. The graduation ceremony's main event was the presentation of awards to the Medicina Scholars as they announced their future intended medical specialty, as their parents were present. The Leadership Conference also featured as the keynote speaker Dr. Jorge Arzola, a flight surgeon that gave a presentation of his experiences that covered his path through medical school and ultimately led to his specialty.

The Summer Research this year also includes some new additions to its program. This year Dr. Amelia Bartholomew was featured as a facilitator for student presentations, which were every Wednesday. This past summer 22 students participated in our Research program. The preceptors involved in the Summer Research were not strictly limited to the University of Illinois Chicago. There were

preceptors from the University of Washington, the University of California at Berkeley, Rosalind Franklin University, and Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. One medical student even did her research in Lima, Peru.

In 2008, over 25 second year Latino medical students participated in using the USMLE Diagnostic and Mock exams, which were purchased by the Hispanic Center of Excellence in collaboration with the University of Kansas City Missouri. In the past five years that the Hispanic Center of Excellence has offered the USMLE test, incredibly enough every medical student that has utilized the exams has passed Step 1 on their first try.

The Hispanic Center of Excellence in addition to managing its regular programs worked this past year with helping organize events for physicians as well as medical students. Among the various events for physicians that HCOE has helped organize or work in collaboration with are the Annual Surgery Symposium, the Illinois Hispanic Physician Association (IHPA), the National Hispanic Medical Association (NHMA), and the Illinois Latino Caucus. HCOE has also helped

coordinate the following events for medical students: the First Year Latino Medical Student Orientation, Summer Research Orientation, Mid-Summer Research Lunch Assessment, a Summer Medical Student Research Recognition Breakfast for preceptors and students, World Kidney Day, for the Latino Community and Medicina Scholars volunteers, Student Affairs Campus Organization Fair, the Annual HCOE reception, and exhibiting and recruitment at the National Hispanic Medical Association (NHMA) along with our Summer Research Fellows and>NNLAMS LaRama (Medical Student Organization) Executive Board.

Accomplishments

- » In 2008, UIC COM had the largest Latino incoming class in the country with 51 of 308 medical students enrolled. HCOE out numbered Texas, California, New York and Florida.
- » In 2008, UIC COM had 51 Latino incoming students. The national average is 11.
- » 39 Latinos of a total of 301 graduates received their Medical Doctor degrees from UIC in 2008 (about 13% of all degrees granted).
- » 174 Latino medical students were enrolled at the UIC College of Medicine for the 2007-2008 academic year. This represents 12% of the total student body.
- » The number of Hispanic medical students involved in research has over quadrupled since 1998, from 5 to 22 medical students participated in the HCOE Summer Medical Student Research Fellowship.
- » The AAMC reported that in Illinois, three out of every five Latinos who earn an MD degree graduate from UIC. There are seven medical schools in the state.
- » “Hispanic Business Magazine” (September 2008 issue), ranked the UIC College of Medicine one of the top 10 Medical Schools for Hispanics.
- » From 1973-2008 we have graduated 943 Latino physicians.
- » The HCOE Medicina Scholars program had 94 premedical students enrolled throughout the year, each student making a three-year commitment to complete the program.
- » The HCOE Network has had a total of 2035 members since 1995. At least 110 students attend each Grand Rounds presentation.
- » In spite of ongoing tuition increases in the 2007-2008 academic year, UIC remained one of the most affordable medical colleges in Illinois, with annual tuition and fees of about \$29,564 for in-state residents.

Faculty Fellow

- Support is based on a minimum of \$20,000 for one faculty fellow per year to protect their time for professional development, instructional skills, post-graduate training, and research development.
- This is a two year program at a minimum cost of \$40,000 per Fellow.



Dr. Gaston Baslet

Dr. Gaston Baslet earned his medical degree in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He completed his Residency Training in Psychiatry at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Upon completing his training, Dr. Baslet has worked in the inner city community, by diagnosing and serving people with severe mental illness in order to give them the best quality care possible.

Dr. Baslet is a Board Certified Psychiatrist and Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Dr Baslet works in the divisions of Neurobehavior and Psychosis; both programs are part of the Center for Cognitive Medicine within the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Through the Neuropsychiatry Service, Dr Baslet sees adults with neurological disorders

who present with behavioral, cognitive, emotional or other psychiatric manifestations (ie: cerebrovascular accidents, traumatic brain injury, epilepsy, dementias, developmental disabilities – mental retardation, autism, etc.).

As part of the Psychosis Service, Dr Baslet sees adults who present with psychotic symptoms, regardless of the specific diagnosis (schizophrenia-spectrum disorders, bipolar disorder, psychotic depression, etc). Dr Baslet is also involved in the clinical care of research participants of the First Episode Psychosis Program, which is under the direction of Dr Sweeney.

We strive to keep stipends for HCOE research fellows competitive. Each fellow receives a \$3500 stipend for the 10-week program.



