

# Office of Diversity Enhancement

## September 2016

Recruitment

Advisement

Support

At Einstein, diversity is our strength.



Diversity may be the hardest thing for a society to live with, and perhaps the most dangerous thing for a society to be without. —**William Sloan Coffin**

# Message from the Associate Dean



**Irene Blanco, MD, MS**

## Hello from the Office of Diversity Enhancement!!!

Happy academic year 2016-17! We are so happy that our second years came home safely from their summer adventures; that the upperclassmen are completing their rotations and research (and getting ever closer to their futures); and that the class of 2020 is joining us here at Einstein!

We are at a transitional time at Einstein. Curricular reform is in full swing. Soon we will be saying good-bye to the old curriculum as we unveil our innovative, progressive and integrated new medical curriculum. In addition to our molecular and organ systems courses, soon all students will be participating in Community Based Service Learning and Population Health will not only be integrated throughout the curriculum it will also have its own course. With our new curriculum, we enhance our students' education, teaching them how to care and advocate for all groups and populations, including those most vulnerable.

While there are so many happy and wonderful things happening on campus it is hard to process the difficult and often terrible things happening in the world around us. A bombing in NY, a Muslim woman set on fire, more shootings of Black men, a spike of anti-Semitic assaults, seemingly we move from one horrible occurrence to another.

Nevertheless, as always, the Office of Diversity Enhancement will continue to be here to help guide you through this pivotal time in your lives. We continue to celebrate you and your diversity. We at Einstein care deeply for all of you be you Jewish, Christian, Muslim, agnostic, atheist or other. Be you Black, White or any and every wonderful shade of brown and beige in between. Be you straight, queer, questioning, fluid. Be you cis-, trans or non-binary. We love you because you are simply you. We are so excited to see each of you harness your enormous potential to be transformative figures in the lives of your patients and in medicine.

