

THE AWIMS ADVISOR

News from the Alliance for Women in Medicine and Science

February 2018

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Welcome to AWIMS

I proudly present to you the first installment of the SIU Medicine Alliance for Women in Medicine and Science (AWIMS) newsletter!

Rooted in the Department of Medicine and housed in the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, our AWIMS group seeks to fulfill its mission (see below) through the inclusion of ALL SIU Medicine members. The most

common misconception about AWIMS is that only women are permitted. Not so! We greatly value the perspectives of men and women including all trainees, faculty, clinical staff and support staff.

In order to break through barriers and effect positive change, we need to work together as a unified team. I am honored to remain at the helm of a deeply meaningful and worthy cause and invite each of you on this incredible journey with me. We are in this together.

Sincerely,

Vidhya Prakash, MD, Director of SIU Medicine AWIMS



AWIMS Mission Statement and Vision

MISSION: To provide a supportive forum to promote honest discussion and positive change in the realms of gender equity, career advancement, work-life balance, and community service, and to champion professional development and promotion of women in medicine and science.

VISION: A strong and meaningful alliance among all members of the medical community, with the common purpose of working harmoniously in an equitable environment to support the mission of SIU Medicine.

Join Our Team!



Our newly established AWIMS group is looking to continuously change, grow, and expand our horizons. In addition to our ongoing community engagement efforts, educational initiatives, and current mentorship programs with our medical students, we are looking to delve more into research and scholarship, develop mindfulness and wellness programs, and recognize outstanding SIU Medicine team members who continue to contribute to these efforts. We are an organization committed to ALL members of the SIU Medicine community, not just women and not just physicians or faculty! We are looking for enthusiastic individuals to join our team! **Please think about which of the initiatives below you see yourself championing and email Vidhya Prakash at vprakash59@siumed.edu.** Our goal is to establish committees dedicated to each initiative and select leaders for each committee within the next few months. We look forward to hearing from you!

**Education Collaborative with Office of
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion**

Research

**Community Engagement Collaborative with the
Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion**

Mentorship and Career Advancement

Mindfulness and Wellness

Where We Came From: Thank You, Department of Medicine



It is impossible to describe how immensely supportive the members of the Department of Medicine were in shaping our Women in Medicine Group, which ultimately made AWIMS a possibility. From their robust attendance at various educational seminars including those on gender bias and work-life integration, to their tremendous support of volunteer endeavors that brought light to the faces of children in need, to a deep personal commitment to educating our community through health fairs and educational seminars, the Department of Medicine led by Dr. John Flack was key to every success of our WIM group. Words of encouragement from Dr. Regina Kovach, Dr. Janak Koirala, Dr. Vidya Sundareshan, Dr. Edem Agamah, Dr. David Steward, Dr. Kathy Bottum, Dr. Sacharitha Bowers, Dr. Karen Broquet, Dr. Alan Deckard, Dr. Laura Shea, Aalia Ameen, Diane Paap, and Sara Lopinski throughout the process provided emotional sustenance and kept us going. Promotional support by Heather Jordan and Megan Miner and coordination of volunteer events by Joyce Hilliard, Megan Matzat, and Dominick Garrison were much appreciated as well. We would be nowhere without Dr. Andrew Varney's encouragement and support or Dr. Susan Hingle's mentorship and wisdom.

Many thanks to other amazing champions including our Dean, Dr. Jerry Kruse, Wendy Cox-Largent, Dr. Linda Toth, our sister groups AMWA and SNMA, Dr. Hilary Sanfey and Dr. Jan Rakinic from the Department of Surgery, Mr. David Ziebler from the Office of Human Resources, Mr. Jason Johnson from SIU Medicine Photography, and Ms. Karen Carlson and her team from the Office of Public Affairs. Last but certainly not least, thank you to Dr. Wendi El-Amin for helping us transition from WIM to SIU Medicine AWIMS. From the bottom of our hearts, THANK YOU!

