

## U.S. News boosts ranking of HSC schools

By Leslie Ridgeway

The Health Sciences campus fared well in the 2013 *U.S. News & World Report's Best Graduate Schools* guidebook, with USC's Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy ranked No. 1 in the annual listing—a ranking it has held since 2004—and the USC Division of Occupational Therapy also ranking first in the nation.

The USC School of Pharmacy ranked 10<sup>th</sup> in a four-way tie with the University of Arizona, University of Utah and University of Washington, moving up from a rank of 15th.

The Keck School of Medicine of USC improved its ranking by two spots from the 2012 rankings, placing it at 34<sup>th</sup> among research-intensive medical schools.

The 2013 rankings will appear in the April 3 issue of *U.S. News & World Report* and are available online at <http://bit.ly/mSHrG>.

James Gordon, associate dean and chair of the Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy, hailed the rankings, saying, "This recognition reflects the incredible dedication and hard work of all our faculty, staff and students."

Established in 1945 to train physical therapists at the undergraduate level, the division was one of the first physical therapy programs in the nation to award the doctor of physical therapy degree, in 1998.

The data for the rankings came from surveys of more than 1,200 programs and nearly 15,000 academics and professionals, conducted during the fall of 2011 and early 2012.

Every year, *U.S. News & World Report* ranks professional school programs in medicine, business, education, engineering and law. The rankings are based on two types of data: Expert opinions about program excellence and statistical indicators that measure the quality of a school's faculty, research and students.

*U.S. News* also periodically ranks programs in the health arena, sciences, social sciences, humanities and many other areas based solely on the ratings of academic experts. The health rankings for physical therapy, occupational therapy and pharmacy are all based on experts' ratings.

## ACGME honors two from Keck School

By Amy E. Hamaker

The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) recently honored two individuals at the Keck School of Medicine of USC for their dedication to advancing the quality of USC's resident physician education. The Keck School of Medicine provides rigorous training for medical residents to help prepare them for board certification and medical practice.

Lawrence M. Opas, associate dean and director of the office of graduate medical education, received one of three

2012 Parker J. Palmer Courage to Lead Awards. The award honors outstanding designated institutional officials, who are in charge of all residency programs at sponsoring institutions.

Nancy Curtiss, student programs advisor with the Department of Anesthesiology, won one of five 2012 Graduate Medical Education Program Coordinator Excellence Awards.

"The Keck School of Medicine of USC's comprehensive medical residency program is thriving thanks to the hard work and dedication of our faculty and

staff," said Keck School Dean Carmen A. Puliafito. "Congratulations to both Dr. Opas and Nancy Curtiss on these well-deserved honors. I know that they will continue to provide an outstanding experience for our residents."

The Courage to Lead Award that Opas received acknowledges the leadership and commitment of officials who foster an excellent environment for resident education. This includes encouraging program directors, improving performance and innovation among

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## Pampering patients: New salon services come to Keck Medical Center

By Sara Reeve

Patients and family members dealing with long hospitalization often crave a sense of normalcy in a hospital room—something to take them out of their day-to-day reality. A little pampering can sometimes work wonders, and it is now just a phone call away for patients at Keck Medical Center of USC.

Thanks to a new initiative of the medical center's Patient Experience Department, patients and family members can make appointments for in-room services from a certified Aveda cosmetologist.

Members of the Patient Experience Department began the process to bring these services into the hospitals back in October 2011, when they spoke with patients about their perceptions of their care at Keck Medical Center.

"We met a woman who had several inches of gray roots, and when we visited her again a week later, a nurse had dyed the patient's hair and the patient was very pleased and felt much better about herself," said Sevanne Sarkis, administrative director of patient experience. "Around the same time we met another patient who had gotten a manicure from another nurse. Both women were so touched by these simple acts and it made them feel so much better during their stay with us."