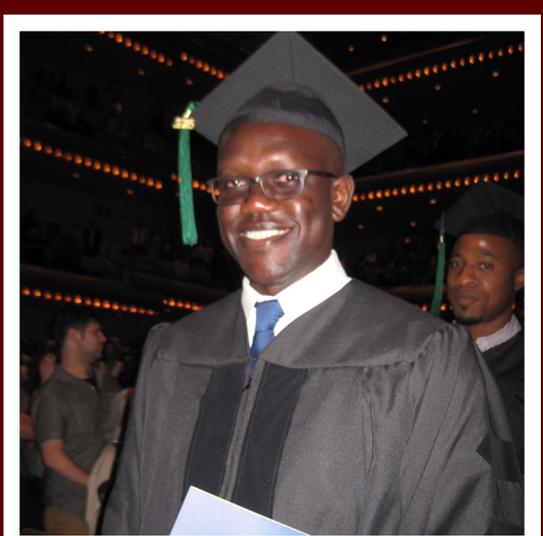
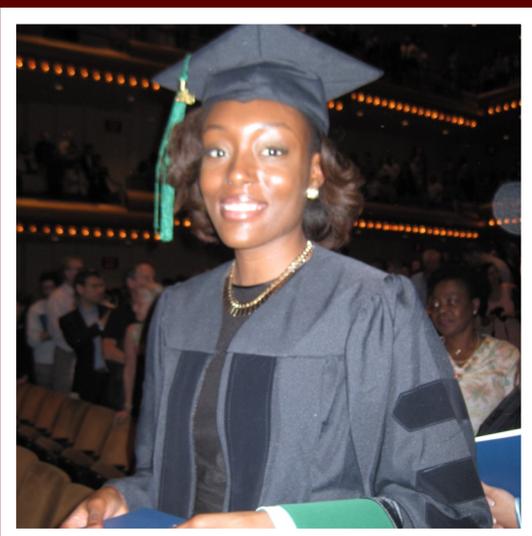
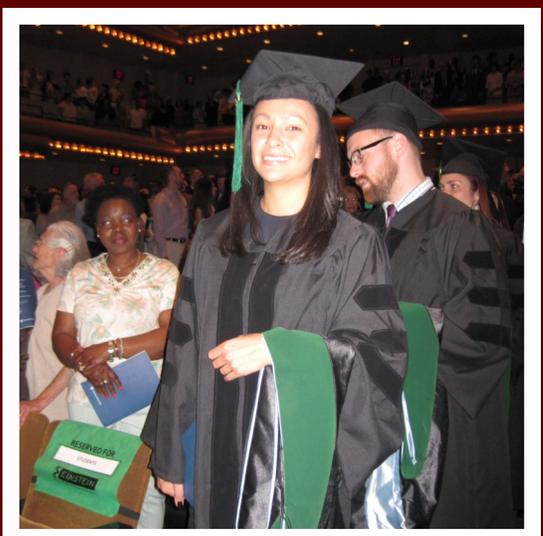
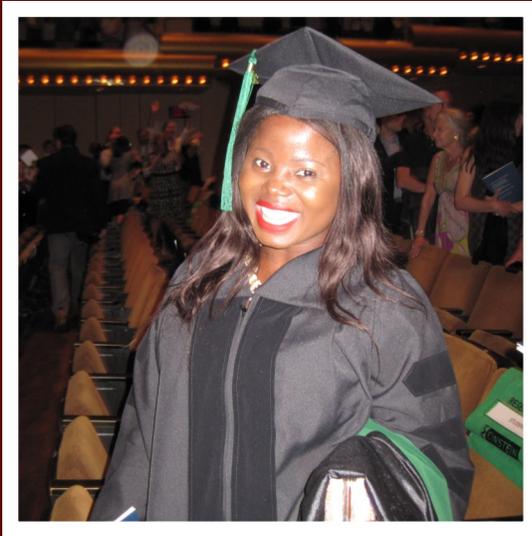
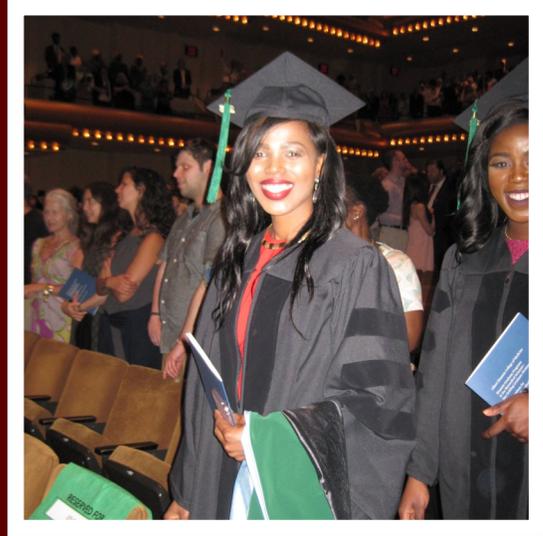
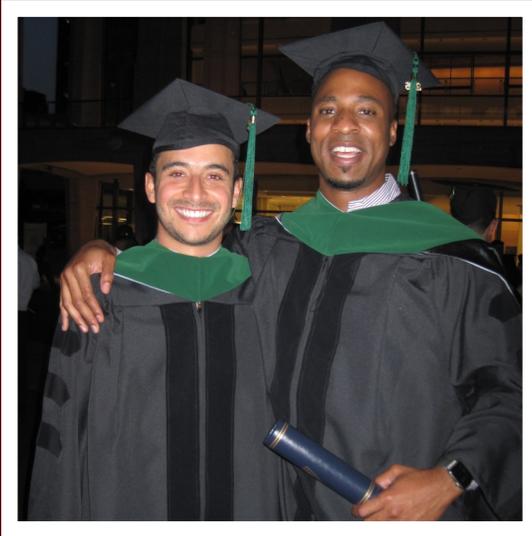
Be good to one another and have a fantastic year – (and study, I'm a mom, I have to stay on you to study).

