Office for Diversity and Academic Success in the Sciences (ODASIS)

Passion...Perseverance...Physician. Read about the incredible journey of ODASIS and EOF alumnus, Randy Jackson, M.D., page 6.
ODASIS would like to thank all alumni for their generosity and contributions and would like to highlight those that donated during 2016-2017:

- Dr. Kelvin Adjei-Twum
- Mr. Robert Alexander
- Dr. Shirley Angel
- Dr. Ayobamidile Balogun
- Dr. Carl Casimir
- Mr. Alex Castro
- Mr. Leonard Haas
- Dr. Gladston Randall Hackett
- Mr. Joseph Magadaleno Jr.
- Dr. Ronniel Mercado
- Dr. Ramon Nunez
- Dr. Oluseun “Alfy” Olufade
- Dr. Charlton Olayemi
- Dr. Herbert Pardes
- Dr. Schubert Perotte
- Ms. Renee Reed
- Dr. Angelique Ridore
- Mr. Paul Samuel
- Mr. Squire Servance
- Dr. Corey Smith
- Dr. Nnajindu Ugoji
- Dr. Ricardo Verdiner
- Dr. Tanya D. Williams

ODASIS had the privilege of hosting their 31st annual ODASIS Graduation and Awards Ceremony on Thursday, April 27, 2017. The event was received by over 300 guests, including alumni, undergraduates, and their proud parents, as well as fellow Rutgers faculty/staff members. One of ODASIS’ very own alumni, Dr. Ronniel Mercado, kicked the evening off with words of encouragement and salutations for a job well done. Dr. Karen Stubaus, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Administration, delivered an inspirational Welcome Address; Dr. Kenneth Breslauer, Dean of the Division of Life Sciences and Vice President for Health Science Partnerships, reflected on the importance of ODASIS and introduced Dr. Robert L. Johnson, M.D., the Sharon and Joseph L. Muscarelle Endowed Dean, who provided Words in Celebration to those in attendance. We were extremely proud to celebrate the acceptance of 41 ODASIS students into medical professions and graduate programs this year. We also celebrated 53 alumni graduating from medical, dental, osteopathic, and public health schools.

This year’s keynote speaker was Dr. Herbert Pardes, Executive Vice Chairman and member of Board of Trustees of New York Presbyterian Hospital, who discussed his professional journey and reminded the audience of the importance of staying true to one’s goals. Later, Dr. Ramon Nunez, an ODASIS alumnus and member of the Rutgers-New Jersey Medical School Class of 2002, shared his experiences from medical school, as well as his journey as a practicing physician. All speakers generously offered motivating assurances and commemorated our students’ successes. Attendees walked away with a newfound appreciation for the medical field after the heartfelt speeches from our distinguished guests.

ODASIS was additionally honored to present Dr. Karen Stubaus with an ODASIS Lifetime Achievement Award for her continuous, collaborative work with ODASIS and Rutgers University. The evening was closed by Dr. Nyarai Mushonga, an ODASIS alumna who gave a touching meditation on never giving up and thanked Dr. Khan and his staff for their endless support of their students. Having the opportunity to share the evening with students, old and new, made the evening a night to remember.

Congratulations to Dr. Karen Stubaus, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Administration, for earning the ODASIS Lifetime Achievement Award for her continuous, collaborative work with ODASIS and Rutgers University.
Cultivating Student Success at the 2016 ODASIS Motivational Workshop

People like you and me are very rare, we are special, but it is up to us to set the path for others to follow.

—Gene Hall

The 2016 ODASIS Motivational Workshop was an excellent opportunity for 450 of our students to immerse themselves in a celebratory, yet professional, environment, as health professionals representing numerous medical, nursing, osteopathic, podiatry, public health, physical therapy, dentistry, and pharmacy schools came to instill in the students the inspiration needed to achieve their professional goals.