Available services include haircuts, manicures and



Tania Chatila

Keck Hospital of USC patient Louise Ball gets her hair shampooed by Tiffany Lopez, a certified Aveda cosmetologist, as part of a new salon services program at the hospital.

pedicures, among others. The price for the services varies, from \$12 for a hand and leg massage to \$45 for a woman's haircut.

For Keck Hospital of USC patient Louise Ball, having her hair washed and dried while in the hospital was a real treat.

"This is really outstanding," Ball said. "It's essential to have these kinds of services for patients. It's bad enough that we're lying here in a hospital bed, somewhat helpless. To be able to do something like have your hair washed professionally, like you would in a salon, makes a difference."

Patients can call Concierge Services to make an appointment. Services

are available on Tuesdays only at this time, and require 24-hour advance reservations. Patients are advised to communicate with their nursing team before appointments, as physician approval is required.

"A lot of long-term patients have been using these services," said Sarkis. "One family member noted that this was an integral part of the healing process. These are basic services we take for granted, but when you are in the hospital, you can't care for yourself the same way."

For more information about the salon services offered at Keck Medical Center, call Concierge Services at (323) 442-8787.

**'These are basic services we take for granted, but when you are in the hospital, you can't care for yourself the same way.'**

**—Sevanne Sarkis,  
administrative  
director of patient  
experience**

# Depo-Provera may increase diabetes risk for obese women

By Alison Trinidad

Obese women may increase their risk for developing type 2 diabetes by using the birth control shot marketed as Depo-Provera, according to a small study by researchers from the Keck School of Medicine of USC.

The first to examine the drug's effect on obese women, the study suggests that other forms of long-term birth control, namely intrauterine contraception, may be a more effective choice for overweight women.

"Obese women have a higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes and other cardiovascular diseases. They also have an increased risk for pregnancy complications. We don't want to prescribe a contraceptive that will push these women from borderline hyperglycemic to diabetic," said Penina Segall-Gutierrez, assistant professor of clinical obstetrics and gynecology, and family medicine at the Keck School.

Segall-Gutierrez led the study, "Deterioration in cardiometabolic risk markers in obese women during depot medroxyprogesterone acetate use," which

appeared in the January 2012 issue of the journal *Contraception*.

Depot medroxyprogesterone acetate (DMPA) is a progestin-only contraceptive that is administered by injection every three months. DMPA and other progestin-only methods are the only hormonal contraceptives recommended by the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists for obese women older than 35. Because most oral contraceptives increase the risk for developing blood clots, they are not recommended for obese women, who are more susceptible to clots than normal-weight women.

For the study, researchers compared the insulin sensitivity, body mass index, blood sugar and cholesterol levels of 15 women (five of normal weight and 10 who were overweight) before injection and 18 weeks after. The participants, recruited over a seven-month period at the Women's and Children's Hospital of the Los Angeles County+USC Medical Center, received an injection of DMPA upon acceptance into the study and another 12 weeks later.

The researchers found that both normal-weight and obese women became more insulin resistant after receiving DMPA, which means that their bodies became less effective at lowering blood sugars. However, it appears that the normal-weight women were able to compensate by producing more insulin. The data suggest that weight gain, an increase in insulin resistance, or both play a role in the increased susceptibility for diabetes among obese women who use DMPA.

Co-authors include Anny H. Xiang, Richard M. Watanabe, Enrique Trigo, Frank Z. Stanczyk, Xinwen Liu, Ronna Jurow and Thomas A. Buchanan, all of the Keck School. The research was funded by an anonymous donor.

