



ODASIS NEWSLETTER

James Pierre-Louis, M.D., An ODASIS Success Story

African-Americans and Latinos make up nearly 30% of the U.S. population, and yet they represent only 9% of physicians in this country. The Office for Diversity and Academic Success In the Sciences (ODASIS) at Rutgers University aims to resolve this disparity in health care as well as in STEM disciplines in general. The goal of ODASIS is to increase the recruitment and academic success of students from underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds who are interested in pursuing careers in the sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Since its inception in 1986, ODASIS has helped hundreds of underrepresented and disadvantaged students successfully complete their undergraduate course of study in these fields. One of these alumni is Dr. James Pierre-Louis, a Rutgers EOF graduate and ODASIS alumnus from the class of 1996.

Dr. James Pierre-Louis, who was born in Haiti, knew from an early age that he wanted to become a physician. As a young boy in his native country, he saw many people who were ill with diseases that were completely treatable, but who had no access to the proper healthcare resources. This made him determined to become a medical doctor and care for underserved populations.

When James started college at Rutgers University, he discovered all the support services ODASIS offered to students like him who wished to pursue careers in the sciences. Not only did the ODASIS programs help him successfully complete his science courses, but they also put him on track to gain early admission to medical school.

James applied and was accepted into ODASIS' ACCESS MED program, which allowed him to begin taking medical school courses at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School (RWJMS) during his senior year at Rutgers.



Dr. James Pierre-Louis and family

He graduated from RWJMS in 2000, and completed a residency in Anesthesiology at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City. He chose this particular specialty because it suits his interest in both pharmacology and physiology, and he appreciates its broad applications to many realms of medicine, including surgery, pain management, and intensive care. Most of all, he loves the ability to help patients and see the immediate effects of anesthesia during life-saving procedures.

Today Dr. Pierre-Louis is a board-certified Anesthesiologist practicing at Overlook Medical Center in Summit, NJ, Edison Surgical Center, and the Metropolitan Surgical Center in South Amboy.

He is mainly a clinician, but also serves as a teacher to advanced medical students com-

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Upcoming Events

- Access Med Conference: Oct. 27th, 9am
- Motivational Workshop: Nov. 30th, 12:30pm
- Access Med Ceremony: Apr. 24th, 6pm
- GRE's Spring 2013
- High Achievers Workshop Spring 2013
- MCATs Online Spring 2013

Past Events

Annual Fall Orientation; ODASIS Open House

James Pierre-Louis, M.D., An ODASIS Success Story

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pleting clinical rotations at Overlook. He also is a mentor to our current ODASIS students who shadow and learn from him. This is his way of giving back to the program that was so instrumental to his current success.

Jefferson Benites, an ODASIS alumnus recently accepted to Cooper Medical School of Rowan University, is one of the students who has had the privilege to observe Dr. Pierre-Louis in action. An aspiring physician who is currently applying to medical school, Benites has nothing but praise for Dr. Pierre-Louis. "He's not your average doctor; his work is amazing and he really cares about his patients. On one particular day I observed him with a young patient about to have surgery to repair a hernia. I was accompanying Dr. Pierre-Louis when he went to the patient's room to ask him the standard pre-op questions. As we left I noticed that the boy began to cry. I followed Dr. Pierre to the O.R. where he began to prepare the instruments and medications he was going to use for anesthesia. I mentioned that I had seen the patient crying, and immediately Dr. Pierre-Louis stopped what he was doing and rushed back to the patient's room. He took extra care and time to

comfort the boy and his parents, explaining in detail everything that would happen in surgery and reassured them."

His patients aren't the only ones who appreciate his work as a medical doctor; Dr. Pierre-Louis is also admired by his fellow physicians. Dr. Didier Demesmin, a board certified Interventional Pain Medicine Specialist who has worked with Dr. Pierre-Louis for years, says about his colleague, "He is a caring doctor who goes out of his way to make patients comfortable. Any time he has a patient who is nervous about a procedure, he spends extra time with the patient in the pre-op room to answer every question, as well as afterward in the recovery room to make sure the patient is doing well. He is very smart and hard-working, has excellent clinical skills, and is a good team-player. He interacts well with all the staff, from nurses to X-ray technicians and recovery room staff."