ODASIS was honored to have distinguished speakers provide essential advice and guidance on achieving success in the health professions. ODASIS Assistant Director Jonathan Langowski opened the event with some welcoming words and was followed by Dr. Larnie Booker, who spoke about the need to continue to work on and refine your tools, for whatever they may be. He emphasized the importance of resourcefulness and how ODASIS provides a platform for such resourcefulness to be utilized. Dr. Martha Haviland spoke next, discussing appropriate study habits and encouraging students to develop short-term and long-term study goals. Dr. Peter March, Executive Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, spoke about the importance of “being nice” and how simple cordiality can go a long way. The decorated lineup of guest speakers concluded with ODASIS alumnus Dr. David Pierre, who assured the students in attendance to #PerfectYourCraft. In his speech, Dr. Pierre reminded all of us that we must work towards our goals with steadfast commitment and reject those who say otherwise. All speakers encouraged students to never let anyone dismiss their dreams or goals.

The workshop was not only a time of practical education, but also a time for recognition. Dr. Gene Hall, of the Rutgers Department of Chemistry and Chemical Biology, was given the ODASIS Lifetime Achievement Award for his unwavering support and commitment to our mission. The award was presented by current ODASIS students Victoria Adeleke and Rikelle White. They acknowledged Dr. Hall’s endless dedication to ODASIS and his field, stating that “Dr. Hall is an embodiment of the dedication and success ODASIS pushes to instill into each and every one of us.” This award acknowledges the immense contributions to academic success that Dr. Hall has made throughout his career.

The afternoon was closed out by the director of ODASIS, Dr. Kamal Khan, who emphatically led the crowd in a chant of “I know, I know, I know, I am special! I know, I can, I will, do well!” and reminded the students of ODASIS to “Eat your books!”

People like you and me are very rare, we are special, but it is up to us to set the path for others to follow.

—Gene Hall
It would be safe to say that Sheronda and Corey Smith's medical careers would not have begun had it not been for their family pediatrician. Their interactions with him were particularly important in sparking an interest in the health professions; and so, began two connected yet different journeys on the path to professional success and fulfillment.

Five years apart, Corey and Sheronda Smith are emblematic of the tenacity and determination that is a distinguishing characteristic of ODASIS alumni. Much like their family pediatrician, ODASIS served as a necessary catalyst in establishing Corey and Sheronda's deep desire to practice medicine. ODASIS provided the two with a critical structure of camaraderie and mentorship. With absolute conviction, Dr. Khan would say to them “this is what you’re going to be doing”, to reinforce that their inclusion in the ODASIS program was a commitment that would inevitably lead to their success. In their own ways, Corey and Sheronda developed a tighter academic focus, built relationships with those who had similar life experiences, and acquired an intensely rigorous sense of discipline.

While Corey and Sheronda were never in school together at the same time, their age difference hardly deterred them from working as a unit while also charting their own paths. As a Rutgers undergraduate, Corey would often send over the rough drafts of his papers to Sheronda, who was still a high school student, to proofread and provide criticism. Unfortunately, Corey was absent from Sheronda's high school graduation, due to his commitment to ODASIS' rigorous MCAT preparatory course and his dream. Even so, Sheronda urged him to stay focused on his studies, understanding that the prospect of becoming a doctor was extremely important to Corey as well as herself.

Described by Corey as “the smartest person I’ve ever met,” Sheronda would be the first one to tell you that she is more than just one-half of a sister-brother duo. In fact, Sheronda has always been “very independent” almost to the point where she is “hard on herself”. To avoid living in the shadow of her older brother, Sheronda worked twice as hard to set an example of her fierce independence. After all, everyone wants to be acknowledged and respected as an individual.

Corey and Sheronda are now successful physicians who have crafted their own path to success via different avenues. They love their careers because, simply put, they love helping people. Their mother would often say, “if you have the opportunity to help someone, do it”. It seems that this tightly knit duo has taken that to heart. ODASIS thanks these two for their hard work and dedication to success in the sciences; they make all of us proud wherever they go.
When Dr. Ramon Nunez was enrolled in the Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) the summer before his freshman year, he never knew that his life and career would soon be profoundly impacted by his general biology professor. That professor was none other than Dr. Kamal Khan.

At the time, Dr. Khan explained to his students that when the semester would start, the ODASIS program would be able to provide supplemental instruction, test preparation, and guidance. Dr. Nunez had to seriously consider this vitally important decision. He hailed from a background of hardships and conflicts, having suffered from the tragic passing of his father when he was three and having experienced difficult financial hardships within his family. He understood that he would not get any second chances.

