

Texas Undergraduate Medical Academy NEWSLETTER

Est. 2004 Prairie View A&M University

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Mission Statement

The Texas Undergraduate Medical Academy's mission is consistent with the overall mission of Prairie View A&M University and the Texas A&M University System. The UMA is dedicated to teaching, research, service, and professional development excellence. The UMA integrates leadership development, pre-medical science education, and compassion for the community.

"EVERY GREAT DREAM BEGINS WITH A DREAMER. ALWAYS REMEMBER, YOU HAVE WITHIN YOU THE STRENGTH, THE PATIENCE, AND THE PASSION TO REACH FOR THE STARS TO CHANGE THE WORLD."

— HARRIET TUBMAN —

Historian's Note

UMA Family,

As your new Historian, I am honored to present to you the first issue of this semester's newsletter! This issue reflects our shared commitment to excellence and pursuing medicine with a purpose, while highlighting events, memories, and achievements that have shaped our UMA community in the past few months. I hope you enjoy revisiting these times as much as I enjoyed putting them together. Here's to another semester of growth, leadership, and unity within the UMA!

-Jamia Boutte

Summer Internship Highlights

RUBYLEANE LINTON PURDUE UNIVERSITY

RUBYLEANE (RIGHT), UMA SENIOR, PARTICIPATED IN PURDUE VET UP!, WHERE SHE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN FACULTY LECTURES, CLINICAL AND DIAGNOSTIC LABS, AND VISITS TO ANIMAL FARMS AND SANCTUARIES. SHE SHARED THAT THE EXPERIENCE FURTHER ENHANCED HER PASSION FOR ANIMAL HEALTH AND VETERINARY PRACTICE.



ANISA COLE HARVARD UNIVERSITY

AS A HARVARD-AMGEN SCHOLAR, ANISA (LEFT), UMA SENIOR, SPENT HER SUMMER CONDUCTING CANCER BIOLOGY RESEARCH AT THE DANA-FARBER CANCER INSTITUTE. HER RESEARCH FOCUSED ON MERKEL CELL POLYOMAVIRUS, A DNA TUMOR VIRUS THAT CAUSES A HIGHLY AGGRESSIVE SKIN CANCER CALLED MERKEL CELL CARCINOMA. SHE WAS INSPIRED TO TAKE ON THIS RESEARCH PROJECT AFTER HER WORK LAST SUMMER AT HARVARD STUDYING THE EPSTEIN-BARR VIRUS. THROUGH THE EXPERIENCE, SHE DEVELOPED SKILLS IN HISTOLOGY AND FLUORESCENCE MICROSCOPY, WHICH ALLOWED HER TO VISUALIZE CELLULAR CHANGES IN NEW WAYS.



SAIF MOHAMMED CENA RESEARCH INSTITUTE

SAIF (ABOVE), UMA SOPHOMORE, CONDUCTED CARDIOVASCULAR RESEARCH OVER THE SUMMER UNDER THE MENTORSHIP OF DR. ASIF ALI. DURING HIS RESEARCH PROJECT, HE ANALYSED PATIENT DATA TO EXPLORE DISPARITIES IN CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE OUTCOMES AND ACCESS TO CARE. HIS RESEARCH FURTHER EXPLORED INITIATIVES FOR ADDRESSING "CARDIOLOGY DESERTS" THROUGH HEALTH TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION.



ALEXAY BULLARD NORTHWESTERN MEDICINE

ALEXAY (LEFT), UMA JUNIOR, SPENT EIGHT WEEKS DURING THE SUMMER INTERNING WITH NORTHWESTERN MEDICINE IN CHICAGO, WHERE HE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHADOW A NEUROSURGEON. HE WAS ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE TO CLINICAL RESEARCH ON TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURIES, WHICH WILL BE REVIEWED BY THE HOSPITAL TO INFORM FUTURE POLICY CHANGES. ADDITIONALLY, HE OBSERVED SURGERIES, NETWORKED WITH OTHER INTERNS, AND VISITED THE SITES IN CHICAGO.

