Contract Univeristies with LAMP

1. Dillard University

2. Grambling State University

3. Louisiana State University

4. Louisiana Universities and Marine Consortium

5. McNeese State University

6. Nunez Community College

7. Southern University and A&M College

8. Southern University at New Orleans

9. Southern University at Shreveport

10. Tulane University

11. University of Louisiana at Lafayette

12. University of New Orleans 13. Xaiver University of Louisiana

Graduate Students from LAMP

Doctoral Degree

Rose-Ann M. Blenman-Abange, Ph.D.,

Bio-Medical Engineering

Dr. Rose-Ann Blenman-Abange, the 2000 *millennium valedictorian* of Dillard University, blossomed in the sciences through the mentorship of Dr. Sylvanus Nwosu, Associate Professor of Physics. This certified *Six Sigma* Green belt received her Ph.D. in Biomedical Engineering, graduating *summa cum laude* in 2006 from the Mayo Clinic College of Medicine in Rochester, MN.

Dr. Blenman-Abange is “a biomedical scientist with team leadership experience in the pharmaceutical imaging and biomarker development sector.” She has presented numerous abstracts at scientific meetings dating back to 1997 with Dr. Nwosu to her most current presentation at the MRL Symposium in Whippany, NJ with other colleagues through her cancer research. She is the recipient of numerous awards and honors.

Dr. Blenman-Abange is the Project Manager, Oncology Biomarker and IVD Portfolio, PPM for MERCK & Co. in West Point, PA.

Karen Jack, Ph.D., Chemistry

Dr. Karen Jack, a 2001 graduate of Dillard University in Chemistry, received her Ph.D. in Chemistry, with a concentration in Biochemistry, from Ohio University in Athens, OH in 2007. Her path continued as Dr. Jack became a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University of Maryland in College Park. “I realized that STEM was for me at a summer program within the Timbuktu Academy at Southern University in Baton Rouge going to my senior year of high

school.” Dr. Jack has co-published several publications from 2005 to the present. She is currently employed by the University of Maryland in College Park as a Research Associate. Dr. Jack stated: “Drs. Bobby Burkes and Reginald Stanton were the most influential in nurturing my science career at DU. Both gave me the confidence to continue in a field where I would always be a major minority.”

Kim Lewis, Ph.D., Applied Physics

Kim Lewis graduated Dillard University in 1998 with a degree in physics. Kim participated in the LS-LAMP program under the mentorship of Dr. Sylvanus Nwosu, Associate Professor of Physics. She describes her undergraduate research experience as a tremendous help toward a deeper understanding of her course work in physics, and a greater focus on her research goals as a graduate student. Dr. Lewis is credited with a patent, Charge Transformer and Method of Implementation,” U.S. Patent No 6,777,911 (August 17, 2004). Kim received the M.S. degree in Electrical Engineering in 2003 and the Ph.D. in Applied Physics in 2004 from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI. She currently serves as Assistant Professor of Physics, Applied Physics & Astronomy at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, NY.

Hassan Moore, Ph.D., Applied Physics

Dr. Hassan Moore is a 1993 Physics graduate of Dillard University, receiving his Ph.D. in Atmospheric Physics from Howard University in 2006. An Assistant Professor and Director of Outreach at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, Dr. Moore has recently engaged high school students in robot designing through the upcoming Blazer BEST Robotics competitions in Birmingham, a hub for the national BEST (Boosting Engineering Science and Technology) Robotics program. Dr. Moore states: “Their goal is to build a robot that can pick up three kinds of fake ‘bugs’, cross bumpy surfaces and corral them in just a few minutes. But the long-term goal of the program is to get them excited about engineering even as they learn the principals behind it.” The high scholars designed robots that are built from plywood and sheet metal.

Kelly L .Nash, Ph.D., Physics

A native of New Orleans, Dr. Kelly Nash was a LS-LAMP participant who went on to get her Ph.D. in Physics from the University of Texas at San Antonio in 2009. Kelly graduated Dillard in 2000 with a dual degree in physics and mathematics and received the M.S. in Applied Physics from the University of Michigan in 2003. Kelly’s research focus is the facile synthesis of inorganic/organic nanocomposites, including loading of nanoparticles in polymeric films and core shell particles of various geometries. She has published numerous refereed articles. Dr. Nash credits her undergraduate research experiences for a competitive edge in her applications and acceptances to graduate school. She mentored by Dr. A. Darwish who introduced her to lasers and optics. Kelly stated that her “background showed a wide variety of research experiences, ranging from simulations to experimentation.” Dr. Nash says, “Through the years, I often find myself contacting my LS-LAMP mentors for advice and still can count on the same level of enthusiasm and encouragement that I received from them as a student.”