*Segall-Gutierrez, P., Xiang, A.H., Watanabe, R.M., Trigo, E., Stanczyk, F.Z., Liu, X., Jurow, R. & Buchanan, T.A. (2012). Deterioration in cardiometabolic risk markers in obese women during depot medroxyprogesterone acetate use. Contraception, 85(1), 36-41. Published online June 11, 2011; doi:10.1016/j.contraception.2011.04.016*

**'We don't want to prescribe a contraceptive that will push women from borderline hyperglycemic to diabetic.'**

—Penina Segall-Gutierrez, assistant professor of clinical obstetrics and gynecology, and family medicine at the Keck School

## Upcoming educational events focus on campus stem cell research

By Amy E. Hamaker

With the recent recruitment of Andrew P. McMahon as chair of the new Department of Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine at the Keck School of Medicine of USC and director of the Eli and Edythe Broad Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research at USC, interest in stem cell education is reaching a new level.

The Broad Center will host "The Stem Cell Niche in Development and Regeneration" symposium on Friday, June 8, in the Aresty Auditorium. Speakers will include the Keck School's McMahon and Cheng-Ming Chuong, professor of pathology, as well as researchers from Stanford, UC Irvine, UC San Francisco, UC San Diego and UC Berkeley.

In addition, the USC Stem Cell Core Facility has added

three workshops designed to assist stem cell researchers:

"Human Pluripotent Stem Cell Workshop" (March 19-21) is an introductory course aimed at those interested in performing research with human embryonic stem cells and induced pluripotent stem cells.

"International Human Pluripotent Stem Cell Culture Course" (June 3-7) offers training in techniques associated with growing human embryonic stem cells or induced pluripotent stem cells.

"Rat ESC Culture and Gene Targeting Workshop" (Sept. 17-19) offers training in derivation of rat embryonic stem cell lines and transgenic rats.

The Keck School has a history of stem cell education. On March 1, 2005, Keck School Professor of Medicine

Laurie DeLeve and Professor of Medicine, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Zea Borok (in coordination with Gay Crooks and Carolyn Lutzko from Children's Hospital Los Angeles) organized "USC Presents Stem Cell Research Day," featuring keynote speakers and presentations by faculty from USC and other research institutions.

"USC Stem Cell Translational and Clinical Sciences Research Symposium" on Sept. 22, 2010, was organized by DeLeve, Borok and Janice Liebler, professor of clinical medicine, as a follow-up to the 2005 conference to explore new information and challenges in translating basic stem cell biology into possible therapies for a number of currently intractable diseases.

And in October 2011,

the Keck School was a sponsor of the World Stem Cell Summit in Pasadena, Calif., where more than 170 prominent scientists and experts discussed the latest scientific discoveries, business models, legal and regulatory solutions, and best practices. Several Keck School faculty participated as speakers and

moderators.

To register for the stem cell events, see the "Calendar of Events" section in this issue. For more information about stem cell services, contact core facility director Victoria Fox, victorif@usc.edu or 323-442-7834, or visit <https://sites.google.com/site/uscstemcellcorefacility/>.

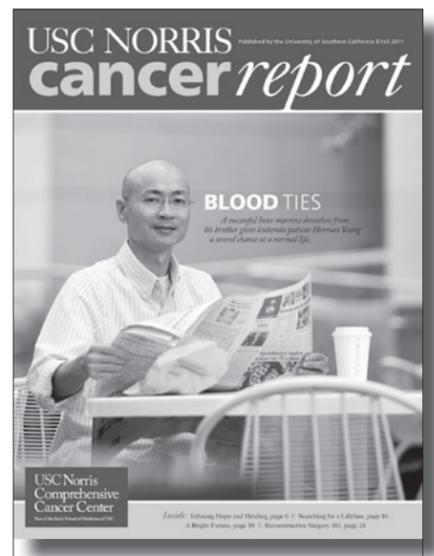
## Three HSC publications honored for communications excellence

Staff in the USC Health Sciences Public Relations and Marketing office recently won five regional awards from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE).

CASE is a professional association serving educational institutions and the advancement professionals who work on their behalf in alumni relations, communications, development and marketing.

