

Rohit Varma named Keck School dean

Rohit Varma, MD, MPH, has been named dean of the Keck School of Medicine of USC, effective immediately. Varma also will hold the May S. and John Hooval Dean's Chair in Medicine.

USC Provost Michael Quick, PhD, announced the appointment Nov. 9 on behalf of USC President C. L. Max Nikias, PhD.

"I am truly honored and privileged to serve as the dean of the Keck School of Medicine of USC, particularly at such

an exciting and transformational period for USC and the field of medicine in general," Varma said. "Our academic medical center is at the forefront of delivering precision health care with compassion, conducting groundbreaking research through interdisciplinary collaboration and providing an enriching and holistic educational experience. Our charge is to revolutionize the traditional approach to medicine through creativity, collaboration and compassion.

I look forward to partnering with our outstanding leadership team, world-renowned faculty and dedicated staff to build upon the school's legacy and advance President Nikias' vision for our university."

Added Quick: "While we interviewed a number of top candidates for this position, the standout to lead the Keck School of Medicine of USC was Rohit Varma. We are lucky to have had



See **DEAN**, page 2

Rohit Varma



HONORING VETERANS: Rod Hanners, CEO of Keck Medical Center of USC and COO of Keck Medicine of USC, second from left, and Annette Sy, chief nursing officer of Keck Medical Center, second from right, join veterans at a breakfast for Keck Medicine employees who served in the armed forces. Hanners is a U.S. Navy veteran.

Changes on tap ahead of accreditation site visit

By Hope Hamashige

The Keck School of Medicine of USC is in the midst of a self-evaluation process in preparation for an accreditation site visit next year from the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME), which accredits medical schools in the United States and Canada.

The Keck School received the maximum eight-year accreditation in 2010. In preparation for the Nov. 12-15, 2017, visit, the school's faculty, staff and students began the process of self-evaluation in July 2015 to identify the school's key strengths as well as areas that can be improved.

Donna Elliott, MD, EdD, senior associate dean for student and educational affairs, said that about 100 faculty and staff members volunteered to participate in one of a dozen self-study groups. The groups are organized

See **ACCREDITATION**, page 3

Leaders tout philanthropy efforts, collaboration at annual meeting

By Amanda Busick

Alumni, residents, parents and friends of Keck Medicine of USC attended the first Annual Meeting and Health Care Conference recently, learning details of the educational programs, academic medical research and outstanding clinical care taking place at Keck Medical Center of USC and the Keck School of Medicine of USC, and the importance of philanthropy to make these things happen.

The program, held Nov. 4 on the Health Sciences Campus, included continuing medical education (CME) sessions on a wide range of topics, tours of new buildings on campus and a lively luncheon, and featured conversations about the growth, triumphs and future plans of Keck Medicine.

Rohit Varma, MD, MPH, dean of the Keck School and director of the USC Gayle and Edward Roski Eye Institute, spoke during the luncheon about how collaborative

efforts among the different USC schools can help make these medical advances happen.

"We at USC are really fortunate," he began. "We have 19 professional schools and we have so much expertise in many different and diverse areas from the arts and the humanities to policy and engineering. There is an abundance of disciplines that medicine can collaborate and converge with to be creative about new ways of learning

See **MEETING**, page 3



USC President C. L. Max Nikias, left, presents Vassilios Papadopoulos, USC School of Pharmacy dean, with the John Stauffer Dean's Chair in Pharmaceutical Sciences at USC.

Steve Cohn

Pharmacy school installs new dean

By Michele Keller

Vassilios Papadopoulos — researcher, scientist, innovator and leader — was installed as dean of the USC School of Pharmacy and recipient of the John Stauffer Dean's Chair in Pharmaceutical Sciences at USC on Nov. 1, marking a new milestone in the school's 111-year history.

Welcoming guests to a ceremony at Town & Gown on the University Park Campus, President C. L. Max Nikias, PhD, described the beginnings of pharmacy in Greek legend, when Asclepius, the Greek god of medicine,

See **PHARMACY**, page 3

Together We Can Beat the Flu

6 Tips to Stay Healthy this Flu Season

Avoid touching eyes, nose mouth



Cover your sneeze/cough



Wash your hands



Stay home if you're sick



Avoid contact with sick people



Get the Flu Vaccine

The flu vaccine is the first step in protecting yourself



Showcase salutes student entrepreneurs

By Peijean Tsai

The USC Stevens Center for Innovation’s Student Innovator Showcase is an annual competition that gives the university’s young entrepreneurs a chance to present their startup ideas to the business community.

