



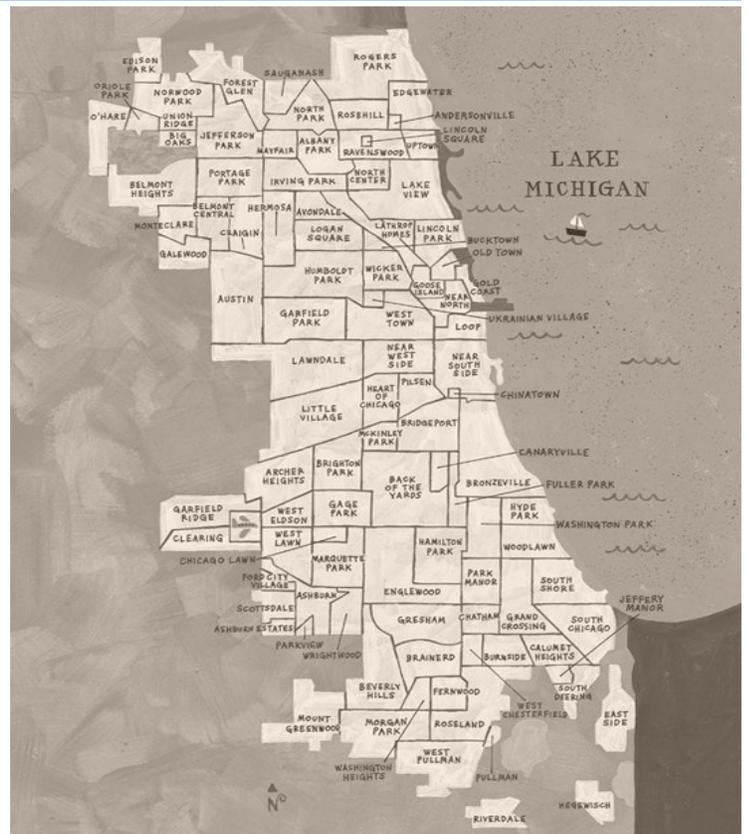
Urban Medicine Program

Class of 2021 Student Newsletter

UMed

Curricular Themes:

- *Disparities in Healthcare Access and Outcomes*
- *Policy and Advocacy*
- *Diversity and Intercultural Communications*
- *Community-Based Participatory Research*





**Jorge
Girotti, PhD
UMed Director**



**Joanna Michel,
PhD
UMed Associate
Director**



**Dimitri Azar,
MD, MBA
Dean, College of
Medicine**

A NOTE TO THE *Class of 2021*

Welcome to the Urban Medicine Program (UMed) family. We are proud of your commitment to our goals, and excited that you chose to enrich your medical studies by addressing the issues that continue to create inequities for residents of urban areas. You bring the kind of diverse perspectives and experiences that will enhance group discussions; we anticipate engaging seminars this year.

UMed is a unique program that integrates educational activities designed specifically for you, with the regular medical school curriculum. Our mission is: “To prepare physician leaders to serve underserved urban communities.” Your background and achievements to date demonstrate an understanding of the issues that contribute to health disparities in urban settings and the desire to become such a physician.

We look forward to working with you!

- UMed Faculty and Staff



Ashley Andrade
Chicago, IL
Loyola University, Biology

Ashley Andrade grew up on the north side of Chicago as the eldest of four girls. Growing up, her family would visit Mexico yearly and she would shadow a family friend, Dr. Marina Coyac. Ashley became interested in the medical field because she witnessed the positive influence that a physician can have on her community, while also applying the analytical skills necessary to provide exceptional medical services. She graduated from Loyola University Chicago in 2013 with a degree in Biology, and before applying to medical school, she decided to take some time off to gain more work experience. She initially worked as a health insurance counselor at a federally-funded health clinic named Alivio Medical Center, and later she worked as a research assistant at Northwestern University and the University of Chicago. These experiences greatly influenced her desire to become involved in patient health education initiatives. When applying to the UIC College of Medicine, she was specifically interested in the UMed curriculum due to its partnership with individual communities throughout the Chicagoland area, and its focus on the communities' needs. Ashley is very excited to be joining UMed and becoming a community advocate and partner.