Mario Lopez
Class of 2012

Mario Lopez born in Guanajuato, Mexico and subsequently at the age of six moved to Chicago where he was raised. Mario worked his way through college and was eventually accepted into medical school. At medical school Mario narrowed his professional interests to Cardiology, Emergency Medicine, and Surgery. Most recently, this past summer Mario worked with Dr. Sloan, UIC-ER Dept. Director on a clinical research project aimed at improving the quality of pain management in the Emergency Department.

The Summer Research Program allowed Mario to gain clinical research skills and the opportunity to work with a physician-mentor in his field of interest. The experience was definitely challenging; there was much reading and self-learning. Mario learned to use statistical software to obtain information, was trained to work methodically, and at the end of the project was able to produce enough information to potentially

present multiple manuscripts for future publication. Mario is still in contact with his mentor and hopes that their research becomes published.

Mario's positive experiences with the Summer Research Program has led him to recommend it to other M1 students looking to make the best of their summer experience. The SRP offers a competitive salary, an opportunity to become involved with research, and become exposed to their fields of interests. The SRP also offered him an opportunity to attend the 2009 Annual NHMA Conference in Brooklyn, NY.



Mayra Cruz-Ithier
Class of 2012

Born and raised in Puerto Rico, Mayra Cruz-Ithier is the oldest of four siblings. Her parents, Daniel Cruz and Nereida Ithier, owners of a restaurant in the island, have taught her that hard work and perseverance are the road to accomplish any dream. Working in the restaurant she did not only learn how to run a small business but the passion to serve others.

Mayra attended the University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez, where she graduated in 2003 Magna Cum Laude with a bachelor degree in biology. During college, she participated in the Minority Medical Education Program at Yale School of Medicine; experience that reaffirmed her goal of becoming a physician and prompted her desire to serve the Spanish speaking Latino population in the United States. After graduation, she moved to Bethesda, Maryland to work as a post baccalaureate research fellow at the National Institutes of Health- National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders. There she worked in the molecular biology branch, researching G-protein-coupled receptors involved in taste. During her stay in Maryland, Mayra not only conducted research but also served as a translator for local health fairs through “La Clinica del Pueblo” and volunteered as an English as a Second Language teacher for “Beyond these Walls”- a program primarily focused on teaching conversational English to Central American immigrants.

During her first year at UIC, Mayra became involved with several medical student organizations such as SNMA and NNLAMS-LaRaMA and was the historian for the Class of 2011. As an active member of these organizations, she participated in health fairs

and outreach programs. Mayra was also a regular volunteer and translator for the Student Run Free Clinic (SRFC). After ending her first year in medical school, Mayra traveled to Guatemala for two weeks to volunteer for Mayan Aid- a non-profit organization that provides free health care to the Mayan community of Santa Cruz de la Laguna.

In her first year of medical school, Mayra was selected to participate in the Hispanic Center of Excellence Research Fellowship. During that summer, she worked with Dr. Claudia Hernandez in the dermatology clinic. Her research project was to explore the associations between preferred learning methods and educational background in Spanish-speaking Hispanics individuals by doing surveys. She also had the opportunity to shadow Dr. Hernandez in the clinic and attend dermatology lectures and conferences. This was a great learning experience since Mayra’s professional interests include how to improve health care delivery to the Latino community.

As a second year medical student, Mayra has continued her involvement with SRFC, SNMA and LaRaMA, as one of the co-presidents for the latter. As one of the leaders of this student organization for the academic year 2008-09, she has not only participated in health fairs and outreach programs but has organized fundraising activities to support SRFC and the Dr. Jose Choca Scholarship Fund. Mayra will continue her involvement in LaRaMA as the M3 representative and at the regional level as the vice president of community affairs for NNLAMS-Midwest region.

Medicina Scholars introduces undergraduate and high school students to the field of medicine. Each student makes a three-year commitment to advance in the program. Medicina Scholars provides the foundation to enhance their application to medical school. This year we had 90 Medicina Scholars and will graduate our first cohort group of 30!

- **Each student who completes the yearlong program receives a \$720 stipend.**
- **Three year support for a student totals \$2,160.**
- **\$64,800 to support 30 Medicina Scholars for 3 years**



Maria Vargas

Maria was born about two hours away from Mexico City in a small rural town where many of its occupants did not have a home telephone or electricity. Maria feels that it was through father's perseverance, that her family was able to move to Chicago, which provided her with the opportunity to receive a better education. Maria is now currently in the process of completing her undergraduate education so that she then proceed to apply to medical school. She will be graduating from the University of Illinois at Chicago with a dual-degree in Biology and Applied Psychology.

Maria feels that she owes part of her success to the wonderful mentorship that she has received through the Medicina Scholars Program, which has helped develop into a competitive medical school applicant. For the past three years, the Medicina Scholars Program has presented her with examples of successful Latino physicians. In the past three years, she has worked as a research assistant in Dr. Bette Bottoms' Psychology and Law laboratory at UIC. Working in Dr. Bottoms' lab for such an extended period has allowed her to gain authorship

on a prestigious peer reviewed journal, conduct independent research by way of UIC's Summer Research Opportunities Program, and present her research at conference presentations. Thanks to a travel award, HCOE granted her, she has been able to present her research at American Psychology-Law Society conference in Texas.