Regards,

**Dr. B**

Irene Blanco, MD, MS  
Associate Dean  
Office of Diversity Enhancement

# Commencement Day 2016



# 2016 Graduation Awards

## **Alpha Omega Alpha**

Olatomide Familusi

\*

## **Gold Humanism Honor Society**

Nafeeza Ali and Tamika Coy

\*

## **Jean L. Cook, MD Memorial Award for Medical Excellence**

Olatomide Familusi

\*

## **The Harold and Muriel Block Institute for Clinical and Translational Research Award for Excellence**

Lagu Alfred Androga

\*

## **Graduation with Distinction in Research**

Adela Aguirre-Alarcon

Donald Uchechukwu Apakama

Lagu Alfred Androga

Dana L. Cruz

Olatomide Familusi

Angelo Landriscina

Dahlia Townsend

Nathalie Trinidad

# ODE Staff

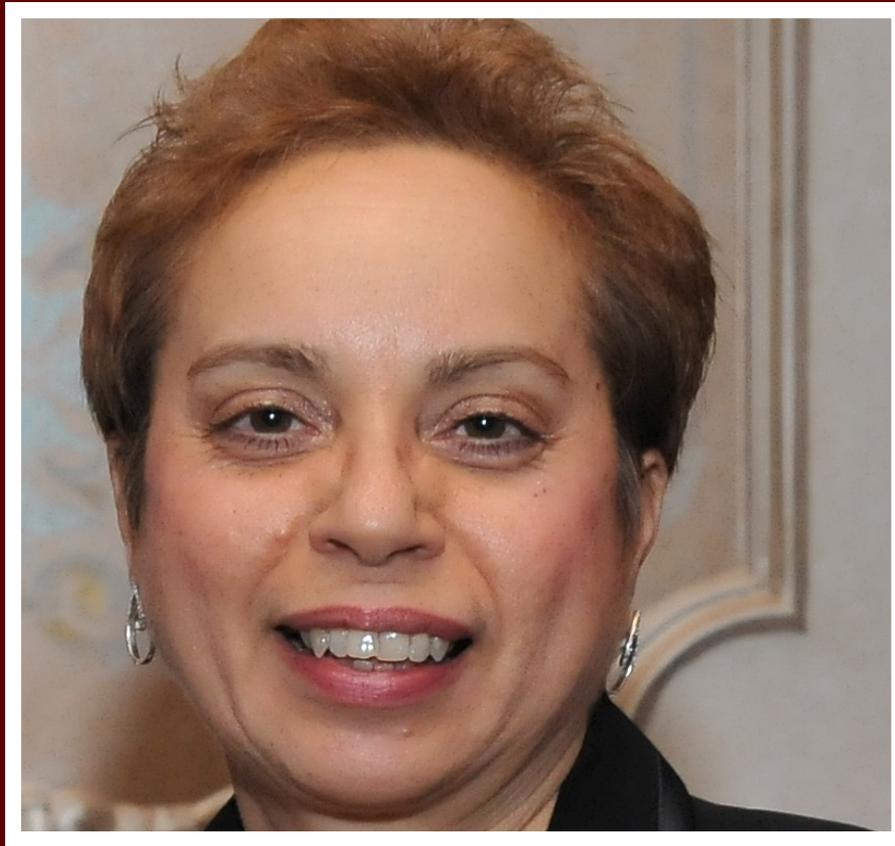


Associate Dean for Diversity Enhancement, Dr. Irene Blanco, was among seven Einstein faculty members honored at Einstein's 58th commencement celebration held on May 25, 2016. The students of the Class of 2016 awarded Dr. Irene Blanco the Samuel M. Rosen Award for Outstanding Teaching in basic science. "Dr. Blanco's engaging approach to medical education has earned her praise from her students and accolades from her peers."

Dr. Blanco is the recipient of numerous meritorious awards among which she was named Montefiore's Division of Rheumatology 2014 Consult Attending of The Year. In 2015, in recognition of her excellence in teaching medical students, she was inducted into the Leo M. Davidoff Society.

Dr. Blanco is a member of Einstein's Class of 2004. She is Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine and Associate Dean for Diversity Enhancement at Einstein. Dr. Blanco is an attending rheumatologist and Director of the Rheumatology Fellowship Program at Montefiore Medical Center. Since 2012 she has served as Director of the second-year Musculoskeletal Diseases Course.

## ODE Staff



Governor Andrew Cuomo nominated, and the NYS Senate confirmed, Nilda I. Soto as chairperson of the NYS Minority Health Council, New York State Department of Health. Ms. Soto has served on the Council since 2007. The Council advises the New York State Commissioner of Health on health care issues that affect the lives of racial, ethnic, and other underserved communities. The Council works with the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities Prevention (OMH-HDP) to achieve the goal of equal health and health care for all New Yorkers.

In addition, as chair, Ms. Soto was appointed as a member to the Public Health and Health Planning Council, PHHPC, which consists of 24 appointed members. PHHPC provides advice on issues affecting health care consumers, health planning, health care financing and reimbursement and the preservation and improvement of public health.