The event has distributed \$117,600 in prizes since 2007, with winning teams using the funding to drive their businesses forward. Projects are judged on uniqueness, business concept, progress in funding and the ability to transform the world.

The winner of this year’s \$10,000 award for innovation went to Auxomel, a startup from the Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC that is developing a peptide-gel prototype to regrow superficial human tooth enamel and slow tooth decay.

The project was represented by Kaushik Mukherjee, a USC doctoral dentistry student.

Auxomel also won the \$2,500 Venture Validation award sponsored by the Lloyd Greif Center for Entrepreneurial Studies at the USC Marshall School of Business.

“The Student Innovator Showcase was an excellent training exercise for aspiring innovators such as our team



Michael Chou

USC student-led startup, Auxomel, won the \$10,000 Most Innovative and \$2,500 Venture Validation awards at the 10th Annual USC Stevens Student Innovator Showcase held on Oct. 7. Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC student Kaushik Mukherjee received the award from Jennifer Dyer, USC Stevens executive director, and Peter Kuhn, master of ceremonies.

to assess the commercial readiness of our technology in the real world,” Mukherjee said.

The awards will help fund the clinical translation and commercialization of Auxomel’s prototype, she noted.

Crowd.Game, which has created

a large-scale interactive platform for live events, earned \$10,000 for best business concept, a prize sponsored by the Diem Shotwell Metcalfe Family Fund at USC Marshall.

The project was led by Benjamin Skaggs and Bryan Edelman, alumni of the Interactive Media & Games

department at the USC School of Cinematic Arts, along with Jimmy Tanner, a computer science doctoral student at the USC Viterbi School of Engineering.

Aqus, which aims to provide affordable access to clean water, won the Daniel Floersheimer Global Impact prize for the project with the greatest potential to benefit society.

Feel Image, which intends to help the visually challenged with new technology, won the \$2,500 Most Potentially Disruptive award sponsored by the USC Marshall Center for Global Innovation.

Toolbot won \$1,200 for the Trojan Family Choice Award, which is selected by a popular vote of people at the event. The company has developed versatile modular gadgets for photography and videography, easing the need to carry bulky camera equipment.

“We congratulate the winners and all the student teams that applied and competed in this year’s USC Stevens Student Innovator Showcase. USC Stevens is proud to be an integral part of the USC entrepreneurial ecosystem,” said Vasiliki Anest, PhD, senior director at the USC Stevens Center for Innovation.

Calendar of Events

Friday, Nov. 18
8:30 a.m. Hastings Center for Pulmonary Research Seminar. “Planar Cell Polarity Signaling in the Airway Epithelium,” Eszter Vladoar, PhD, Stanford University. IRD 734. Info: Elva Rubio, (323) 409-7184, elvarubi@usc.edu

9 a.m.-1 p.m. SC CTSI Workshop. “REDCap Database Solutions Workshop: Electronic Data Capture.” Soto Building, 1st Floor, Room 116. Info and RSVP: Juan Ruiz, (323) 442-1594, Juan.Ruiz@med.usc.edu, <http://bit.ly/2dQf5k9>

3 p.m.-5 p.m. Zilkha Neurogenetic Institute Lecture. “7th Annual Zach Hall Lecture,” Eric R. Kandel, MD, and Denise Kandel, PhD. Mayer Auditorium. Info: Emily Chu, (323) 442-3219, Emily.Chu@med.usc.edu

Monday, Nov. 21
10 a.m. Division of Cardiovascular Medicine. “L. Julian Haywood, MD LAC+USC Medical Center Coronary Care Unit Dedication.” Los Angeles County+USC Medical Center, IPT C2J104A. Info: Jasmin Cortes, (323) 442-5604, jcortes@usc.edu

Conference Room, 6th Floor. Info: Lina Poyzner, (323) 442-6383, Lina.Poyzner@med.usc.edu, <http://eye.keckmedicine.org>

Tuesday, Nov. 29
Noon. USC Institute for Global Health Talk. “Children vs. Tobacco: 2016 – Who’s Winning?” Jonathan Klein, MD, MPH, American Academy of Pediatrics. Soto Street Building 1 (SSB) 115/116 USC Health Sciences Campus. Info: Mia Poynor, (415) 879-6542, mpoynor@usc.edu, <https://globalhealth.usc.edu/2016/10/07/children-vs-tobacco/>