Maria has also volunteered at the Albany Park Community Center as a teacher assistant. Furthermore, for the past two years, Maria has volunteered at the Children's Memorial Hospital. Working with children in the Hematology and Oncology department has confirmed my dream of becoming a physician. As a volunteer, she is able to work one-on-one with children who have cancer providing positive interaction through age appropriate games. Maria has found it especially rewarding to provide comfort to children in their native language since she is only one of the few volunteers who can speak Spanish.

Medicina Scholars



Anastasia Munoz

Anastasia Munoz is a third year undergraduate student at Loyola University Chicago. She is studying Spanish Literature and Biological Sciences. Anastasia joined the Medicina Scholars program in the Fall of 2005 and graduated in the Spring of 2008. As an alumna, she now serves on the Medicina Scholars Volunteer Committee as an ambassador and is happy to continue working closely with fellow students. She is an active volunteer at the Loyola Community Learning Center where she tutors ESL sessions. During the Summer of 2007, she was a summer research intern

at the University of Illinois Medical Center's Islet Isolation Lab. Most recently, during the Summer of 2008, she volunteered at Stroger Hospital of Cook County's Fantus Health Center in the pediatric clinics; this experience made her realize the serious health care issues minorities face. She is currently preparing to take the MCAT and will be applying to medical school this fall.



Egwin Loya

Egwin Loya was born and raised on the south side of Chicago. Egwin is currently finishing his last year of undergraduate school and Medicina scholars. This past school year Egwin was the President of the Health Oriented Latino Association. He also worked part time at the Jesse Brown Veterans Affairs Medical Clinic as a Nuclear Medicine student trainee. During the start of the spring semester of 2009, he became a resident assistant for the Commons South dorm all male freshman floor. Egwin is currently applying to medical school. Egwin's main goal is to be accepted into the University of Illinois Medical School program. Egwin, who is a former marine, has taken a keen interest in learning how Congress will finalize the new G.I. Bill to review and the new opportunities that are entitled to veterans. Egwin feels that medical scholars group has exposed him to many valuable experiences, which consist of team building skills, interpersonal communication and ethics on the medical field. The classes taught on ethics placed real life situations

where moral character and judgment were outside the boundaries of proper rules and guidelines. Egwin feels that "the ability to meet Latino doctors and communicate with them has helped build confidence in the fact that they are people just like me and that they started out just like me. It has made my dream of becoming a physician much more attainable." Egwin looks forward to forward to continuing to be a part of the Hispanic Center of Excellence in Medicine by planning to attend future leadership conferences in order to help mentor younger students.



Luis Rivera

Luis Rivera was born and raised in the South Chicago neighborhood. Luis's parents are Mexican immigrants and so he was the first in his family to attend college. Luis, who is a married with two beautiful children, spent ten years working as an electrician before deciding to return to college to pursue his dream of becoming a physician. The Hispanic Center of Excellence through the Medicina Scholars program is bringing me closer to fulfilling that dream. The courses that are part of the program, which range from Public Health to Cultural Competency, have provided me with the foundation necessary to succeed as a future medical student and physician. The program has also opened up numerous opportunities for Luis. These have included shadowing Latino physicians, as well as opportunities to participate in research. Luis is currently a research assistant in the Department of Medical Education and in the Department of Latin American and Latino Studies.

Being part of the program has kept Luis constantly involved in activities directly related to his goal of becoming a physician. Starting in the fall semester of 2008 Luis participated as a mentor in the LARES

Leaders Mentorship Program. Throughout the program Luis has mentored three UIC Latino freshmen, by helping them make a successful transition to the rigorous academic environment of UIC.

Another valuable component of the Medicina Scholars program has been the health oriented volunteer opportunities. In addition to the numerous health fairs, the program has also introduced him to the Community Health Clinic. This is a clinic which provides services to Chicago's uninsured free of charge. At the clinic Luis has volunteered as a Spanish interpreter as well as triaging patients when they first arrive for their visits. This has been an invaluable experience. Luis feels that direct interaction with patients from predominantly underserved Latino communities has helped reaffirm his decision to pursue a career in medicine.

HCOE Scholarship Recipients



Christian Cain
Class of 2012
M2 Chicago
Recipient, HCOE Scholarship

Christian Cain was born in Rockford, Illinois. He is currently a second year medical student at the medical school at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Before having applied to medical school, he worked at Mount Sinai Hospital in Chicago where he became ever mindful of the importance of utilizing his Spanish in order to help patients in need. During this time, Christian became a recipient of the Dr. Martin Luther King Scholarship. Even so, Christian continued to strive as he helped find and lead his campus chapter of Colleges Against Cancer. Through his leadership he helped raise money for cancer research.

