▶ GRADUTES LOOK TO FUTURE, GRADUATION UPDATE .....1

▶ STUDENT FOCUS, NEW OFFICERS ELECTED, HEALTH CARE TRIVA .....2

▶ A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR, ..... 3

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# Jayhawk *forecast*

*The KUMC student chapter of the American College of Healthcare Executives promotes leadership, marketability, relationships, and knowledge for students pursuing a career in health services administration through personal and professional development activities.*

## HP&M Graduates Look to the Future

Graduation is quickly approaching for the members of the Health Policy and Management Class of 2006. These individuals have worked tirelessly to earn their degrees and look forward to applying their knowledge, skills, and abilities in a wide variety of environments.

Future career paths include positions and/or fellowships at the Palomar Pomerado Health System (CA), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Henry Ford Health System, Shawnee Mission Medical Center, Stormont-Vail Regional Health Center, Saint Luke's East, and many others.

Regarding the time spent in the program, Cara Cramer, a participant in the dual M.H.S.A/J.D. program, said that, "...the opportunity to build relationships with HP&M faculty, staff, and classmates to be continued well into my personal and professional life is a memorable experience I am grateful to have had."

Chris Lipp, outgoing president of the ACHE student chapter, said, "The people I have met, both students and professors have made my time at KU very special. Through this program I have formed some of my best friendships and learned many concepts that will impact my professional career for life."

Graduation will take place on May 20, 2006.

**WHAT:** GRADUATION BANQUET

**WHEN:** MAY 19, 2006
6:00 P.M.— 8:30 P.M.

**WHERE:** LIDIAS RESTAURANT
101 W. 22ND STREET
KANSAS CITY, MO

**COST:** $48.00 PER PERSON

## GRADUATION BANQUET INFO

Enjoy an evening with family and colleagues to honor the 2006 HP&M graduating class. A formal three course dinner will be served including salad, pasta trio, and dessert. A cash bar will also be available.

Mr. David Adkins, Vice Chancellor for External Affairs, University of Kansas Medical Center, will address the graduates. A short awards presentation will follow.

Tickets are $48.00 per person. Preferred payment is by check. If paying by cash/money order need to pay exact amount. Please make checks payable to ACHE. Please include your name and the total number of guests (including yourself) on the memo line. Payments can be made to Danielle Woolsey from 7:30-4:00 M-F at 5008 Student Center.

# Student Focus: Sumalatha Gaddam

*Suma leverages a background in research to investigate quality in health care*

Sumalatha Gaddam has traveled quite a large distance to her current location within the Health Policy and Management program at the University of Kansas Medical Center.

A citizen of India, Suma received her B.S. in Agriculture from the Konkan College of Agriculture in 1999. Following graduation, she moved to Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK to pursue a Master's degree. While at Oklahoma State, she earned a M.S. in Molecular Biology.

After initially pursuing a Ph.D. in infectious diseases with a major in Molecular Parasitology at Iowa State University, Suma decided to switch focus and study the overall health care environment at the University of Kansas Medical Center

Suma serves as a Graduate Research Assistant with the National Database of Nursing Quality Indicators (NDNQI)

Today, Suma is finishing her first year within the program. During this first year, Suma has served as a Chair on the Student Research Forum committee, a volunteer intern at Odyssey Health Care, an intern with the Community Outreach Program, and as an administrative coordinator at the Institute of Maternal Fetal Biology. Most recently, Suma has taken on a Graduate Research Assistant position with the National Database of Nursing Quality Indicators (NDNQI). NDNQI is an American Nurses Association database that collects and evaluates unit-specific nurse-sensitive data from hospitals in the United States.

Suma is responsible for the analysis and generation of feedback reports based upon data provided by the hospitals. Also, she designed a web-based human subject's tutorial for RN's who participate in the RN satisfaction survey. In addition, she is involved in development of quality measures and indicators.

Moving forward, Suma is interested in investigating the health care industry from the perspective of a Hospital Administrator as well as an insurance provider. In that direction, she has joined the FirstGuard Health Plan team in Kansas City as a management Intern for the Summer of 2006.

## Quick Facts: State Health Care Trivia

1) Which State had the fewest number of deaths per 100,000 population in 2002? (Kaiser Family Foundation)

2) Per capita, which State had the most retail drugs filled at pharmacies in 2004? (KFF)

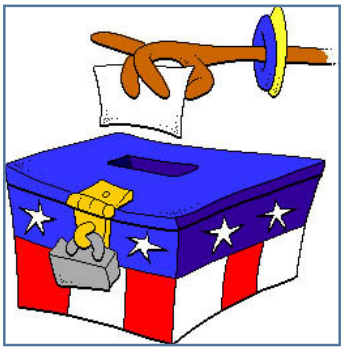
3) In 2003, which State had the greatest health care expenditures? (KFF)

4) Which State had the highest hospital adjusted expenses per inpatient day in 2004? (KFF)

*www.statehealthfacts.org*

**Answers:** 1. Hawaii (659), 2. Tennessee (15.5), 3. New York ($44 million), 4. Washington ($2,006)

# Officers Elected for New HP&M Student Organization



The Health Policy and Management program's student body has elected the officers for the new HP&M student organization which will be in place for the 2006-2007 school year. This new student organization will take the place of the outgoing ACHE student chapter. Please let these incoming officers know of any ideas or advice on improving our student organization activities.

| Position | Name |
|---|---|
| President | Nicholas Tejeda |
| Vice-President | Chase Finnell |
| Treasurer | Ryan Jarmer |
| Information Officer | Megan Twait |
| Outreach Officer | Jennifer Winsky |
| Liaison | Joel Worthington |
| Planning Officer | Mark Van Blaricum |

Michael Fox, Sc.D.