Dr. James Pierre-Louis is indeed an outstanding physician and an example of the success that can be achieved through hard work and determination. He acknowledges that the road to becoming a physician is difficult and requires personal sacrifice. For him, this sacrifice involved countless hours dedicated to studying and having to delay

starting a family while he completed his medical training. Ultimately his efforts paid off. Today he is an accomplished well respected medical doctor who successfully balances his commitment to family with the work of saving lives.

His advice to underrepresented students who wish to pursue a career in medicine is: "Try to align yourself with the right crowd and surround yourself with positive people. If this is what you really want, you have to put in a lot of time and effort, look for positive role models, be on time, and seek out help in as many places as possible. Resources are abundant but you have to find them and use them. There are many challenges in medicine, so you must have a game plan. Do not give up."



Dr. James Pierre-Louis

DID YOU KNOW?

ODASIS offers MCAT

preparation classes both face to face and online. For the year 2011-2012, ODASIS students' average composite score was 25.75 compared to the nationwide average of 25.1.

10 ODASIS

students were accepted into Access Med Phase II at RWJMS, the largest group to-date.

72 ODASIS

students participated in summer research programs in 2012, compared to 52 in 2011.

497 students

participated in ODASIS 2012 programs. In 2011, 310 participated. This is an increase of 187 students over last year!

ODASIS offers GRE

preparation classes. In 2011-2012, the avg. score for ODASIS students in Math was 150 & 152 verbal compared to 151.3 math & 150.8 verbal nationwide.

15 out of 36

students enrolled in ODASIS New Brunswick High School programs in 2011-2012 are attending Rutgers University. The remaining 21 are attending other colleges.

During the Academic Year 2011-2012:

ODASIS students received **28.72% more B grades in General Biology** when compared to the RU student population taking the same course.

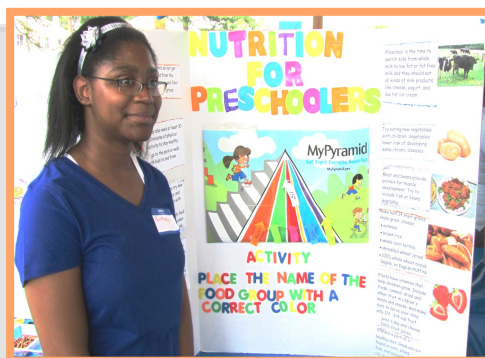
ODASIS students received **33.11% more B grades in General Chemistry** when compared to the RU student population taking the same course.

ODASIS students received **79.07% more B grades in Organic Chemistry** when compared to the RU student population taking the same course.

ODASIS students received **34.10% more B grades in all Math courses** when compared to the RU student population taking the same course.

ODASIS Supplemental Instruction program consistently shows academic strength above the general Rutgers Student population. (Source: Office of the Registrar).

ODASIS High School Programs



Bridge to Employment (BTE) New Brunswick, New Jersey

Overview and Objectives:

This BTE site is part of the Johnson & Johnson worldwide program, which guides and prepares students over the course of their four years of high school.

The program components this year have included Applied Learning projects, mentor workshops, internships, RU English classes for college credit, and sessions for applying to colleges and scholarships.

Highlights:

- This year marked the end of this cohort of BTE students as they graduated high school and completed their four years in the BTE program. All 23 BTE students were accepted into various colleges.
- Eight BTE students were awarded competitive scholarships.
- Six BTE students attended the annual Science Enrichment Program at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. Students shadowed the following mentors: John Young, Shaun Mickus, Michael Valentin, and Ruby Hope. They also visited the Johnson & Johnson Media studio, and were educated on the importance of patents.

12th Grade English Program

Overview and Objectives:

The RU 12th Grade English Program consists of students from New Brunswick High School and New Brunswick Health Sciences and Technology High School who have completed the New Brunswick Saturday Scholars Program.