Christian volunteerism and research also includes working with the Chicago Department of Public Health and research with the Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention, where he completed a fellowship in 2005. Shortly before being accepted into medical school, he volunteered with and shadowed doctors at work in the University of Illinois Medical Center's Emergency Department. Most recently, Christian participated this past summer in HCOE Summer Research Fellowship where he worked under Dr. Labotka and Dr. Chishti, researching the effect of inhibition of erythrocyte μ -calpain on the physical properties of sickle cells.

Christian's optimistic outlook on his future profession as a great addition to the Hispanic Center of Excellence, as many find students find it to have a positive affect on their own approach to school.



Christian Nuñez
Class of 2012
M2 Urbana
Recipient, HCOE Scholarship

Christian Nuñez was born in Flushing, New York. Christian's early interest in medicine stemmed from a profound fascination with the human brain. Christian was especially interested misdiagnosed disorders in children, particularly Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorders. In 2005 he graduated from Washington University in St. Louis, with a major in psychology and a minor in philosophy. Christian's experiences include volunteering at Barnes-Jewish Hospital in St. Louis, shadowing doctors in the emergency department through the Emergency Medicine-Scholastic Training and Research (EM-STAR) program.

Christian's long journey toward becoming a doctor is best reflected in his hard work and diligence in medical school. It is for this reason that the Hispanic Center of Excellence has recognized him with the HCOE Scholarship. HCOE hopes to continue to be a source of help for him through his upcoming years in medical school.

HCOE Scholarship Recipients



Joyce Meza
Class of 2012
M2 Chicago
Recipient, HCOE Scholarship

Joyce Meza was born in Barranquilla, Colombia. At the age of five, she moved with her family to the United States. The transition proved to play a crucial role in Joyce's decision to go to medical school. Joyce had after all had the unique perspective of understanding the situation that Latinos face in being clinically underserved and having to understand a new language. It is for this reason that Joyce pushed herself and became heavily involved at La Casa Cultural Latina of the University of Illinois at Urbana. Joyce's participation at La Casa Cultural Latina was instrumental in helping host the Hispanic Center of Excellence staff upon their visiting the Latino pre-med students at Urbana.

Joyce, who is currently a second year medical student, recently participated in the Hispanic Center of Excellence's Summer Medical Research Fellowship. She worked under Dr. Claudia Hernandez. Joyce's research consisted of comparing sunscreen availability in Chicago's Hispanic and Non-Hispanic neighborhoods.

The Hispanic Center of Excellence welcomes Joyce and confidently views her a role model for future Latinos at Urbana who are currently applying to medical school.



Lisette Rodriguez
Class of 2012
M2 Chicago
Recipient, HCOE Scholarship

Lisette Rodriguez was born and raised in Chicago, Illinois in the neighborhood of Brighton Park. During her year of high school, Lisette decided to choose a career in medicine. Lisette then proceeded to attend Dominican University where she majored in Biology and graduated with an overall 4.0 grade point average.

Lisette's volunteer and research experiences have since then been numerous. Lisette has interned at Rush Oak Park Hospital, volunteered at Christ Hospital, and has partaken in the Summer Research Opportunities Program. She had furthermore had her name included in research performed at part of the International Pancreas and Islet Transplant Association and the American Transplant Congress

in 2007. Finally, Lisette was a recent participant in the Hispanic Center of Excellence's Summer Medical Research Fellowship. She performed her research under Dr. Thomas Stamos. Lisette's research was titled: Patient Reported Symptom Activity Scale and Correlation to the Six-Minute Walk Test in an Outpatient Heart Failure Population.

Lisette continues to perform at a high level at the medical school of University of Illinois at Chicago. Last year, Lisette not only scored highly in every exam, but also was among the top of her class.

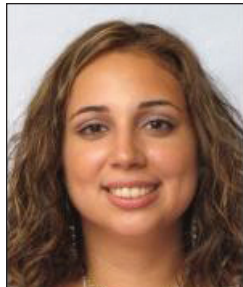
HCOE Scholarship Recipients



Maria Isabel Angulo
Class of 2012
M2 Chicago
Recipient, HCOE Scholarship

Maria Isabel Angulo, who was born in Mexico to a family of nine children, has been very instrumental in helping various students work to achieve their dreams. In addition to having been accepted in the medical school at the University of Illinois at Chicago, she has created an impressive resume of experience and volunteering. She has volunteered at Carle hospital in the pediatrics. She also has numerous research experiences at the University of Michigan, Northwestern University, and University of Chicago. This past summer she participated in the Summer Research Fellowship Program under Dr. Claudia Hernandez studying the effects of sunscreen

on Latinos. Maria Isabel is currently in her second year of medical school and is highly involved with the Hispanic Center of Excellence. Maria Isabel is always willing to help tutor or help any first year student who may be in need of support.



