

Unique Perspectives

Celebrating Diversity, Inclusion and Equity in the University of Missouri's School of Medicine | Volume 1, Issue 4

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Contributor's Notes:

Brought to you by the School of Medicine Faculty and Staff Diversity and Inclusion Committees. To be disseminated 5 times per year.

-To submit diversity and inclusion news and events, please e-mail: folkerts@health.missouri.edu and wesslerk@missouri.edu

-To find out more about what's going on in the University of Missouri School of Medicine's diversity and inclusion efforts, go to:

<https://medicine.missouri.edu/about/office-diversity-and-inclusion>

In the Spotlight: Diego Avella Patino, MD



Diego Avella Patino is an assistant professor of surgery in the division of cardiac and thoracic surgery.

Describe how you help create an environment that is welcoming and inclusive as a faculty member in your department.

One of my goals since joining Mizzou has been to increase the presence of underrepresented minorities in the School of Medicine and more specifically, in the Department of Surgery. With the support of the Chairman of Surgery, we expanded the initiatives of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee of the School of Medicine. In order to get medical students from diverse backgrounds to join our residency program, we offered a rotation in the Department of Surgery for underrepresented minorities who might be interested in furthering their surgical training at Mizzou upon graduation. Though this program is in its infancy as far as the Department of Surgery is concerned, it has a promising future for expanding the diversity of the department.

On a daily basis, I believe it is important to try to reach out to undergrad and medical students from underrepresented minorities to provide opportunities for advancement and guidance for their careers. Indeed, I have been working with a number of such candidates to help them with their research as well as to give them ideas about how to better build portfolios and expand their interest in surgery. I try to show them that anyone can pursue a surgical career, and there is a pathway to get there.

How do you encourage others to honor the uniqueness of each individual?

This is a very hard question for me. Changing others' opinions is never an easy task. I am not perfect at this, but my goal is to become better so that I can lead by example.

What is your definition of diversity?

Diversity is the recognition of the importance of all of the characteristics and features that make each person unique, including, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, religious beliefs, socio-economic status, age, physical ability, and other attributes.

How do you think diversity and inclusion relate to one another?

Inclusion means creating a place that values each person's diverse characteristics. It is impossible to foresee the benefits that we may gain from other people's contributions, especially those who bring different points of view we would not otherwise understand or be able to consider. Only later will we be able to determine how including a greater diversity of opinion helped shape better answers. Therefore, it is important to provide opportunities to a wide spectrum of opinion in all facets of society.

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In surgery, even when there are disagreements, it is important to honor each person's opinion and not write off that opinion before at least considering it. The challenge comes in determining what is really innovative, helpful and best for the patient versus what is simply the imposition of tradition and habit over innovation. Showing how unique points of view can enhance current understandings is important. Without such inclusion, we risk becoming stagnant and may not evolve. I truly believe that the only way to get better and stay ahead of the curve is to continue to grow and learn from others – to make the effort to understand where each person is coming from and what each person has to contribute and to step outside of our comfort zones in order to expand our points of view and techniques. As I have been told before, “you won't get anywhere by treading water.” We need to continue to incorporate others' ideas and new methods in order to swim forward as a team or risk being left behind.

Activity Highlights

Education Day Faculty Awards~ On October 8th, the annual Education Day Faculty Awards were bestowed on deserving School of Medicine faculty who exhibit excellence in teaching. Elizabeth Malm-Buatsi, MD was the 2020 recipient of the **Jane Hickman Teaching Award**, the highest honor in medical education bestowed by the University of Missouri School of Medicine. Dr. Malm-Buatsi is an Associate Professor of Urology working as the pediatric urologist at Women's and Children's Hospital. Of note, earlier this year, Dr. Malm-Buatsi was also named a 2020 Young Urologist of the Year by the American Urological Association (AUA).



