Adams Addresses Class of 2000 at Annual Dinner

Amy Adams, M.D.-Ph.D. Class of 2000, made the following remarks at the program’s annual spring dinner held in honor of the graduates on May 23.

Nearly a decade ago, my fellow graduates and I started an academic journey here at the medical school and over that time we’ve seen a number of things change.

We saw the first Harvard Medical School class with over 50% women. There’ve been changes in the leadership— including the Dean of Medicine, the head of the M.D.-Ph.D. Program, and a few society masters. And we were still here. In the nation, health care reform issues have been a political priority. We’ve seen instability of several hospitals across the country as pressures for “Medicine as Business” mount. Medicine has been sheik-as ER and Dr. Quinn Medicine Woman, to name a few, have translated bits of medicine’s gritty truth to the populace. The era of the Internet has made most everyone an informed and sometimes super-informed consumer and patient. Molecular biology has continued to transform medical research— a sheep was cloned, and the genome project is in full swing.

Sami’s Middle Eastern cuisine started out as a trailer, then was a cart, a cafeteria, a mall restaurant, only to come back as a cart again. And we were still here. And Dan Goodenough was portrayed as a hippie in my 2nd year show— well I guess some things never change…

On reflecting for this talk I realized that something else that has not changed has been the character and quality of those people I find around me. As M.D.-Ph.D. students we face many challenges but are lucky to be a part of three separate groups of talented people— there’s our initial medical school class, toward whom we all feel great allegiance, our

Redefining the M.D.-Ph.D. Path: Dr. Nancy Andrews Leads the Way

A stronger and more distinctive community of physician-scientists is emerging as a result of recent M.D.-Ph.D. Program changes. Leading the way is Nancy C. Andrews, M.D., Ph.D., HMS associate professor of pediatrics at Children’s Hospital, who was appointed to faculty director last December. A 1987 program graduate, Dr. Andrews has been a longstanding and supportive affiliate of the M.D.-Ph.D. Program. During the past few years, she served as the program’s associate faculty director and chair of the admissions committee.

Dr. Andrews is an associate investigator of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, and an associate in medicine at Children’s Hospital. Her research interests focus on red blood cell development and mammalian iron metabolism. Her laboratory has made important contributions to understanding human iron disorders through their use of the mouse as a model system for genetic studies. Dr. Andrews

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The revelation came to light primarily in an intense collaborative effort with Linda and a few others at some of the M.D.-Ph.D. retreats. So, while I often feel as an M.D.-Ph.D. student that I am continually saying goodbye to someone— I feel truly lucky for the number of friends and colleagues who have enriched my experience here.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the other individuals who have touched our lives while in this program. Certainly each of us have made special lasting connections with a myriad of faculty and teachers— whether our Ph.D. advisor, a talented and helpful post-doc from the lab, or faculty from the med school, graduate school, or on the wards. The sheer number of talented dedicated individuals who have been our role models and mentors in each of the steps we’ve taken in the program will serve each of us well as we find our way in the worlds of science and medicine. We have the lessons learned from these individuals to call upon as we strive to be dedicated physicians, scientists, mentors, and citizens.

Sir William Osler stated “No bubble is so iridescent or floats longer than that blown by the successful teacher.”

Finally, there are those special individuals who have personally helped each of us during our time here in their own unique way. From my experience in the program, I would state that two individuals who have continually been unassuming, yet supportive of my struggles and endeavors and have always been there to lend a sympathetic ear have been Nancy Andrews and Linda Burnley. Each have listened compassionately and helped me in ways for which I will always be grateful. I think each of us has special people we’d like to thank. Certainly my parents are at the top of my list. So, to the friends, family, classmates, mentors, and teachers whom we have counted on during our journey through the M.D.-Ph.D. Program: on my classmates’ behalf, I thank all of you for your energies, efforts and support and your belief in our abilities to succeed.

As Dr. Albert Schweitzer once said “One can save one’s life as a human being, along with one’s professional existence, if one seizes every opportunity, however unassuming, to act humanly toward those who need another human being. In this way, we serve both the spiritual and the good.”

Congratulations to the class of 2000— best of luck to everyone on their future endeavors and no matter where you are going next year don’t forget you’ve gained a special family here that you can always count on.

And for those of you still training in the program I leave you with these words of inspiration from Robert Louis Stevenson— “To travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive” (but I’ve got to tell you, arriving feels pretty good too!)
Revisit Prepares New Students to Begin in July 2000
by Linda Burnley

The M.D.-Ph.D. Program’s first Revisit Weekend was held April 6-9, 2000, for M.D.-Ph.D. applicants offered admission in 2000. One of Dr. Nancy Andrews’ priorities as the new director was to invite new admits to come back to Harvard before accepting their offers of admission to the program to meet with faculty, students, and staff. The Revisit Committee, chaired by Dr. Lee Gehrke, planned a weekend of activities to provide an orientation to changes in the M.D.-Ph.D. curriculum. In addition, the new admits learned about the new summer program and were introduced to key faculty with whom they might want to do a summer lab rotation. Hosted by M.D.-Ph.D. students for three days, thirteen of the country’s most promising future physician scientists participated in the Revisit.