Jasmine Arrington
Chicago, IL
Vanderbilt University, Minority Health & Culture

Jasmine was born and raised on the Southside of Chicago, and attended school on the city's Northside. Early on, she was immersed in diverse cultures, perspectives, and experiences that gave her an awareness of Chicago's differences and inequalities. Jasmine developed her passion for health disparities and medicine in high school while researching at the University of Chicago. In college, she fostered that passion through both her volunteer work in underserved minority communities and in creating her own major, which focused not only on health disparities, but also the sectors of society that contribute to them. After graduating in 2015, Jasmine completed her pre-medical requirements at DePaul University and interned with EverThrive Illinois to support their advocacy efforts for Illinois state funding for maternal and infant mortality social service providers. She also spent the past two years working at After School Matters, a non-profit that serves Chicago high school teens. Jasmine was led to UMed by the well-rounded curriculum that will prepare her to be a leader in urban medicine. Her goal is to bridge the gap in health disparities through close work with the communities she serves. Jasmine loves to sing, go to live shows, and explore new neighborhoods.



Chanell Davis

Chicago, IL

Northwestern University, Epidemiology & Biostatistics

Chanell Davis was born and raised on the South Side of Chicago by two supportive parents who never let her forget that her opportunities were not dictated by her surroundings. She attended Whitney Young High School before going to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where she completed a Bachelor of Science in Molecular & Cellular Biology. She then attended Northwestern University where she received a Master of Science in Epidemiology & Biostatistics. She later worked as a Clinical Research Associate for a few years while preparing to enter medical school. Growing up in a low-income household, she witnessed firsthand the healthcare disparities affecting the disadvantaged. Chanell believes that UIC is at the forefront of celebrating diversity, and feels that there is no better place than UMed to learn the skillset that will allow her to become the kind of physician these patients can count on. She also has a passion for long-distance running which started when she joined Team To End AIDS, an endurance training charity team that raises funds for the AIDS Foundation of Chicago. She will be running her fourth Bank of America Chicago Marathon this October, alongside her mother and oldest brother.



Nicholas DeFelice

Cleveland, OH

Case Western Reserve University, Biology

Prior to starting medical school, Nicholas served as a corps member in Teach For America. Placed at a charter school on the Westside of Chicago, he instructed high school students in biology and physics. After witnessing his students' lack of mental health resources, he decided to pursue a career in medicine. He believes that UMed will teach him the skills required to devote his career towards improving mental health outcomes for patients in low income communities. In his free time, Nicholas enjoys hiking, using his French press, and arguing with his Amazon Alexa.



Ryne Diamond

Phoenix, AZ

Grand Canyon University, Biological Sciences

Ryne Diamond was born and raised in the sweltering land of Phoenix. Here, he attended Grand Canyon University (which is nowhere near the natural world wonder) and majored in Biology. With his school being situated so close to the heart of Phoenix's refugee population, he had the opportunity to spend many weekends during his undergrad learning from and working with this community. His love of medicine combined with a strong desire to continue to work with underserved communities lead him to UMed. Since graduating from college two years ago, he has stayed very busy working as a scribe and teaching chemistry. His interests include running in the rain, reading riveting novels, traveling around this pulchritudinous planet, robust cups of coffee, and nectarous glasses of wine.



Adam Douglas

Edwardsville, IL

University of Kentucky, Biology, Neuroscience

Adam's Educational background was centered in biology and neuroscience through the University of Kentucky, but he became particularly interested in service and active citizenship through his involvement in the student organization the Center for Community Outreach. Through this organization, Adam learned more about a variety of social issues and the importance of making a sustainable impact on one's community. Adam was particularly involved in the plight of homelessness and hunger within the Lexington community. Through his greater involvement in the homeless community, Adam started to realize just how lacking healthcare was for those without a home, along with many others who are living in poverty. This experience gave Adam a mission: to provide quality health care for those who needed it most in his community. When searching for medical schools, UIC stood out especially because of the focus on health care disparities in an urban setting. This fit in perfectly with Adam's career focus on primary care for those in need, so he jumped at the chance to be a part of the program. Along with his career aspirations, Adam enjoys reading, running, playing volleyball, and keeping informed on health care policy.