Sully Paz
Class of 2012
M2 Chicago
Recipient, HCOE Scholarship

Sully Paz was born and raised in Chicago in a tight knit Latino community. At an early age, she decided to choose a career in medicine. Sully's first approach towards medicine was to major in chemistry and graduate from the University of Chicago. Prior to being accepted into medical school at the University of Illinois at Chicago, she spent several summers at Thorek Hospital, where she would translate for Spanish-speaking patients. It was this experience, which further strengthened her desire to seek a medical profession, which would help address, the needs of the Latino underserved community. Sully therefore took it upon herself upon being accepted into medical school to utilize the most of what the Hispanic center of Excellence had to offer. Therefore,

Sully participated in the HCOE Summer Medical Research Fellowship where she studied under Dr. Ben Gerber. Sully's research focused on the use of ACEI and ARB Medication by Latinos with Diabetes. Sully is currently in her second year of medical school, preparing for the USMLE in June.

Dean's Scholarship Recipient



Anthony Pantoja
Class of 2012
M1 Chicago
Recipient, Dean's Scholarship

Anthony Pantoja was born in Highland Park, IL. Anthony initially did not choose a career in Medicine until he began to his junior at the University of Illinois at Urbana. Anthony chose to major in Molecular Biology, which he found to be challenging and competitive. During his senior year, he did research under Dr. James Imlay, a professor who teaches Biochemistry to students earning their PhD. This research was intensive and Dr. Imlay's mentorship was invaluable as it left a profound impression on him.

Anthony's volunteer experiences were also crucial in reinforcing his decision to eventually apply to medical school. From 2006 to 2008, he volunteered at Carle Foundation Hospital in the emergency department

where his decision to work with the underserved community was strengthened through his experiences there. During this time, he performed 30 hours of training in order to receive his clinical time at Vista East Medical Center.

Anthony Pantoja is now a first year medical student at UIC. Anthony's outgoing personality is a great fit for the student body at the University. Anthony's passion for learning and adventure is not strictly limited to medicine. He enjoys partaking in many outdoor sports and activities.



Jason Alvarado
Class of 2011

Jason Alvarado graduated from the University of Chicago in 2002 with a Bachelors Degree in the Biological Sciences. It was during that time that the inspiration of his Paramedic father and Registered Nurse mother fully set in and he decided to pursue a career in medicine. To this day, the most significant experience of his life in support of this pursuit was his time spent as a volunteer on several medical missions to Abancay, Peru. It was there that he was able to experience the Doctor-Patient relationship firsthand and began to realize the privilege and honor of being a part of that sacred interaction.

It was not long after graduating, that Jason decided to explore other aspects of the field before entering medical school, and joined the Becker-Vanden Hoek lab in the Emergency Resuscitation Center at the University of Chicago Hospitals. After enjoying many

successes during his time spent conducting research in the field of Cardiac Arrest and Resuscitation, in which he earned several manuscript publications, presented his work at numerous scientific conferences nationwide, and even assisted in the authorship of a Critical Care Medicine textbook. Jason began his medical education at the University of Illinois College of Medicine in Urbana-Champaign, August 2007, after working with the Hispanic Center of Excellence staff at the College of Medicine.

Jason is now entering his second year of medical education he maintains an incredibly strong desire to become the very best physician he can, and through his patient care and research to one day give back to community that has provided him with so much pride and support.

Leadership Development

The Leadership Development Conference is a culmination of the Center's programs. This two-day program develops student leadership skills in health care, builds advocacy skills, confidence, and teamwork. Most importantly it exposes students to Latino physicians, case studies and the personal experiences of our doctors.



- **This program pays for lodging, transportation, meals, and materials for 30 students, guest speakers, teamwork consultant and staff. Total cost is \$11,000.**
- **Cost per student to attend is \$366.70.**

Community Physicians



Jorge A. Cavero, M.D.
Associate Professor,
Department of Medical Education

Dr. Jorge Cavero completed his residency training in Internal Medicine at St. Francis Hospital in Evanston and his medical degree at the University of the East, Dominican Republic. He is President of the Cavero Medical Group, and is a recognized leader and community activist in the Chicago's Latino Community. He has established the Cavero Medical Group, a community health care center that is located on the Southwest Side of Chicago, which is a predominantly Latino neighborhood. He is an "adopted" alumnus of the University of Illinois at Chicago, because of his continuous support to the College of Medicine and our Latino students. "What makes Cavero Medical Center so unique to our Latino community is that it helps the community, by providing Latino doctors and nurses to assist their patients. The center provides culturally

appropriate bilingual, bicultural primary health care services to underserved, uninsured families. Dr. Cavero has consistently led efforts to improve and empower the greater Hispanic community. He has created scholarships for Brother Rice High School, which had a minimum number of Latino students, and now has increased its enrollment because of these scholarships. Dr. Cavero is also in the Board of Directors of Casa Central. He continuously assists the Hispanic Center of Excellence through their endeavors to help Latinos succeed and strive for higher education in the medical field and health careers. He serves as a member of the UIC Medical Advancement Council. In September 2007, Dr. Cavero became part-time staff of the Hispanic Center of Excellence.