WIM Executive Committee Retreat



Team-building exercise to determine how personality types function in an effective team. Above, from left to right: Wendi El-Amin, Zainab Obaidi, Nicole Abbott, Elizabeth Nielsen, Sharon Onguti, Rexanne Caga-anan, Vanessa Williams, and Vidhya Prakash

The transition to the school wide AWIMS group would not have been possible without the Department of Medicine's Women in Medicine (WIM) executive committee. We decided to have a retreat at the Kreative Lounge (located at the White Oaks Mall) which offered the perfect space for all to express themselves creatively and partake in open discussions about future steps. Our favorite part of the retreat was learning our individual personality styles using the PACE® test. You will notice that we fell predominantly into "Blue" and "Yellow" groups. Each team created fabulous posters highlighting all traits associated with each color. The exercise was entertaining but also very informative as we reflected not only on our own personality traits but also on those in individuals we interact with on a personal and professional level. Hats off to our amazing team! Read more about the impact of [PACE®](#).

<p>Practical Serious Responsible Prepared Observant Eye for detail Analytical Good decision maker Follows the rules Confident Disciplined Leave emotions out of it</p>	<p>Compassionate helpful Courteous Imaginative Enthusiastic Detail-Oriented Dreamer Encourager Confident Relationship building Wanting to be there for people</p>
<p>Calm Cool Collected Conceptual Troubleshooter Introverted Detail-Oriented Task-Oriented Thinkers Intellectual Inventors</p>	<p>Professional Adventurer Competitive Free Spirited Spontaneous Clever Problem Solvers Witty Eager Outgoing Creative</p>

Mindfulness retreat



A group of SIU faculty had the privilege of attending a mindfulness retreat at the Chiara Center on Saturday, September 23rd. As we entered the Chiara Center, there was an immediate sense of calm and peace. Our experienced instructor, Bridget Rolens, director of Mind-Body Health Services at St. John’s Hospital, warmly greeted us and started the session by defining mindfulness. Mindfulness means “consciously bringing awareness to you’re here-and-now experience, with openness, receptiveness, and interest.” We then went through several interactive exercises including mental noting, breathing to connect, defusing from unhelpful thoughts and even walking and eating mindfully! These day to day activities took on a new meaning and experience when injected with mindfulness. Warm regards and thanks to our fabulous instructor, Bridget and to our attendees from SIU: Dr. Vinod Alluri, Virginia Zahn, LCSW, Dr. Karen Broquet, Dr. Eric Black, Dr. Vidhya Prakash, Ruta Kulys, LCSW and Dr. Ayame Takahashi. A few resources that you might find useful are listed to the right.



Above, from left to right: Vinod Alluri, Virginia Zahn, Karen Broquet, Eric Black, Vidhya Prakash, Ruta Kulys, Ayame Takahashi

Top picture: The healing and beautiful Chiara Center

RESOURCES

[St. Johns Mind-Body](#)

[Mindfulness Resources](#)

[Stanford Mindfulness Resources](#)

[Pathways to Mindfulness](#)

Articles, Quotes, and AMWA-WIM Mixer

February 2018

Articles

[Being a Doctor is Hard. It's Harder for Women](#)

[Sexual Harassment Training?](#)

[Doctors Judge Female Surgeons More Harshly When Patients Die](#)

[The Hidden Battle of the Sexes at Work](#)

[Personalized Wellness for Women Physicians](#)

Thanks to Dr. Susan Hingle, Dr. David Steward, and Dr. Carlos Nolasco for the articles!



AWMA-WIM Mixer! A great time was had by all at our October AMWA-WIM mixer! Sharon Onguti, MD and Kylee Maxheimer, Class of 2018, did a wonderful job organizing the event. We had a great meal followed by a fabulous discussion about issues salient to women in medicine including mentorship and gender bias among students, residents, and faculty. Thanks to Jacque Ferguson for her great pictures!

Quotable Quotes

“Always be a first-rate version of yourself, instead of a second-rate version of somebody else.” Judy Garland

“Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement; nothing can be done without hope.” Helen Keller



Women's Health Forum

Several of our incredibly talented Department of Medicine members contributed to our community by participating in a Women's Health Forum, sponsored by SIU Medicine's Office of Regional Programs and our Women in Medicine Group. This event took place on Monday, October 23rd at Calvary Missionary Baptist Church in town. The forum was open to the public and touched on breast cancer awareness, skin health, weight loss and healthy eating, and menopause. Below are some quotes from attendees:

"I was excited to have a chance to speak with doctors about my personal medical conditions. The forum provided me the opportunity and time not only to speak my truth but to share with others who are experiencing the same challenges I am experiencing. I loved the one on one opportunity with doctors. These types of conversations never happen during my routine office visits."