Dr. Nunez ultimately decided to join, taking into consideration the great experience that he already had during the EOF program. Despite its intense focus on academic rigor, ODASIS was never intimidating to Dr. Nunez. It felt like an environment of family, providing a vast network of scholarly and personal support. Like any pre-med undergraduate, Dr. Nunez would sometimes feel the immense pressure of his credit-intensive course of study. While many students would spend the weekends partying at tailgates or grabbing a bite to eat at the grease trucks, Dr. Nunez would find himself “eating his books” at the library.

ODASIS made this experience much more palatable. By being able to associate with people of similar backgrounds taking similar courses of study, Dr. Nunez never felt like he was missing out; it felt as if he and his companions were all working towards the same thing. ODASIS, interwoven with EOF, was essential to Dr. Nunez’s success. It provided him a means to interface the big bureaucratic system that is Rutgers and navigate the intimidatingly large campus.

Now, Dr. Nunez resides in Orlando, Florida, where he is the Medical Director of one of the busiest Emergency Departments in Osceola County. After becoming a partner with Florida Emergency Physicians in 2006, Dr. Nunez quickly applied the wide array of interpersonal and professional skills acquired at ODASIS to move up the ranks and ultimately become Medical Director. Dr. Nunez is tasked with managing a staff of approximately 90 people, working relentlessly to provide vital healthcare and improve the lives of their patients.

To Dr. Nunez, the word “family” means a lot of things. It means your support system and your roots; where you go when you need help. Family also means your legacy, as the brevity and fragility of life only provides us so much time to make an impact. Staying connected to your family is the best source of strength, something that we here at ODASIS live by. When it comes to Dr. Nunez and his family, whether it be here at ODASIS or back at his home, he has certainly made his family very proud.

Looking Back, Paying it Forward

Gold Humanism Scholars

The Gold Humanism Honor Society is sponsored by the Arnold P. Gold Foundation. Each year, through peer nomination, they “recognize students, residents and faculty who are exemplars of compassionate patient care and who serve as role models, mentors, and leaders in medicine.” This year, ODASIS is honored to announce that ODASIS alumni Gabrielle Abissi and Ijeoma Eleazu at Rutgers-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, and Khushboo Baldev, Jessi Munoz, and Andy Reyes at Rutgers-New Jersey Medical School were all named as 2017-2018 recipients of the Gold Humanism Award.
This one here is for anyone who has ever struggled with self-doubt, feelings of inadequacy, or insecurity. The journey to obtain this degree was one that tested every limit I thought I had. From being the first in my family to graduate high school and go to college, to being the first to strive towards a doctoral degree, the deck was always stacked to the ceiling, but that’s what makes this one just that much sweeter. SEVEN YEARS it took me to finish this degree, and I’m not ashamed to admit the struggles I faced along the way.

These struggles started well before medical school though; this journey began the day I was rejected from Rutgers University as a senior at Franklin High School. I was a late bloomer in high school, not getting my act together until the end of my sophomore year, so by the time I started applying for college, I was behind the curve. After receiving the devastating news of my rejection, I had a teacher who brought me up to Rutgers personally and kicked down every door she could until I was introduced to the directors of the EOF program and Dr. Khan. They reviewed my coursework and resume and deemed that I had fallen through the cracks and they managed to help me gain acceptance to school. This was one of many hurdles that the EOF and ODASIS programs helped me overcome.

Throughout my time at Rutgers University, I faced financial and family adversity. There were times where I couldn’t afford my term bill for classes, but every time I faced an issue Dr. Khan and EOF were there to offer me a helping hand. In no way did he make things easy for me though, he made sure I earned every bit of help he offered. There were times where I was sure he would kick me out of the program (especially after I did horribly in biology and he told me if I didn’t change I would never make it to medical school). But he never turned me away; instead he demanded more from me and constantly challenged me to be better. He never let me use my background or my lack of support as a crutch. Rather, he made me use it as fuel. I guess that is the true beauty of this program though; it took a kid with untapped potential who had no real guidance and molded him into someone who would rather die than to fail at the goals he set forth for himself.