ALYSSA BRADFORD UT-HEALTH HOUSTON & MCGOVERN MEDICAL SCHOOL

ALYSSA (RIGHT), UMA SOPHOMORE, COMPLETED THE GILSTRAP SUMMER EXTERNSHIP IN OB-GYN, WHERE SHE RECEIVED HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE TO PATIENT-CARE AND HIGH-RISK PREGNANCY MANAGEMENT. SHE WAS ABLE TO ROTATE THROUGH GYNECOLOGIC ONCOLOGY, LABOR & DELIVERY, WOMEN'S HEALTH CLINICS, FETAL MEDICINE, AND CLINICAL RESEARCH.



JORDAN DERRY PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY & HOUSTON METHODIST HOSPITAL

THIS SUMMER, JORDAN (LEFT), UMA SENIOR, PARTICIPATED IN TWO IMPACTFUL INTERNSHIPS.

THROUGH THE GET-PHIT (GAINING EQUILITY IN TRAINING FOR PUBLIC HEALTH INFORMATICS AND TECHNOLOGY) INTERNSHIP, SHE GAINED HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE IN PUBLIC HEALTH RESEARCH, DATA ANALYTICS, AND INFORMATICS. HER RESEARCH PROJECT EXPLORED HOW SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS CONTRIBUTE TO INFANT HEALTH DISPARITIES.

LATER IN THE SUMMER, SHE PARTICIPATED IN THE MERLIN (METHODIST EDUCATION AND RESEARCH LEARNER INFORMATION NETWORK) PROGRAM. SHE WAS ABLE TO SHADOW PHYSICIANS IN THE NICU, LABOR & DELIVERY, POSTPARTUM, AND EMERGENCY OB-GYN, WHERE SHE GAINED AN APPRECIATION FOR HOW COMPASSIONATE CARE TRANSFORMS PATIENT EXPERIENCES.



UMA Fellow Spotlight

THE TEXAS UNDERGRADUATE MEDICAL ACADEMY IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE LEON BAKER III AS OUR FIRST UMA FELLOW!

LEON IS A RECENT GRADUATE OF THE BOSTON CONSERVATORY AT BERKELEE, WHERE HE MAJORED IN VIOLIN PERFORMANCE AND MINORED IN PSYCHOLOGY. HE IS CURRENTLY PURSUING A DEGREE IN BIOLOGY AT PVAMU, WITH AN ULTIMATE GOAL OF TAKING THE MCAT AND ATTENDING MEDICAL SCHOOL. LEON IS ESPECIALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT DERMATOLOGY AND IS INTERESTED IN COMBINING THE HEALING POWER OF MUSIC WITH THE SCIENCE OF MODERN MEDICINE.



Q. CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND HOW YOU FIRST BECAME INTERESTED IN PURSUING A CAREER IN MEDICINE?

A. I began playing the violin at the age of three, and it has since dominated my life. Throughout school, I became increasingly interested in the sciences, entering and winning my first science fair in fifth grade with a project that measured the difference in UV protection offered by various sunscreen brands. In middle and high school, I continued to cultivate my love for science through honors and AP classes. Although my love for science continued to grow, my passion for the violin remained, and I ultimately decided to attend a conservatory of music. While I realized that I would no longer be taking any science classes, I never imagined just how much I would miss them. At the end of my

freshman year at the Conservatory, I decided to declare a minor in Psychology. This reintroduction to science helped fill a void I had been missing so desperately, but also solidified my decision to pursue a career in the field of medicine. That summer, I met Dr. Daniels, who kindly guided me through the process of pivoting my focus towards medicine. I would like to extend special thanks to him and the entire UMA staff for their continued support in my current and future endeavors.

Q. DO YOU SEE ANY CONNECTIONS BETWEEN YOUR PASSION FOR MUSIC AND YOUR INTEREST IN MEDICINE, WHETHER THROUGH TRANSFERABLE SKILLS, PERSONAL GROWTH, OR FUTURE CAREER GOALS?