“Both appointments will provide me an opportunity to gain insights and contribute in discussions on how to address the healthcare needs and delivery of services to the residents of New York, with an emphasis on diversity and underserved communities,” said Ms. Soto. Her appointments are due, in part, in recognition of her twenty plus years of service at Einstein where she holds the position of Assistant Dean for Diversity Enhancement.

# National Medical Fellows Gala



Einstein's chapter of SNMA President SNMA Tonya Aaron, MS-II and Einstein's chapter of LMSA Co-President Roberto Valdovinos, MS-II attended this year's National Medical Fellow Award gala as guests of Dr. Philip O. Ozuah.



Philip O. Ozuah MD/PhD is the executive Vice President & COO of Montefiore Health System. He received the National Medical Fellow Excellence in Academic Medicine Award.



Lagu A. Androga, Class of 2016, was one of two recipients of the 2016 New York Community Trust/National Medical Fellows Medical Research Scholars.

## Priyanka Datta, MSII



Congratulations to Priyanka Datta, MS-II on being this year's recipient of the Alan and Ruth Borenstein Medical Scholarship. Alan and Ruth Borenstein Medical Scholarships are awarded to students who have completed at least one year of medical school. Priyanka was awarded \$10,000 which she will apply towards her medical school tuition. The scholarship will enable her to take less loans for the academic year.

Alan and Ruth Borenstein Medical Scholarships are awarded to students who have completed at least one year of medical school. Amongst the selection criteria for the scholarship the student has demonstrated community involvement, scholarstic record and good moral character.

## Reflections



Natalie Ramsey, 3rd year MD/PHD

Representation matters. I, as well as many of my peers, have heard this phrase repeated over and over in the media. The importance of representation in the media pertains to the access media has to youth from a broad array of socioeconomic demographics. For medicine and science, representation also matters. However, the medium through which these fields access youth is academia. Thus, I was eager to serve, when presented with the opportunity, to be the 2015-2016 Physician Researcher Initiative (PRI) Coordinator for the Student National Medical Association (SNMA).

One of the major goals of this initiative is to take an active, rather than passive, approach to increasing underrepresented minorities' presence in academic medicine. As part of this active approach, the PRI coordinator plans and facilitates the PRI track at the national SNMA Annual Medical Education Conference (AMEC). During the track, AMEC attendees are exposed to physician researchers, clinician educators, and those serving in other capacities in the academic medicine. Students receive first hand accounts and experienced advisement on what a career in academic medicine entails and offers.

I was excited and proud to have Einstein alum and former Einstein faculty member, Dr. John P. Sanchez, open the PRI track with *Demystifying Academic Medicine*. He gave an engaging and educational presentation that impacted students at both the undergraduate and medical student level. In addition, as part of the panel on planning research-tracked academic careers, two of the four panelists were affiliated with Einstein. Dr. Chinazo Cunningham, a current full professor in the Department of Medicine as well as the Department of Family and Social Medicine at Montefiore Medical Center, spoke about her path to her career, which included obtaining a master's degree in clinical research methods while at Einstein. Dr. Francine Garrett-Bakelman is an alumna of the Einstein MSTP and gave encouraging as well as honest feedback about how her medical training and continued clinical involvement fosters and strengthens her intensive basic science research in leukemia. All of the speakers I invited, including those from a variety of other institutions, were phenomenal and remarkably generous with their time as most of them traveled from the east coast to participate in the track.

# Reflections

Aside from the PRI track, Annual Medical Education Conference was, once again, such a rewarding experience, overall. It brings together students who often share similar experiences in their path to medicine. It is a great experience that addresses both career development and psychosocial concerns for underrepresented minorities in medicine. I hope to attend next year, as I will continue my involvement in SNMA on the Region 9 executive board. I am so grateful to the Office of Diversity Enhancement for funding me, as well as eight (8) of my classmates' trip, to the annual Student National Medical Association Annual Medical Education Conference.

Natalie Ramsey, 3rd year MD/PHD



Picture from Left to Right: Alden Landry, MD, MPH; Kameron L. Matthews, MD, JD; K. Torian Easterling, MD, MPH



Picture from Left to Right: Tonya Aaron, Kristine Alexander, Shacelles Bonner, Sean Schnarr, Angela Anderson (Class of 2015), Carla Anderson, Elise Mike and Natalie Ramsey.