Through unwavering guidance from the dedicated staff of the ODASIS program, I managed to maneuver through undergrad and gain acceptance into Robert Wood Johnson Medical School through the Access-Med Phase 2 program. This was all while managing to work 3-4 jobs per semester and maintaining grades that Dr. Khan deemed necessary for success. At this point I thought I had made it, the toughest part of the journey was complete, or so I thought.

While in medical school I would face some of the most challenging obstacles I had ever encountered. From struggling with first year coursework to losing friends to gun violence, I had found myself in the middle of utter turmoil with no clear way out. Personal tragedies had begun to pile up all while I was trying to pass my board exams so that I could graduate. It was clear to me that things had to get worse before they could get better.

After I buried my grandmother who passed from leukemia in 2013, depression hit me and rattled me to my core. It was so bad, that I tried to quit, tried to walk away. But the people in my corner wouldn’t let me. Every time I tried to throw in the towel, I would walk over to Dr. Khan’s office and he would pat me on the back and say “you’ve come too far to give up, look at all that you’ve overcome… its too late to turn back now”. As I continued to stay the course, a very close family friend also struggled with cancer. On her deathbed she gave me a stethoscope and told me “finish what you started”. As I continued I thought of her words and the words of the many who believed in me and I kept going.

So this degree is not only for the people who helped me see this process through, but also for any and everyone who thinks that they are going through the struggle alone. You can do it. Every time you feel like giving up, just remember there are people rooting for you even when you can’t see. I can honestly say that without the guidance and help from ODASIS and EOF I would not be where I am today. I wouldn’t have even made it to college without their help. The next time that you think you may not have what it takes to reach your goal just remember that there is a world of untapped potential inside of you, do not be afraid to bring it out.
It’s about to two minutes to 11:00pm. For the last few hours, my head has been buried in a Princeton Review Book in preparation for a test that my future career hinges on, the MCAT. For a moment, I think of calling it a night and spending the rest of the night out and being merry like other students. As I begin to pack up and head home, I notice a piece of paper with a scrawny cartoon of a boy eating a book -- I can’t help but smile as I recognize the meme which captures a phrase I have heard about a thousand times at the ODASIS Office in Nelson: eat your books. Remembering this phrase provoked a desire to work harder. I stop packing up and put in two more hours before heading home grateful for the little things I’d learned from ODASIS over the years.

Ever since I first joined ODASIS, it’s taken me a long way. This year, I graduated and will be matriculating into my first choice medical school with a scholarship. My success story is just one among many others that serve as a testament to the goal-seeking culture the ODASIS program creates and the soundness of its model. Combined with hard work and determination, the program provided played a key role in getting me into the health professional school of my choice. It’s also through the ODASIS program that I met many like-minded peers with whom I’ve built long-lasting friendships. It’s rare to find a whole community of underrepresented students pursuing excellence in one place – something I valued about the program. Having a community of students, going through the same difficulties and challenges I was experiencing really made all the difference; it showed me I wasn’t alone and motivated me to work harder. Looking forward, I’m a bit anxious about starting medical school but I know I’ll be ready to handle any hurdles I might face because being a part of the ODASIS program taught me how to succeed not just in my undergraduate studies but in any academic environment I might find myself in. If I had to start college all over again as a premedical student, I’d choose to attend Rutgers again because of the ODASIS program. To any incoming first years and anyone interested in the program, the best advice I can give is to take advantage of the resources and opportunities ODASIS has to offer.

When I joined ODASIS in the beginning of my freshman year, I had no idea I’d be where I am today, four years later. I had no idea that I would be forced to redefine my standard of excellence or to become a better person in every regard. I had no idea that I’d get to fly across the country and conduct research at an amazing institution or that I would gain admission to my first-choice medical school on a full scholarship. Without God, my family, and ODASIS, I would not be able to proudly say that I will be attending Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons.

Because of ODASIS, I knew exactly what courses I would take and when, in order to complete my Biological Sciences degree and medical school prerequisites on time. I realized very early on that I would have to work twice as hard just to get half of what others had. ODASIS instilled in me the importance of being uncompromising when it came to pursuing something you love. As a result, I never found myself being hesitant about putting in work. I had to learn how to study smarter, not harder. I had to study to apply, not to regurgitate.