Thursday, Dec. 1
11:30 a.m. Keck School of Medicine of USC, Faculty Affairs, SC CTSI and USC Libraries Seminar. “Learn new ways to measure the reach and impact of your research: Why it matters to researchers and administrators,” Caroline Muglia and Katja Reuter, PhD. Eli and Edythe Broad CIRM Center 1st Floor Conference Room. Info and RSVP: Aileen Dinkjian, (323) 442-1087, aileen.dinkjian@med.usc.edu, https://scctsi.formstack.com/forms/registration_altmetrics

Friday, Dec. 2
Noon-2 p.m. Clinical Investigations Support Office Meeting. Aresty Auditorium. Info and RSVP: Johana Nava, (323) 865-0468, nava_j@med.usc.edu

Tuesday, Dec. 6
Noon. The Saban Research Institute Seminar. “Floyd H. Gilles Lecture in Neuroscience Research: Molecular and Cellular Mechanisms of Neuronal Migration,” Pasko Rakic, MD, PhD, Yale School of Medicine. Saban Research Building Auditorium. Info: Ritu Gill, (323) 361-8715, ttecpad@chla.usc.edu

Tuesday, Nov. 22
12:30 p.m. USC Immigrant Health Initiative, Center for Health Equity in the Americas & USC Institute for Global Health. “Striving for Health Justice: The Reality of Syrian Refugees & Displaced Populations,” Steve McAndrew. Soto Street Building (SSB) 117. Info and RSVP: Larissa Puro, (323) 442-7233, global.health@usc.edu, <https://globalhealth.usc.edu/striving-for-health-justice/>

5:30 p.m. Department of Ophthalmology Grand Rounds. Ramon Lee, MD. HCCC4

Event addresses homeless care issues

By Douglas Morino

A physician renowned for delivering compassionate, skilled care to the homeless living on the streets of Boston spoke about his work and the role of health care for the underprivileged during a recent discussion at McKibbin Lecture Hall on the Health Sciences Campus.

James O’Connell, MD, spoke to Keck School of Medicine of USC students as part of USC Vision and Voices, a university-wide arts and humanities initiative established in 2006 that provides the USC community with events aimed at expanding knowledge and perspectives.

O’Connell discussed the challenges facing health care professionals trying to treat homeless patients, many of whom are suffering from severe, life-threatening illnesses and are hesitant to receive care. There are an estimated 46,000 homeless people living on the streets of Los Angeles County each night, according to a report issued in May by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority.

“You can do remarkable things if you think creatively,” O’Connell said to the group of

about 75 medical students. “People were not coming to us for treatment, so we had to go to them where they were most comfortable. We had to figure out ways to care for them.”

O’Connell started serving the homeless in 1985 when he founded the Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program. Today, an interdisciplinary team of professionals, including psychiatrists, primary care physicians and homeless advocates, staff outpatient clinics at Massachusetts General Hospital and Boston Medical Center, along with providing services at more than 60 shelters and homeless outreach centers across the city. O’Connell and his team also make nightly rounds in a van, roaming the city’s streets and searching under bridges, darkened stoops, alleyways and parks in search of homeless in need of medical care.

“From a public health perspective, the people who are most vulnerable to dying are those who live outside,” he said. “We realized that if we want to help those folks, we had to find ways to reach them.”

DEAN: Varma’s roles include president of USC Care

Continued from page 1

him here, leading the way as interim dean. We are proud of the outstanding quality and talent of the Keck faculty and staff, current students and graduates. We know that (the school) will continue to soar in the future under the leadership of Dean Varma.”

Varma was appointed interim dean of the Keck School on March 24. He is the holder of the Grace and Emery Beardsley Chair in Ophthalmology at the school, and is a professor of ophthalmology and preventive medicine. His most recent service to USC includes serving as the chair of the Department of Ophthalmology, director of the USC Gayle and Edward Roski Eye Institute and president of USC Care Medical Group.

“I am pleased to congratulate Dr. Varma on his appointment as dean of the Keck School of Medicine,” said Tom Jackiewicz, senior

vice president and CEO of Keck Medicine of USC. “In addition to being an exceptional researcher and clinician, Dr. Varma is an excellent leader and academic administrator. Since he stepped into the role of interim dean, Dr. Varma has been a great partner and collaborator in building on the success of the Keck School of Medicine and Keck Medicine of USC. I look forward to our continued partnership as we work towards becoming one of the nation’s elite academic medical centers.”

