

## UPCOMING DATES

- November 13-December 14, 2007  
Registration
- January 7, 2008  
Spring Registration  
8:30-10:30 a.m.
- January 7, 2008  
Spring Classes Begin
- January 14, 2008  
Last day to register for  
Spring Semester  
Last day to add a class
- January 21, 2008  
Martin Luther King, Jr.  
Day
- For additional  
important dates see  
page 5

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

UAMS Graduate School Students Receive NIH Fellowships	2
Graduate Student Profile: Laruen Blair	3
Nutrition Graduate Student Receives ACRC Grant	3
Graduate School's Career Day Draws Students From 14 Schools	4
Graduate Student and Faculty Awards	5
Important Dates	6

# UAMS Graduate School

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

WINTER 2007

## Letter from Dean McGehee

As we begin to close out 2007, I would first like to wish for everyone a wonderful holiday. I hope that you and your families take the opportunity to enjoy some down time together to just simply relax and do nothing for a little while. It has been a great year for the Graduate School with many new courses, new programs, record numbers of graduates, with our students having traveled the country and occasionally the world representing us at scientific meetings. As presenting authors at meetings, most students are eligible to apply for and receive a travel award to help defer the cost of the trip to their advisor. Through that mechanism, I get to see the abstracts of these presentations and I have to tell you its quite humbling. The work that our students perform under the guidance of our graduate faculty is quite amazing and takes a second seat to no one. They are presenting at Gordon Conferences, Keystone Conferences, countless Society meetings, receiving invitations to speak in plenary sessions of national meetings, being invited to chair regional sessions, asked to serve on journal editorial boards and having editorial comments written about their work. Collectively and individually it is quite impressive. Over the past 3 years we have inaugurated a series of awards to specifically recognize achievements of our students and the response to these have been very positive. Now, it seems an appropriate time to begin recognizing our graduate faculty because it is through their untiring efforts and mentorship that our students succeed. Beginning this month, we are initiating a Mentor Award to be presented at our Graduate School receptions to the Major Graduate Advisors of our graduating PhD students. Eleven of these awards were presented at our holiday reception and I would like to congratulate all of them. They are listed elsewhere in this publication, and if you see them in the next few weeks, congratulate them, they deserve it. I think it is very important to recognize the outstanding accomplishments of our graduate students and faculty, and welcome new ideas any of you may have to help us do so. As good as 2007 was, 2008 is going to be even better and I look forward with working with all of you to make it happen. Please have a safe a happy holiday season and New Year.



Robert E. McGehee, Jr., Ph.D.  
Dean, Graduate School

# UAMS Graduate School Students

## Receive NIH Fellowships



Jonathan Hubbard  
and Kristy Nicks

Two students in the UAMS Graduate School recently received fellowships from the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Jonathan Hubbard, a [M.D./Ph.D. degree](#) candidate in the pharmacology lab of Michael Owens, Ph.D., received a Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award pre-doctoral fellowship from the National Institute on Drug Abuse at the NIH. He said his research and grant submission entitled “Antibody Antagonists as Protective Medications for Drug Abuse During Pregnancy” grew out of the Siloam Springs-area native’s interest in helping others.

Hubbard said a two-year mission trip to the Philippines while an undergraduate at the University of Arkansas impressed upon him the importance of service and initiated his interest in medicine. Having also gotten intrigued in research during college, he said he decided medical research was the

best way to combine both.

“Dr. Owens has a very active lab and his research is translational in nature – seeking to turn basic research into new treatments for major public health concerns, which is to me what makes medical research satisfying,” Hubbard said.

Kristy M. Nicks, a [physiology and biophysics](#) doctoral degree candidate (Ph.D.) student from Forrest City in the laboratory of Dana Gaddy, Ph.D., received two NIH awards from the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, both of which are aimed at understanding mechanisms of enhancing bone formation. Her NIH research supplement entitled “Inhibin Anabolism during Distraction Osteogenesis” explores the use of a new factor, inhibin, to aid in fracture healing, and her three-year Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award pre-doctoral fellowship entitled “Cellular and Molecular

Mechanisms of Inhibin Action on the Skeleton” focuses on mechanisms involved in the ability of inhibin to stimulate bone formation, as a method to prevent or alleviate osteoporosis.

The daughter of a biology teacher, Nicks said she has always been interested in science and understanding the basic functions of the body. With her research interest, she’s trying to understand the mechanisms involved in the action of the protein inhibin, which could ultimately lead to a new treatment for the bone-weakening disease osteoporosis and improve fracture healing.

The fellowships provide money for a stipend as well as for offsetting research expenses and travel to research conferences.

