

The Official USU Newsletter

the pulse

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Learning to Care for Those in Harm's Way



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Photo by MC3 Laura Bailey

On the cover

First-year students at the F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine participated in the White Coat Ceremony, April 11. See page 6 to learn more about the White Coat Ceremony.



“Live Our Values” every day, all year long: April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month

Article courtesy of VPE

Sexual Assault Awareness Month is recognized across the country by civilian and military communities in April. Although the issue is important year round, now is a great time to build on the existing momentum to fight sexual violence and ensure all civilians and service-members are treated appropriately.

“Dignity and respect for your fellow human beings, whether it’s a wingman, battle buddy, shipmate or civilian, is the basis of all of our services core values,” said Air Force Col. Kevin Glasz, Uniformed Service University of the Health Sciences brigade commander. “You have to work and aspire to always do what’s right, to ensure our team can always complete the mission with excellence in an environment free from assault, discrimination, harassment or any of these sorts of things.”

The 2014 Sexual Assault Awareness Month is themed, “Live Our Values: Step Up to Stop Sexual Harassment.” The Department of Defense defines sexual assault as intentional sexual contact, characterized by use of force, physical threat, abuse of authority, or when the victim does not or cannot consent.

Members of USU can “step up” against these crimes by intervening when appropriate, reporting crimes and supporting sexual assault victims. Doing so will prevent the degradation of military readiness and the subversion of good will. It can also expedite the healing process for victims of sexual assault.

“Sexual assault is everyone’s problem. It has a negative effect on productivity and creates liability for damages. Working together and combining

resources should make a difference in eliminating this plague,” said Patricia Burke, USU’s Equal Employment Opportunity director and the point of contact for any questions or complaints regarding sexual harassment or assault at USU military or civilian. “Each person has a responsibility for the health and well-being of one another, a culture in which we show self-respect and mutual respect.”

“As a young airman, I had a commander touch me inappropriately and it really shook my faith in my leadership because nobody in my chain of command had the courage to stop it,” said Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Bonnie J. Sanchez, USU’s Air Force element senior enlisted advisor and clinical and preventive services superintendent. “That is why I like this theme, ‘Live Our Core Values.’ We have to have put a stop to these kinds of actions and I think we are headed in the right direction. We have come worlds away from when I first joined the Air Force, now we are talking about it, wearing the badges, providing resources and making the end of these crimes a priority. It’s a bonus when leaders are actively involved in solving the problem.”

“People thrive at work when they feel safe and respected. That’s why USU has a zero tolerance policy when it comes to sexual harassment,” said USU President Charles Rice. “If you’re a victim, please speak out. Ms. Patricia Burke is available for counsel, and the rest of USU’s leadership team is committed to fostering an environment that is characterized by mutual respect and one that is free of harassment in any form.”

Countdown to Commencement: A look at the Class of 2014

Navy Ensign Michael “Mitch” Eliason, School of Medicine

by Christine Creenan-Jones, editor

Leadership training is an important part of the curriculum at the Uniformed Services University. In order to graduate, USU students must demonstrate their ability to thrive during intense, high-stakes situations. This ability is tested in simulation labs, on hospital wards, inside classrooms and during field exercises.

Although USU spends a lot of time teaching leadership skills, many students arrive on campus with years of operational experience. Navy Ensign Michael “Mitch” Eliason, a fourth-year medical student at the F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine, is one of them.

By the time he enrolled at USU, Eliason was already a seasoned military officer with vast deployment experience. After graduating from the U.S. Naval Academy, he joined the line community as a nuclear engineer on a submarine.

Back then, Eliason’s home port was Pearl Harbor but his submarine went underway frequently. They were even part of a reconnaissance mission with a Navy Seal team that deployed to the Western Pacific, where his fleet took part in reconnaissance missions throughout Asia.

“Deploying with the Seal team was a lot of fun. We pulled into some really neat ports and did a lot of interesting work,” Eliason said. “During that time, I also got the opportunity to work with enlisted sailors, who taught me a lot about leadership.”

The lessons stuck. After his sea duty ended, Eliason returned to the Naval Academy as a faculty member and taught leadership and ethics courses to midshipmen while taking college classes himself.

By this time, Eliason was ready to pursue a career in military medicine but needed to finish up a few supplemental science courses before coming to USU. Once complete, Eliason threw himself into medical school, where he’s distinguished himself through strong leadership once again.

As the class president, Eliason has worked hard to foster a feeling of camaraderie among



Courtesy Photo

Michael “Mitch” Eliason was a Navy line officer before enrolling in the F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine.

his peers while also serving as a liaison between them and USU’s leadership. Part of his responsibilities as a class officer include meeting with Dr. Charles Rice, president of USU, and Dr. Arthur Kellermann, dean of the F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine, on a monthly basis to discuss matters impacting the Class of 2014.

“My interactions with USU’s leadership have been great. I get to see the wizard behind the curtain, so to speak, which has given me an opportunity to really understand how and why the university operates the way it does while still advocating for my classmates,” Eliason said.

