

Herbert W. Nickens Medical Student Scholarships

These awards consist of five scholarships given to outstanding students entering their third year of medical school who have shown leadership in efforts to eliminate inequities in medical education and health care and demonstrated leadership efforts in addressing educational, societal, and health care needs of minorities in the United States.



Photo: C. Rene Perez

Jessica Buck

Weill Cornell Medicine

A member of the Caddo Nation of Oklahoma, Jessica Buck is passionate about improving the health of American Indians. She is a third-year medical student at Weill Cornell Medicine in New York City.

Jessica graduated from Harvard College in 2012 with a BA in human developmental and regenerative biology and a minor in global health and health policy. Throughout college, Jessica was active in the American Indian community, serving for three years in a row as community chair of a school-based American Indian organization.

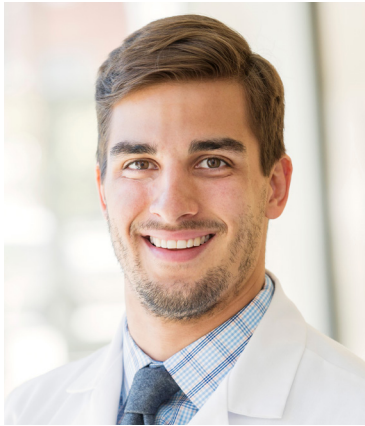
After graduation, she moved to New York City to work at the American Indian Community House and directly serve this minority population.

About 75 percent of the U.S. American Indian population lives off tribal lands, with New York City having the largest urban community of more than 110,000 people. Jessica took on a variety of roles, including behavioral health case manager and Youth Council coordinator. Her time in these positions reaffirmed her desire to serve in a health provider role for her Native American community.

At Weill Cornell, Jessica is expanding her active involvement in minority student affairs. As a first-year student, she served as co-chair of the Students for Equal Opportunity in Medicine (SEOM), a minority-based student organization that collaborates extensively with school and hospital administrations. In this position, she founded a Native American medical student organization. She was able to incorporate Native American efforts into SEOM events, including hiring a local drummer to share American Indian history and perform traditional tribal songs at the Annual SEOM Thanksgiving Potluck. As a second-year student, she was elected SEOM president and continued her community work, which included helping to organize the Annual Pre-Medical Conference for more than 300 New York City minority high school and college students interested in health profession careers.

Jessica currently serves as the East Coast representative and president and founder of the New York City Chapter of the Association of Native American Medical Students Executive Board. She is involved with the Association of American Indian Physicians (AAIP) and has mentored at the organization's pre-medical workshops. At the AAIP annual conference, she presented the findings of her research on Native American teenage sexual health behaviors.

After completing her medical training, Jessica plans to continue her work to help eliminate health disparities and address the health care needs of minority populations. She believes there is great potential for improving Native American health within New York City and nationally, and she hopes to help implement this change.

**Maximilian J.V. Cruz**

Cooper Medical School of Rowan University

Maximilian (Max) J.V. Cruz, a third-year medical student at Cooper Medical School of Rowan University in Camden, N.J., has a deep commitment to community service and working with underserved populations. He first became involved with community outreach when he volunteered for a high school service trip to Appalachia, where he saw first-hand the effects of poverty and inadequate access to health care. He also participated in Aim High, a program designed to provide inner-city St. Louis high school students with an intensive summer session of tutoring to better prepare them for college.

Born and raised in the suburbs of St. Louis, Max received his BA in Spanish from the University of Notre Dame. As an undergraduate, he volunteered at St. Anthony of Padua in Camden, N.J., as part of a summer service learning project. There, he assisted with an HIV/AIDS ministry, helped community members organize to better coordinate with local law enforcement, and held a free sports camp for neighborhood and parish children.

During the year between graduation from Notre Dame and the beginning of his medical studies, Max spent four months volunteering at Santisimo Sacramento Parish in Piura, Peru. He assisted nurses in the free clinic and hospice, joined nurses in making house calls to deliver medical attention to those who had no means of accessing care, served as a translator for visiting missionaries, and developed public health information sessions in Piura and nearby villages.