## Graduate Student Profile: Lauren Blair

Fourth-year University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) graduate student Lauren Blair says her father nurtured a love of science in his children from a young age.

Her dad, who graduated with a biology degree, inspired Blair, who like her father earned a degree in biology, and her brother, who earned a degree in chemistry. She and her brother have gone on to pursue graduate degrees, hers in biochemistry and molecular biology at the [UAMS Graduate School](#).

"My father spent a lot of time outdoors with my brother and me," Blair said. "We both joined scouting and he and my mother were very involved.

"I think that had a lot to do with setting the both of us – my brother [who is now in Colorado working on a doctorate in chemical education] and me – on the path to science."

Now Blair has her sights set on defining a protein mechanism that could lead to a better understanding of certain diseases. Understanding how to control

helicases, proteins essential to DNA replication, could lead to the development new medical treatments.

Outside the lab, Blair is president of the UAMS chapter of the [Graduate Student Association](#) (GSA). The organization represents the graduate students in campus organizations and acts as a liaison between the Graduate School faculty and UAMS administration to address student concerns. The GSA also promotes UAMS graduate programs and encourages sharing of ideas in scientific research among the students.

She sees the group as a vehicle to promote interaction among UAMS students who come from diverse backgrounds.

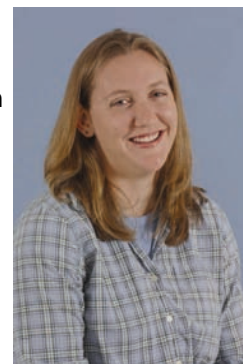
"I believe this interaction is important not only to scientific collaboration, but also our mental well being as students," Blair said. "We need to know that we are all having similar experiences and we need to be able to laugh about them and help each other out."

Strangely, it was some undergraduate research related to trees that got her thinking about a

graduate degree. Studying tree demography, she used core samples and statistical analysis to determine the age of two different forests.

It was that in-depth research experience that intrigued her. Then, Blair said, she got a job as a chemist out of college that further spurred her interest in graduate education.

"I realized that I needed more education to attain the goals I have set for myself in life," she said. Plus, a biochemistry class she enjoyed while an undergraduate at Hendrix College gave her an idea for her field of study.



**Lauren Blair, Ph.D. candidate, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology**

## Nutrition Graduate Student Receives WPRCI Grant

Alisa Brown, a student in the [master of science in clinical nutrition](#) (M.S.C.N.) program of the UAMS [Department of Dietetics and Nutrition](#), recently received a \$4,800

grant for her work helping patients at UAMS' Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute (WPRCI).

The one-year [grant from the](#)

[WPRCI Auxiliary](#) to Brown, a registered dietitian at the WPRCI, will fund nutritional supplements for patients who cannot afford them.

# Graduate School's Career Day Draws Students

## From 14 Schools



**Dr. Jeff Moran,**  
Section Director,  
Environmental  
Chemistry, Arkansas  
Public Health

*"Love what you do,  
and the rewards –  
including bigger  
paychecks – will  
follow"- Dr. Jeff  
Moran*

As a 2001 graduate of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) Graduate School, Jeff Moran, Ph.D., was able to convey some key messages to college students looking for science-related careers upon graduation.

Love what you do, and the rewards – including bigger paychecks – will follow, he said during the Seventh Annual Career Day for Biomedical Sciences, hosted by the [UAMS Graduate School](#) on Nov. 1.

And you don't have to leave Arkansas to find your scientific bliss.

Moran, a toxicologist who earned his degree in the UAMS Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology, didn't leave Arkansas. He stayed primarily for family reasons, he said, but is now enjoying a position as section director of environmental chemistry at the Public Health Laboratory in Little Rock. Moran also is an assistant professor in the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health in the UAMS Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health.

Work at the Public Health Laboratory includes research and testing and covers disease prevention and control, food safety and managing Arkansas' safe drinking water law. Jobs in the public health arena are available, but students may have to work a little harder to find them because of the low-key approach to advertising such jobs.

"There are a lot of public sector opportunities out there that you may not be aware of," Moran said.

Career Day introduces undergraduates to the Graduate School's programs and provides career advice for graduate students and postdoctoral scholars, said Graduate School Dean Robert McGehee, Ph.D.

The daylong event at the Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging drew 89 undergraduates, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows and faculty, with 14 undergraduate schools represented from across Arkansas.