Sandra L. Richardson, Ph.D., Philosophy/Mathematics Education

Dr. Sandra Richardson graduated from Dillard University magna cum laude with a bachelor's degree in mathematics in 2000. She went on to earn the M.S. and Ph.D. in Mathematics Education from Purdue University. Sandra currently serves as Assistant Professor of Mathematics and Mathematics Education at Lamar University in Beaumont, TX, where she has developed original courses designed for elementary and secondary school teachers in mathematics. Dr. Richardson has continued to engage in research and scholarly activities, with a particular interest in preparing 8th and 9th grade mathematics teachers to use technology, pedagogy, and content knowledge in the teaching and learning of algebra. She has received funding for ongoing research initiatives, which date back to her Dillard years, under the mentorship of Dr. Jaime Hernandez and Mr. James Beard. Sandra is positioned to become a master educator in the field of mathematics.

Tamara Singleton-Goyea, Ph.D., Applied Mathematics and Scientific Computing

Tamara, a 2002 cum laude graduate in mathematics, credits her undergraduate research experience as a LS-LAMP participant in her pursuit of graduate study and continued research. While at Dillard, Tamara took advantage of summer research opportunities at Tulane University, where she designed computer programs in Mathematicá for visualizing plane curves in parametric and polar form, for computing and visualizing the curvature of plane curves given in parametric and polar form, and for the involute and evolute of plane curves given in parametric and polar form. Tamara received the M.S. degree in mathematics from Tulane University, and earned the Ph.D. in Applied Mathematics and Scientific Computing from the University of Maryland, College Park in 2011. Her research interests include data assimilation, ensemble Kalman filtering, scientific computing, numerical and mathematical modeling, atmospheric and oceanic sciences. Dr. Singleton-Goyea currently serves as Assistant Director for Recruitment and Co-Curricular Programs at the University of Maryland, College Park. She is also Program Coordinator for the Math Summer Program in Research and Learning (SPIRAL) at that university.

Dr. Julia Bryant-Brown, PhD., In Environmental Science, Georgia Tech

She graduated from Dillard University in 2005, where she joined Georgia Tech for Master in Chemistry, and then PhD in Environmental science. “I joined LS-LAMP where I was mentored by Dr. Stanton who lead me in research projects and this made the difference in my life to study environmental science .

Pursuing Doctoral Degree

Nelson Hawkins, Jr.

Nelson Hawkins Jr. earned the B.S. degree in 2006 in Biology with a minor in Chemistry. Since then he entered Baylor College of Medicine’s Ph.D. Program in Molecular and Human Genetics. “However, it was the impact I was having in the LS-LAMP program, and the support and mentoring of the program Director, Dr. Abdalla Darwish, during and after my graduation, both through research of Western Blotting techniques as well as tutoring colleagues in STEM disciplines that allowed me to select this career path.” Nelson has continued on the tutoring track, as a teaching assistant for a core Cell Biology course and peer reviewing candidacy examinations.

Joseph Hicks

Joseph Hicks was involved in the LS-LAMP Program from 2001, when he entered Dillard University, until his graduation in physics in 2005 under the mentorship of Dr. Abdalla Darwish. Through this participation in LAMP, Joseph was chosen to attend numerous conferences and summer research programs designed to expose him to more extensive scientific research. Upon completion of his studies at Dillard, Joseph earned a master's degree in physics from Tulane University in 2008. He credits the rigors of his academic program at Dillard, and his vast opportunities for research as further preparation for graduate study. "I am a better scholar and scientist for having had the LS-LAMP Program in my life under the mentorship of Dr. Darwish," says Joseph. Joseph is continuing his pursuit of the Ph.D. in physics.