Students take Basic Composition (English 100) in the Fall Semester and based on the professor's recommendation, they can take Expository Writing (English 101) in the Spring Semester. When students fulfill these writing requirements in 12th



grade, they have a greater chance of being placed directly into college-level science courses in order to fulfill their majors.

Highlights:

- This year, eleven 12th grade students of the New Brunswick Saturday Scholars Academy Program and 25 BTE students successfully completed the RU 12th Grade English program.
- 19 students received 3-college credits for their English 100 course.
- 17 students received 6-college credits for their English 100 and 101 courses.

11th Grade New Brunswick Saturday Scholars Program

Overview and Objectives:

The New Brunswick Saturday Scholars Program gives 11th grade students from New Brunswick High School and New Brunswick Health Sciences and Technology High School the opportunity to increase their reading, writing, and math skills through year-long SAT Prep classes. Students participate in science labs at Rutgers University and are exposed to careers in the sciences from various guest speakers, while receiving individualized academic support in SAT Prep.

Highlights:

- This year, thirty-four 11th grade students successfully completed the program, with 21 students being accepted into the 12th grade English program.
- The average score for the 21 students who took the SAT exam was 1475. Twelve students scored between 1300 and 1600, and nine students scored above a 1600.
- Students have grown more motivated to take the SATs more seriously in order to move on to the next level
- Students are regularly checked on to ensure they are working on time management, and doing their studies.



Pictured on this page: ODASIS students from New Brunswick Health Sciences and Technology High School and the New Brunswick High School present their projects at a Nutrition Fair and examine an organ at the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.

Congratulations to Our Alumni!

ODASIS Alumni in 2012 entering Graduate, Doctoral or Professional Programs

UMDNJ—Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

1. Elizabeth Beckford **(Phase II)**
2. Claudia Herreros **(Phase II)** (EOF)
3. Wylie Lopez **(Phase II)**
4. Somair Malik
5. Amaka Onwuka **(Phase II)**
6. Shantel Suncar **(Phase II)**
7. Afua Takyi
8. Paul Truche
9. Michelle Walker **(Phase II)**



Amaka Onwuka



Wylie Lopez

UMDNJ— New Jersey Medical School

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 22. Ting Chen (EOF) | 29. Larrisha Love |
| 23. Chandler Christophe | 30. Aneesah McClinton |
| 24. Devin Clark | 31. Denisse Reyes |
| 25. Omar Elfanagely | 32. Susan Rasul |
| 26. Ydamis Estrella (EOF) | 33. Alisha Valdez |
| 27. Felipe Guzman | 34. Brianna Wapples |
| 28. Adaugo Ike | |



Felipe Guzman



Alisha Valdez



Adaugo Ike

UPenn-Perelman School of Medicine

10. Kevin Bonilla
11. Kelsey Robinson



Kelsey Robinson and Kevin Bonilla

New York University-Medical School

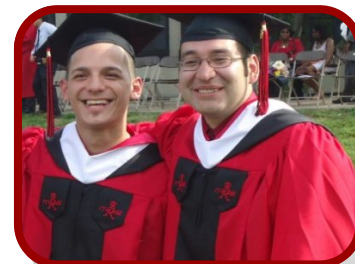
12. Adefemi Betiku (DPT Program)
13. Richard Carmona
14. Osamudiamen Obanor



Adefemi Betiku

UMDNJ-School of Osteopathic Medicine

35. Adebayo Adunbarin
36. Alyssa Cocchiara
37. Javier Gomez
38. Shane Mahabir **(EOF)**
39. Assad Nasralla
40. Santhana Sriradchatha
41. Kevin Vasquez **(EOF)**
42. Raleke Adibe



Javier Gomez (left) and Kevin Vasquez (right)