A. I believe that being a musician has given me a multitude of skills I can utilize in a career in medicine. It has taught me a great deal about patience, discipline, resilience, and delayed gratification. These are all skills that are desirable for any medical student or physician. However, since making the switch from music to medicine, I often reflect on how the purpose of music in my life has evolved. Being outside of a conservatory environment, no longer surrounded by other musicians, has broadened my scope, causing me to think about the purpose of music in the lives of nonmusicians. Music is such an integral part of everyone's lives, whether you are listening by yourself in your car, at a concert, or with your friends and family. At the center of it all, music is connection. While music has allowed me to develop a multitude of intrapersonal skills, the greatest gift it has given me is the ability to empathize and make meaningful connections with those around me. I believe these interpersonal skills will serve me well on my path to becoming a physician.



Q. WHAT DOES BEING NAMED THE FIRST UMA FELLOW MEAN TO YOU, AND HOW DO YOU THINK IT WILL IMPACT YOUR JOURNEY IN MEDICINE?

A. It is truly an honor to be named the first UMA Fellow. Reflecting on the end of my freshman year at the conservatory, I felt unsettled and anxious about what the future would hold. Being here, four years later, and having the privilege of being part of such an amazing program means a great deal. It represents not only my faith and hard work, but all the support systems I had along the way. My family, friends, and especially the UMA staff. Having this opportunity has made me even more determined to become the best physician I can. Thank you so much to everyone who has provided continuous support throughout my journey.

“Music is such an integral part of everyone’s lives, whether you are listening by yourself in your car, at a concert, or with your friends and family. At the center of it all, music is connection.”



Q. WHAT ADVICE CAN YOU GIVE TO OTHER STUDENTS IN THE UMA WHO ARE LOOKING TO MAKE THE MOST OF THEIR TIME IN THE ACADEMY AND PREPARE FOR SUCCESS IN THE FIELD OF MEDICINE?

A. While I have only been a part of the UMA for a short while, I have learned so much. Aside from the universal truths of attending class on time, completing coursework promptly, and taking effective notes, I believe it's essential to remember that the most important part of learning is acquiring a deeper understanding. With so many classes and exams, it is easy to study for the exam itself, rather than studying to fully understand and connect each topic. In this field, our biggest advantage is that many topics are interrelated, so deepening your understanding of one topic helps you better understand another. One of your best resources is your peers. Forming study groups has been personally vital in deepening my understanding and helping me learn and retain information quickly. I believe approaching learning in this way will not only help you during your pre-medical degree but also during medical school and as a physician. Learning is a lifelong process, and medicine is a field that is constantly growing and changing, which is why effective learning is important to master. Additionally, try to get involved as much as you can! Part of learning is having new experiences to shape and expand the knowledge you have already acquired. Each opportunity is a chance to learn something new, which is what I believe being a physician is all about.

“Aside from the universal truths of attending class on time, completing coursework promptly, and taking effective notes, I believe it's essential to remember that the most important part of learning is acquiring a deeper understanding.”



Vanderbilt & Belmont Universities: Nashville Medical School Visits



On October 28, 2025, the 2024-2025 Jasper Scholars visited the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine and the Thomas F. First, Jr. College of Medicine at Belmont University. During the visits, students toured both campuses, explored simulation labs, and learned about the admissions process, academic programs, and student life. The experience offered valuable insight into different paths within healthcare and inspired the scholars to continue striving toward their professional goals.

Texas Southern University Visit



On October 10, 2025, Debra Davis, UMA senior, visited Texas Southern University's College of Pharmacy & Health Sciences, where she connected with UMA alums C'Brionne Hendrix, PhD Candidate in Pharmaceutical Sciences (UMA Platinum Class of 2014) and Dr. Jason Monroe, PharmD (UMA Charter Class of 2004) to learn about opportunities in pharmacy and health sciences.