An accomplished physician and scientist, Varma is recognized worldwide as a visionary leader in the epidemiology of eye diseases. He is an expert on changes in the optic nerve in glaucoma, and is also studying new imaging techniques in the early diagnosis of glaucomatous optic nerve damage. His primary research focuses on epidemiologic studies of eye

disease in children and aging populations.

He is the principal investigator of the Los Angeles Latino Eye Study, the Chinese American Eye Study, the Multi-Ethnic Pediatric Eye Diseases Study and the African American Eye Disease Study. More recently, Varma has been involved in the development of novel implantable intraocular pressure sensors and drainage devices. He has over 247 publications in various peer reviewed ophthalmic journals, and has co-authored two ophthalmic books.

Varma obtained his medical degree at the University of Delhi, India. He completed his residency in ophthalmology at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, as well as earning a master of public health degree from Johns Hopkins University. He completed two glaucoma fellowships, one at the Wills Eye Hospital in Philadelphia and the other at USC.

Notice: Calendar items are due at least 10 days before publication date. Timely submission does not guarantee publication in print. See more calendar entries at hscnews.usc.edu/calendar-of-events. Submit items at tinyurl.com/calendar-hsc. Include day, date, time, title of talk, first and last name of speaker, affiliation of speaker, location and a phone number/email address.

Meditation app offers free memberships for staff

By Douglas Morino

Ten minutes a day.

That's the mantra for Andy Puddicombe and the nearly 10 million users of Headspace, the digital meditation platform he co-founded in 2010 with Rich Pierson.

Headspace offers users guided meditation resources online. Many sessions are in 10-minute intervals. With an engaging and easy-to-use interface, the platform is aimed at making meditation accessible to new audiences while also helping those who have been meditating for years.

Headspace is partnering with Keck Medicine of USC to offer physicians, nurses and staff one-year memberships. Sign up at <https://www.headspace.com/keckmedusc> and use code: CCUSC1Y.

Puddicombe, a former ordained Buddhist monk, was diagnosed with testicular cancer and treated at USC Norris Cancer Hospital. He is healthy and has been cancer-free for three years.

He recently spoke with HSC News about Headspace, meditation and how a daily commitment to calming the mind can promote personal wellness and offer healthy benefits for a lifetime.

How did Headspace get started?

We began with meditation events in the United Kingdom and people started writing in, saying how much they enjoyed the courses. So we started recording short portions that people could use online. The feedback was so good we recorded more and put it together in a more organized way. Then we put it all together in an app. Before we knew it, we had a million users. Once it was clear Headspace was effective, we focused on making it a more comprehensive digital program.



Andy Puddicombe

What advice would you give for someone who may be new to meditation?

First, put aside any ideas that we may have about meditation. There are preconceptions and misconceptions that can get in the way. We might think meditation is about sitting cross-legged in a room with incense and chanting. But that's not what meditation is about — meditation is defined by the user. The most important thing is just to give it a go. Think of it like a small project — what happens when you take 10 minutes to meditate each day, 10 days in a row?

Many members of Keck Medicine are professionals who are extraordinarily busy and often experience high levels of stress. What meditation advice would you give them?

Our mind is the most precious resource we have. Our own health, happiness and relationships are dependent on it. At work, our ability to do our job and cope with stresses depends on a healthy mind. We've

seen what happens if we don't look after the body. But what happens when we don't look after our mind? We feel unhappy and start to struggle. With meditation, we can build up a sense of resilience and prevent it from getting to that point by simply taking 10 minutes a day to meditate.

How do you meditate?

I used to do it every single morning, first thing when I woke up. But these days, with my family and work, I have to be more flexible. Like most people, my day is jam-packed. So it takes a conscious effort. During especially busy days, I may have to move a meeting to fit it in. But it's not good for myself or my family if I'm not looking after my mind, and it's not good for Headspace the organization.

How did meditation help you after your cancer diagnosis and through treatment?

Meditation helped me in more ways than I could have possibly imaged or even describe. On a macro level it has fundamentally changed my perception of life and the world in which I live. Every day looks different as a result. I have a greater sense of calm, clarity and my relationships are healthier than when I was younger, before meditation. I'm less reactive to things and I have more perspective.