UMDNJ—New Jersey Dental School

15. Nneka Emenaka
16. Cheryl Li **(EOF)**
17. Paul Red Path
18. Paola Rodriguez
19. Brittany Young



Paola Rodriguez

Dartmouth-Geisel School of Medicine

43. David Hernandez
44. Oluyinka Igberase



David Hernandez

Rowan University-Cooper Medical School

20. Ernest Egu
21. Sandra Pena



Ernest Egu

45. Ife Anikpe
46. Isaac Awad **(EOF)**
47. Madiha Aziz
48. Ayobamidel Balogun
49. Natasha Cabrera **(EOF)**
50. Geoffrey Casimir
51. Jshade Evans
52. Sara Jurado
53. William Murray

- | |
|------------------------------------------------|
| Workforce |
| Workforce |
| Meharry Medical College |
| Jefferson Medical School |
| Boston University School of Medicine |
| Vanderbilt School of Medicine |
| University of Delaware DPT |
| Rutgers Nursing School |
| Temple University School of Podiatric Medicine |



William Murray

Congratulations to Our Alumni!

54. Rachel Odeyemi	NYCOM
55. Jaqueline Palmer	Workforce
56. Christina Rodriguez	Arcadia University-Physical Therapy Program
57. Akriti Sharma (EOF)	UMDNJ- SHRP Physical Therapy Program
58. Marvell Saint Victor	AUC Medical School
59. Tanbir Singh	Ross Medical School
60. Jonathan Vo (EOF)	Rutgers Business School, Kennedy Health System



Natasha Cabrera



Rachel Odeyemi



Akriti Sharma

ODASIS Alumni 2012 Graduates from Graduate, Doctoral or Professional Programs



Alyson McGhan, MD

Residency in Internal Medicine—
Duke University Medical Center



Stephanie Arismendi, DDS

Residency in General Practice—
Methodist Dental



Opeyemi Awe, MD

Residency in Internal Medicine—
Morristown



Ogechi Dike, MD

Residency in Internal Medicine—
Harvard



Maxime Debrosse, MD

Residency in Anesthesia—
Cleveland Clinic



Nicholas Perez, MD

Residency in Physical Medicine
and Rehabilitation—RWJ/JFK



Afsheen Khan, PharmD (EOF)

Rutgers Ernest Mario School of
Pharmacy



Alycia Valente, MD

Residency in Emergency
Medicine—UPenn

Summer Research Program Participants

Summer Research:

This summer, 72 ODASIS students participated in several research programs. These programs enabled the students to gain exposure to career opportunities in scientific research, while also making them more competitive candidates for graduate and health professions schools. The two programs were:

P.U.L.S.E. (Premedical Urban Leaders Summer Enrichment) Program, sponsored by Cooper Medical School of Rowan University, which provides academic, clinical, research, and service learning opportunities to individuals traditionally underrepresented in medicine.

CURE (Continuing Umbrella for Research Experience) Program at the Cancer Institute of New Jersey provides research training and academic and professional enrichment activities for highly motivated underserved students. Here are some examples of the interesting projects our students worked on in their summer research programs.

Chioma Unegbu-Ogbonna

Class of 2013

P.U.L.S.E.—Cooper Medical School of Rowan University

I did research on the correlation between education and health both nationally and specifically within the area of Lanning Square, Camden. Outlining a plan on how Lanning Square Family School intends to increase the standard of health in this urban setting, the paradigm of Geoffrey Canada's Promise Academy and Harlem Children's Zone prove to be very effective. Geoffrey Canada implemented a baby college for pregnant women in which they were taught child raising skills (ie. how to feed the child, when they should be able to recite letters or numbers, what is nutritious for them to eat, etc.). He then enrolled the children into a headstart program followed by entrance into promise academy. His motto is "cradle to college to career" and this outlook has proved very successful. I suggest improvements that would make the Lanning Square's program, Promise Neighborhood, more efficient.



Vanessa Arientyl

Class of 2013

University of Southern California – KECK School of Medicine

While bonds with partner and family are typically the strongest associations in humans, the majority of our social interactions are not based on sexual or kinship relations. These bonds are associated with the actions of the nonapeptide hormone oxytocin in all social mammals. The goal of my research was to determine if oxytocin, like social behavior, is rewarding in social animals. I evaluated the effects of oxytocin in a conditioned partner preference test and also did a dosage response. A small and large dose were given to two separate groups of mice.



