

Med School Watercooler

NEWS FROM FREDERICK P. WHIDDON COLLEGE OF MEDICINE
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA

Thursday, August 13, 2020

Orientation welcomes students entering doctorate program in Basic Medical Sciences



The University of South Alabama College of Medicine held orientation this week for students entering the doctorate program in basic medical sciences at USA. This year, seven students are entering the program.

A unique aspect of the program at USA, during their first year, students complete the core curriculum while they explore and ultimately

decide which research area they wish to focus on for their dissertation.

"We have students from various backgrounds – some have master's degrees while others have their bachelor's," said Angie O'Neal, an academic advisor in the USA College of Medicine's Office of Research Education and Training. "The variation in degrees and experience is part of what makes our program special. We appreciate the diversity of backgrounds and what they add to our program."

Because of COVID-19, Mark Taylor, Ph.D., director of the graduate program and associate professor of physiology and cell biology at the USA College of Medicine, said this year will be exceptionally unique.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted or redirected almost every aspect of our education mission, including how we train the next generation of biomedical researchers," he said. "Nevertheless, the current situation has also been a true source of motivation for our current and incoming Ph.D. students. Having experienced the devastating impact of widespread disease, they understand why their contributions will be so important in addressing existing and future threats worldwide."

Taylor said the training will continue to focus on application of knowledge and cutting-edge approaches to address real problems in human health and disease. "We emphasize adaptability as a crucial tenet of our Ph.D. program and this year's incoming students will certainly need to adapt to blended instructional and mentoring strategies like no other class before them," he said. "In the end, new challenges inspire novel problem-solving strategies and I look forward to watching this new generation of scientists take on the challenges to come."

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Virtual Med School Café set for Aug. 21

The first-ever virtual Med School Café planned for noon, Friday, Aug. 21, will feature Hanna Alemayehu, M.D., pediatric surgeon and assistant professor of surgery and pediatrics at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine. She will discuss chest wall reconstruction service and treatments provided by the USA Health pediatric surgery department.



Prior to joining USA, Alemayehu served as a clinical instructor in surgery at Children's Mercy Hospital in Kansas City. She received her medical degree from Weill Cornell Medical College in New York and completed her residency at New York Medical College. Following residency, she completed a fellowship in pediatric surgery at Children's Mercy Hospital. Alemayehu has performed extensive pediatric surgical outcomes research and has authored dozens of manuscripts.

Med School Café will be held Friday, Aug. 21, at noon via the Zoom digital platform. [Register for the virtual event here.](#) For more information, contact Kim Partridge at (251) 460-7770 or kpartridge@health.southalabama.edu.

Med School Café is a free community lecture series sponsored by USA Health. Each month, faculty and physicians share their expertise on a specific medical condition, providing insight on the latest treatments available.

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Implicit bias in healthcare the topic of Pediatric Grand Rounds on Aug. 21

A primer on implicit bias in healthcare will be presented by Franklin Trimm, M.D., during pediatric grand rounds at 8 a.m. on Friday, Aug. 21, via the digital platform Zoom.

A pediatric developmental and behavioral physician, Trimm serves as associate dean of diversity and inclusion and assistant vice president for medical affairs at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine.



Objectives of the presentation are:

- Understanding the science of unconscious bias
- Identifying how bias and the processes of the unconscious mind can impact critical decisions and results
- Applying strategies for practicing more conscious awareness

Also known as implicit social cognition, implicit bias (or unconscious bias) refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner, according to the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity. These biases, which encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments, are activated involuntarily and without someone's awareness or intentional control. Residing deep in the subconscious, implicit biases are different from known biases that people may choose to conceal for the

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purposes of social and/or political correctness.

Research shows that implicit biases are not accessible through one's own introspection. The implicit associations humans harbor in the subconscious cause them to have feelings and attitudes about other people based on characteristics such as race, ethnicity, age and appearance. These associations, according to research, develop during the course of a lifetime beginning at a very early age through exposure to direct and indirect messages.

Participants are asked to pre-register using this link:
https://southalabama.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJUvdO-urTguEtzVhEtTdKn8vXy80tR_emTO

Pediatric grand rounds is held the third Friday of each month from 8 until 9 a.m. for the physicians, advanced practice providers, residents, nurses, social workers, medical students and other members of the healthcare team who are interested in increasing their knowledge, addressing competence, performance, and improving patient outcomes in healthcare.

For more information, contact Jessica Petro at 251-415-8688 or jpetro@health.southalabbama.edu.

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