Luis R. Muñoz, M.D., MPH
Associate Professor,
Department of Medical Education

Dr. Munoz received his Medical degree from the Medical College of Wisconsin in 1986 and completed an internship in Internal Medicine at Mercy Hospital in Chicago, Illinois. He completed his residency in Occupational Medicine at the University of Illinois Medical Center in 1989. Dr. Munoz also received his Masters in Public Health (MPH) degree from the UIC School of Public Health in 1990. He is presently President and Medical Director of the WorkCare Group Medical Center. Dr. Munoz also provides consulting services to the area Fortune 500 companies on occupational and environmental health issues. He has been committed to improving health care delivery and medical education to the Hispanic community, starting with his involvement on the original board

of directors of the Alivio Medical Centers, as well as participating on the Board of Directors of the West Technical Center in the Pilsen/Little Village area.

Dr. Munoz is one of the founders and Director of the Illinois Hispanic Physician Association (IHPA), an advocate for Illinois Hispanic public health care issues and medical education opportunities for Latino students. Recently, Governor Blagojevich named him to the Illinois State Diabetes Commission. He is an active board member of the San Francisco de Assisi parish for the last 15 years. He is currently serving his ninth year on the Board of Director for Gordon Tech High School. In September 2007 Dr. Munoz became part-time staff of the Hispanic Center of Excellence.

Community Physicians



Ricardo G. Senno, MD, MS,
FAAPMR

Dr. Senno earned his medical degree from the University of Illinois, completing his internship at Norwalk Hospital (Yale University Medical Center) and his residency at Boston University Medical Center. In Addition, he holds a Master of Science in Urban Planning, Public Management and Policy Analysis. This gives him a unique perspective in the field of Americans with Disability Act (ADA) design and universal architecture as well as medical care as it relates to patient, family and staff issues. Currently, he is involved in the design and development of the El Valor International Inclusion Center in the Illinois Medical District. In collaboration with colleagues, Dr. Senno is presently writing a book on the issues faced by people with brain injury.

In addition to being an Urban Planner, Dr. Ricardo G. Senno is a board-certified Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation/Disability physician with extensive experience in the management and treatment of traumatic & anoxic brain injury, stroke, Parkinson's & Alzheimer's disease, movement disorders and general rehabilitation. Currently he is the founder of an "elite" practice in the North Shore & is an adjunct assistant professor for the University of Illinois, College of Medicine.

Dr. Senno has worked extensively with the Medicina Scholars program having given numerous lectures. He is currently working on a thorough evaluation of the program.

Medicina Academy

The Hispanic Center of Excellence is currently planning a new program, Medicina Academy, which serve to recruit a stable cohort of Latino high school students that can matriculate into the Medicina Scholars Program.

In order to better prepare students for a post-secondary education leading to medical school we will be targeting 5 CPS high schools and 1 private high school in recruiting 10 Latino students from each target school for a total of 60 students each year. We will provide onsite guidance counseling and tutoring once a week at each respective target school, and on a quarterly basis provide workshops such college admissions, financial aid, ACT/SAT Prep, and test taking skills at the UIC COM campus (weekly visits at each school will be divided amongst the 2 project coordinators and program coordinator).

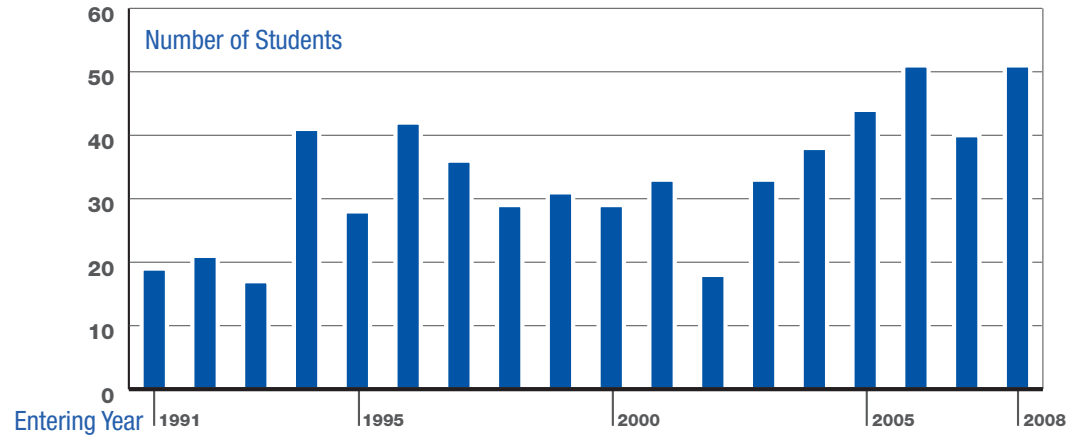
The key to Medicina Academy will be the parental involvement. We will schedule quarterly workshops for both the parents and students at UIC. The workshops will include professional development, FAFSA/ scholarship information, College Admissions, High School Life, College Life, AP coursework, and Study Environment at Home, amongst others.

