



# Where are They Now?

By Margaret Berglund

A monthly feature on **Nexus Alumni**: Dr. Candace Wakefield, pediatric dentist

As an MU undergraduate Dr. Candace Wakefield was headed down the path to medical school. She had just finished an internship at the medical school, but she was feeling apprehensive about the lifestyle that went with being a doctor. She saw someone die in a hallway and was worried about living a stressful life tied to a pager. She she said she wanted a life more compatible with her idea of having a family. About this time, she saw a flyer about attending dental school posted on a tree.

“My process definitely wasn’t cookie cutter,” Wakefield said, of becoming a dentist.

She went to the meeting and she spoke with a recruiter from Southern Illinois University School of Dental Medicine. He recommended that she apply to dental school. She was well qualified.

Wakefield had started at MU as a Biological Sciences major. She participated in EXPRESS and did an upperclass research internship project. Her mentors were Dr. George Kracke, anesthesiology, and Dr. Mark Kirk, biological sciences. Her research on nerves and cell cultures was relevant to dentistry. She needed to take a test to get into dental school, and she was just in time to register. Suddenly dental school made a lot of sense, but she had never

thought about it before.

“I sat down in that room and the smoke cleared and the heavens opened up. Everything just clicked into place,” Wakefield said of the process.

Wakefield graduated from MU in 1995 and then earned her Doctor of Dental Medicine degree from

Southern Illinois University School of Dental Medicine in 2000. She did her residency at Howard University.

Now she runs a successful dental practice in the Saint Louis area. The Children’s Dental Zone ([www.childrensdentalzone.com](http://www.childrensdentalzone.com)) is focused on establishing healthy dental habits for children and providing a positive environment for kid’s early dental experiences.

Wakefield’s work doesn’t end with her practice. She has volunteered her dental services to meet the needs

of children in other countries such as Nicaragua and Jamaica. Additionally, she teaches as an adjunct professor for Southern Illinois University.

Wakefield has some insight for other students.

“There is no one way to do anything. Just be confident in yourself as a person,” Wakefield said.

“Don’t give up on your dreams. There is no plan B. Life is full of challenges.”



# On the EXPRESS Route...



Graduate Student Rebecca Burholter, Medical Pharmacology & Physiology, demonstrates autoclaving.



Mariah "Mo" McClain practices pipetting.



Graduate student Kawasi Lett, Molecular, Microbiology, & Immunology, talks about pipetting



Sam Prince and Akia Parks waiting to get started



Plant Sciences Graduate Student Greg Yeckel talks about sterile techniques.

## Lab Learning

On Saturday, October 3rd new EXPRESS students attended a lab training session in the Bond Life Sciences Center. The students learned skills and knowledge that will be vital to them in the lab such as pipetting, writing lab notebooks, making solutions, sterile techniques, and autoclaving. Students also attended the Saturday Morning Science presentation by Dr. Deb Anderson (Veterinary Pathobiology) on plaques.

Thanks to the following graduate students for their help: Mike Gerau, Rebecca Burkhalter, Greg Yeckel and Kawasi Lett. Additional thanks to Aric Krogstad and Dr. Mark Hannick.

# Summer of Study Diversifies Experience

Calvin Lewis was working in a lab from his first visit to MU. Lewis, now a junior, was visiting campus from his hometown of Warrensburg and he stopped to ask for directions.

It just so happened that he was talking to Dr. Fred Hawthorne, the director of the International Institute of Nano and Molecular Medicine. The next thing he knew, he'd been invited to come up for an interview with Dr. Hawthorne and started working that same day.

Lewis came to school knowing that he wanted to do chemical research, and that he wanted to help people. Now Lewis has decided that he wants to get a joint PhD in chemistry and medicine.

His work on campus has been lab-based chemistry, and last year he decided he wanted to get some clinical research experience too. So last fall he applied to Johns Hopkins for a summer internship and was accepted for summer 2009.

This summer Lewis traveled to Baltimore, Maryland where he conducted research on ways to detect the causes of high blood pressure.

Lewis said that since he does chemical research at MU, doing the clinical research was a good opportunity and very different from his previous experiences.

Lewis loves the process and results of doing research but one of the best things about the summer was meeting new people. He met a variety of PhD's, MD's, specialists and other students. It was a pleasure to make new friends and establish new contacts.

The summer internship confirmed Lewis's plans to continue in school. He said that some people think he is crazy for committing to so many more years of school. He retorts that he likes to do research and he likes to help people.

Lewis recommends working in a lab. He said he started to learn and understand chemical processes before they even began to cover it in his classes. In the lab he saw chemistry happening.

His advice to other students:

"The number one thing to do in order to understand what profession you want to go into is it's essential to understand how the field operates," he said.

"Go out and do internships and get experience."



## Piled Higher and Deeper by Jorge Cham

[www.phdcomics.com](http://www.phdcomics.com)



## Website of the Month

[Http://www.webguru.neu.edu](http://www.webguru.neu.edu)

The Web Guide to Research for Undergraduates (WebGU-RU) is an interactive web-based tool intended to assist undergraduates navigate the hurdles of an undergraduate research experience.

# Graduate Student Corner



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aces.missouri.edu

## Fall Seminar Schedule

Date	Event	Time	Location
September 3, 2009	<b>Meet-n-Greet Ice Cream Social</b>	3:00 pm	572 Life Sciences Center
September 25, 2009	<b>Dr. Bill Allen,</b> MU science journalism professor	9:00 am	572 Life Sciences Center
October 23, 2009	<b>Dr. Todd Garabedian,</b> patent attorney	9:00 am	Life Sciences Center TBD
November 12, 2009	<b>Dr. Linda Harris,</b> Associate Director of Academic Programs St. Jude's Children's Hospital	9:00 am	572 Life Sciences Center
December 4, 2009	<b>Dr. Vipula Shukla,</b> Project Lead Dow AgroScience	9:00 am	Life Sciences Center TBD

\*Please make sure to check our website for updated ACES seminar information!

## What is the NEXUS newsletter anyway?

Our purpose is to create a network for minority undergraduate students, graduate students, post-bac students, post-docs and faculty in the life sciences on this campus.

Nexus (nex-us n)

1. a connection associating two or more people or things
2. a group or series of connected individuals or things
3. the center or focus of something
4. a specialized area of the cellular membrane that helps cells to communicate or adhere

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The Office of Undergraduate Research, located at 150 Bond Life Sciences Center, composes and designs the newsletter. If you would like to contribute something to the newsletter (award announcement, science joke, story, etc.), contact graduate assistant Maggie Berglund 882-4818 or mmbthf@mail.missouri.edu

## Good luck, Brandon Pope!

He will be defending his thesis on the perceptions of wildlife by inner-city youth before and after a urban wildlife education program.

Show your support, by joining him November 3, at 11 am in the Natural Resource building room 210.

**MOUGR**

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