ODASIS has granted me so much opportunity. During my junior year, I was fortunate to be a part of the program’s MCAT prep class which helped me master the skills required to do well on the MCAT. If someone told me during my freshman year that I would spend eight months studying for just one test, give up 32 weekends in addition to my winter break and spring break, I would’ve laughed at them. It still baffles me how I made it through. Through thick and thin, my friends and peers motivated me to push through any adversity I faced during that year. In addition, the ODASIS staff was always there to lend a helping hand during this tough time Dr. Kamal Khan, Taruna Chuheria, Jon Langowski, Anika Francis, Shama Huq, I thank you. I thank you for seeing potential in me and reminding me that I could do it when I forgot.

“To whom much is given, much is required.” When the chance to give back arose, I did not hesitate. During my senior year, I served as an instructor for the same MCAT class that fostered my growth and development. I had the opportunity to teach 40 amazing individuals who are also on the pursuit of medicine. They have all touched my life and I hope to have touched theirs.

Now, as I get ready to start medical school, I am not anxious or intimidated. I am ready for what comes next. I am a testament to ODASIS’s work and I am so grateful for everything this program has done for me. When dreams become reality, it is so important to stop, reflect, and thank whoever played a role. So, thank you, ODASIS. I hope to make you proud!

To any incoming first years and anyone interested in the program, the best advice I can give is to take advantage of the resources and opportunities ODASIS has to offer.

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In Their Words—Charting a Path to Success
Strategic Plan Program. After a highly selective recruitment process, an

privilege to host 40 incoming freshmen students in this year's 5 week

foundation and exposure to their core fall courses, ODASIS had the

Strategic Plan Summer Scholars

Summer Research Programs

Cameron Wolf, Honors College, Dean’s List
W.M. Keck Center for Collaborative Neuroscience Research

This summer, I worked at the W.M. Keck Center for Collaborative Neuroscience Research with Dr. Wise Young. This program allowed me to not only design a research project, but perform the experiments and analyze results under the guidance of an M.D./Ph.D. student. The goal of my team’s research this summer was to isolate and characterize monocytes (a mononuclear leukocyte) in peripheral blood. We wanted to design the most affordable and efficient method for collecting and identifying these monocytes so that a standard could be used worldwide. Our next step is to understand the morphology of monocytes in human umbilical cord blood, which is a novel and effective therapy for individuals suffering from spinal cord injury. If monocytes can be isolated and characterized in umbilical cord blood, their function in recovery from spinal cord injury can be better understood and observed.

Christopher Stevens, Honors College, Dean’s List
Aresty Research Center

A variety of driver mutations are known to cause the onset of colorectal cancer. The serrated tumor pathway, unlike the conventional pathway of colorectal cancer progression, commonly involves mutations in the BRAF gene. The molecular oncogenic progression of serrated polyps is poorly characterized despite it occurring in around 20-30% of colorectal cancer cases. In addition to the lack of characterization, the prognosis of a patient with a progression of serrated polyps is distinctly worse due to the fact that current forms of chemotherapy are not effective at treating this form of the cancer. Activation of the mutated BRAF oncogene, BRAFV600E, not only inefficiently induces tumor formation in the intestinal epithelium, but induces the loss of stem cells in the intestine of the available mouse models. Due to the constant renewal of epithelial tissue in the intestine, any mutation not existent in stem cells would be lost, thereby making stem cells the perfect vector for oncogenic mutations. This phenomenon is seemingly contrary intuitive given that a tumor driver dependent on stem cells would cause the loss of stem cells, indicating that an unknown process must be responsible for allowing such a mutation to survive. Using the in vitro organoid system, the characteristics of the BRAFV600E mechanism can be studied without the many variables present in the in vivo models. With an established organoid system, the mutated gene can be expressed, and the effects of certain drugs can be tested against the BRAFV600E mechanism in order to better understand its physiology.