Another key component of Medicina Academy will be the selection of a teacher or guidance counselor at each target high school who will act as an Academy liaison. This individual will help the HCOE staff keep track of each students academic progress, problems or concerns that may arise, and will handle the logistics of each our quarterly visits by the students to the UIC COM campus. Not only will the HCOE staff have a weekly presence at each high school but we will also have someone who shares in the mission and vision of Medicina Academy to ensure the progression of each student.

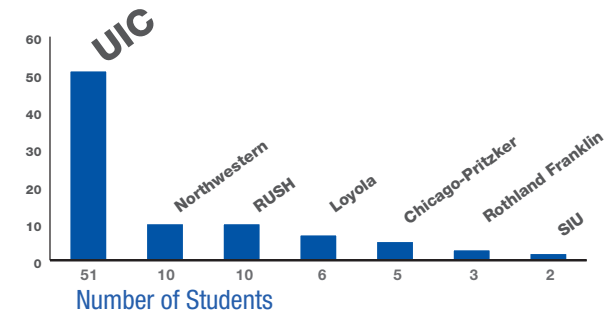
The Medicina Scholars will also contribute to the success of the Medicina Academy by acting as mentors to the high school students. We look to have a mentorship established in the 1st year of Medicina Academy in which each Medicina Scholar will be assigned and required to meet with a Medicina Academy participant once a month at the HCOE office. The mentor will serve to provide the Medicina Academy student a personal perspective on college life both in and out of the classroom.

By The Numbers

Entering Latino Medical Students

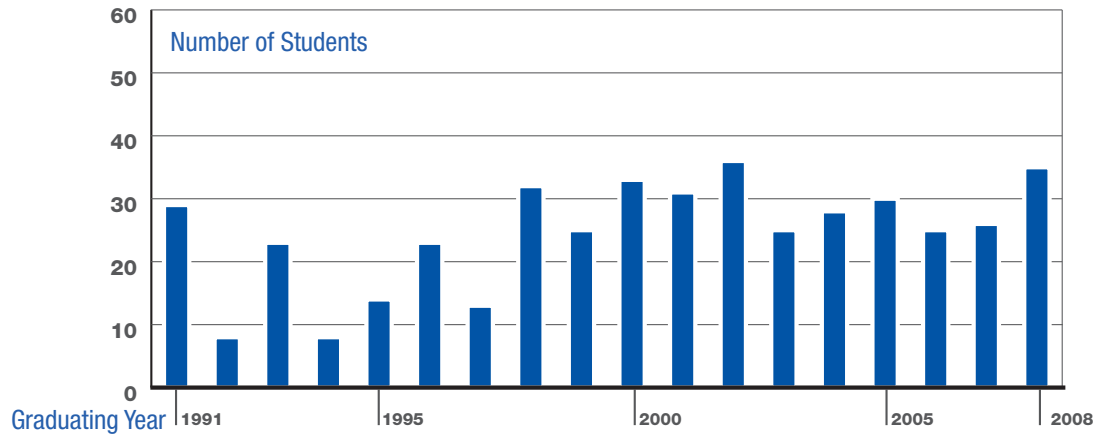


Entering Latino Students to Illinois Medical Schools in 2008

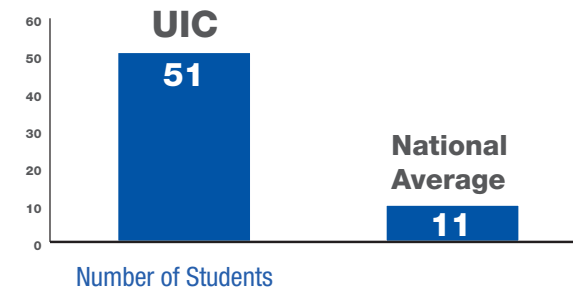


Source: AAMC Medical School Admission Requirements (MSAR) 2008-2009

Graduating Latino Medical Students



2008 Latino National Average Matriculants Out of the 128 Medical Schools



Source: AAMC Medical School Admission Requirements 2008-2009

Information Resources

The Hispanic Center of Excellence this year reaffirmed its commitment to utilizing its information through the upgrading of its website. It seems just like yesterday that we first upgraded our website for the first time. However as time has passed, the need to upgrade our website has become crucial in order remain technologically relevant and keep in touch with our students. The second upgrade of our website was important in order stay in contact with alumni, premedical and medical students, residents, community physicians, health care partners and Latin American medical schools. Through our new website we provide options to access scholarships, internships, the UIC medical sciences library, HCOE newsletter, staff contacts, applications for our programs, CME registrations, and current HCOE collaborations and events.

