2002-03 student awards

Abdelmonen A. Alfi Fellowship
Kristin Yarris Community Health Sciences
Fred H. Bixby Doctoral Fellowships
in Community Health Sciences
Allison Butterheim Chi Chiao
Yasamin Kusunoki Anita Yuan
California Endowment Scholarships
Marcelo Divine Health Sciences
Tommie Gaines Biostatistics
Gabriel Garcia Community Health Sciences
Carla Howard Health Services
Kymna Wright Community Health Sciences
California Wellness Foundation Scholarships
Jabar Akbar Epidemiology
Autumn Devore Epidemiology
Marisol Lopez Biostatistics
Rita Velikina Epidemiology
NINA ADATIA was presented first prize in the essay contest of the Professional Schools Seminar Program for "Tobacco Advertising and the First Amendment" written for UCLA School of Public Health faculty member Ruth Roemer's course "Public Health Law and Policy: Private Rights and Social Ethics". Adatia received her award at a luncheon held at the UCLA Faculty Center in May. The Professional Schools Seminar Program enables freshman and sophomore under-graduate students at UCLA to investigate various professions through lower-division seminars taught by distinguished faculty from UCLA’s professional schools. Roemer’s course examines legal and policy issues affecting the U.S. health care system.

Foley & Larnder Fellowship
Osvaldo Martinez Health Services
Emma Wolfschlag Health Services
L.S. Goenka Memorial Award
Na He Epidemiology
Raymond Goodman Scholarship
Audrey Fisher Health Services
Julia Prentice Community Health Sciences
Graduate Opportunity Fellowship Program
Norma Sanchez Community Health Sciences
Health Policy and Management Alumni Association Scholarship
Jessica Louie
Gordon Hain Memorial Award
Christian Shinaberger Epidemiology
Dr. Ursula Mandel Scholarship
Constance Gewa Community Health Sciences
Yun Chon Biostatistics
Joon Hu Health Services

Maternal & Child Health Program in Community Health Sciences
Christine Park
Caroline Salinas
Raphael Travis
Lisa Thompson
NH AIDS Training Grant in Biostatistics
Tymon Rogers
Myungshin Sim
Yin Chon
Li-Jung Liang
NH Genomic Analysis & Interpretation Fellowship
Sonia Minassian Biostatistics

Tony Norton Memorial Fellowship
Samantha Yaussy Chua Environmental Health Sciences
Ann G. Quady Memorial Fellowship in Health Services
Osvaldo Martinez
Vesna Grubic Research Mentorship Program
Hector Lemus Biostatistics
Tasya Thomas Community Health Sciences
Ruth F. Richards Outstanding Student Award
Amanda Babcock Community Health Sciences
Anne Marie Cruz Health Sciences
Jose Mexul Biostatistics
Matthew Redelings Epidemiology
Weiguang Zhong Environmental Health Sciences

Romeo Fellowship for Dr.P.H. Studies in Health Services
Randal Henry
Charles F. Scott Fellowship
Sue Dao Health Services
Wayne SooHoo Fellowship
Tu-Luyen Nguyen Community Health Sciences
Samuel J. Tibbits Fellowship
Jun Wu Environmental Health Sciences

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) selected UCLA School of Public Health student RAPHAEL TRAVIS as one of four Prevention Research Centers fellows for 2003. Travis will work with the UCLA/RAND Center for Adolescent Health Promotion, where he will analyze whether community-based youth programs in Carson, Calif., support positive youth development. The Prevention Research Centers Program engages communities as participants in research by sending academies who build relationships with communities that help define research questions and conduct research and interventions. The fellowship program, now in its second year, is sponsored by CDC and the Association of Schools of Public Health for students of minority racial or ethnic origin.

Responsibility," Adatia received her award at a luncheon held at the UCLA Faculty Center in May. The Professional Schools Seminar Program enables freshman and sophomore under-graduate students at UCLA to investigate various professions through lower-division seminars taught by distinguished faculty from UCLA’s professional schools. Roemer’s course examines legal and policy issues affecting the U.S. health care system.
LOVES RESEARCH, considers himself a “people person,” and
is dedicated to promoting health in underserved minority communities. After
exploring several career options in search of one in which he could use skills in
both science and communication to address critical
health needs among people of color, he settled on
one he considers ideal. The first-year UCLA School of
Public Health student is now on a path to a Ph.D. in
epidemiology, with plans to remain in academia as an
epidemiologist focusing on community-based public
health nutrition – particularly the role of diet in cancer.
The choice crystallized for Akbar after his father
suffered a fatal heart attack in 2001. “On my dad’s
side of the family, most of the men do not live past the
age of 60,” says Akbar, who is African American.
“Heart disease, diabetes, hypertension and physical
inactivity are all particular problems in the black com-
munity.” By that time, Akbar had received his M.P.H
from the University of Michigan and was working as a
research assistant at the University of North Carolina,
helping to implement a pilot study of the role of diet in
prostate cancer among African Americans. “I made a
pact with myself after my father passed away that I
would pursue a Ph.D. at UCLA, and that my research
would address health disparities among certain ethnic
and racial minority groups,” he says.