Darnell Alexandre

Class of 2013

Access Med Phase II

Cancer Institute of New Jersey—The Continuing Umbrella for Research Experience Program

Multiple endocrine neoplasia type I (MEN1) is an inherited tumor syndrome characterized by tumors in multiple endocrine organs including the parathyroids, pancreatic islets and the pituitary. It has been reported that MEN1 may play a role in DNA repair, cell cycle control and transcriptional regulation. But how MEN1 involves in these cellular functions are still not clear. We are specifically interested in examining whether MEN1 is involved in DNA repair by regulating p53-regulated genes.



Joel Okech

Class of 2013

Access Med Phase II

Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and the Cancer Institute of New Jersey.

My summer research involved observing women who have a heterozygous germline mutation in BRCA1 and have a greatly increased risk of developing breast (50%-80%) and ovarian cancers. (40%).

The repair defect in BRCA1-deficient cells is due to inappropriate use of a 53BP1-dependent non-homologous end joining (NHEJ) repair pathway. The purpose of my summer experience was to examine the localization of 53bp1 to DNA damage sites following DNA damage in BRCA1 -/- background.



Chukwudi Okafor

Class of 2013

Access Med Phase II

Robert Wood Johnson Medical School-Biomedical Careers Program.

My research revolved around Mammalian target of rapamycin (mTOR) which is a protein that is a central controller of cell growth and proliferation. mTOR functions as two multimeric protein complexes, mTORC1 and mTORC2. In this study we found that Bortezomib, approved for the treatment of leukemia and more recently liver cancer, showed dramatic effects on colon cancer cells. These findings provide us with a potential new drug for the treatment of colon cancer.



Access Med Ceremony

On April 18, 2012, ODASIS celebrated the ACCESS MED program with a ceremony attended by over 350 guests, including graduating students and their proud parents, rising sophomore and junior students, and faculty/staff members. In attendance were Vice President of Undergraduate Education, Dr. Barry Qualls; Vice President for Health Science Partnerships, Dr. Kenneth Breslauer; and Vice Dean – Office of Undergraduate Education, Dr. Mike Beals. Furthermore, 28 alumni of the program who are now graduating from medical, dental, osteopathic and public health schools, as well as several inspirational speakers, were in

attendance.

This year's keynote speaker was Dr. Maria Soto-Greene, Vice Dean of New Jersey Medical School, who discussed her professional journey and exposed students to careers in administration. Our guest speakers who motivated and encouraged ODASIS students were Drs. Shelley Ann and Owano Pennycooke, EOF alumni and physicians practicing emergency medicine at New Jersey Shore Medical Center. The closing remarks were presented by Mrs. Amanda Onwuka, parent of ODASIS student Amaka Onwuka. Amaka, an Access Med Phase II student, was

recently accepted into UMDNJ – Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. We thank all our sponsors for their continued support which makes programs like ACCESS MED successful!



Dr. Maria Soto-Greene

Student Testimonials

Kevin Bonilla:

When I started at Rutgers I knew I wanted to go to medical school and I had a plan for how I was going to get there, however, there was still so much I didn't know about the process. It wasn't until my sophomore year that ODASIS found me and gave me a community to belong to within Rutgers. I joined the program's MCAT course and its structure and framework enabled me to score well. But more importantly, ODASIS offered me the opportunity to network with students and admissions staff of different medical schools.

After taking the ODASIS MCAT course, I wanted to help other students just as I had been helped. I became an instructor for two years and this was instrumental in making my college experience great. It was rewarding to see my classes get accepted into medical schools. ODASIS gave me the tools to successfully navigate the journey to medical school and introduced me to my first choice school, the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, which I now attend.

Because of the ODASIS community I had a support system that not only gave me the information I needed, but actively championed my cause. Dr. Khan made phone calls, wrote emails, and set up introductions, not just for me but for every one of my peers and students. I am proud to be part of ODASIS and I hope that I can continue to find ways to be involved and assist future students.