# Reflections

It was a beautiful May morning at Swarthmore College in 2005 when two graduating seniors from the Bronx made a pact to “lean back” across the stage on their way to accept their college degrees. To them, “lean back” was more than a dance move. It was a reference to their common roots in the Bronx and the improbability of their journeys. Eugene Palatulan from the Kingsbridge area of the Bronx and Jorge Aguilar who is from the East Tremont area of the Bronx did not know then that more than 10 years later, they’d be on schedule to once again “lean back” across the stage together, this time to accept their Doctor of Medicine degrees from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine.

Eugene and Jorge met in the summer of 2001, when they were assigned by their college to be freshman year roommates. They like to joke that the Dean roomed them together so that in case one of them went crazy he would only hurt the other Bronx kid. Their four years as college roommates were their most formative years. They witnessed together the 9/11 attacks on their dorm room television, consoled each other through their academic and socio-economic struggles at the college, and even became President and Vice-President of their college class.

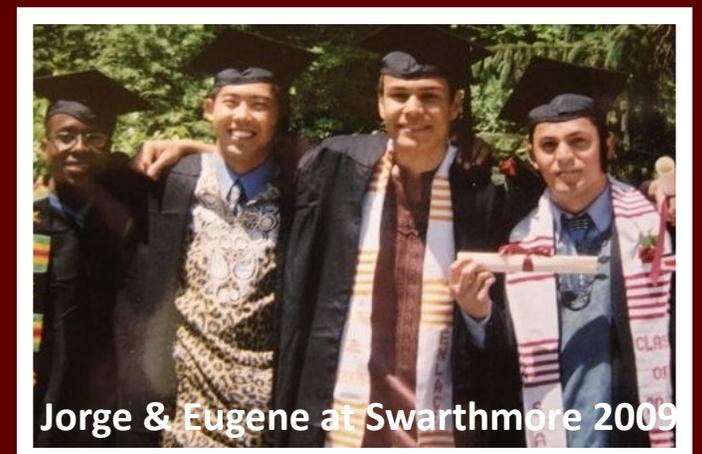
After graduation, the two returned to New York City and together moved into an apartment in Washington Heights. Eugene taught biology at his old high school in the Bronx, Kennedy, which was infamous for its 5000+ students and a less than 24% 4-year graduation rate, while Jorge worked as a research



assistant in a pediatric infectious diseases laboratory at Columbia University.

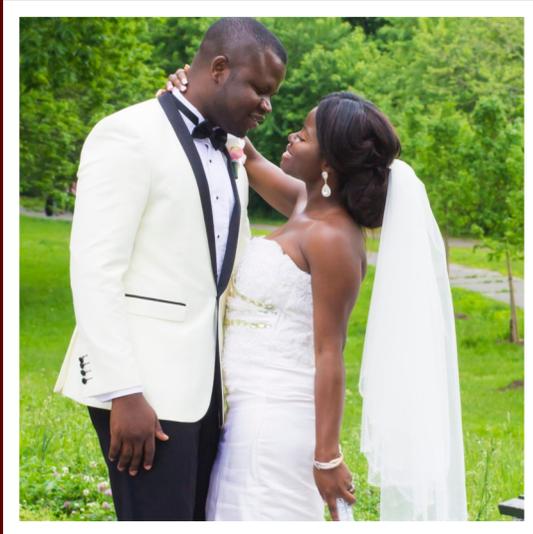
Five years after their graduation from Swarthmore, Jorge began classes at Einstein, becoming the first MD-PhD student from the South Bronx to be accepted into the program’s 60+ year history. Three years later, Eugene entered Einstein medical school class of 2017. Despite being originally scheduled to graduate in 2018, Jorge was able to complete his PhD one year earlier than expected, and is now a member of the class of 2017... with Eugene.

Now in our 4<sup>th</sup> year at Einstein (or 7<sup>th</sup> for Jorge), Eugene and Jorge are mad excited to “lean back” on that Lincoln Center stage in less than one year.