Hesbon Isaboke, EOF, Dean’s List
BCP II at Rutgers–RWJMS

The Biomedical Careers Program Level II is a six-week program, which consisted of two courses per day from Monday to Thursday and included the opportunity to be involved in various hospital experiences through a shadowing program at RWJUH. The courses of the program at RWJMS focused on enhancing our knowledge of Biochemistry, Critical Analysis and Reasoning Skills (CARS), and MCAT prep, focusing on the science portion. The Biochemistry course aimed to prepare those of us who would be taking the course in the fall. The CARS course gave me an opportunity to better understand what the MCAT is like, the questions it consisted of, and how to approach them. In addition to this course, we also had “Study Strategies” and “Cognitive Skills” courses where we learned useful skills and were tested on CARS section of the MCAT. This type of schedule required rigorous studying outside of class as well as collaborating with other students in order to excel in the weekly quizzes and exams. We also did case studies to apply our scientific knowledge and presented two projects on drugs and diseases. At the end of the week on Friday, another student and I shadowed different physicians and nurses each week at the Emergency department where we witnessed very interesting trauma and non-emergency cases. Overall, this experience was very insightful and productive, providing me with excellent resources to help better myself as a future medical student.

Strategic Plan Summer Scholars

In an effort to provide incoming first year students with a strong foundation and exposure to their core fall courses, ODASIS had the privilege to host 40 incoming freshmen students in this year’s 5 week Strategic Plan Program. After a highly selective recruitment process, an elite group of students was selected to enroll in the rigorous program. Students partook in classes that prepared them for their Rutgers Chemistry, Calculus, and Expository Writing courses.

Strategic Plan scholars were also provided with additional opportunities including workshops, one-on-one tutoring, a chemistry lab demonstration conducted by chemistry professor Robert Porcja, seats at the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School’s BCP Symposium, as well as a medical school trip to Lewis Katz School of Medicine at Temple University. Our Strategic Plan scholars began their summer with great enthusiasm as new members of the Rutgers community and performed above expectations. With great pride, we share that we are pleased to report that 12 students received A’s, 11 received a B+, 8 received B’s, 8 received C+’s, and 3 received a final grade of C. These students are well on their way to becoming exceptional contributors to the university as 100% of participants successfully completed the program!
Tochi Unegbu-Ogbonna, Dean’s List
USC Keck Bridging the Gaps

This summer I participated in Bridging The Gaps; a program at Keck School of Medicine, University of Southern California. During this eight week research program I worked in Dr. Florence Hofman’s laboratory in the department of Pathology. The research I conducted revolved around brain tumors, specifically Gliomas. My project was to test the efficacy and optimal mode of treatment for a specific drug we were testing. During My time in the laboratory. When I first began, I assisted the senior lab members with their projects on breast cancer research. During this time, I learned basic laboratory methods, such as pipetting, western blot, gel electrophoresis, and cell culture. After three months of training, I was given my own project. The purpose of the research we do in our lab is to understand the role unique genetic rearrangements play in breast cancer. These rearrangements are gene fusions that involve the kinase RET. Novel RET fusions were discovered after we completed genomic profiling on tissue that was received from a breast cancer patient. In particular, my project focuses on the cellular localization of the protein product. My project will offer additional information and help of us determine whether the fusion causes cancer. If it does, the next step would be to target it. The goal is that our research will provide breast cancer patients more personalized methods of treatment. I am so grateful for this opportunity here at CIT; I feel like I am truly making a difference.

Sopuru Ezeonu, Dean’s List
CURE at Cancer Institute of New Jersey

Through the CURE (Continuing Umbrella of Research Experience) Program, I was given the chance to work as a student research assistant at the Cancer Institute of New Jersey. As a student research assistant, I gained hands-on experience and conducted research in Dr. Kim Hirstfield’s laboratory. When I first began, I assisted the senior lab members with their projects on breast cancer research. During this time, I learned basic laboratory methods, such as pipetting, western blot, gel electrophoresis, and cell culture. After three months of training, I was given my own project. The purpose of the research we do in our lab is to understand the role unique genetic rearrangements play in breast cancer. These rearrangements are gene fusions that involve the kinase RET. Novel RET fusions were discovered after we completed genomic profiling on tissue that was received from a breast cancer patient. In particular, my project focuses on the cellular localization of the protein product. My project will offer additional information and help of us determine whether the fusion causes cancer. If it does, the next step would be to target it. The goal is that our research will provide breast cancer patients more personalized methods of treatment. I am so grateful for this opportunity here at CIT; I feel like I am truly making a difference.