Nia Foney

Chicago, IL

Dartmouth College, Sociology

Born and raised on the Southside of Chicago, Nia attended middle and high school here in Chicago, IL. Having spent her entire childhood in the city, Nia then decided to move away for college and set her sights on Dartmouth College in Hanover, NH—a big transition from the fast-paced city life. With an unwavering passion to pursue a career in medicine, she balanced her Pre-Med academic journey with a focus on health disparities and race & ethnicity as a Sociology major. Her increasing interest in population health and wellness in the inner city, together with her intensified devotion to her faith, led her to spend the last two years at Lawndale Christian Health Center (LCHC) on the West Side of Chicago. As an Inpatient Care Coordinator, she witnessed the intersection of faith and medicine and what it means to serve in a health clinic implemented *by* and *for* the community. Experiences with healthcare providers, community health workers, and patients all led to her desire to participate in the Urban Medicine Program and further engage with people in their communities. Outside of spending quality time with family and friends, Nia loves to sing, travel, and binge-watch classic TV shows.



Kate Galvan

Chicago, IL

DePaul University, Chemistry, Biology

Kate was born in Iloilo City, Philippines but has lived in Chicago since moving in 2003. In high school, Kate began volunteering at the Old Irving Park Community Clinic, a free clinic for uninsured patients. Her work in triage showed her how social, economic and cultural factors affect how patients receive healthcare. Volunteering taught her the importance of working with marginalized populations and the need to be a strong advocate for them. At DePaul University, Kate fostered her interest in teaching through her jobs as a chemistry teaching assistant, supplemental instructor and private tutor. She also mentored and tutored students at TRIO Student Support Services, a federally funded program which helps first generation and low income students finish college. Her experiences as an immigrant and work with underserved populations led her to the UMED program. She hopes to learn more about how health policies affect health equity. She wants to understand the issues in health disparities, the factors that perpetuate them and the intervention policies that will help reduce them. In her free time, Kate enjoys spending time with friends and family, baking, and exploring Chicago for new places to eat.



Damaris Sandoval-Garcia

Inglewood, CA

University of Southern California, Health Promotion & Disease Prevention

Damaris graduated from the University of Southern California with a BS in Health Promotion and Disease Prevention in 2013. Damaris knew she was called to become a culturally competent doctor when she experienced subpar medical care in her medically underserved community. From her time as co-president of the pre-health group Chicanos/Latinos for Health Education, Damaris sought to tackle issues of health disparities in communities of color and underrepresentation in medicine through outreach and education. For the last year, Damaris has worked as a Hepatitis C and HIV coordinator on Skid Row, working primarily with homeless patients in Los Angeles. Working and advocating for underserved patients has brought Damaris great joy, and she looks forward to partnering with communities in Chicago through the Urban Medicine program. Damaris hopes to learn more about the specific healthcare needs in Chicago and to become a leader in the pursuit of health equity. In her free time, Damaris likes to go on hikes with friends and practice yoga.



Daniel Hong

Wilmette, IL

Knox College, Chemistry, Biology

Dan is a nerd that enjoyed playing music and skateboarding before science consumed him; he also enjoys researching and learning new things! Dan grew up as a first generation American in a single parent household for most of his adolescent life due to family illness. This intimate encounter with healthcare, along with many others, pushed him to pursue medicine. He also has the experience of being uninsured for several years of his young life, and was in and out of All-Kids/Medicaid otherwise for the majority of the last decade. He hopes that he can learn through the Urban Medicine Program what one can do as a healthcare professional to best help the people around him beyond the context of treatment, knowing that there are vast populations that struggle with access and/or are under-served. Medicine is a field that works with people, and with that often comes contexts that must be understood to deliver the most optimal form of healthcare. Chicago is one of the world's most diverse cities, and he believes the experiences his family has gone through, along with the Urban Medicine program, will help him find what this optimal way is.



Alejandro "Aleh" Hurtado

Modesto, CA

UC Berkeley, Ethnic Studies

San Francisco State University, Sexuality Studies

Alejandros professional background is multifaceted and dynamic. He has lived in India, Mexico City, St. Kitts, and Cuba. Over the last decade, Alejandro has worked tirelessly to address the complex health disparities that affect the LGBTQ and HIV positive community. His unique cultural background helps to serve as a bridge towards linking clients to housing, rehabilitation and citizenship services. These diverse experiences enabled him to pioneer innovative research projects while working at UC San Francisco. The core of Alejandros work at UCSF centered upon incorporating alternative coping mechanisms such as meditation and mindfulness, into the treatment regime of patients recently diagnosed with HIV/AIDS.