**Jorge Aguilar, MD/PHD**  
**Eugene Palatulan, MD**  
**Class 2017**

# ODE's Marriage Announcements



**Congratulations to Mr. Frank Sarkodie and Mrs. Vera Sarkodie on their May 21, 2016 marriage. The former Vera Osafo is a member of Einstein's Class of 2016.**



**Congratulations to Mr. Jordan Padgett and Mrs. Ashley Guadalupe-Padgett on their May 21, 2016 marriage. The former Ashley Guadalupe is a member of Einstein's class of 2018.**

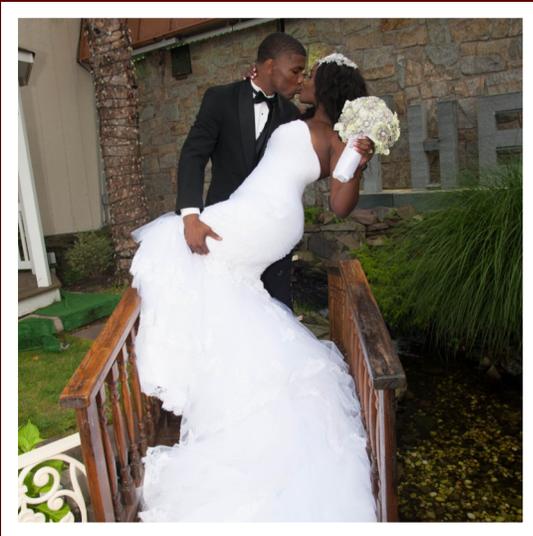


**Congratulations to Mrs. and Mrs. Keneta and Odalina McKellar on their May 20, 2016 marriage. Keneta is a member of Einstein's class of 2018.**

# ODE's Marriage Announcements



**Congratulations to Mr. Nick Grant and Mrs. Jaselyn Grant on their June 25, 2016 marriage.**

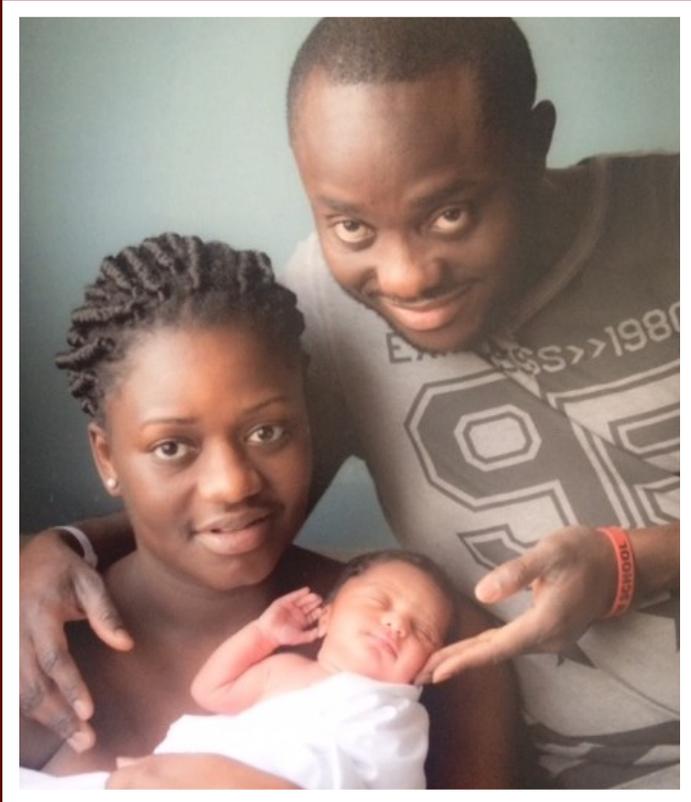


**Congratulations to Mr. Calvin Nash and Mrs. Chino Aneke-Nash. The former Chino Aneke is a current MD/PhD student. Chino and Calvin had a Nigerian wedding and an American wedding. Pictured to the left is their American wedding celebration held on August 2nd. The weddings were held in New York.**



**Pictured to the left is Mr. Calvin Nash and Mrs. Chino Aneke-Nash on the day of their Nigerian wedding celebration held on August 1st.**