He entered the school’s M.S. program and
already has become involved in community-based
work. Akbar has served as coordinator of an initiative
by the Diabetic Amputation Prevention Foundation to
collect health-risk data among attendees of the
annual Los Angeles African Marketplace and Cultural
Faire. He designed, implemented and analyzed results of a cross-sectional survey
that garnered 1,147 responses – three-fourths of them from self-identified African
Americans – at last year’s fair, and will follow up at this year’s event in an effort to
obtain more comprehensive data on risk factors in the community.

Through this and future epidemiologic studies, Akbar hopes not only to pro-
vide important health-related data on underserved communities, but also to assist
the affected communities in understanding and disseminating the results and in
developing programs designed to reduce such risk factors. “In the past, too many
researchers have gone into communities of color, collected their results and left,
never to be heard from again,” he says. “What is much more needed, and respect-
ful, is for researchers to share their results.” Akbar notes that there are many ways
to do that – at town halls, in meetings with community leaders and politicians, and
through articles or service announcements in the local media, to name a few. He
sees a role for himself as a liaison between academia and the community, help-
ing to translate epidemiologic research so that it can be better put to use.

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know about health disparities and how they fit into the picture.”
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Filmmaker Uses Art to ‘De-Mystify’ Ecological Hot Topics; SPH Education Informs Environmental Documentaries

TERRY YOUNG SUSPECTS THAT IF SOMEONE HAD TOLD HER, at age 16, that she would eventually pursue a master’s degree in a scientific field, she would have had a simple response: “You’ve got to be kidding.”

At that time she was part of a dance company performing at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion. She would go on to explore other artistic passions, earning a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in photography and ceramics from Mount St. Mary’s College before attending the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, Calif., to study photography and film, with a special concentration in documentary filmmaking. For more than a decade she worked with her grandfather, a photographer who owned a documentary film company. “I really like the medium,” Young says. “I think as an education tool it’s very powerful.”

That thinking, combined with a concern about environmental issues, has driven Young as she went through an undergraduate program in biological sciences at Wright State University and then enrolled in the UCLA School of Public Health’s M.S. program, where she is completing her second year in the Department of Environmental Health Sciences.

With her M.S. education, Young intends to produce documentary films as a way to de-mystify difficult biological concepts and ecological hot topics for the general public. “The problem is that not all of the information is on the table,” she says. “I find that the Environmental Protection Agency has one perspective, the Army Corps of Engineers has another, scientists have another, environmental groups still another, and the general population, which outnumber all of them, has an entirely different perspective. It would be nice to clarify the issues and get everyone on the same page.”

Her film credits include “The Crisis at the Salton Sea,” an educational video short that Young produced, photographed and edited for the Pacific Wildlife Project, an environmental rescue organization. For the video, she ventured into the Salton Sea in a kayak during a period of heavy fish and bird die-off. She also edited an updated version of Sheila Laffey’s award-winning documentary “The Last Stand,” detailing efforts to preserve the Ballona wetlands.

While pursuing her M.S., Young has engrossed herself in her current film project, “Ya Don’t Miss the Water,” a video documentary on the problems of water in Los Angeles in which she uses the San Gabriel River basin as a model for water-strapped communities with high-population pressures. Young, who has shot more than 40 hours of interviews and footage, says the point of view emerged during the filmmaking process. She prefers it that way – keeping her own biases to herself. “If you shoot enough and you open it up to as many people as are willing to talk to you, issues start sticking out like sore thumbs,” she explains.

For a right-brained person, the scientific aspect of the M.S. program has been “very hard,” Young concedes, laughing. But she is convinced it will help her make a more powerful impact through her art. “There are so many people who have trouble understanding the world around them with all of the technology and science that seems to be coming at them at a very fast pace,” she says. “A powerful medium like film can contribute to bridging that gap.”