# A Message from the Chair

*Dr. Michael Fox, Interim Chair, shares an outgoing message with students and graduates of the Health Policy and Management Program*

Dear Students and Graduates:

Calvin Trillin is a Kansas City native who has written in syndication and for the New Yorker for many years. He is a Midwesterner, who can easily translate the many nuances of our cultural experience to others around the country, especially those living east of the Hudson River. In an article he wrote last year, he explores the life and early death of a young man from a small town in northern Illinois named Brian Slavenas. A recent graduate of the University of Illinois with a degree in industrial engineering, Brian Slavenas was thirty years old when the helicopter he was piloting was shot down as it was ferrying 36 soldiers to what they had hoped would be their first leg of a journey out of Iraq in November of 2003. Trillin was first made aware of Brian Slavenas through a radio segment that aired earlier that year, as he was driving on a highway in New Jersey. In what appears to have been an emotionally fragile time in his life while traveling to visit his newborn grandchild, Trillin broke out in tears listening to this report.

A hardened journalist of many years, he was surprised by this response; so surprised that he took it upon himself to learn more about who this person really was, visiting his family, friends, and teachers. At likely the exact same time, 1,500 miles to the west on a highway in Kansas, I heard this report too. Like Trillin, I felt overcome with a fleeting sense of personal loss, and very likely like him, I also asked myself where this sense of loss came from. People of my age and gender are supposed to be immune from these sorts of emotions. What nerve did this young man expose in me that has since made it so hard to get Brian Slavenas out of my head?

As graduates or students who will soon face new challenges in the healthcare world, each of you now passes through our program unfrozen in time or space

There are no mean streets in Genoa, Illinois, about an hour west of Chicago, but even if there were, Brian Slavenas would have been able to negotiate them pretty well. At six feet, five inches tall and 230 pounds, a wrestler in high school and a power lifter through college, he struck an imposing figure. One of three children of a social worker father who had migrated to the U.S. as a teenager from Lithuania, and a mother who was a professor at Northern Illinois University, he learned early in life the role of an enforcer, but not in the way his physical strength may have suggested. Within a deeply divided household whose parents divorced when he was in third grade, Brian Slavenas became the dutiful son, the child who tried as hard as he could to please both parents, to keep the peace. His high school coach saw his need to fulfill both his parents' visions of what a noble man should be; the strong and the gentle, avoiding getting into any kind of trouble that could expose the family to further emotional wounds. Accomplished in weight lifting, so too did he excel in piano, especially Chopin. His mother, Rosemarie, referred to him as "my wise child."

The words often used to describe him were not connected to his physical strength nor what appears to have been his considerable intellect, but rather his personality. He was a modest person; a person whose many lifting trophies were revealed to people at his gym only after his death; a person whose former college girlfriend described as so shy that it took him six dates before he found the will to kiss her for the first time. He was a gentle person, whose doors to life, sparked by a love of learning and a love of flying, were just beginning to open for him. His enlistment in the National Guard helped pay his way through college and taught him how to fly, offering him the means by which he could act on his dreams.

By all accounts, Brian Slavenas had few, if any, strong opinions about the war in Iraq. After trying to find ways to remain stationed in the U.S. unsuccessfully, he simply served because it was his duty to serve as he understood it.

His father was in the National Guard earlier in his life. Trillin describes his father's home as having elements of a military museum. The home became a memorial to his son, flying the flag of the 82nd Airborne outside, with every wall laden with mementos, pictures, flags. The centerpiece was a letter written from the president, the same letter written to survivors of all our fallen soldiers. There was honor and pride distributed amidst the memorials, an overriding sentiment that his son had not died in vain or without good cause.

His mother chose to memorialize her son in other ways. On a mantel in her home, about thirty miles away, was Brian's high school graduation portrait, draped with his dog tags. Next to it was a painting he did when he was eight, above the upright piano, now unplayed and itself a monument of sorts. Instead of framing letters from the president, she has written them to him. The last one, in which she wrote, "…my beloved son Brian died for your red herring in the sand… he did not give his life. It was cruelly taken from him in your rush to war," this last one was never answered. When first informed of her son's death, she was heard to say, "All the kindness has gone out of this world."

Trillin makes no attempts to editorialize in his article. For him then, as it is for me today, it is an effort to probe the sanctum of his feelings and come to grips with a few basic truths that people of my generation and his seem to be struggling with in these cynical times. He concludes his article with the following words:

"If Brian had lived, I think he would have continued to please both of his parents. He wasn't supposed to be frozen as one thing or the other at the age of thirty. He was supposed to live long enough to define himself rather than to be defined by his mother or his father. Parents aren't supposed to have to decide on a headstone for their child."

As graduates or students who will soon face new challenges in the healthcare world, each of you now passes through our program unfrozen in time or space. The visions of your parents, husbands, wives or people close to you are still a part, however dwindling, of the future you are now developing for yourselves. My hope in sharing this story with you is that each of you can live long enough to define who you are through what you are and what you believe in, regardless of what you believe in – and that our contact with you at KUMC, however brief, has helped you move a little closer to this understanding.

If we could construct a memorial to this young man and the more than 2,400 other American men and women whose lives have ended prematurely in Iraq who in many ways were probably like him, it would be for you to use your knowledge and your beliefs gained these past years to work towards bringing kindness back into the world, not just for mothers of fallen soldiers, but for all persons you touch in your future lives.

If I can speak for our faculty and my generation in addressing yours for just one passing moment on its way out the door, I would exhort you and all who follow in your footsteps to believe in something and value life in ways that honor your beliefs.