Being diagnosed with cancer was a difficult situation. But I think my own experience was really different. It didn't feel like a fight. I didn't feel it was this terrible thing. Having cancer was a really life-affirming experience for me. Rather than have my mind bouncing around, I was able to be more at ease during my treatment through meditation. I realized things were outside my control and meditation helped me be OK with that. I didn't know how things would work out and so I couldn't take anything for granted.



Steve Cohn

USC School of Pharmacy Dean Vassilios Papadopoulos enters the Installation Ceremony, followed by USC President C. L. Max Nikias on Nov. 1 at Town & Gown.

PHARMACY: School has long 'history of firsts'

Continued from page 1

delegated the job of creating healing remedies to his daughter Hygieia.

Nikias also noted the USC School of Pharmacy's long "history of firsts" since its establishment in 1905, which include being the first in the nation to offer a four-year degree in pharmacy, the first to offer a doctorate in pharmacy and the first to offer a clinical pharmacy program.

At a time when USC is redefining the role of the pharmacist as a healer, Papadopoulos, DPharm, PhD, understands that improving the human condition is at the heart of the school's mission, Nikias said.

Papadopoulos' leadership, unmatched expertise across fields and clear track record of bringing people together make him the ideal leader for the school at a time when the growing convergence of biology, genomics, chemistry and medicine demands close ties between research and clinical care, Nikias added.

"By considering the past, we can see the future," Nikias said. "It is a future in which intense collaboration — not

separation — of the sciences will give us breakthroughs to overpower our most complex diseases."

Calling USC a "global leader," Papadopoulos explained why he chose to come to Los Angeles after living in Athens, Paris, Sydney, Washington, D.C., and Montreal.

"USC has a way of expanding your thinking and opening possibilities," he said. "It's a bold and exciting place, accomplishing major advances at an impressive speed."

He outlined multiple initiatives to accelerate USC School of Pharmacy's upward trajectory, which included diverse recruitment, integration with biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries and building a pipeline for undergraduate and high school students.

"When a faculty member comes to me with a radical idea — a novel approach that could be transformative for science and for the university — I want to be able to provide the support to pursue that notion," he said. "Like our students, I want our faculty to dream big."

ACCREDITATION: Visit set for late 2017

Continued from page 1

around key topics and areas the LCME has identified as standards for accreditation such as facilities, the curriculum, the admissions process and other services and programs that serve students and faculty. Georgianna Newell, continuous quality improvement and accreditation administrator at the Keck School, said the groups will cite strengths and make recommendations for improvements in their respective areas to prepare for the LCME visit.

Elliott pointed out that three new positions were added to the Keck School administration based on student feedback. Jason Murillo, MA, MLS, was hired as the assistant director of financial aid planning and recruitment, Chantal Young, PhD, director of medical student wellness,

will oversee programs and services to support student well-being and Stephanie Zia, MD, is the newly appointed assistant dean for career advising.

While the faculty and administration always are making improvements to the Keck School, Frank Sinatra, MD, assistant dean for faculty development and faculty lead for the LCME review, noted that the LCME presents a unique opportunity to take an in-depth look at policies and practices by soliciting feedback from a large group of faculty and students.

"The LCME process gives us another opportunity to make positive change," Sinatra said. "And though they have requirements to meet, our goal is to go above and beyond what they require."

MEETING: Medical center's rankings, safety score highlighted at conference

Continued from page 1

and managing health and disease."

Rod Hanners, COO of Keck Medicine and CEO of Keck Medical Center, provided a brief history of how Keck Medicine came to be and discussed many of the recent accolades that the medical center has earned,

including the recent rankings in *U.S. News and World Report* and the Leapfrog Group's A rating for Keck Hospital of USC in patient safety. He highlighted the medical enterprise's designated centers of excellence and noted Keck Medicine's growing network of providers.



Photos by Ricardo Carrasco III

Rohit Varma, left, and Rod Hanners speak at Keck Medicine of USC's first annual meeting and health care conference, held Nov. 4 on the Health Sciences Campus.

Staff: Nominate your Ethics in Action Hero

Do you know an ethical role model who demonstrates a commitment to the university's Code of Ethics, serves as an example to others through their actions and decisions and sets high standards for themselves and others in the workplace? The USC Office of Compliance is accepting employee nominees for "Ethics in Action" heroes. Email a Word attachment describing your Ethics in Action hero in 500 words or less, to compliance@usc.edu by Dec. 2. Your stories will be featured in upcoming compliance publications and newsletters.