Competing against institutions in Arizona, California, Guam, Hawaii, Nevada and Utah, staff won these awards:

- Gold Award in Periodical Staff Writing for External Audiences for *USC Norris Cancer Report*—edited by Sara Reeve and Katie Neith with stories by Amy Hamaker, Alison Trinidad, Imelda Valenzuela, Reeve and Neith;
- Silver Award for Special Interest Magazines for *Keck Medicine*—edited by Ina Fried;
- Silver Award in Print Internal Audience Tabloids and Newsletters for *The Weekly*—edited by Jon Nalick;
- Bronze Award in Periodical Staff Writing for Internal Audiences for *The Weekly*—edited by Nalick with stories by Ryan Ball, Tania Chatila, Reeve and Valenzuela; and
- Bronze Award for Communications & Marketing Programs—Issues Management for "Keck Medical Center of USC Hand Hygiene Initiative"—produced by Chatila.



USC Norris Cancer Report received a gold award from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education.

The Weekly

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The Weekly is published for the faculty, staff, students, volunteers and visitors in the University of Southern California's Health Sciences campus community. It is written and produced by the Health Sciences Public Relations and Marketing staff. Comments, suggestions and story ideas are welcome. Permission to reprint articles with attribution is freely given.

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# USC School of Pharmacy reorganizes administrative leadership

By Kukla Vera

The USC School of Pharmacy has reorganized its administrative structure to augment its leadership and enhance the school's continued ability to set vital trends for the pharmacy field.

Sarah Hamm-Alvarez, the Gavin S. Herbert Professor in Pharmaceutical Sciences, has been named vice dean for research and graduate affairs, as well serving as chair of the Department of Pharmacology and Pharmaceutical Science. Kathleen A. Johnson, the William A. and Josephine A. Heeres Professor in Community Pharmacy, is now vice dean for clinical affairs and outcome sciences, while continuing to serve as chair of the Titus Family Department of Clinical Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Economics & Policy.

Kathleen Besinque has become assistant dean for curriculum and assessment. Fred Weissman continues

as the associate dean for student/faculty affairs and admissions, and Ronald Alkana is associate dean for graduate affairs and interdisciplinary graduate programs.

Michael Wincor has expanded his role to include the school's technology activities by assuming the new position of associate dean for global initiatives and technology. Meanwhile, Jeff Goad has been appointed vice chair for continuing professional development, credentialing and distance education in the school's Titus Family Department. Cynthia White will continue in her role as associate dean of administrative affairs.

The reorganization demonstrates the school's commitment to maintaining its distinctive, pioneering role in the profession.

By uniting clinical affairs and outcome sciences, for instance, the school acknowledges the growing empha-

sis on outcomes in the delivery of health care.

Similarly, the combination of curriculum and assessment highlights the school's commitment to continuously evaluate and revise its educational offerings to create new models in pharmacy education, as well as to meet and exceed the requirements of the school's accrediting body.

"These appointments signal a new path in the USC School of Pharmacy's longstanding leadership in pushing the pharmacy profession forward," said School of Pharmacy Dean Pete Vanderveen.

"The 21<sup>st</sup> century continues to bring tremendous changes to our profession, and we will remain ahead of the curve by helping pharmacists define themselves through expanding practice areas and using our expertise to better serve patients and optimize outcomes for a healthier society," he said.

# USC Women's Conference 2012 focuses on physical, financial health

By Valerie Zapanta

The Keck Medical Center of USC participated in this year's USC Women's Conference, with three USC faculty physicians leading the health workshop sessions.

The more than 200 women who attended the sessions were presented with key health issues on heart health, osteoarthritis and digestive health.

In addition to the women's health sessions, the conference offered workshops on financial strategies, nutrition and fitness, career development, and leadership. This was the first year that the Keck Medical Center of USC partnered with the USC Alumni Association to sponsor the health workshop sessions.

Michael Bowdish, assistant professor of surgery, spoke about his pioneering work with artificial heart devices implanted into patients awaiting heart transplants. Bowdish shared photos of earlier style

devices as well as the latest devices that he uses, which are much smaller and more efficient.