Speakers at the event also included

-Scott Struthers, Ph.D., director of Neurocrine Biosciences in San Diego,

who spoke on research in industry

-Thomas J. Lynch, Ph.D., professor in the Department of Biology and associate dean of math and sciences at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, who spoke on academia

-Debra A. Draper, Ph.D., associate director of the Center for Studying Health System Change in Washington, D.C., who spoke on health systems research

-Christine Daugherty, Ph.D., J.D., senior counsel at Tyson Foods, Inc., who spoke on intellectual property, research and development law

-James Simples, Ph.D., a cardiovascular medical information scientist at CV Therapeutics in Palo Alto, Calif.

Featured speakers talked to graduate students and postdoctoral fellows about some of the career choices and were available for individual advising. Booths also were set up with information on each of the 16 programs in the Graduate School and UAMS tours were given to undergraduates.



## Graduate Student and Faculty Accomplishments and Awards

Congratulations to Terri J. Hutton, Assistant Professor in the Department of Audiology and Speech Pathology, who was elected a fellow of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association



Terri Hutton at the Annual ASHA meeting

### UAMS GSRF Grant Graduate Student Recipients for April and September 2007

Karthik Arumugam	Shuliang Liu
Wassim El-Jouni	Balasubramanian Manickam
Carol Enderlin	Lalit Oberoi
Laura Evans	Shelia Savell
Shashank Jain	Ying Su
Tammy C. Jones	David Terrano

### Graduate Student National Awards

Wassim El-Jouni received an American Society for Cell Biology travel award to attend the national meeting.

Carol Enderlin received a Hartford Predoctoral Scholarship in Geriatric Nursing from 2006-08.

Biny Joseph received a Predoctoral Fellowship from the American Heart Association.

Brooke Montgomery received a Predoctoral Fellowship from the Southern Regional Education Board.

Agnieszka Zielinska received a travel award from the International Society for the Student of Xenobiotics to attend the 8th International Meeting in Sendai, Japan from October 5-14, 2007.

### Graduate School Mentor Awards

Dr. Marie Chow	Dr.. Angus Macnicol
Dr. Wayne Gray	Dr. Grover Miller
Dr. Laura James	Dr. Grazyna Nowak
Dr. Robert Kennedy	Dr. Paul Prather
Dr. Tammy Kielian	Dr. Martin Ronis
Dr. Cherng-Ju Kim	



Graduate School Mentor Award plaque

## Graduate School Staff

**Robert E. McGehee, Jr., Ph.D.-Dean**

[rem@uams.edu](mailto:rem@uams.edu)

501-603-1998

**Jackie McRoberts,-Assistant Dean, Graduate Studies**

[JEMcroberts@uams.edu](mailto:JEMcroberts@uams.edu)

501-686-5454

**Kristen Sterba, Ph.D.-Assistant Dean,  
Office of Graduate Student Recruiting and Retention**

[kmsterba@uams.edu](mailto:kmsterba@uams.edu)

501-526-7396

**Pattie Hamilton-Registrar**

[pmhamilton@uams.edu](mailto:pmhamilton@uams.edu)

501-686-5454

**Pam McCullough-Assistant Registrar**

[PSMccullough@uams.edu](mailto:PSMccullough@uams.edu)

501-686-5454

## University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences Graduate School

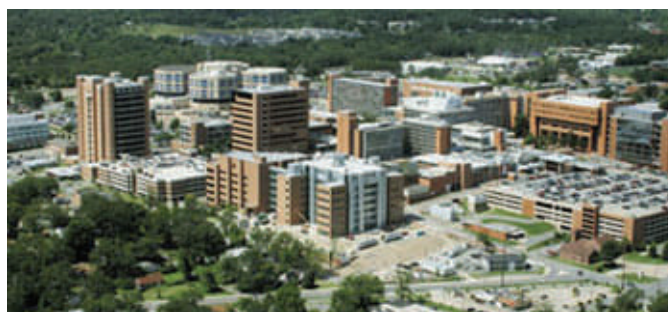
4301 W. Markham Slot 601  
Little Rock, AR 72205

Phone: 501-686-5454

E-mail:

[graduateschoolUAMS@uams.edu](mailto:graduateschoolUAMS@uams.edu)

[www.uams.edu/gradschool](http://www.uams.edu/gradschool)



## Spring 2008 Important Dates



February 4, 2008	A mark of "W" will be recorded on the academic record for any course dropped after this date.
February 18, 2008	President's Day Holiday
April 21-May 9, 2008	Registration for Summer Session
April 21, 2008	Last day to drop a class
May 5, 2008	Last day to submit thesis and dissertations to Library
May 16, 2008	Last day of the Spring Semester
	Last day to remove an "I" received during the last enrolled Semester
May 17, 2008	Graduate School Brunch Commencement