On Friday morning, Dr. Dennis Kasper, HMS Executive Dean for Academic Programs, and Dr. Nancy Andrews welcomed the new recruits. Graduate program heads from both Harvard and MIT made presentations describing their specific Ph.D. program. Following a luncheon, recruits met with three or four faculty members whose research was of interest to them. That evening, the M.D.-Ph.D. community gathered in the Alpert Courtyard Cafe for dinner, music, and student posters.

The next day, applicants gathered to hear more about the program’s organization and goals. Linda Burnley presented the new admits with information on administration and funding. Dr. David Golan, the program’s new co-director, and an alumnus of Yale’s M.D.-Ph.D. Program, reinforced Harvard’s commitment towards a more efficient and balanced curriculum. Several key M.D.-Ph.D. faculty participants highlighted various aspects of M.D.-Ph.D. training and spoke enthusiastically about the new initiatives for incoming students.

Dr. Orah Platt, Master of the Castle Society, spoke about implementing journal clubs and tutorials for students interested in combining research and medicine. She also welcomed the recruits in the New Pathway who would join the Castle academic society for their medical education. Dr. Joe Bonventre, a graduate of the Harvard M.D.-Ph.D. Program, discussed the success of the HST program in educating M.D.-Ph.D.s. Fifty percent of the new class will matriculate in HST. Dr. Alan Michelson, another program graduate and chair of the program’s advising committee, explained how the advising mechanisms have been strengthened to guide students by providing mentoring. Dr. Thomas Michel, a graduate of the Duke M.D.-Ph.D. Program, introduced the program’s plans for enhancing the clinical curriculum.

Dr. Richard Maas, another M.D.-Ph.D. faculty participant, outlined the syllabus for the new summer course in Molecular Biology of Human Disease that he will direct along with his colleagues (many of whom came to the session). The course, with an emphasis on critical reading, will run from July 5 - August 25, 2000 for three mornings each week. It offers an opportunity for students to get to know the Harvard research community and to get to know one another before formal classes begin in September.

Hosted by first and second year students, the weekend concluded with a dinner at a Back Bay restaurant. We look forward to greeting the following new students: Andrew Aguirre (U-Michigan, Ann Arbor), Allen Bryan (Mississippi State University), Savita Dandapani (MIT), Anna Farago (Haverford College), A. Paiman Ghafoori (U-Colorado at Boulder), Raj Gopalakrishnan (UC-Irvine), Todd Herrington (Stanford), Robert Ohgami (Princeton), Cullen Taniguchi (Occidental College and Oxford), Leo Tsai (Williams College), Glenn Yiu (Columbia University).

Note: Elizabeth Stover (Harvard) will defer her admission for one year to pursue a research fellowship.
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is a member of the clinical hematology program at Children’s Hospital, specializing in diseases affecting red blood cells and diseases associated with abnormal iron homeostasis. She is also a faculty member of the Biological and Biomedical Sciences graduate program at HMS.

In her new role as director, Dr. Andrews chairs several faculty committees to foster a more cohesive and time-efficient program curriculum. From matriculation when crucial decisions about lab and courses must be made, to graduation when students face important career and personal options, Dr. Andrews is committed to providing a structure that is both nurturing and efficient for M.D.-Ph.D. students. The subcommittee on advising, for example, meets regularly to review progress and to make sure that students are getting the guidance and mentoring they need.

To assist with these efforts and help oversee the integration of the medical and graduate school education, Dr. Andrews has appointed David E. Golan, M.D., Ph.D. as co-director of the program. Dr. Golan is an associate professor of biological chemistry and molecular pharmacology at HMS, an associate professor of medicine at Brigham and Women’s Hospital, and a physician at Brigham and Women’s Hospital and the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. His research interests focus on cell surface protein and lipid dynamics, including the molecular dynamics of membrane proteins and lipids in red cell structure, function, and pathophysiology, and the molecular dynamics of cell surface adhesion receptors in lymphocyte adhesion and activation. He has an active clinical practice in hematology, specializing in disorders of red cells, white cells, platelets and the clotting system. Dr. Golan is a member of the faculty of the Biological and Biomedical Sciences and the Biophysics graduate programs. He has a number of leadership roles in the HMS New Pathway curriculum, including directorship of the core course in pharmacology. His involvement with the M.D.-Ph.D. Program’s admissions process, advising system and curriculum planning make him a well-suited candidate for this assignment.