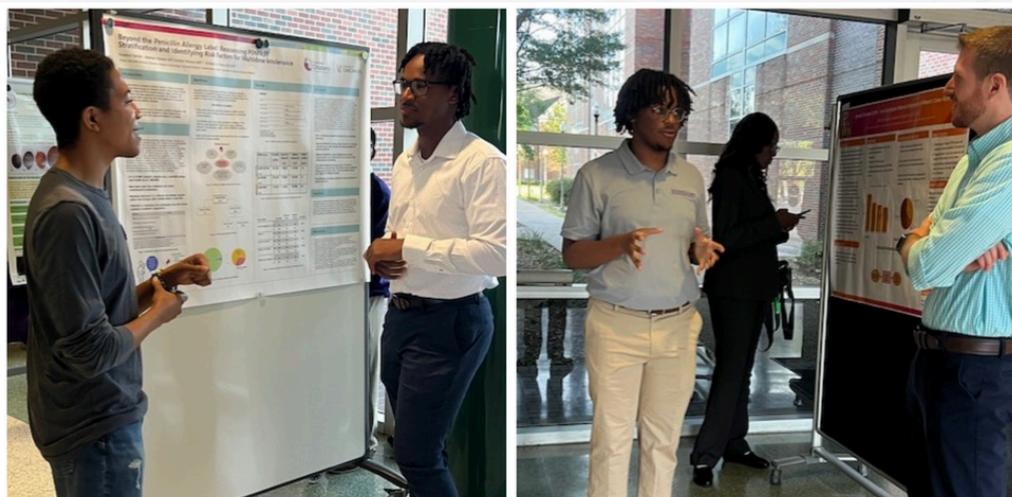
Texas A&M University

College of Medicine & College of Pharmacy Visits



On Tuesday, September 16, 2025, UMA scholars visited the Texas A&M College of Medicine and the Texas A&M Irma Lerma Rangel College of Pharmacy. At the medical school, students participated in a panel led by our UMA alum, Reagan Scott, gaining insights into the journey from undergraduate to medical student life. At the College of Pharmacy, the students were welcomed by Dr. Juan Bustamante (Instructional Associate Professor of Pharmaceutical Sciences and Director of Recruitment), who delivered an engaging presentation on diabetes research and opened discussions on pathways into the PharmD program.

Biology Symposium



On October 24, 2025, Keeland Harville, UMA President, and Kenton Moore, UMA Vice President, showcased their scientific excellence at PVAMU's 26th Biology Research Symposium, presented by the Department of Biology. Our scholars proudly presented their research among peers and faculty mentors.

THE UMA WAS ON FIRE!
 DR. DENNIS E. DANIELS, MRS. SHERYLLE FULLER, AND UMA PRESIDENT, KEELAND HARVILLE, JOINED PV VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS FOR A RED HOT SUMMERS NIGHT ON AUGUST 23, 2025, AND WERE AWARDED THE "UNSUNG HERO" AWARD FOR THEIR SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY.



GET-PHIT Bootcamp

This summer, 12 UMA scholars, including all of the 2024-2025 Jasper Scholars, participated in the GET PHIT (Gaining Equity in Training for Public Health Informatics and Technology) Summer Bootcamp hosted at PVAMU. The two-week program brought together 30 students to learn how to address real-world public health informatics challenges through teamwork, data analysis, and innovation. The bootcamp opened with remarks from Engineering Dean Dr. Obiomon, inspiring students to approach data-driven health solutions with creativity and collaboration.

The cohort's hard work culminated at the GET PHIT Summit, held on September 11, in Laredo, Texas, where UMA scholars Nyla Holimon, Taylor Kilgore, and Jaycie Youngblood were awarded Best Poster Presentations for their outstanding projects.



Mr. & Miss UMA 2025

Introducing the 2025 Mr. and Miss UMA, Caleb Owens and Kharys Grice! Caleb and Kharys enjoyed their coronation during PVAMU's Homecoming week and represented the UMA with pride, leadership, and excellence, truly embodying the UMA's commitment to scholarship, service, and success.

UMA Research Lab Activities



The 2025-2026 Jasper Scholars practiced cell culture techniques and honed their lab and research skills in the UMA's BL-2 lab under the mentorship of Dr. Naznin Sultana. Dr. Sultana and UMA Scholar, Anisa Cole, also attended the Faculty-RISE program Kickoff.

Practice MCAT/DAT Exam



The Undergraduate Medical Academy hosted a Practice MCAT/DAT Exam on Saturday, October 4th, giving UMA Scholars the opportunity to practice by taking a full-length, timed exam in a realistic testing environment. This event helped students gauge their readiness, identify strengths and areas for improvement, and build the endurance needed for success on the official MCAT and DAT.