Dr. Elizabeth Malm-Buatsi, MD

Here is the full list of faculty honored with 2020 awards: **Curriculum Board Excellence in Teaching Awards:** *Outstanding Pre-Clerkship Faculty Educator* – Allison Nesbitt, PHD, *Outstanding Clinical Educator (Springfield)* – William Moore, MD, *Outstanding Clinical Educator (Columbia)* – Junaid Siddiqui, MD, *Outstanding Resident Teaching* – James Landreneau, MD, *Outstanding Community-Based Faculty Preceptor* – Juan Dominguez, MD, *Citation of Merit* – Shellaine Frazier, DO. **David and Kathy Morton Outstanding Faculty Educator Award:** *Pre-Clinical Teacher* – Allison Nesbitt, PhD, *Clinical Teacher (Springfield)* – Arijit Chowdhury, MD, *Clinical Teacher (Columbia)* – Syed Hasan, MD. **Congratulations to everyone!**

WIMMS~ On October 2nd, the Women of MU Health Care ERG (Employee Resource Group) and Women In Medicine and Medical Sciences (WIMMS) joined together for the monthly Empower Lunch with, “Group Think: Moving the 2020 Roadblocks.” The program “MindMeister” was used to break down roadblocks in front of us in order to make them more approachable. The hour was spent applying brainstorming techniques to the pandemic-related stressors many of us are facing in 2020. We've learned our institution has access to an app within Microsoft Teams called “MindMup,” similar to MindMeister, and is very user-friendly. The app makes it easy to share and collaborate with internal teams.

Give Me 5!



Rafael Marroquin is a Perfusionist in the Department of Surgery Services. To get to know Rafael better, we asked him these 5 questions:

1. If you could live anywhere or do anything, where/what would it be?

I love Columbia, MO. It has the beauty of the seasons, streams, the Missouri River, lakes, forests, trails and rolling hills. Columbia is a small college town, surrounded by nature, with a lot of cultural activity and friendly people. I enjoy doing what I do -- managing the heart and lungs of patients during open heart surgery and keeping the metabolic and electrolytic balance of the body during surgery. I also would love to make fictional movies. In other words, I would like to be nowhere else other than CoMO doing just what I do – perfusion and making films.

2. What is your favorite food or restaurant?

This is a hard one. As much as I would like to be a vegetarian, I love filet mignon & lobster! My wife recently perfected a recipe for “mulligatawny soup” (an Indian-British dish combination); it tastes superb. Additionally, I have a real weakness for orange sorbet!

3. What is a favorite cultural/family tradition you celebrate every year?

“Tradition, Tradition, Tradition,” like the actor, Topol, starts the Norman Jewison film, “Fiddler on the Roof,” is a big part of my family life. Christmas is a favorite tradition, but as a guy with children and grandchildren, “El Día de Los Reyes Magos” (Epiphany) and “Las Fiestas de la Pascua,” (Easter) have gained importance. And, of course, I can't forget our adopted American traditions of Halloween and Thanksgiving, which are a lot of fun.

4. FUN FACT!

I'm a very formal and serious guy who, in reality, is a joyful kid inside, which shows up in the form of a smile.

5. If you could make one change in the world, what would it be?

If I could have a magic wand or be a Greek god like Zeus of Olympus or have the ability to ferret out good and evil, I would erase poverty and the traditional capital deadly sins of hate, greed, envy, pride, gluttony, lust and sloth. I would create a state of homeostasis (balance) or harmony on earth – which seems very strange in our complex, never-ending, doing and undoing, pulsating universe. However, in fact, if I could make one change in the world, what would it be? The only thing I can do is to change myself and my inner core for the better of humanity and send a message in any form of peace, love and harmony to my fellow men in this time and space.

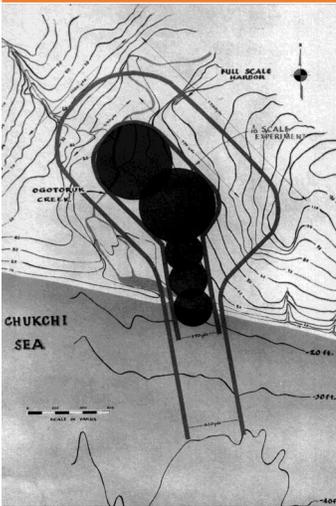
A Look Back...