Enrique' M. Jackson

Enrique earned the B.S. degree in physics from Dillard in 2002. As an undergraduate student at Dillard University, Enrique conducted research under the mentorship of Dr. Abdalla Darwish concerning the Lithium Niobate Crystal and the Electron Paramagnetic Resonance (EPR) study. His participation in the LS-LAMP program led to his first publication in International Society for Optical Engineering, Volume 4459, July 2001 aas a co-author with Dr. Darwish "Investigation of the photosensitivity of the Lithium Niobate Crystal: Barium Ferrate Crystal. He went on to receive the M.S. degree in Materials Science from Norfolk State University, an M.A. in Physics from Fisk University, and is currently a Ph.D. candidate in Materials Science at Vanderbilt University with an expected graduation date of 2013. Enrique is currently conducting research with carbon nanotubes as they are implemented into nanocomposites. Enrique Jackson currently serves as an AST, Materials and Structures Engineer at the NASA George C. Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, AL. He stated that "My mentor Dr. Darwish, is still giving me the same support as if I am still at DU" .

Crystal I. Leach

Crystal I. Leach graduated from Dillard University in 2002 with a BS in physics. As a LS-LAMP scholar she studied the effects of the carbon dioxide laser and its utility in medical applications under the mentorship of Professor Abdalla Darwish who guided her through the research project and supported her during and after DU to achieve her dream. She continued her research efforts at the University of Wisconsin-Madison where she earned a MS degree in biomedical engineering. Subsequently, she became an Associate Research Specialist for Dr. Jamey at the University of Wisconsin Hospital & Clinics Cancer Center. From 2006-2009, she had the privilege of working for the United States Patent and Trademark Office as a Patent Examiner in the field of medical imaging. As a Patent Examiner, she awarded United States Patents 7,315,757; 7,336,989; 7,588,538. Crystal is currently a second year medical student at LSU School of Medicine in New Orleans, LA and plans to receive her Doctorate of Medicine in May, 2014and provide quality health care to medically underserved populations.

Masters Degree

Jessica M. Chaney

Jessica Chaney graduated from Dillard University with a Bachelor of Science in Physics in 2007, and earned the Master of Science in Industrial Engineering in 2009 from The University of Iowa. “The moment I realized STEM was the perfect choice for me was during my involvement with the LS-LAMP program at Dillard University, where I was allotted the opportunity to do research on ideas that could help improve society,” stated Jessica. Jessica attributes much of her success to opportunities granted at Dillard LS-LAMP and her mentor, Dr. Abdalla Darwish, where she worked with him in optical diffraction from NLOM, all this were translated into internship opportunities at The University of Michigan and Lexmark International, and being awarded the GEM fellowship for graduate school.

Jamal H. Granger

Jamaal H. Granger is a Louisiana native and a 2002 graduate with a Bachelor of Science degree in Physics. While attending Dillard University, he participated in the LS-LAMP program under the supervision and mentoring of Dr. Abdalla Darwish where his research topics included Magneto-Optical Atom Trap and DMD Waveguides and Diffraction. Following undergraduate studies, he declined a job offer with Teach for America and attended graduate school at The University of Texas at Dallas where he earned a Master of Science degree in Applied Physics and Operations Management in 2004. He accepted a job at The Boeing Company, St. Louis, MO, and currently works as an electrophysicist on multiple aircraft radar programs. He has received performance recognition awards at Boeing and was nominated to participate in the Engineering Leadership Development Program.

Robert Haydel

Robert Haydel received his Bachelors Degree in Physics from Dillard University and a Master's Degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Robert published his Master's Thesis, which is entitled "Channel Incision Into Mixed-Sized Reservoir Sediments Caused By Dam Removal." The LAMP invaluable experience that was the bridge to my focus of river hydraulics was during my sophomore year at Dillard University under my mentor, Dr. Abdalla Darwish, with his engineering and physics experience, I was able to research the possibility of altering wave and current direction with submersed structures," Robert says. Robert has been employed by Camp Dresser and Mckee (CDM) as a Water Resources Engineer for four years.

Jason Hicks

A native New Orleanian, Jason Hicks obtained a Bachelor of Science in physics at Dillard University in May of 2008 and will receive a Master of Science in geology from Louisiana State University in December of 2011. While participating in the LS-LAMP program at Dillard, under the mentorship of Dr. Abdalla Darwish who introduces me to the GAMEP program and placed me in LSU- geology department during a 6-week intensive geological field campus course in south central and western United States. Upon completion, he conducted a short independent research project in seismic methods. He continues his comprehensive research in geology through projects which involve both field data and acquisition and computer analysis. Jason's master's thesis is entitled, "Investigation into the cause of earthen embankment instability along the 'V-line' artificial levee in Marrero, LA, USA." Jason describes as his career goal an appointment in the area of geology or geophysics.