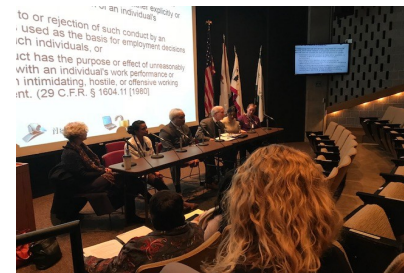
"I am new to this area and I could not have come at a better time. I was invited to the Women's Forum by my sister-in-law and I am so glad I came. The forum allowed me to talk to doctors about issues I have been dealing with for a while now. I was able to share in safe, comfortable and enjoyable environment. I learned so much. I am looking forward to attending more events like this. Kudos to all those who took time to come to our community."

Heartfelt thanks to Dr. Rexanne Caga-anan and to Patrice Jones of the Office of Regional Programs who did a phenomenal job of organizing this event. Also, a very special thanks to our dedicated Department of Medicine members who were instrumental in making this a resounding success by taking time out of their busy schedules to educate and provide service to our community:

Cynthia Yergler, RD: Weight Loss and Healthy Eating
Meghna Desai, MD and Swati Pathak, MD: Breast Cancer Awareness
Sacharitha Bowers, MD, Rebecca Larson, MD, Betty Yan, MD and Ashley Steffens, MD: Skin Health
Rexanne Caga-anan, MD: Menopause



SEXUAL HARASSMENT PANEL DISCUSSION



Above, from left to right: Vidhya Prakash, Shakthishri Kandaswamy, John Flack, David Steward, Angie Doolin, Brenda Pryor, Christine Jarmer, Sacharitha Bowers (not pictured: Karen Broquet)

On January 30th, SIU Medicine AWIMS conducted its first educational seminar! The topic was sexual harassment in the clinical setting. Vidhya Prakash opened up the seminar with some background data on sexual harassment in academic medicine, highlighting key findings from multiple studies in an [important article in press](#). A stimulating and powerful panel discussion ensued. Our panelists included Dr. Karen Broquet, Dr. John Flack, Dr. Shakthishri Kandaswamy, Dr. David Steward, Dr. Sacharitha Bowers and Christine Jarmer, RN. The panelists discussed how they would approach different scenarios in a clinical setting including those that involved sexual harassment and those that entailed inappropriate behavior from patients. One common theme was the importance of speaking up and standing up for yourself and for all members of the healthcare team including students, residents, fellows, and staff including receptionists, MA's, and nurses. Angie Doolin, our Human Resources consultant, delivered a very effective message with "Report It. Say Something. Address It." She reinforced the importance of speaking up, setting a "not in my workplace rule," confronting the individual involved in a nonthreatening manner, and to notify her in Human Resources (545-9715). Brenda Pryor, our consultant from the Office of General Counsel, also emphasized the fact that it is an inherent part of our duty as members of SIU Medicine to speak up and not tolerate harassment or inappropriate behavior of any kind. We had great attendance and an engaging audience. The feedback for our first seminar was very positive. We look forward to many more seminars in the future! If you have any ideas for seminars, please contact Vidhya Prakash at vprakash59@siumed.edu.

Harvard Park Food Drive

The Department of Medicine's Harvard Park Food drive, led by Dr. Rexanne Caga-anan, was a great success! According to Marilyn Hebert of the Harvard Park Elementary School, the donation could not have come at a better time as there were families in need of food the following morning.

According to Patrice Jones from the Office of Regional Programs, Harvard Park Elementary School is located at 2501 S. 11th Street in Springfield. There are no medical or grocery services (other than small locally own stores that offer groceries, etc. at inflated prices) available to families who live within Harvard Park boundaries. The team at Harvard Park works extremely hard to help those families in need. They have extended their generosity to those who live in the surrounding community as well, creating a food pantry inside the school. Sadly, the shelves are often empty. To learn more about the population of Harvard Park Elementary, please see the [Illinois State Board of Education Report Card for the 2016-2017 school year](#). Heartfelt thanks to our generous Department of Medicine members whose kindness made all the difference in the lives of multiple families.