"Heart failure affects over 5 million Americans and is the most common reason for hospital admission over the age of 65," said Bowdish. "Informing the USC Women's Conference attendees about some of the causes of heart failure and new treatment options, such as ventricular assist devices, was a privilege. Hopefully, word will spread that we offer these options at the Keck Medical Center of USC."

Glenn Ehresmann, associate professor of clinical medicine, spoke about osteoarthritis and how it affects women, including prevention, care and up-to-date findings. His presentation highlighted important facts on symptoms and risk factors of osteoarthritis and arthroplasty, which is a surgical option for some patients.

Anthony Senagore,



Stephen Blaha

Michael Bowdish, assistant professor of surgery, speaks about his pioneering work with artificial heart devices at the March 6 USC Women's Conference at the University Park campus.

professor of surgery and chief of colorectal surgery, discussed current issues on digestive health and colorectal surgery, including colorectal cancer screenings. Senagore

focused on the benefits of having laparoscopic surgery for colorectal disease. "It is essential for your health and that of your families that you take advantage of colorectal

cancer screening," he said. "Minimally invasive surgical options can reduce the risks, speed recovery and improve overall survival for patients with colorectal cancer."

# Geoffrey Baum named interim leader of USC Health Sciences Public Relations and Marketing

University officials have named Geoffrey Baum interim assistant vice president for USC Health Sciences Public Relations and Marketing.

Baum comes to the Health Sciences campus from the USC Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism, where he served as assistant dean for public affairs, acting associate dean for development and alumni relations and, currently, managing director of the Center on Communication Leadership & Policy.

Previously, he served as assistant vice president for

marketing and public relations at Claremont McKenna College during W. M. Keck Foundation chair Robert A. Day's tenure as chair of the college's board of trustees. Baum also worked in journalism as executive producer for C-SPAN in Washington, D.C., and as senior editor for public radio's "Marketplace" in Los Angeles. He is active in the community and serves as president of the Pasadena City College board of trustees and on the advisory board for Foothill Family Service. Baum holds a master's degree in journalism from USC and a

bachelor's degree from Claremont McKenna College.

Baum will report to Brenda Maceo, vice president of public relations and marketing, while working closely with campus leaders including Tom Jackiewicz, Scott Evans, Stephen Gruber and Carmen Puliafito. He will manage the Health Sciences Public Relations and Marketing staff and direct day-to-day operations.

Baum succeeds Jane Brust, who oversaw the recent launch of the Keck Medicine of USC brand and led the department since 2006.

## The Weekly NEWSMAKERS

A March 12 broadcast on KTLA-TV featured an interview with **Glenn Ault**, associate dean for clinical administration at the Keck School, about common runner injuries in a feature about the L.A. Marathon. Ault is medical commissioner of this year's marathon.

A March 12 story in the *Los Angeles Times* quoted **Carol Koprowski**, assistant professor of clinical preventive medicine at the Keck School, about a study that suggests eating any red meat significantly increases the risk of premature death.

A March 12 report in the Montrose Patch quoted **Nerses Sanossian**, assistant professor of neurology

at the Keck School, about Verdugo Hills Hospital being designated a primary stroke center.

A March 11 story in *The Desert Sun* mentioned that **Paula Cannon**, associate professor of molecular microbiology & immunology, pediatrics, and biochemistry & molecular biology at the Keck School, presented research at the second annual HIV/AIDS Conference held in Rancho Mirage, Calif.

A March 9 story on Neon Tommy mentioned USC Norris Cancer Hospital in an article about **Arlene Ray**, a USC Norris patient and one of the founding presidents of STOP CANCER.

A March 7 report by Mother Nature Network cited an editorial by **Lon Schneider**, professor of psychiatry, neurology and gerontology at the Keck School, about the effectiveness of Aricept, a drug commonly prescribed for Alzheimer's disease. HealthDay News also cited the editorial.