## ODE's New Arrivals



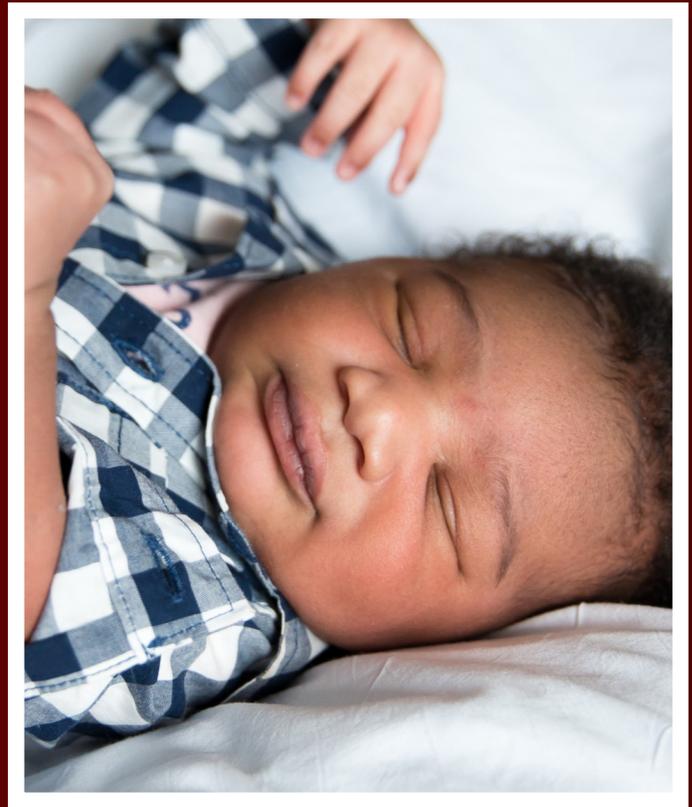
**Congratulations to Stephen Ansah-Addo, MS-II, and his wife Lydia Ampadu on the birth of their son Caleb Brako Ansah-Addo, born on March 23, 2016, weight 5 lbs. and 7 oz, length 19 inches long.**

## ODE's New Arrivals



**Congratulations to Ujunwa Cynthia Okoye-Okafor, Class of 2016, and her husband Francis Okafor on the birth of their daughter Amarachi Hannah Okafor, born on May 13, 2016, weight 7 lbs. and 9.2 oz, length 19.5 inches long.**

## ODE's New Arrivals



**Congratulations to Chino Aneke-Nash, MD/PhD and her husband Calvin Nash, on the birth of their son Kamsi Daniel Nash, born on April 19, 2016, weight 9 lbs. and 8 oz, length 21.5 inches long.**

## Student Meet & Greet



On August 10, 2016 members of Einstein SNMA, LMSA, EMSA, Muslim Student Association, Bronx-Einstein Training in Teaching and Research (BETTR), and PRIDE student groups held a Meet and Greet event. The Meet & Greet was a huge success as students had the opportunity to introduce themselves and their respective group.

# Diversity Student Summer Research Opportunity Program (DSSROP)



## Undergraduates Provided Opportunity to Do Bench Research

For over three decades, the Office of Diversity Enhancement has offered the Diversity Student Summer Research Opportunity Program to rising college sophomores and juniors where they have an opportunity to obtain a significant research experience at Albert Einstein College of Medicine within a structured and mentored program. DSSROP is a component of the Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP) directed by the Graduate Division Biomedical Sciences at Albert Einstein College of Medicine. The eight week program consisted of laboratory research, weekly lectures by faculty members on their own research, weekly small group discussion sessions focused on selected "hot topics" in science and health disparities, and training in the writing and oral presentation of research work. At the conclusion of the program, each student submitted a written abstract and present their work formally at a Poster Session at the SURP/DSSROP Symposium. All the abstracts were included in the 2016 SURP/DSSROP Abstract Book.

This year's DSSROP cohort consisted of eight undergraduate students from the following colleges and universities: Fordham University which sponsored three students through the CSTEP program, Syracuse University and SUNY at Albany, at Farmingdale, and at Potsdam. The students are pursuing majors in Biology, Bioscience, Chemistry/Mathematics, Natural Science and Public Health. They were engaged in research in the following departments at Albert Einstein: Genetics, Developmental Molecular Biology, Nephrology, Pathology, Pediatrics and Radiation Oncology.



**At Einstein, we believe a diverse approach to medical education better prepares future doctors to meet the needs of a globally-interdependent world.**

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