Top Center, from left to right: Rexanne Caga-anan and Vidhya Prakash with Marilyn Herbert and Erin Clotfelter-Givens from the Harvard Park Elementary School

Left: Harvard Park Elementary School pantry **BEFORE** the food drive

Right: Harvard Park Elementary School pantry **AFTER** the food drive!



SOJOURN SHELTER FUNDRAISER



Faculty mentors from the Department of Medicine joined their student mentees from AMWA and SNMA to partake in an informative session on skin care. Led by Madison Marvel, Class of 2018, this was a fabulous tutorial on the importance of the 5 essential steps of skin care. As you can see, we all had a blast donning masks and getting to know each other. All proceeds went to a very worthy cause, [The Sojourn Shelter](#). Participants included Karen Broquet, Marti Hlafka, Vidhya Prakash, Yasmina Arroyo-Jimenez, Zainab Obaidi, Sharon Onguti, Rexanne Caga-anan, Andrianna Stevens, Ticara Onyewuenyi, Kyley Maxheimer, Sheela Gogula, Erica Maduakolam, Dorene Hinton, and Madison Marvel. We remain excited as we continue to expand our mentorship program. If you are interested in mentorship (as a mentor or mentee), please contact Vidhya Prakash at vprakash59@siumed.edu.



Women in Medicine Faculty Spotlight

Wendi Wills El-Amin, MD



Right: Wendi Wills El-Amin

Left: Samira, Arianna, and Yasmin (Earth, Wind, and Fire)



Role at SIU Medicine: Associate Dean for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Born and Raised: I was born in Hershey, Pennsylvania where my father was a first year medical student at Penn State Medical School. I grew up in Houston, Texas.

Birthday: June 13.

Family: I have three daughters. Samira, Arianna, and Yasmin whom I affectionately call my Earth, Wind, and Fire.

Favorite Books: The Four Agreements by Don Ruiz M.D.: *Be impeccable with your word. Don't take anything personally. Don't make assumptions. Always do your best.*

Hobbies: I love to visit national parks, dance, and write poetry.

Proudest Moment: My proudest moment was when I became a mother and when I received the Sharon L. Hostler Women in Medicine Leadership Award at the University of Virginia with my three little girls at my side.

Personal Hero: My personal hero is my mother, Bettina Wills. She taught me to stand up, speak up and to be unapologetically YOU.

Most Embarrassing Moment: I debated this one; there are so many...I was once seated on a panel in front of 200 people. Someone asked, "What would you like to go back and tell your younger self?" I blurted out, "I'd like to go back and say, 'Always carry a box cutter.'" The room became silent, and people had the most *interesting* expressions on their face. It was then I realized that no one understood what I was trying to express, so I began to translate. "My whole life I felt like people put me in a box. So, I'd like my younger self to carry a box cutter so she'd always be able to cut her way free of those stereotypes and limitations."

What is your unique contribution to Women in Medicine and Science? The unique lens through which I see the world is shaped by my multivariate experiences as an African American woman, a mother of three girls, a physician, an educator and an ambassador for health equity. All this shapes my interactions with patients, colleagues, students and my community.

Women in Medicine Staff Spotlight

Jacqueline Ferguson



Left to right: One of Jacque's woven bags (example of her fiber art); Archaeological field crew in 1984 at Old Monroe Site near Louisiana, MO—Jacque is the 5th from the left; Jacque in front of the Illini Indians diorama at the IL State Museum one month before its closure in Aug 2015

Role at SIU Medicine: Educational Program Evaluation Coordinator, Department of Medicine

Born and Raised: Born Frankfurt a/M, West Germany. Raised in upstate New York, Kentucky, Ohio, and mostly Detroit, Michigan where assembly lines were integrated in the 1920s, where the auto industry fueled a large and prosperous middle class, a town known as the Arsenal of Democracy, the original home of Motown Records, and the seat of the United Auto Workers union which functioned as the funder for the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. It is home to the most decorated US hockey team in the NHL—the Red Wings, with 11 Stanley Cup wins, only surpassed by the Montreal Canadiens and the Toronto Maple Leafs.