A March 7 news article in *Nature* quoted cancer geneticist **Darryl Shibata**, professor of pathology at the Keck School, about the diversity present in tumors. *Discover Magazine* also quoted Shibata in a March 7 report. "By listening to a patient, a wise M.D. can just about predict what they will find on lab tests," he said.

# Calendar of Events

This Calendar of Events is also online at [www.usc.edu/hscalendar](http://www.usc.edu/hscalendar) for the Health Sciences Campus community

## Monday, Mar. 19 – Wednesday, Mar. 21

**9:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.** USC Stem Cell Core Workshop. “Human Pluripotent Stem Cell Workshop,” Various speakers. BCC Lab 205B. Info: (323) 442-7834

## Tuesday, Mar. 20

**10:30 a.m.** Keck Medical Center of USC Guild. Tour of Eli and Edythe Broad CIRM Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research building, and lunch. 10:30 a.m. Coffee; 11:00 a.m. Tour; Noon lunch. Tour free; \$25 for luncheon. Info: Carol Corral, (323) 254-0600

## Wednesday, Mar. 21, and Thursday, Mar. 22

**7:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.** Nurses of USC Critical Care Symposium. Speakers include Carol Jacobson, Karen Marzlin and Cindy Webner, Cardiovascular Nursing Education Associates. NRT Aresty Auditorium. Registration and Info: (323) 442-8660

## Thursday, Mar. 22

**Noon.** Cellular Homeostasis Lecture Series. “Reticulon 4B (Nogo-B): A Novel Regulator of Liver Diseases,” Yasuko Iwakiri, Yale University. MCH 156. Info: (323) 442-3109

**4 p.m.** Hematology Grand Rounds. “Transcobalamin 1 Deficiency: Rethinking a ‘Mystery’ Protein,” Ralph Carmel, Cornell University. NOR 7409. Info: (323) 865-3913

## Friday, Mar. 23

**8:30 a.m.** Surgical Grand Rounds. “Reflections of a Starzl Student: A Progress Report Near the Three Decade Mark,” Ronald Busuttill, UCLA. DOH 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Auditorium. Info: (323) 442-2506

**Noon.** Hematology Grand Rounds. “Subclinical Cobalamin Deficiency: The Silent Majority?” Ralph Carmel, Cornell University. IPT C2J104 Conference Rm. B. Info: (323) 865-3913

**Noon.** Physical Sciences in Oncology Monthly Seminar: “How Do Interactions Modulate Heterogeneity in Cancer Progression and Drug Resistance?” Alexander Anderson, Moffitt Cancer Center. CSC Harkness Auditorium. Lunch served for attendees at 11:45 a.m. Info: (323) 442-3849

**Noon.** Immigrant Health Initiative Seminar Series. “Health Care Reform and the Impact on Immigrants—Panel Discussion,” David Hayes-Bautista, UCLA; Michael Cousineau, USC; Sonal Ambegaokar, National Immigration Law Ctr. KAM Mayer Aud. Info: (323) 442-1678

**Noon.** Pharmacology and Pharmaceutical Sciences Seminar. “DNA Repair and NAD + Biosynthesis Crosstalk: Understanding and Exploiting PARP Activation-induced Cellular Energy Modulation,” Robert Sobol, Univ. of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute. PSC 104. Info: (323) 442-2341

## Friday, Mar. 23, and Saturday, Mar. 24

**7:30 a.m.** *HemOnc Today* Breast Cancer Review and Perspective. Various speakers, including Debu Tripathy, USC. Hilton San Diego Bayfront. For registration and more information: <http://www.HemOncTodayBreastCancer.com>

## Tuesday, Mar. 27

**Noon.** Psychiatry Grand Rounds. “Evidence-Based Treatment and Special Populations,” James Alexander, Univ. of Utah. CSC 250. Info: (323) 442-4065