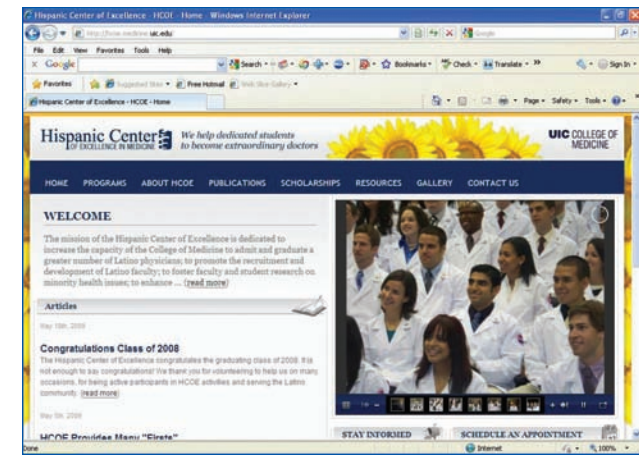
The HCOE library has continued to expand through the utilization of funds and the generous donations of former students. The library serves to support Latino students, faculty, and community physicians with access to books and other multimedia products. We have increased the number of available information resources that address Hispanic health issues by partnering with the medical science library and offering links on our website. HCOE also

established a database to assist us in tracking our students and maintaining communications with our constituents via email, mail, and faxes, but most important continually looking at the results of our programs by race, gender, by number of participants, and at a finger tip emailing all students in a program.

www.hcoe.medicine.uic.edu Jan. through Dec. 2008	
Page on the website	Number of times viewed
Home page	4,496
Contacts	1,387
Medicina Scholars	1,127
History	933

Top 4 most visited pages on HCOE.medicine.uic.edu in 2008

A Closer Look at the Web Site



HCOE web site - home page.

In 2008 HCOE web site was visited 6,370 times by at least 3,989 unique visitors. While most IP addresses are from Illinois there were at least 281 from California and 167 from Massachusetts. Google has sent over 2100 total visits via almost 1300 different keywords. The HCOE web site has been optimized for the search engines. The most web traffic comes from search engines via keywords: Most popular keyword - "HCOE", fourth most popular keyword - "Medicina Scholars."

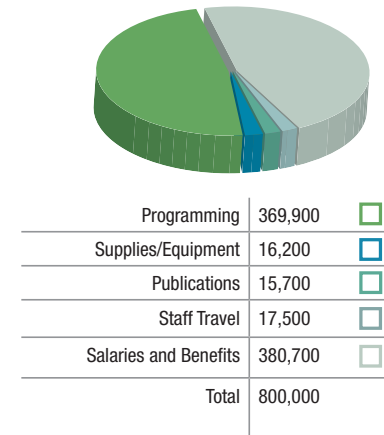
HCOE web site offers valuable information on scholarships, various programs and contact information at the students' fingertips. Content Management System allows HCOE staff to access and manage the site's content, schedule appointments and instantly upload resourceful information.

Finances

HCOE functioned with a more limited budget this year, compared to previous years. In spite of this, we continue to strive for excellence. We thank Dean Flaherty and the College of Medicine for their continued support. We also thank the members of the Latino Caucus of the Illinois General Assembly for taking an interest in education, health care issues, and the Latino community. Finally, we thank the Illinois Hispanic Physician Association (IHPA) for helping to promote HCOE's mission and raising Latino health care awareness and medical education.

HCOE provides advising, implements grand rounds three times a year, established a two year faculty fellowship program for Latino faculty who want to pursue academic medicine, is involved in recruitment of Longitudinal Primary Care Preceptors, collaborates on CME's with internal departments, provides opportunities to expand our affiliations in Latin America and continually evaluates the outcomes of our programs. We are proud of our staff and our accomplishments.

Hispanic Center of Excellence - Operating Budget



Future Plans

Great improvements have been made to the HCOE's programs this year, but our success will not end there. Already in the works are plans to expand curriculum, faculty opportunities, faculty/student research, and scholarship opportunities in the College of Medicine. Specifically, the HCOE plans to:

- » Create an Urban Medical Education (UMED) Program that will train interested UIC medical students for work in the Chicago urban environment. This will include additional class work, a specialized curriculum, and urban internships and rotations. It is anticipated that the first class will be enrolled in the Fall of 2005.
- » Expand the annual Leadership Development Seminar. In the past years, both the number of students expressing interest and applying for the two-day development conference has increased, as has the desire for clinicians to be more involved in the programs of the HCOE.
- » Collaborate with Alumni Affairs and the Office of Development to expand the availability of scholarships for deserving Latino students.
- » Assist faculty in the Department of Medical Education in the establishment of agreements with medical schools in Mexico and other Latin American countries.
- » Increase the number of Latino Preceptors for the Longitudinal Primary Care (LPC) Program of the Essentials of Clinical Medicine course. With the growing number of Latino patients, students need to develop skills early in their training to recognize the health care needs of the Latino community, to have the opportunity to work with actual patients and to develop a relationship with a mentor. The program also provides established physicians an opportunity to give back to the community.
- » Increase the number of preceptors in research to provide medical and undergraduate students with research skills to enhance their understanding of treatment of patients. Taking the student from the "beside to the bench" builds their research skills, offers them an opportunity to get published, and makes them competitive applicants for residency programs. The need to identify health care disparities and treatment of illness that are prevalent in the Latino community will continually grow as the populations grow.

Hispanic Center

OF EXCELLENCE IN MEDICINE

The logo for the Hispanic Center of Excellence in Medicine, featuring a stylized blue and white emblem to the right of the text.

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