

Med School Watercooler

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

Thursday, April 18, 2024

Meet a Med Student: Lee Givens

Lee Givens

Age: 24

Class: 2027

Hometown: Auburn, Alabama

Undergraduate education: B.S.,
Auburn University

What do you enjoy most about being a medical student at the Whiddon College of Medicine?

My favorite thing about the Whiddon College of Medicine is the sense of family and community that is so engrained within the school. Each of the students in my class always

watches out for the person next to them, and my experience has really been one of a collective working toward a common goal rather than a group of individuals each working toward their own goals. All of the faculty, administration, and staff have also been so welcoming and inviting, and I've really felt that support in the transition to beginning medical school.

Are you involved in any research, organizations or other initiatives at the Whiddon College of Medicine?

I am involved in the Christian Medical Ministry of South Alabama and the Student-Run Free Clinic. I have also had fun being a part of some of the COM intramural sports teams.

What are your interests and hobbies?

I love going for runs around Mobile and exercising at the Student Rec Center. I also love spending time with my dog, Louie.

What is something unique about you?

I have a titanium plate and two screws in my cheek.





Posted by Med School Watercooler at 2:17 PM



Class of 2024 looks forward to spring ceremonies

Spring is filled with events leading up to graduation for students completing medical and doctoral degrees at the Whiddon College of Medicine.

An honors breakfast and ceremony are planned for medical students who are receiving awards and honors cords on Wednesday, April 24. Breakfast will begin at 9 a.m. in the Terrace Room of the USA Student Center followed by an awards ceremony at 10 a.m. in the Student Center Ballroom.



The Academic Hooding Ceremony for all graduates of the Whiddon College of Medicine will be held at 8:30 a.m. Friday, May 3, at the USA Mitchell Center. Seventy-four graduating medical students will take the Hippocratic Oath and be hooded by a person or persons of their choosing. Those with a military affiliation will take the military oath of office and receive their new rank. Two graduating doctoral students in the Basic Medical Sciences Graduate Program will be awarded doctoral hoods by their major professors. The ceremony will be streamed live on the Mitchell Center's YouTube channel at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9G_Vqk7qXDA.

USA's Spring Commencement Ceremony will celebrate graduates and confer degrees from the Whiddon College of Medicine and other colleges at the university. Commencement is set for 9:30 a.m. Saturday, May 4, at the Mitchell Center. The Class of 2024 will be the 49th class to receive medical degrees from the Whiddon College of Medicine. The ceremony will be streamed live at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hOM9m2gguC0>.

For more information on graduation, visit the Registrar's Commencement page.

Posted by Med School Watercooler at 9:46 AM



Wednesday, April 17, 2024

Custodio named director of pediatrics residency program

Infectious disease pediatrician Haidee Custodio, M.D., an associate professor of pediatrics at the Whiddon College of Medicine, recently was named director of the pediatrics residency program for USA Health.



Haidee Custodio, M.D.

"We are delighted Dr. Custodio accepted this important role," said Gul H. Dadlani, M.D., professor of pediatrics and chair of USA Health Pediatrics. "Her passion to train and mentor the next generation of healthcare providers is vital to maintaining – and improving – the quality of life for everyone we serve."

This year, the pediatrics graduate medical education team at USA Health will welcome 12 first-year residents, who will begin the program July 1.

"We have new partners joining our community," Custodio said of the most recent class of medical school graduates seeking career paths as pediatricians. "Our program's mindset is to recognize the importance of collaborating and partnering with these new physicians as they continue their medical education. They bring a new set of skills, interests, and enthusiasm that we can tap into in our mission of taking care of the children and meeting the needs of the community."

By training in teaching hospitals and at medical clinics, new physicians can learn in an environment that integrates education, research, and patient care — an experience offering benefits to the healthcare staff and those they care for. Research shows patients treated in teaching hospitals had up to 20% higher odds of survival compared to those treated at non-teaching hospitals, noted the Association of American Medical Colleges.

Custodio joined USA Health in 2011 and previously served as associate director of the pediatrics residency program. She completed medical school in the Philippines before moving to New York to complete a pediatrics residency at Nassau University Medical Center in East Meadow. She completed a pediatric infectious diseases fellowship at the University of Florida/Wolfson Children's Hospital/Shands Hospital in Jacksonville, Florida.