## Wednesday, Mar. 28

**8:30 a.m.** Women in Management Seminar. “Women and Hormones: Managing the Effects in the Workplace,” Kathryn Randel, USC. Attendees are welcome to bring their own breakfast. CHP 102. Info: (323) 442-1865

**Notice:** Deadline for calendar submission is 4 p.m. Monday to be considered for that week’s issue—although three weeks’ advance notice of events is recommended. Please note that timely submission does not guarantee an item will be printed. Send calendar items to *The Weekly*, KAM 400 or fax to (323) 442-2832, or email to [ebalauw@usc.edu](mailto:ebalauw@usc.edu). Entries must include day, date, time, title of talk, first and last name of speaker, affiliation of speaker, location and a phone number for information.

## Doheny program gets kids excited about science

By Leslie Ridgeway

The Doheny Vision Research Center was bursting March 2 with the sounds of schoolchildren learning lessons in science



Leslie Ridgeway

Bravo High School student Hector Trujillo (right) performs an eyesight exercise with a younger student as part of Family Discovery Day at The Doheny Vision Research Center.

during Family Discovery Day, hosted by the USC Biomimetic Microelectronics Systems-Engineering Research Center’s (BMES-ERC) Science for Life program.

Ninety Murchison Middle School students and 40 of their family members participated in exercises about the brain, heart, circulatory system, eye and electricity during the event, designed to give parents a taste of the scientific concepts their kids have been exploring as part of the program.

Bravo Medical Magnet High School students teach the lessons, which are given to students in the third, fourth and fifth grades to expose them to the possibilities of higher education and careers in science and engineering, said Joe Coccozza, BMES-ERC co-director for education and outreach.

“The younger kids identify with the high school students, and the high school students identify with the younger students,” he said. “It teaches the high school kids how to communicate.”

At the event, students from the Bravo Medical Magnet High School Engineering for Health Academy led the younger kids and their family members in exercises ranging from running in place to determine heart rate to calculating nearsightedness and farsightedness by measuring the distance at which the children could read a sentence.

The USC Neighborhood Outreach program helps fund both the Science for Life program, in its ninth year at Murchison Elementary School, and the Engineering for Health Academy, in its fifth year at Bravo High School.

## ACGME: Two from Keck School receive key honors

Continued from Page 1

faculty and students, using resources strategically, showing strong leadership through core values and principles, and using reflection as an integral part of the education improvement process.

“For more than a decade, Dr. Opas has provided oversight for 52 fully accredited training programs with a mean accreditation cycle of 4.7 years,” said D. Brent Polk, the Keck School’s vice dean for clinical affairs (Children’s Hospital Los Angeles) and Children’s Hospital’s vice president for academic affairs, in a congratulatory letter. “Furthermore, under Dr. Opas’ leadership, the LAC+USC Medical Center achieved a five-year accreditation cycle.”

Curtiss was nominated by the Keck School graduating class of 2011, and recommended by program residents and by Opas. Program coordinators like Curtiss hold pivotal roles in the functioning of medical education programs, and award nominees must show excellent communication and interpersonal skills, enhance and improve the program, thoroughly understand the

accreditation process, and actively participate at a national level in program coordinators’ associations or other national meetings.

“We should feel fortunate to be working with Nancy, who deserves this recognition,” noted Rajesh Patel, residency program director for the Department of Anesthesiology.

ACGME is a private, non-profit council that evaluates and accredits residency programs in the United States. Its mission is to improve health care by assessing and advancing the quality of resident physicians’ education. The awards were presented March 2 at the organization’s 2012 Annual Educational Conference in Orlando, Fla.

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## In case of an emergency...

**Call the Emergency Information Phone: (213) 740-9233** The emergency telephone system can handle 1,400 simultaneous calls. It also has a backup system on the East Coast.

**Visit the USC Web: <http://emergency.usc.edu>** This page will be activated in case of an emergency. Backup Web servers on the East Coast will function if the USC servers are incapacitated.