Irene Martinez, Dean’s List
NERA at Rutgers–NJMS

This summer I had the opportunity to participate in the Northeast Regional Alliance (NERA) program at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School. As part of the level three cohort, I was paired with a laboratory at NJMS that was conducting cancer research. My small study, which looked into the induced changes of mesenchymal stem cells by breast cancer cells, contributed to the large-scale research that was being conducted in the lab. It was a fantastic opportunity to see countless procedures and lab techniques that I knew from previous course material in application to a particular study. Furthermore, I was able to get invaluable insight into the world of publishing scientific articles and how to assess the validity of an article based on the evidence and discussion provided. The biggest takeaway that I had from this program was a deeper appreciation for scientific research and its significance to the medical field. Having had close experiences with cancer in my family has always made me consider specializing in oncology and being able to work alongside scientists at the front of cancer research was amazing. To see how a seemingly small and extremely specific topic could transcend, and with contribution of other work, could ultimately lead to potential diagnostic tools or interventions for patients was awe-inspiring and in a way, humbling. From this experience I have grown not only as a future physician but also as a future scientist and look forward to continuing to nurture these skills as I enter medical school and beyond.

ODASIS High School Programs: Possibility Through Partnership

ODASIS recognizes the importance of community partnership and the need for pipeline programs that help high school students make their dreams of attending university a reality. ODASIS is a proud partner of Johnson & Johnson (J&J), FHI360, and the New Brunswick Public School District and provides such programs to New Brunswick students. **Saturday Scholars SAT Prep Academy:**

Students enrolled in the J&J 11th Grade Saturday Scholars SAT Prep Academy attend weekly SAT Math and English classes. This year, participants saw an overall average improvement on their SAT scores by over 175 points, with some seeing an increase by close to 300 points! **Rutgers 12th Grade College English Program:**

The 12th Grade College English Program allows seniors to earn up to six college credits through the successful completion of Rutgers Basic Composition and Expository Writing courses. In 2016-2017, 39 out of 58 participants were accepted to Rutgers University. **Bridge to Employment Program:**

Bridge to Employment (BTE) is a J&J sponsored program that collaborates with FHI360 and has been established worldwide for 25 years. 2017 was the New Brunswick BTE site’s final year with the 2013-2017 cohort. The project developed various activities and methods to enhance students’ academic and extracurricular performance, and transform them into competitive college applicants. **New Brunswick AVID Supplemental Instruction Program:**

The New Brunswick Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) Supplemental Instruction program is designed to assist students who are in the academic middle; most are minorities pursuing careers in the sciences. The supplemental instructors are Rutgers University juniors and seniors who are or have been ODASIS participants. Through sponsorship by the New Brunswick Board of Education, ODASIS provided over 35 AVID instructors in 2016-2017.
Congratulations to the Class of 2017
Graduating Seniors and Alumni accepted to Dental, Graduate Medical, Osteopathic, Physical Therapy, MD/PhD, or BA/MD Programs

Rutgers–RWJMS
Motunrayo Becky Adu
Joshua Akinsanya
Iman Ali
Stephanie Chisom Amaefuna
Duniel Coke
Valerie DeJesus
Lester Julian McRae
Nanaama O'Hene
Anevea Tinnery

Rutgers–NJMS
Adam Ahmad Chasttre
Joshua Akinsanya
John Bertot
Ayodeji Folarin
Ashley Gallagher
Murka Jeancharles
Flor Lema
Breta Osei Bonsu
Jillian Paredes
Darius White

Cooper Medical School
Marie Beauvais
Sofia Fils
Keiry Rodriguez
Claudia Rugama

EOF Students
Travis Garth
Pablo Ortiz
Jinalben Parikh
Nitishe Sharma

DO Schools
Francisca Aguilar - Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine
Tatiana Fech - Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine

Dental Programs
Lika Natour - Rutgers School of Dental Medicine
Sabine Page - Temple School of Dentistry
Matthew Sawaged - University of Maryland School of Dentistry
Dorin Yakubov - NYU College of Dentistry and Touro College of Dental Medicine

Other Professional Programs
Lindsey Michelle Williams - Workforce- MIT Office of Digital Learning
(Integrated Learning Initiative Team)

University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine
Nathaniel Baffoe Mensah
Michael Boateng
Alexis Holmes
Anchi Numfor