Correction: Due to a clerical error, an outdated version of the Trojan Society of Hospitals article was published in the Nov. 4 issue of *HSC News*. An updated version is available at <http://bit.ly/2fvpAwk>.

HSC Newsmakers

A roundup of news items related to Keck Medicine of USC, which may include philanthropic donations, research grants, publication in academic journals and mentions in the news media:

Analysis: Tumor location predicts treatment response

A RETROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS OF DATA from the CALGB/SWOG 80405 clinical trial revealed that in patients with metastatic colorectal cancer, the location of the primary tumor predicts the patient’s response to various treatment strategies for the disease. Patients with left-sided primary tumors responded significantly better to cetuximab, which had an average survival of 39 months as opposed to 32 months with bevacizumab. Conversely, patients with right-sided primary tumors responded more favorably to bevacizumab. Heinz-Josef Lenz, MD, J. Terrence Lanni Chair in Gastrointestinal Cancer Research and professor of medicine at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, chair of the Gastrointestinal Oncology Program at USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center and co-chair of the SWOG 80405 clinical trial, presented the data at the European Society for Medical Oncology on Oct. 10. He also was a co-author on a paper published in *JAMA Oncology* online that illustrated similar findings through the CRYSTAL and FIRE-3 clinical trials. — Mary Dacuma



From left, Julie Anderson, Paul Gilbert, Cecilia Cayton and Vivienne Uytana are seen recently in Honduras for Operation Walk.

Staff take expertise overseas with Operation Walk

FOUR MEDICAL STAFF MEMBERS from USC Verdugo Hills Hospital traveled to Honduras for the 20th annual Operation Walk. Lawrence Dorr, MD, professor of clinical orthopaedic surgery at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, founded the program to provide free surgical care and education in developing countries that have limited means for treating debilitating orthopaedic ailments. The team visited 34 patients and performed 46 joint replacement surgeries (both hip and knee), 12 of which were bilateral. Paul Gilbert, director of orthopaedic operative services at USC-VHH and clinical assistant professor of orthopaedic surgery, also was on the Operation Walk Physician Education Team and taught hands-on techniques to Honduran nurses, students and therapists. “This was my 11th Operation Walk, and each one has been an unforgettable experience,” Gilbert said. “As members of a medical center at the forefront of technology and patient care, it is our responsibility to heal not only those who come through our hospital doors, but also those who are in other parts of the world without access or options. — Mary Dacuma



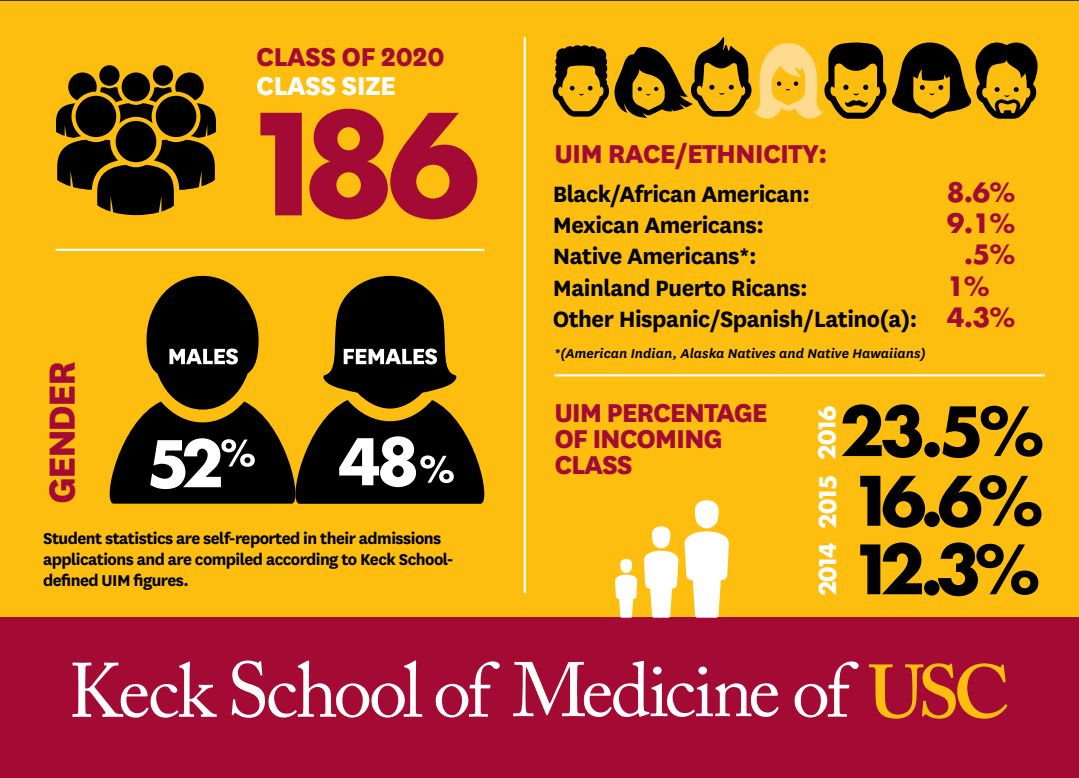
From left, Rohit Varma, Tom Jackiewicz and Karthik Murali are seen Oct. 25 at the Millenium Biltmore Hotel during the Milken Institute’s California Summit.