In addition to his passion for social justice and medicine, Alejandro is highly creative. He loves music and has used indie rock shows to help fundraise for LGBTQ focused non-profits. Moreover, he is invested in advocating for and continuing to work on integrating gender variance into the healthcare system. Finally, as a former substance abuse counselor working with patients, their families and healthcare professionals, he learned firsthand how the body can be perceived as a biography for someone's life. In the words of Egyptian novelist Naguib Mahfouz, "Nothing records the effects of a sad life so graphically as the human body."



Elzbieta Kalata

Chicago, IL

Loyola University, Biology, Biostatistics

Elzbieta was born and raised on the south-west side of Chicago. She is the first person in her family to attend and graduate from college. She studied at Loyola University Chicago, where her passion for social justice grew, specifically focusing on disparities among healthcare access and outcomes. Growing up, Elzbieta often translated for her parents and family members in healthcare settings. It was these experiences that inspired and motivated her to take on greater responsibility in serving others in her community and abroad. In 2014, Elzbieta traveled to Honduras to provide sustainable health services to underserved communities. Throughout her undergraduate career, Elzbieta continued to follow her passion in serving others as a tutor and mentor for the Chicago Youth Program and Polish language interpreter at CommunityHealth Clinic. She also volunteered in the ER department at Advocate Christ Hospital and later became an EMT. She has been a research assistant with the Chicago Healthy Adolescents Transition Study for two years, working with children and young adults with spina bifida. In her free time, Elzbieta likes to read, watch documentaries, and spend time outdoors with her friends and family. She loves playing soccer, running, and practicing her yoga skills!



Michika Maeda

Chicago, IL

University of Chicago, Biological Sciences

Michika Maeda moved to the U.S. from Kyoto, Japan in second grade and has lived in Chicago for the past 16 years. She graduated from the University of Chicago in 2016 and afterwards worked as an Assistant Regulatory Coordinator at Northwestern University. Her hope is to ultimately work within local communities in Chicago. She is also interested in global health issues, especially after time abroad during undergrad. In her spare time, Michika enjoys art, catspotting, and weekend nature getaways. She is thrilled to be staying in the city for medical school and excited to be a part of the Urban Medicine program.



Darren Miller II

Maywood, IL

Indiana University, Vocal Performance

Darren completed his Bachelor of Music degree at Indiana University. Although the primary focus of his curriculum was classical vocal performance, music theory, and music history, vocal pedagogy, a class that combines the science of singing with the art of making music, drew his greatest interest. So after graduating, he worked in marketing operations, sang and studied voice in Chicago, and began researching prospective careers that included the anatomy and physics of phonation. Darren's exploration during that time ultimately drew him to medicine; working toward the goal of becoming an otolaryngologist would give him the tools to treat vocal dysfunction and to continue engaging with the science of making vocal music.

Now, after three additional years of premedical post-baccalaureate coursework, Darren's medical interests have greatly expanded, but he is still eager to explore topics related to voice. As a Chicagoland native, Darren is also thrilled to have the opportunity to contribute to the communities that have shaped him. In particular, he hopes to engage with communities of color and LGBTQ communities. Among his support network is his husband, Justin, and his dog, Emmett. As time permits, he hopes to continue singing and teaching voice students.



Carlos Montero
Cicero, IL
UIC, Biological Sciences

Born and raised mostly in Chicago, graduating from UIC, and working on his goal of becoming a physician at the UIC College of Medicine is a dream come true for Carlos. While at UIC, Carlos enjoyed the many opportunities Chicago has to offer and is excited to continue becoming involved with the various underserved communities in Chicago and with the help of the Urban Medicine Program, create a meaningful experience as a medical student. His undergraduate experiences were diverse and the medical volunteer trips in Peru and Costa Rica, traditional Chinese medicine study abroad in China, and volunteering as a Spanish interpreter at CommunityHealth clinic enlightened him about what it is like to be a physician in urban and rural settings. Carlos is confident joining UMed can keep him connected with other like-minded people working to improve the health of surrounding communities in Chicago. Also, UMed can provide the opportunity to use his bilingual skills to reach out to the Latino community. Outside of school, Carlos likes to play soccer, bike, and explore Chicago neighborhoods.