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Training



This Fall semester, 7 UMA students participated in CERT Training, where they learned essential emergency preparedness and response skills. Throughout the sessions, members received hands-on instruction in CPR, first aid, disaster response, and emergency protocols, preparing them to act effectively in crisis situations. Pictured above: Praise Amzat, Roy Gil, Nasya Levi, Adela Maldonado, LaMiya Plummer, Amaya Sanders, and Jaycie Youngblood.



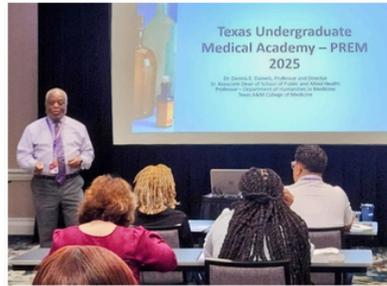
Over the summer, UMA's own Dr. Gail Brekke and Tenley Sablatzky attended the National CERT Association Conference, expanding their expertise in emergency preparedness and completing additional training to become CERT Program Managers. Dr. Brekke also taught a specialized course on Wilderness Identification and First Aid, representing the UMA on a national stage.

UMA Pre-Matriculation (PREM) 2025



Each summer, the Undergraduate Medical Academy hosts its Pre-Matriculation (PREM) Program, welcoming the newest class of UMA scholars and Jasper Scholars into the UMA family. This weeklong experience introduces students to the Academy's values, professional expectations, and academic culture while helping them develop professionalism, time management, and leadership skills before the semester begins.

Throughout the program, students heard inspiring presentations from current UMA members, alumni pursuing professional degrees, and practicing UMA alum physicians who shared their journeys through medical and health-related fields. Interactive workshops and bonding activities fostered a sense of camaraderie among new members, creating a strong foundation for their success in UMA and beyond.



Crochet & Suturing Club



CREATIVITY IN ACTION: THE UMA CROCHET & SUTURING CLUB BRINGS STUDENTS TOGETHER TO CRAFT AND CONNECT.

Mini Grand Rounds



LEARNING FROM THE EXPERTS: UMA SCHOLARS ATTENDED A MINI GRAND ROUNDS WITH DR. DAVE FLETCHER OF BARRY UNIVERSITY, ON SEPTEMBER 10TH. FROM THE PROGRAM, STUDENTS GAINED VALUABLE ADVICE AND SUTURING PRACTICE.



INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION: UMA SUMMER COLLEGE PREP PROGRAM WELCOMED HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS INTERESTED IN HEALTH SCIENCE AND MEDICINE FOR A FUN AND EDUCATIONAL WEEK-LONG EXPERIENCE!



WE LOVE IT WHEN OUR UMA ALUMNI RETURN TO CAMPUS! THEIR VISITS REMIND US THAT UMA IS MORE THAN A PROGRAM; IT'S A LIFELONG COMMUNITY OF SUPPORT, MENTORSHIP, AND SHARED PURPOSE. RECENTLY, WE WERE THRILLED TO WELCOME BACK DR. SHAURYAR MANSOOR, MD, WORKING IN INTERNAL MEDICINE (UMA RUBY CLASS OF 2012), SAHAR FATTANI, A MEDICAL STUDENT AT EDWARD VIA COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE, LOUISIANA CAMPUS (UMA ALEXANDRITE CLASS OF 2018), AND LOUISA IDAH-OZE (UMA OPAL CLASS OF 2019). THEIR SUCCESS STORIES CONTINUE TO INSPIRE THE NEXT GENERATION OF UMA SCHOLARS.



SPOOKY FUN AND COMMUNITY SPIRIT: UMA STUDENTS ENJOYED THEMSELVES WHILE VOLUNTEERING AT A FESTIVE TRUNK OR TREAT THIS HALLOWEEN AT THE PRAIRIE VIEW VOLUNTEER FIRE STATION.

UPCOMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER	14	UMA SCHOLARSHIP - WRITING REQUIREMENT DUE BY 5PM
	15	PRACTICE MCAT/DAT EXAM
	18	FINAL DAY TO WITHDRAW FROM COUSES WITH A "W"
	27-28	THANKSGIVING BREAK
DECEMBER	1	LAST CLASS DAY
	2	COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS DUE
	3-10	FINAL EXAMS
	13	COMMENCEMENT
	24-31	WINTER BREAK