Keck Medicine leaders speak at institute’s California Summit

TOM JACKIEWICZ, MPH, senior vice president and CEO of Keck Medicine of USC, and Rohit Varma, MD, MPH, dean of the Keck School of Medicine of USC and director of the USC Gayle and Edward Roski Eye Institute, participated in a panel discussion during the Milken Institute’s California Summit, held Oct. 25 in downtown Los Angeles. The session, titled “Harnessing Data to Combat Homelessness,” included discussion about the importance of supportive services as well as new data initiatives and opportunities to use technology to amplify society’s capacity to combat this crisis.

INCREASING DIVERSITY AT THE KECK SCHOOL

The Keck School of Medicine of USC welcomed its most diverse class of medical students this year, as the number of students in the class of 2020 who are underrepresented in medicine (UIM) increased by double digits from two years ago. Here are some details about the first-year students:



PA students win Challenge Bowl

By Claire Norman

A team of students from the Primary Care Physician Assistant Program at the Keck School of Medicine of USC made a major comeback to defeat four other California physician assistant student teams at the annual California Academy of Physician Assistant (CAPA) Challenge Bowl.

Physician assistant (PA) program students Andrew Luna, '18, Nicole Galle, '18, and Sarah Nargiso, '17, were quick on the buzzer and exact in their answers, helping them redeem themselves in the wild card round after losing in the first bracket during the tournament, held Oct. 8 in Palm Springs.

In the end, they defeated student teams from Stanford University, Loma Linda University, Marshall B. Ketchum University and Western University of Health Sciences, winning the Challenge Bowl trophy and a check for \$250.

PA faculty members Christopher P. Forest, MSHS, PA-C, assistant professor of clinical family medicine and director of research for the Physician Assistant Program, and Jennifer Ramos, MPAP, PA-C, clinical instructor of family medicine (clinician educator), led the team.

The group trained for months and spent hours practicing along with alternates Jie Zhuang, Dane Arispe and Matthew Tan. The final score was USC 30, Marshall -10 and Western 10. The cheering section of alumni, fellow students, staff and faculty rushed the stage to congratulate the winning team.

This is the fifth time USC has won the trophy in the last eight years.



From left, Jennifer Ramos, Jie Zhuang, Matthew Tan, Sarah Nargiso, Nicole Galle, Andrew Luna, Dane Arispe and Christopher P. Forest pose with the California Academy of Physician Assistant Challenge Bowl trophy.

Keck Medicine of USC
Marketing and Communications
2011 N. Soto Street – SST-2830
Los Angeles, CA 90032

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Industry CA
Permit 4029

HSC News

HSC News is published for the faculty, staff, students, volunteers and visitors in the University of Southern California’s Health Sciences Campus community. It is produced by Keck Medicine Marketing and Communications staff. Permission to reprint articles is available upon request. No artwork may be reproduced without the creator’s consent.

Editor: Melissa Masatani
Director, Internal Communications: Virginia Baca
Director, Content Strategy and Management: Sara Reeve
Contributors: Meg Aldrich, Amanda Busick, Ricardo Carrasco III, Nathan Cowen, Mary Dacuma, Hope Hamashige, Michele Keller, Cristy Lytal, Douglas Morino, Claire Norman, Larissa Puro, Carol Sussman, Peijean Tsai, Zen Vuong and L. Alexis Young

Phone: (323) 442-2830
Fax: (323) 442-2832
Email: hscnews@usc.edu
Web: hscnews.usc.edu | kecknet.usc.edu

Next Issue:
December 2