Michael Rabaza
Chicago, IL
UIC, Biological Sciences

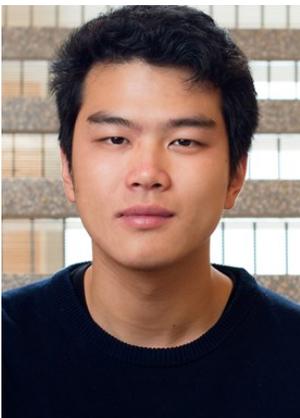
Michael Rabaza was born on the South Side of Chicago and was raised in various locations throughout the city and south suburbs alike. Michael received his B.S. in biological sciences from the University of Illinois at Chicago during the summer of 2016, becoming the first member of his family to receive a college degree. Michael's motivation for pursuing a career as a physician is manifold. A deep curiosity in the fields of science and technology, a drive to apply scientific principles to the art of medicine, and the desire to serve as a role model are just some of the factors that influence him most. Michael's attraction to the UMED program is a byproduct of witnessing the harmful effects that inefficient healthcare has had on his own community and family members alike. Michael wishes to utilize UMED as a means of providing assistance and guidance to assuage the problems faced by vulnerable populations. In his free time Michael enjoys exercising, reading, watching sports, playing video games, and spending time with loved ones.



Jennifer Moreno-Sinchi

Chicago, IL
Loyola University, Sociology

Jennifer graduated from Loyola University Chicago with an interest in social work and medicine. She served as a Case Manager at Casa Central Social Service Agency where she provided minorities with the opportunity to become a certified nursing assistant and assisted with job placement as a CNA. Deciding to continue her journey towards medicine, she obtained a research internship with UIC's Emergency Medicine Department where she actively participated in teaching inner city communities how to save a life with Hands-Only CPR. This opportunity revealed to her the importance of actively advocating thru education and intervention in high risk communities, and solidified Jennifer's decision to practice medicine in urban communities. Following this, she worked as a research specialist for the national Study of Latinos and B.A.I.L.A. study on Alzheimer's, traveled to Nairobi Kenya with a medical mission team, and completed a post-bacc at UIC. Jennifer's other interests includes long bike rides throughout the city, discovering new tasty eateries, and running marathons with her husband. She loves the outdoors and spends her free time planning future backpacking trips.



Rex Tai

Leawood, KS
Northwestern University, Biological Sciences,
Sociological Research

Rex is excited to be a part of the UMed Class of 2021 and this opportunity to supplement his medical training with the broad community-based focus that has already taught him so much! Through his formative experiences in college of guiding peer education workshops around safer drug use, providing harm reduction services like syringe exchange and overdose prevention to injection drug users throughout Chicago, and studying the neuropsychopharmacology of addiction in biological research labs, he has come to appreciate a holistic and interdisciplinary understanding of health and medical well-being for our society's individuals and communities. Through the UMed program, he hopes to expand his connections to the network of healthcare providers caring for the most vulnerable residents of Chicago and continue to pick up additional perspectives on how health can be both guaranteed in clinical practice and reinforced in our broader society. He is working passionately toward a vision of a society where the spirit of learning and collaboration in science are widely appreciated, guiding everything we do so that every person is well taken care of and thrives in their communities. Besides medicine, Rex loves jazz and classical piano, photography, graphic design, cooking, political organizing, traveling, and watching anime.



Corrine Thornton

St. Charles, IL

University of Wisconsin-Madison, Medical
Microbiology & Immunology, Global Health

After writing for her high school newspaper, Corinne found a passion for serving the public at-large. Combined with a love for science and microbiology, becoming an infectious disease physician to eliminate diseases of public health concern was a natural fit. She hopes to specialize in internal medicine with an infectious disease sub-specialty and also earn a Master in Public Health. Corinne graduated college in 2015, where she founded the Global & Public Health Club and wrote the science column for the Daily Cardinal. Her public health field-experience began as a Water Quality Lab Assistant at Public Health–Madison & Dane County analyzing water for health risks such as *E. coli* and toxic algae. After college Corinne worked for the U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention in the Public Health Associates Program. Assigned to southern Illinois, Corinne was introduced to a wide range of public health issues and disparities in preparedness, rural health, environmental health, policy, and safety. She also served the Zika Virus Response at the Emergency Operations Center. At CDC Corinne realized the necessity for multiple disciplines to collaborate to make healthier, sustainable futures, which led to her interest in UMed.

As a life-long learner, Corinne loves trying new activities and site-seeing. She also likes coffee, cats, tennis, and baking.