Birthday: October 24

Family: I am an only child and affiliated with the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma through my mother. My parents were both musicians; my mother an opera singer, my father an organist who was a Professor and Co-Chair of the Music Dept. at Wayne State University and was the organist for the Detroit Symphony Orchestra for 40 years. My husband and I are both Anthropologists, having worked on archaeological and paleontological sites for 25 plus years. He is currently "retired," but continues to conduct climate-change research using fresh-water mussels from across the United States as proxy data. I have two step sons, one owns the Wolf's Head Tavern in Columbia, Missouri (home of the Un. Of Missouri—go MIZZOU); the other is the Vice President of the Small Bankers Association in Washington, D.C. My third and youngest son is a first-year medical student at Wayne State University, School of Medicine in Detroit. Go Red Wings!

Favorite Books: An important and timely book for anyone concerned with today's sociopolitical landscape is *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century* by Timothy Snyder.

Hobbies: Fiber arts. I weave, knit, and crochet and have recently added spinning to my repertoire.

Proudest Moment: For finding and identifying the second-oldest human structure in Illinois (6000 years old); working to reauthorize the federal Violence Against Women Act in 1998, 2004, 2010; and for standing up on behalf of Native American groups when Governor Rauner chose to close the Illinois State Museum, and raise awareness for the continued need to protect the human remains and associated funerary objects held by the State of Illinois in the Museum.

Personal Hero: My dad, who fiercely stood up to support the rights of the under-served, under-represented, and those whom society would shun. Democracy has to work for *everyone*, or it will fail all of us.

Most Embarrassing Moment: Forgetting peoples' names at inopportune times, such as introducing my youngest son's girlfriend to my husband's family members over the holidays. Geeze, I've only been involved with the family for 30+ years!

What is your unique contribution to Women in Medicine and Science? I have fought for equal pay for women throughout my career. Additionally, I have worked in science since the 1970s, first as an archaeologist, then as a public policy advocate using data to argue for increased funding to provide services to victims of domestic violence at both the state and federal levels. Most recently, I have used data to identify areas of need for our internal medicine residents.

Women in Medicine Student Spotlight

Matthew Power



Role at SIU: Medical Student, Class of 2019

Born and Raised: Marion, Illinois

Birthday: 8/17/1991

Family: John Power and Lori Power (Parents)

Favorite Books: Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close, As I Lay Dying, Grendel, The Odyssey

Hobbies: Music, Poetry, Cooking

Proudest Moment: Acceptance to medical school. Any time a healthcare decision I make leads to positive outcomes.

Personal Hero: Too many to count. I'll give special mention of a friend I made in college who has traveled the world - even giving talks at the United Nations - in promotion of seeking peaceful interactions between people and cultures of different faith traditions. It was eye-opening to hear her perspective on what it means to be a Muslim woman living in the United States and the unique struggles that she has faced in her pursuit of raising awareness and promoting international peace.

Most Embarrassing Moment: I once forgot how to spell "of." It just didn't look/sound right.

What is your unique contribution to Women in Medicine and Science? As a medical student, it's still very early in my career, but I've made efforts to be involved in the community in the forms of education and screening for issues in women's health. Moving forward, I hope to be more involved as an ally for women both in terms of healthcare and in terms of our continued pursuit for more equal and fair treatment and opportunities for women working in these fields.

Women in Medicine Faculty Spotlight

Andrew Varney, MD



Andy Varney making smokey meat treats!



Left to right: Jake and Britta with Grace, Claire, Carol, Andy, Rose, Najwa and Nicholas



A game of cribbage with the family

Role at SIU Medicine: Program Director, Internal Medicine Residency Program

Birthday: 11/14/1960

Family:

Wife: Carol

Children: Jacob Varney MD married to Britta Varney, MD, daughter Grace

Nicholas Varney, DDS married to Najwa Varney, DDS

Claire Varney (SIU Medical Student, 1st year)

Rose Varney (freshman at UIUC)

Favorite Books: Kitchen Table Wisdom by Rachel Naomi Remen, 5 Essentials of the Golf Swing by Ben Hogan

Hobbies: Golf, gardening, making smokey meat treats, cribbage, singing

Proudest Moment: Raising children of sound character, being a grandparent

Personal Hero: Collectively, I am inspired by my patients who demonstrate courage in adversity, creativity in resilience, and compassion.

Most Embarrassing Moment: Not many embarrassing moments but oodles of funny ones!

What is your unique contribution to Women in Medicine and Science? Concept supporter and number one cheerleader