This knowledge has informed Eliason’s leadership, and it’s an experience he’ll carry with him after he graduates in May and begins an otolaryngology residency at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth in Virginia.

“I’m excited to graduate but sad to leave the great people at USU who’ve provided incredible support to me and my family over the past four years,” Eliason said. “USU is full of smart, hard-working and fun people. It’s really great to be a part of this incredible community.”

Uniformed Services University Commencement Exercises

May 17, 2014

10:30 a.m.

Daughters of the American Revolution Constitution Hall

USU research seeks to reverse uptick in global smoking rates

by Christine Creenan-Jones, editor

The prevalence of global smoking is rising despite compelling evidence that sustained tobacco use has been linked to many fatal illnesses. In fact, more than 443,000 Americans die each year from smoking-related disease, including thousands of U.S. troops.

But new research at the Uniformed Services University aims to curb worldwide smoking rates through a novel investigation using smart phone technology. Dr. Andrew Waters, an associate professor in the Department of Medical and Clinical Psychology at the F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine, launched an investigation funded by the National Cancer Institute called Project SMaRT. It looks at the ecology of smoking by analyzing how

participants respond to random surveys on specially programmed mobile devices that assess mood, environment and other stimuli that can affect tobacco use and cravings.

“We want to learn as much as possible about why people smoke, and the mobile device is a great tool for understanding the cognitive processes and biases associated with tobacco use,” said Waters. “It’s user friendly and generates a lot of data by capturing random, frequent self-reports, all in real time.”

Unlike traditional, in-person laboratory interviews, Waters’ method illustrates how smokers behave in their natural environments, which may provide valuable insight into what prompts

tobacco cravings and how to stop them for good.

“Our phones are programmed to include cognitive interventions that are designed to help people overcome the urge to smoke by encouraging them to focus on something besides cigarettes when they’re feeling vulnerable,” he said.

This process, called attentional retraining, may assist with the treatment of nicotine addiction, but more research is needed to determine if it improves smoking cessation success.

Project SMaRT is part of this research. Visit the Laboratory of Cognitive Interventions at www.usuhs.mil/faculty/waters/index.html to learn more about smoking cessation research at USU.

McLeod earns Carol Johns Medal

by MC3 Brittney Cannady

Dr. David McLeod earned the 2014 Carol Johns Medal for his outstanding accomplishments as a clinician and academician at the Uniformed Services University, April 8.

McLeod was instrumental in establishing USU’s Center for Prostate Disease Research, where he serves as a co-director and oversees hundreds of clinical trials and research programs that combat prostate disease and cancer. He has also received more than \$100 million in Congressional funding that supports wide-ranging, multidisciplinary research at the F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine.

Furthermore, McLeod trained several generations of USU medical students while serving as the chief of Urologic Oncology and director of the Urology Residency Program at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

These and McLeod’s many other prolific achievements were the basis for his selection as the winner of the 2014 Carol Johns Medal, the most prestigious award given by USU’s Faculty Senate.

“It is such a privilege to be in a position on the



Army Lt. Col. (Dr.) Justin Woodson presents the Carol Johns Medal to Dr. David McLeod.

Faculty Senate to be able to meet people like Dr. McLeod, whose career has generated such lasting contributions to medical science. Dr. McLeod was selected from a robust group of amazing academicians, all of whom deserved the award. I’m honored to have the chance to represent the faculty in their award of the Carol Johns Medal to Dr. McLeod,” said Army Lt. Col. (Dr.) Justin Woodson, president of USU’s Faculty Senate.

Service member of the year named

by MC3 Brittney Cannady, writer

Army Staff Sgt. TaMikka Lewis was named the 2013 Service Member of the Year at the Uniformed Services University for her work as the lead academics noncommissioned officer in charge in the Department of Military Emergency Medicine. In this role, Lewis creates lesson plans for the military medicine curriculum and training for more than 700 medical students.

A natural leader, Lewis is a familiar presence at virtually every command exercise, from the Antietam Road March to USU's Commencement ceremonies. Upon earning recognition as Service Member of the Year, Lewis was thankful for the accolades saying, "I do what I do for the people that I work with, the people to my left and my right and I enjoy it. I think to win Service Member of the Year is a testament to the hard work I've done but I enjoy the work that I do."

Besides serving as the lead academics NCOIC, Lewis is a trained Basic Life Support

instructor and master resilience trainer, where she trains 250 personnel on the Army's Comprehensive Solider Resiliency Program. Furthermore, Lewis often coordinates emergency medicine seminars on primary and combat care issues for the USU community.

A native of Statesville, N.C., Lewis received a Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences and is working toward a Master's in Human Services Counseling. After her military career is complete, Lewis hopes to work as a career counselor or high school guidance counselor.

While Lewis was excited to be named Service Member of



Photo by Thomas Balfour.

Army Staff Sgt. TaMikka Lewis

the Year, she encourages others to continue doing the best job possible no matter what. "Even if you think no one sees the work you're doing, keep doing your best because you can't be successful unless you put in the work," said Lewis.