Along with implementing new initiatives for the program, during the last several months, Dr. Andrews meets regularly with students in both one-on-one and group meetings. She is the facilitator for ongoing student discussion lunch meetings. The meetings are successful in bringing together different cohorts of students to discuss specific issues related to career and personal development as physician scientists. In response to students who were interested in learning more about how physician scientists balance family and career life, Dr. Andrews invited her colleagues, Drs. Rosalind Segal and Ellis Neufeld, to participate in a special seminar held in May. The lunch discussions will continue in the new academic year.

We welcome Dr. Andrews and Dr. Golan to their new roles, and we look forward to the contributions that their new direction and enthusiasm will bring to the Harvard Medical School community.

-Linda Burnley

SAVE THESE DATES!

July 26, 2000

General Session - M.D.-Ph.D.
Students and Directors

October 20 - 22, 2000

18th Annual Student/Faculty Weekend Retreat
Waterville Valley, NH

For the Record

Ph.D.s Completed

Pradeep P. Atluri, Neuroscience—DMS [Wade Regehr, Ph.D.] The Role of Prenysynaptic Calcium in Short-Term Synaptic Plasticity (1/00)

Laurence H. Beck, Jr., Cell Biology—DMS [Patricia D’Amore, Ph.D.] Cell-Cell Interactions and Microenvironmental Influences in Vascular Development and Pathology (3/00)

Paul R. Borgesani, Neuroscience—DMS [Rosalind Segal, M.D., Ph.D.] Neuronal Migration in Development and Degeneration (12/99)


David J. Hirsch, Biology—Massachusetts Institute of Technology [Harvey Lodish, M.D.] The FATP Gene Family: Story of Mice, Men and Mycobacteria (12/99)

Jason I. Koontz, Biological Chemistry and Molecular Pharmacology—DMS [Jeffrey Sklar, M.D., Ph.D.] Frequent Fusion of JAZF1 and JIAZ1 Genes in Endometrial Stromal Tumors (6/00)

Jerry W. Lin, Neuroscience—DMS [Morgan H. Sheng, M.D.] I. Characterization of an NMDA Receptor-Associated Complex Centered around NR1 II. The Role of AMPA Receptor Trafficking in Synaptic Plasticity (6/00)

Katherine P. Lemon, Biology—Massachusetts Institute of Technology [Alan Grossman, Ph.D.] DNA Replication and Chromosome Partitioning in Bacillus Subtilis (5/00)

Sharon C. Posey Morley, Immunology—DMS [Barbara Bierer, M.D.] The Actin Cytoskeleton and the Actin-Binding Protein Gelsolin in T Cell Signal Transduction (6/00)

Pasha Sarraf, Cell Biology—DMS [Bruce Spiegelman, Ph.D.] A Role for the Nuclear Receptor PPARγ in Cancer (4/00)

Christine L. Tsien, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science—Massachusetts Institute of Technology [Peter Szolovits, Ph.D.] Trend Finder: Automated Detection of Alarmable Trend (4/00)

Vasantha Vedartham, Neuroscience—DMS [Stephen Cannon, M.D., Ph.D.] Moving Parts of Voltage-Gated Sodium Channels (6/00)

DMS = Division of Medical Sciences, Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
Recent Publications


Deconinck, A.E., Mead, P.E., Tevsonias, S.G., Crispino, J.D., Kuo, L.C. An alternate binding site for the P1-P3 group of a class of potent HIV-1 protease inhibitors as a result of concerted structural change in the 80s loop of the protease. Acta Crystallogr 2000; 56: 381-388.


Recent Publications


* the authors contributed equally to the work
For the Record

Class of 2000 Appointments

Amy E. Adams, Pediatrics, Boston Combined Pediatrics-Boston, MA; Dermatology, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, MA.

Manish K. Aghi, Preliminary Surgery, Massachusetts General Hospital - Boston, MA; Neurological Surgery, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, MA.

Laurence H. Beck, Jr., Internal Medicine, Boston University Medical Center, Boston, MA.

Howard Y. Chang, Preliminary Medicine, Santa Clara Valley Medical Center, San Jose, CA; Dermatology, Stanford University Programs, Stanford, CA.

Yun-Beom Choi, Preliminary Medicine, Massachusetts General Hospital - Boston, MA; Neurology - Columbia University, NY, NY.

Saumya Das, Internal Medicine, Massachusetts General Hospital - Boston, MA.

Jeremy S. Dittman, Postdoctoral Fellow in Molecular and Cell Biology, UC - Berkeley, CA.

Rose Du, Neurological Surgery, UCSF - San Francisco, CA.

Whitney B. Edmister, Transitional, St. Luke’s Medical Center, WI; Radiology, UCSF - San Francisco, CA.

Lisa F. Horowitz, Neurology, University of Washington Affiliated Hospitals - Seattle, WA.

Karen S. Taraszka, Preliminary Medicine; Dermatology, Yale - New Haven Hospital - New Haven, CT.

Marcus L. Ware, Neurological Surgery, UCSF - San Francisco, CA.

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