

2002-03 student awards

Abdelmonem A. Afifi
Fellowship
Kristin Yarris
Community Health Sciences

Fred H. Bixby
Doctoral Fellowships
in Community
Health Sciences
Allison Buttenheim
Chi Chiao
Yasamin Kusunoki
Anita Yuan

California Endowment
Scholarships
Marcelo Divine
Health Services
Tommie Gaines
Biostatistics
Gabriel Garcia
Community Health Sciences
Carla Howard
Health Services
Kynna Wright
Community Health Sciences

California Wellness
Foundation Scholarships
Jabar Akbar
Epidemiology
Autumn DeVore
Epidemiology
Marisol Lopez
Biostatistics
Rita Velikina
Epidemiology

Celia & Joseph Blann
Fellowship
Susan Alber
Biostatistics

Chancellor's
Fellowship
Ning An
Epidemiology
Amy Carroll
Community Health Sciences
Hua Guo
Biostatistics

Dissertation Year
Fellowship
Roberto De Vogli
Community Health Sciences
Yunda Huang
Biostatistics
Sung-Jae Lee
Epidemiology
Victoria Ojeda
Community Health Sciences
Craig Shuman
Environmental Science
and Engineering
Irene Tetreault
Environmental Health
Sciences
Yifang Zhu
Environmental Health
Sciences

Foley & Lardner
Fellowship
Osvaldo Martinez
Health Services
Emma Wollschlager
Health Services

L.S. Goerke
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

Gorden Hein
Memorial Award
Christian Shinaberger
Epidemiology

Dr. Ursula Mandel
Scholarship
Constance Gewa
Community Health Sciences
Hsin-Ju Hsieh
Biostatistics
Soon Huh
Health Services

Maternal & Child Health
Program in Community
Health Sciences
Christine Park
Caroline Salinas
Raphael Travis
Lisa Thompson

NIH AIDS Training
Grant in Biostatistics
Tyson Rogers
Myungshin Sim
Yun Chon
Li-Jung Liang

NIH Genomic Analysis &
Interpretation Fellowship
Sonia Minassian
Biostatistics

Tony Norton
Memorial Fellowship
Samantha Yaussy Chua
Environmental Health
Sciences

Ann G. Quealy
Memorial Fellowship
in Health Services
Osvaldo Martinez
Vesna Grubic

Research Mentorship
Program
Hector Lemus
Biostatistics
Taigy Thomas
Community Health Sciences

Ruth F. Richards
Outstanding Student
Award
Amanda Babcock
Community Health Sciences
Anne Marie Cruz
Health Services
Jose Matud
Biostatistics
Matthew Redelings
Epidemiology
Weiguang Zhong
Environmental
Health Sciences

Roemer Fellowship
for Dr.P.H. Studies
in Health Services
Randal Henry

Charles F. Scott
Fellowship
Sue Dao
Health Services

Wayne SooHoo
Fellowship
Tu-Uyen Nguyen
Community Health Sciences

Samuel J. Tibbitts
Fellowship
Jun Wu
Environmental
Health Sciences



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

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 undergraduate 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.



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 academics 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.

Spreading the Word on Epidemiologic Research

JABAR AKBAR 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.

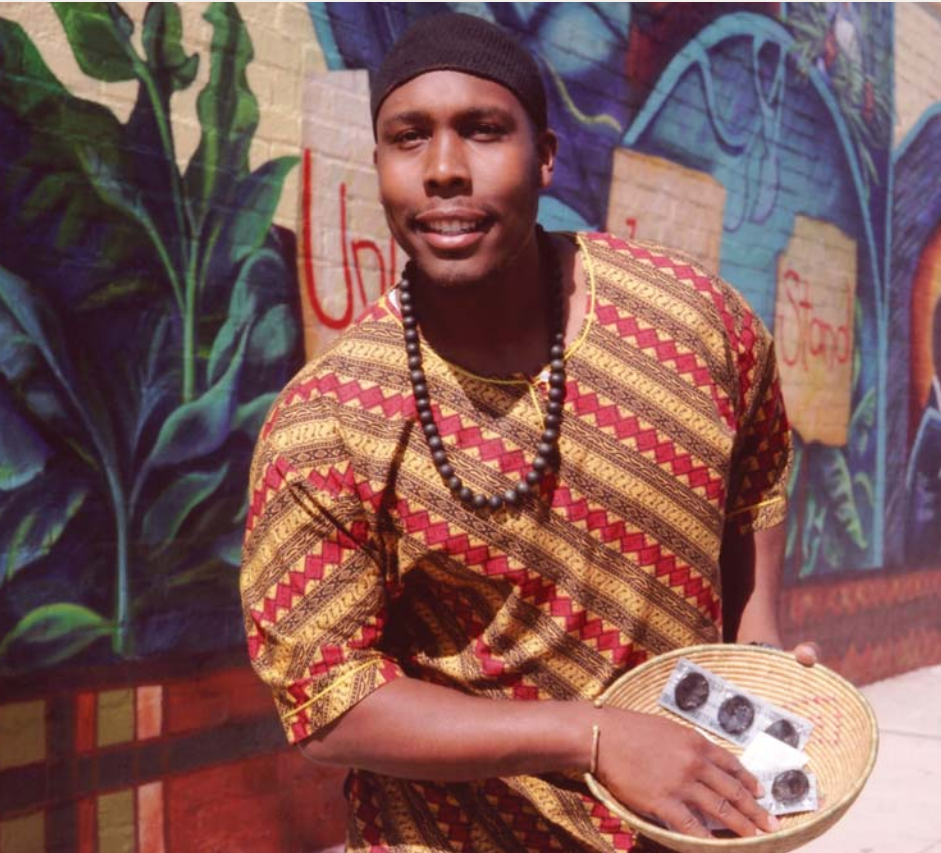
The choice crystallized for Akbar after his father suffered a fatal heart attack in 2001. “On my dad’s side of the family, most of the men do not live past the age of 60,” says Akbar, who is African American. “Heart disease, diabetes, hypertension and physical inactivity are all particular problems in the black community.” 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 provide 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 respectful, 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, helping to translate epidemiologic research so that it can be better put to use.

“People would be surprised at how little many individuals in communities of color know about health disparities and how they fit into the picture – how their current lifestyles are setting them up for a higher risk of developing chronic disease,” Akbar says. “We need as many individuals from different backgrounds to pursue careers as public health professionals as possible – people who will return to their communities to make a difference.”



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—Jabar Akbar

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 outnumbers 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.”

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—Terry Young