At Cooper Medical School, Max has already logged more than 250 hours of community service. He was a mentor to a Camden high school student as part of the Camden After-School Medical Program (CAMP), which exposes at-risk students to medical education and careers. He is a founding board member of Tutor Time, which he and two other Cooper medical students initiated in 2013. One of the few after-school options in Camden, the program has grown to include more than 20 Cooper Medical School volunteers.

Max is a board member of both the Cooper Rowan Clinic, a free, student-run facility serving those who lack health insurance, and the Camden Area Health Education Center, a nonprofit that has served the citizens of Camden for more than 35 years. In addition, he is the founder of Seminarios de Salud, a program that offers a workshop series in Spanish to provide Camden's citizens with the awareness and tools they need to manage their own health and wellness. He is also collecting data to identify gaps in health care access among Camden's Latino subgroups.

Max served as the vice president of Cooper Medical School's Latino Medical Student Association (LMSA) chapter, which seeks to educate citizens about the health care process and recruit Latino students into health care professions. He currently serves as the CIO on the LMSA-Northeast's Executive Council.

Max hopes to specialize in pediatrics and use all the knowledge gained from his experiences to best serve his patients, both mentally and physically.



Lucy Ogbu-Nwobodo

University of California, Davis, School of Medicine

Lucy Ogbu-Nwobodo, a third-year student at the University of California, Davis (UC Davis), School of Medicine, is dedicated to improving health care through social justice. Born in Nigeria, Lucy was brought by relatives to Oakland, Calif., when she was 11 years old. The United States promised to provide a better life, but as an undocumented student for more than 12 years, Lucy had to fight for her own survival. She developed a strong sense of resilience in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

Lucy focused on her academics and graduated from high school as the class valedictorian at the age of 15. She obtained her undergraduate degree from California State University, East Bay, before the age of 20. After college, she started volunteering at Highland General Hospital, a safety-net facility primarily serving Oakland's uninsured patients.

Lucy started Operating Room Experiences (OREX) at Highland General Hospital, a pre-medical surgical observation program and one of the few programs in the nation allowing undergraduates extensive access to operating rooms. More than 30 OREX participants have gone on to medical school and other graduate health education programs. OREX serves as a model for other teaching hospitals. At UC Davis, Lucy serves as co-director of the Imani Clinic, a student-run facility that provides services to the medically disenfranchised in Sacramento. She is the co-president of the Student National Medical Association–Davis Chapter, as well as the president and founder of the UC Davis Neurosurgery Student Interest Group.

In 2014, Lucy became the first UC Davis medical student to receive the Chancellor's Civic Engagement Award for academic excellence and leadership in working with the most vulnerable communities. Most recently, she received the 2015 Paul and Daisy Soros New American Fellowship for her originality, initiative, and sustained accomplishment. The fellows are selected based on their potential to make significant contributions to their society, culture, or specific academic field, including medicine, the sciences, law, music, and education.

After medical school, Lucy's goal is to bring specialty medical services to low-income communities. She plans to specialize in neurosurgery.



Jaire Saunders

University of California, Riverside, School of Medicine

Jaire Saunders, a first-generation American whose parents emigrated from Panama in their teens, was born and raised in Diamond Bar, Calif. He is a member of the inaugural graduating class of the University of California, Riverside, School of Medicine. With a long history of community service and advocacy, he serves on the Council of African American Parents (CAAP), which advocates for excellence in higher education among African-Americans in cities in several California counties.

In the summer of 2002, CAAP created the Legacy Roundtable Conference to address the problem of African-American youths falling behind in mathematics. Following a cohort of middle school children, the program provides classes, tutorial services, and mentoring with the goal of preparing the students for calculus by the time they enter their first year of college. Since then, the program has broadened to serve students at all levels of math in grades 6 to 12, not just preparing them for college calculus, but also guiding them to be ready for the competitive landscape of college admissions. Jaire's role within the program has advanced from tutor to lead tutor to academic coordinator and now academic director. In addition, he serves as a mentor and role model to young scholars of color.