In honor of Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15th- October 15th) we take a look back at Dr. Carlos Perez-Mesa, a Pathologist and cancer researcher at Ellis Fischel Cancer Center in Columbia, Missouri. Dr. Perez-Mesa was born in Santa Clara, Cuba in 1925. He attended medical school at the University of Havana from 1942-1949 and completed residency training in Internal Medicine and Pathology in Cuba. He came to the United States in 1956 and after time training and working in Colorado Springs and Buffalo, New York came to Columbia joining the faculty at Ellis Fischel Cancer Center in 1968. Dr. Perez-Mesa was known for his passion for medicine, patients and teaching. A former pathology resident who trained under Dr. Perez-Mesa remembers how he helped trainees see beyond the diagnosis. "Many times, the pathologist doesn't get involved with the patient. All they look through is the microscope, all they see is the biopsy. Dr. Perez-Mesa showed us and taught us to get involved with the patients, to think about their circumstances and their histories." Dr. Perez-Mesa's passion and appreciation for people went beyond his interactions with patients and trainees. An employee of Ellis Fischel remembered him fondly stating, "I've seen all different types of physicians in my time here, but he was genuine. He had a deep caring and compassion for all mankind. With him, it didn't make a difference who you were, he treated them all the same- like family."

Carlos Perez-Mesa not only had a passion for medicine but also had great enthusiasm for the arts, theater and humanities. In 1999, the Perez-Mesa Lectureship was established at the University of Missouri in his honor. The lectureship distinguishes Dr. Perez-Mesa as a respected cancer researcher, clinician and teacher who was passionate about the arts and humanities.

Carlos Perez-Mesa died in 2000 at the age of 75 in Columbia, Missouri. We salute Dr. Perez-Mesa for his contributions to the field of medicine, Ellis Fischel Cancer Center and his love for the arts and humanities.

Brain Food



It is no secret that our country has a long history of mistreating and disenfranchising indigenous peoples and people of color. Often these groups live in impoverished areas where their safety, health and well-being have been compromised for profit or experimentation. **Project Chariot** is a documentary and was the title of a US government proposal created by the Atomic Energy Commission in 1958. Born from a research project to "find peaceful uses for nuclear explosives" post-World War II, Project Chariot would plan to detonate five nuclear bombs (image above) just miles from the Inupiat Alaskan village of Point Hope to create an "economy-boosting" harbor for America's upcoming 49th state.

Project Chariot presents the stories of the courageous people of Point Hope and their struggles that unfortunately continue today. There are countless other examples in our history about those who have lost or had to fight to preserve their land or way of life; the Central Park story of Seneca Village, Operation Sailor Hat on the Hawaiian island of Kaho'olawe, and most recently, the ongoing fight against the Keystone Pipeline, to name a few. November is National Native American (American Indian) and Alaska Native Heritage Month.

Project Chariot can be viewed on Vimeo [here](#)

Calendar of Events~



Upcoming events on campus and in the Columbia community

*WIMMS next First Friday Empower Lunch is, "What we don't understand about trust," by Onora O'Neill on **November 6th**, 12-1pm via Zoom. E-mail [Kate Wessler](mailto:kate.wessler@wimms.org) to RSVP. [Click here](#) for more info about WIMMS.

*STITCH (Summit To Improve Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Collaborative Healthcare) is offering four upcoming webinars with the first on **November 6th**- *Common Themes in Gender Affirming Therapy: Panel Discussion*. For the full webinar schedule and to register [click here](#)

*The SOM's new IDEAS (Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Answers and Support) Book Club has two upcoming sessions: **November 12th**, 12-1pm, [Seeing Patients](#) by Augustus White III and **December 16th**, 12-1pm, [So you Want to Talk About Race](#) by Ijeoma Oluo. Click the book title links to join the discussion via Zoom. E-mail [Maike Krenz](mailto:maike.krenz@som.edu) for more info.

*MU Office of Inclusion, Diversity and Equity's Learn, Engage, Apply, Promote (LEAP) series remaining fall sessions:

November 16th is *Gender Identity Solidarity* and **November 19th**, *Radical Hope after Local and Global Instability* both from 12-1pm.

The last LEAP session of the year will be a Book Table Talk on **The Nickel Boys** by Colson Whitehead on **December 4th**, from 10-11:30am.

[Click here](#) to RSVP and to learn more about the 2020 Fall IDE LEAP Series sessions.

*The 24th annual Columbia Values Diversity celebration presented by the City of Columbia's Office of Cultural Affairs will be held on **January 14th, 2021** from 7 to 9am. Registration and sponsorship opportunities start in November, 2020. [Click here](#) for more info.

Disclaimer: Event dates and times are subject to change. Thank you!