Countdown to Commencement Trivia Answer #4

Congratulations to Denise Anderson, who was the first person to answer last issue's trivia question:

Commencement at the Uniformed Services University is held on this special holiday each year.

Armed Forces Day is the correct answer.

White Coat Ceremony

by Christine Creenan-Jones, editor

First-year students at the F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine are indoctrinated into the world of medicine during the White Coat Ceremony, a time-honored tradition at the Uniformed Services University.

During the ceremony, students don and pin their white coats before reciting the Hippocratic Oath. Army Maj. (Dr.) Camille

McGann (top right), a 2003 SoM alumna and assistant professor of radiology at USU, also highlighted the importance of compassionate care and scientific proficiency in military medicine during her keynote address, which included a personal narrative about the roles she's taken on as both a soldier and physician.

Photo by MC3 Laura Bailey



Photo by Thomas Balfour



Photo by Thomas Balfour

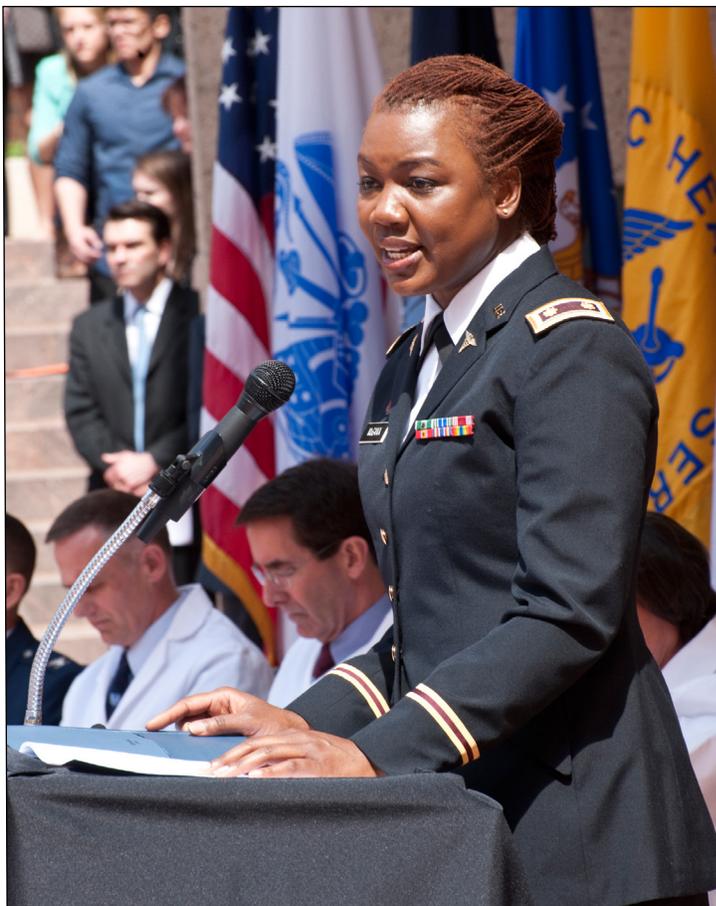


Photo by Thomas Balfour



Snakes offer valuable lessons

by Christine Creenan-Jones, editor

Rectangular, wooden boxes lined the front wall of Sanford Auditorium, April 2. Above them, on a large, black chalkboard, a handwritten message warned: “Come in. Sit anywhere, except the front row.”

Dozens of audience members at the Uniformed Services University took heed. They wanted to learn more about the snakes Bruce

Shwedick brought in for a special lecture sponsored by the Department of Preventive Medicine and Biometrics at the F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine – but from a safe distance.

Shwedick, director of the Reptile Discovery Program, has been showcasing his collection of vipers, copperheads and cobras at USU for more than three decades. His adrenaline-pumping presentation included valuable, potentially life-saving information for healthcare providers at USU.



Bruce Shwedick, director of the Reptile Discovery Program, brought a collection of venomous snakes to the Uniformed Services University to illustrate the dangers they pose to military service members.

Photo by Thomas Balfour

“Today, we’re going to talk about snakes and snake bites,” said Shwedick, who described a typical snake dentition as four rows of teeth on top and two rows of teeth on bottom.

His illustration – combined with information about the biology and ecology of snakes, venom types, and snake

bite symptoms – gave university faculty and students a better understanding about the dangers of venomous reptiles and ways to treat injuries caused by snakes.

They also had an opportunity to handle a friendlier species of snake at the end of the lecture. After displaying several dangerous breeds, Schwedick brought out a docile python named Java Kaa, a 14-foot crowd pleaser among USU’s personnel and their families.

A photograph of a man in a white lab coat sitting at a desk with multiple computer monitors. One monitor displays a complex network of green and red lines, possibly representing a biological or data network. The man is looking towards the right side of the frame.

Save the Date
USU Research Days
“Celebrating Excellence in Research”
May 14-15

Final Frame



Photo by MCG Laura Bailey

First-year students from the F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine (black shirts) competed against third-year medical students (grey shirts) during the Base Basketball Championship held at Naval Support Activity Bethesda, April 7. The MS3s ultimately prevailed by ten-points.