Although Jaire has wanted to be a physician for his entire life, it wasn't until he earned his bachelor's degree at the University of Arizona that he became aware of the social determinants of health and understood that providing high-quality medical care is only one part of the solution when addressing health care disparities across the nation. While earning his master's degree in public health at the University of California, Los Angeles, he was involved in a research project sponsored by the UCLA Labor Occupational Safety and Health Program, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, and the Association of Occupational and Environmental Clinics that examined underserved worker populations, common work-related injuries, and mechanisms to obtain adequate medical care through local federally qualified health clinics. For his master's project, he and three colleagues created a community-based afterschool program, *Project Changes*, aimed at decreasing youth mortality through gang-diversion programs administered through local schools.

Between undergraduate and graduate school, Jaire worked in social services at a nonprofit organization for three years. As the care coordinator, he led a team that established structure and created interventions that families could use to ensure that youth remained in the home and the family stayed together. This experience convinced Jaire to pursue a master's degree in public health before going to medical school.

Following Riverside's mission to train medical students with ties to the local community and retaining physicians to care for the underserved population, Jaire plans to practice medicine in his local community.



Mary Tate
Harvard Medical School

As a third-year student at Harvard Medical School (HMS), Mary Tate is passionate about working with underserved communities and eliminating racial and ethnic health disparities, especially in infant mortality, in the United States. She began cultivating her skills as a leader and mentor at Dartmouth College, where she received an AB in biology (genetics). She was the director of the Dartmouth Alliance for Children of Color, a program designed to promote positive cultural awareness and expression and foster strong relationships between Dartmouth students and children in the Upper Valley Community of the African Diaspora. She served as the vice president of her sorority, which allowed her to plan community service events such as Sisters of CHaD, a program established during her tenure. Each academic

term, sorority sisters visit the Children's Hospital at Dartmouth to play with children to give their parents a break.

Since graduating from Dartmouth, Mary has kept ties to several institutions so she can mentor students. As the young alumni coordinator of the Black Alumni at Dartmouth Association (BADA), she works to keep young alumni engaged and connected to the students on campus. She also collaborated with the Pre-Health Office, the Academic Skills Center, a professor, and a couple of students to establish Pathways to Medicine, a program that provides mentorship, resources, and support to Dartmouth students traditionally underrepresented in medicine.

Prior to matriculating at HMS, Mary spent a year working as a fellow at One Heart World-Wide (OHW), a nonprofit organization focused on reducing maternal and neonatal mortality in the most remote parts of the world. While at OHW, she investigated paternal influences on pregnancy outcomes among Rarámuri natives in Guachochi, Mexico.

Since arriving at HMS, Mary has served as the president of the school's Student National Medical Association (SNMA) chapter where she led her executive board to raise more than \$25,000 to plan the Region VII SNMA conference, "To Medicine and Beyond." The conference drew more than 200 medical school and college students, and 15 high school students from underperforming schools in underserved communities received sponsorships to attend.

In addition to serving in leadership roles in the OB/GYN Interest Group and the Harvard chapter of the American Medical Women's Association, being involved with the Multicultural Fellows Committee, and volunteering with the Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Partnership, Mary co-founded Medical Students Offering Maternal Support (MOMS), which partners pregnant women with medical students at the community health center. She sought to develop a program that would 1) provide women with an advocate to help them navigate the health system and enhance their system of support and 2) provide students with the invaluable experience of building a longitudinal relationship with a patient and exposing them to various social determinants of health. Since the program's launch, her team was awarded a grant to expand the program, evaluate the interventions, and develop a standard operating procedures manual.

Mary plans to specialize in obstetrics and gynecology and obtain a master's degree in public health with a focus in quantitative methods.