Graduate Programs
Chizoba Akunwanne - Case Western Reserve Master's Program and Rowan GSBS
Kayla Fowler - Rutgers School of Public Health
Joanna Ma - Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University

Other Medical Programs
George Asham - Meharry Medical College School of Medicine
Sunday Ebo - Temple School of Medicine
Kene Ezeigwe - Johns Hopkins School of Medicine
Viemma Nwigwe - Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons
Abim Okulaja - Temple School of Medicine

* Indicates an EOF Student
Alumni Graduating in 2017
Congratulations to our ODASIS Alumni Graduating in 2016 from Graduate, Doctoral, or Professional Programs

Chukwudi Okafor and Lauren Evans
Darnell Alexandre
Felipe Guzman and Brianna Wapples
Kelsey Bonilla and Kevin Bonilla

1224 ODASIS GRADUATES FROM 1990-2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Number (%)</th>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Number (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medicine (MD)</td>
<td>503 (41.1%)</td>
<td>Medicine / Public Health (MD / MPH)</td>
<td>4 (0.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osteopathy (DO)</td>
<td>93 (7.8%)</td>
<td>Chiropractic (DC)</td>
<td>4 (0.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biomedical Sciences (MBS)</td>
<td>50 (4.1%)</td>
<td>Biomedical Engineering (MBE)</td>
<td>3 (0.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dentistry (MDM / DDS)</td>
<td>35 (2.9%)</td>
<td>Law (JD)</td>
<td>3 (0.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biomedical Research</td>
<td>13 (1.1%)</td>
<td>Optometry (OD)</td>
<td>4 (0.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physician Assistant (PA)</td>
<td>11 (0.9%)</td>
<td>Medicine / Biomedical Sciences (MD / MBS)</td>
<td>3 (0.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podiatry (DPM)</td>
<td>14 (1.1%)</td>
<td>Research (PhD)</td>
<td>3 (0.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing (RN / BSN / LPN / MSN)</td>
<td>10 (0.8%)</td>
<td>Medicine / Business (MD / MBA)</td>
<td>1 (0.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine / Research (MD / PhD)</td>
<td>8 (0.7%)</td>
<td>Osteopathy / Law (DO / JD)</td>
<td>1 (0.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacy (Pharm D)</td>
<td>17 (1.4%)</td>
<td>Master of Science (MS)</td>
<td>1 (0.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osteopathy / Biomedical Sciences (DO / MBS)</td>
<td>7 (0.6%)</td>
<td>Veterinary (DVM)</td>
<td>2 (0.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health (MPH)</td>
<td>6 (0.5%)</td>
<td>Other (e.g., business, education)</td>
<td>412 (33.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Therapy (PT)</td>
<td>16 (1.3%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rowan Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences
Massah Bassie
Courtney McPherson
Karon Milar
Musunga Mulenga
Tim Oyeniran
Aslihan Sahil

Rutgers–Robert Wood Johnson Medical School
Lessley Chiriboga
Roland Howard
Randy Jackson*
Somair Malik
Afua Takyi

Rutgers–New Jersey Medical School
Adebowale Ayegunna
Chifaa Bouzidi
Martha Castro
Devin Clark
Kenny Dishow*
Omar ElFanagely
Felipe Guzman
Marcus Hughes
Asha Martin
Tochi Nworgu
Susan Rasul
Katherine Sharp*
Christina Vo*
Brianna Wapples

Other Graduate Programs
NYU School of Medicine – Richard Carmona
George Washington University Medical School – Ismanie Guillaume
AUC School of Medicine – Javier Padro*
NYU College of Dentistry – Amarpreet Suri
New York College of Podiatric Medicine – Zakkiyah Waters
University of Louisville School of Medicine – Stephen Wortman

* Indicates an EOF Student
Rutgers-New Jersey Medical School, Rutgers-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, and Rutgers School of Dental Medicine are all working to produce some of the top health care providers in the nation. ODASIS is privileged to be a part of this process, with several of our alumni attending these schools and going on to achieve excellence in the medical and dental fields. All of the ODASIS students pictured here were accepted to these schools in 2016-2017. We are incredibly proud of all they have accomplished and all they will go on to accomplish.