“ODASIS gave me the tools to successfully navigate the journey to medical school” -KB



Kevin Bonilla and Kelsey Robinson

“... made me a more responsible and well-rounded individual with the skills necessary to be a successful physician” -KR

Kelsey Robinson:

When I began at Rutgers I knew I wanted to go to medical school but I didn't know how to make myself a strong applicant. When Dr. Kamal Khan found me during my sophomore year, he offered me the resources and support I needed to be successful.

The MCAT class helped me attain the score necessary to be competitive, the ODASIS office helped me make connections with the admissions officers through networking opportunities, Dr. Khan ensured that they would know me as a person, and I believe this impacted the way they approached my application. ODASIS also offered me the opportunity to hone my leadership and communication skills through becoming an instructor for the MCAT class. As the instructor, I learned how to create a balanced learning environment and tailor my teaching in a way to make my class succeed. I believe that my involvement with the MCAT class made me a more responsible and well-rounded individual with the skills necessary to be a successful physician.

The ODASIS office helped prepare me for medical school by supporting my academic and personal development and was instrumental in helping me get accepted into the medical school of my dreams. Without them I may not have gotten where I am today so I can attest to the efficacy of their program and the value of their advice.

Geoffrey Casimir:

Class of 2016 Vanderbilt University School of Medicine

Over the course of my four years at Rutgers, life has been full of ups and downs, but through it all the ODASIS program has helped ensure that this thrilling experience ended on a positive note. ODASIS is a group of dedicated individuals who have become like a family, providing me with a sense of direction in the journey of life. It was only through this program that I have had the pleasure of meeting so many diverse and unique individuals whom I am proud to call my friends. Although science classes were tough, we kept each other in uplifted spirits. Dr. Khan, Taruna, Jonathan and Stephanie provide the wisdom that every college student needs. They will always have a place in my heart. Without their help I am not sure where my life would have lead me.



"ODASIS is a group of dedicated individuals who have become like a family, providing me with a sense of direction in the journey of life"

"ODASIS makes you work. Hard. And not only do you work hard, but when you're done working, you take a breath and keep on working even harder than before."

Ben Schindel:

Class of 2013 Rutgers University

My very first night at Rutgers, a new friend told me about ODASIS and explained that you show up to supplemental instruction sessions and they guarantee that you get an A in the class and go to medical school. Easy! Three years into ODASIS, the program is successful, but in no way is it easy. In fact, it is exactly the opposite of that: ODASIS makes you work. Hard. And not only do you work hard, but when you're done working you take a breath and keep on working, even harder than before.

I credit the success of ODASIS to one invaluable quality of the program: nowhere can you find the kind of tough love that ODASIS offers. In a really loving family there must be a desire to give each other wings, and ODASIS is this family. The staff do not just want to see you succeed; they want to see you soar. I have spent hours locked in the ODASIS office, slaving over the material. Because of ODASIS and their tough genuine love I am ready not just to succeed in medical school, but to be the doctor I have always dreamt of becoming.



OFFICE FOR DIVERSITY AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS IN THE SCIENCES

The programs and services offered through the Office for Diversity and Academic Success in the Sciences are made possible through grants and support from:

Division of Life Sciences (DLS)
Educational Opportunity Fund
Central Office (EOF)
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New Brunswick Public Schools
The African American Fund
The Merck Co. Foundation
New Jersey Medical School
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PCOM

RUTGERS

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Mr. Elorm Avakame (PT)
Academic Advisor

Ms. Alvina Swati (PT)
MCAT Coordinator

Ms. Stephanie Pena
Administrative Assistant

Take advantage of the opportunity to make a significant difference in the life of a Rutgers undergraduate student. The overwhelming success of ODASIS is made possible by our generous sponsors and donors who partner with us to further the work we are doing. If you would like to become an ODASIS partner, please contact us by calling us at:

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On behalf of the Office for Diversity and Academic Success in the Sciences and the students we serve,

Thank you for your support!