Custodio, who is certified by the American Board of Pediatrics, also serves as CME chair on the board of the Alabama Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and as a member of the AAP national committee on Continuing Medical Education.

Posted by Med School Watercooler at [10:18 AM](#)



USA launches Healthcare Leadership Certificate program



The first cohort of participants in the Healthcare Leadership Certificate program is a select group of faculty and staff from USA and USA Health. Registration for the 2025 program will open this fall.

Healthcare professionals seeking to develop their management and leadership skills now can earn a Healthcare Leadership Certificate from the University of South Alabama. The program is a partnership of the Frederick P. Whiddon College of Medicine, the Mitchell College of Business, and USA Health.

"In this ever-changing industry, it's important that rising leaders have the skills they need to think strategically and adapt quickly," said John V. Marymont, M.D., M.B.A., dean of the Whiddon College of Medicine and vice president for medical affairs. "We wanted to offer a hands-on program that would be accessible to busy healthcare professionals."

The Healthcare Leadership Certificate takes a year to complete, with classes held in person at the Mitchell College of Business. The first cohort, a select group of faculty and staff from USA and USA Health, is working through the curriculum and expected to complete the requirements by December 2024. It will open to community participants in 2025.

"This certificate is designed to prepare you to lead effectively in your career," said Binata Mukherjee, M.B.B.S., M.B.A., assistant dean for faculty and professional development at the Whiddon College of Medicine and director of healthcare leadership initiatives at the Mitchell College of Business. "It is intended for professionals at the director level and above, or managers moving into those positions."

To earn the certificate, participants complete eight modules comprising Friday and Saturday classes scheduled throughout the year. They also are required to spend one hour to one and a half hours reading materials between classes. The fee for the program is \$5,000.

The modules cover communication, management, operations, finance, leadership, and more, Mukherjee said. Classes are designed to be interactive and experiential. "The goal is to give them the practical knowledge and skills that will help them the most in their work life," she said.

Registration for the 2025 program will open in the fall.

Posted by Med School Watercooler at 10:07 AM



Tuesday, April 16, 2024

Altun to present on collaborative care in treatment of inflammatory bowel disease



Osman Altun, M.D., Ph.D.

Pediatric gastroenterologist Osman Altun, M.D., Ph.D., will present a lecture on collaborative care for patients with inflammatory bowel disease at the Alabama Chapter of the American Association of Pediatrics' spring meeting on Saturday, April 20, in Gulf Shores.

Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis are inflammatory bowel diseases that cause chronic inflammation and damage in the gastrointestinal (GI) tract. The GI tract is responsible for digestion of food, absorption of nutrients, and elimination of waste.

Inflammation impairs the ability of affected GI organs to function properly, leading to symptoms such as persistent diarrhea, abdominal pain, rectal bleeding, weight loss and fatigue, according to the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation of America (CCFA).

Collaborative care is critical in the management of patients with IBD, Altun said, and demands the best of multiple specialties including gastroenterology, surgery, radiology, rheumatology, and primary care providers.

In the collaborative care team, the primary care provider is often neglected in the literature. However, in this regional patient population, he noted, the primary care providers have served the population for many years and earned their trust. Often, patients with IBD contact their primary care provider even before they contact a gastroenterologist for IBD-related complications.

"The presentation's focus is to recognize, recruit and support the primary care providers in managing the pediatric IBD population," said Altun, who is also an assistant professor of pediatrics at the Whiddon College of Medicine.

Altun serves as medical director of inflammatory bowel disease at USA Health, and with his partners continues to explore opportunities daily to better serve the pediatric IBD population.

"USA Health has the most critical components of collaborative care to serve the pediatric IBD population," he noted, "including pediatric radiologists, pediatric surgeons and pediatric gastroenterologists."

Posted by Med School Watercooler at 9:15 AM



Monday, April 15, 2024

Activities planned for Earth Day

Earth Day 2024 is Monday, April 22. The Whiddon College of Medicine will host an Earth Day Break activity from 10:30 a.m. to noon and 2:30 to 4 p.m. in the grassy area in front of the Medical Sciences Building.

The event will feature a potting area, snacks, a photo booth, and more. Gardening supplies will be provided. Students, faculty and staff are welcome to participate.

Recycling is important to the University of South Alabama and the Sustainability Committee's mission. When disposing of paper, plastic bottles, and aluminum cans, look around campus for the blue recycle bins.