Olivia Mitchell

Olivia has taught middle grade mathematics in Atlanta Public Schools since she graduated from Dillard University in 2006. She was named LJ Price Middle School Teacher of the Year 2009-2010, District Middle School Teacher of the Year and the Atlanta Public Schools District Teacher of the Year 2009-2010. Olivia completed her Masters in Teaching Mathematics (M.A. Clark Atlanta University May 2011) and will complete her Masters in Pure Mathematics (M.S. Clark Atlanta University May 2012). Currently Olivia teaches collegiate mathematics at Atlanta Metropolitan College. Olivia describes her goal to incorporate a love for mathematics education and her specialized abilities in data analysis and organization, to either implement change in the form of new proposals for secondary mathematics or the development of a charter school for math and science. Olivia credits the mentorship of Dr. Abdalla Darwish and the LS-LAMP program for providing 1st class experiences in the sciences that has fostered a passion to expose inner city youth to various opportunities in math and science fields.

Khadijah Ransom

As a Physics/Pre-Engineering major, Khadijah Ransom participated in the LS-LAMP program at Dillard University under the mentorship of Dr. Abdalla Darwish, studying laser tissue ablation and properties of optical waveguides. Research with LS-LAMP under the mentorship of Dr. Darwish led to multiple internships with NASA to study future lunar posts and design cyclone separators. In Fall 2008, Khadijah continued her engineering curriculum at Columbia University in NYC. In May 2009 she graduated from DU as salutatorian with summa cum laude honors, and received the B.S. in Mechanical Engineering from Columbia in May 2010 as an Evelyn Bishop Scholar. She is currently pursuing her graduate degree at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University studying mechanical engineering, and plans to work in robotics.

Stephanie Sigers-Pierce

Stephanie Sigers-Pierce, completed the dual degree program between Dillard University and the Georgia Institute of Technology, where upon receipt of a BS in Physics in May 2005 from Dillard, she received a BS in Mechanical Engineering from Georgia Institute of Technology in December 2006. While at Dillard, she completed a number of internships with the first being the LS-LAMP program prior her enrollment as a freshman and her intensive research experience under the mentorship of Dr. Abdalla Darwish. Consecutive internships included three research programs at Tulane, Pennsylvania State University, and Georgia Tech, as well as two corporate internships with Marathon Oil Company, which secured a full time engineering position a semester prior to graduating from Georgia Tech. In January 2007, she relocated to Houston, TX to work for Marathon Oil Company as an offshore Facilities Engineer in the Gulf of Mexico asset team. Since graduating from college, she has consistently given back to the community and helped continue to expand interest in STEM disciplines.

Kenisha C. Staine

Kenisha C. Staine is a 2007 cum laude graduate from Dillard University in Mathematics, with a

minor in Computer Science/Management Track. In 2009, she received her Master of Science in Mathematics with a concentration in Actuarial Science from Roosevelt University in Chicago, IL. Kenisha is currently employed by Roosevelt University as a Mathematics Graduate Assistant.

Pursuing Masters Degree

JaMarcus Brewer

JaMarcus Brewer is a 2005 graduate of Dillard University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Physics/Pre-Engineering, with a minor in mathematics. He has obtained certifications with the Association of Energy Engineers in Climate Change, Utility Analysis, and Greenhouse Gas Emissions. He is currently in the process of becoming a Certified Energy Manager and a LEED AP. “I realized STEM was for me upon entering the STEM office at Dillard and interacting with other faculty, staff, and student. Dr. Abdalla Darwish mentored me during my time at DU, and through his encouragement and excellent mentoring , I was able to search the effect of lasers on different materials linear and nonlinear. Then, the realization became evident that I had a passion for the sciences and engineering. From this interaction, I pursued a degree in Physics. I also completed internships at Louisiana State University and Gas Technology Institute in Chicago, IL. An additional goal that I want to achieve is to start my MBA next year at either Emory or University of Georgia. My ultimate goal is to be an Energy Advisor for the United States Government or Secretary of Energy.” JaMarcus is currently employed at ICF International as a Commercial Energy Efficiency Account Manager for the Georgia Power Earthcents Business Program in Atlanta, GA.

Bryan Conyers

Bryan Conyers received a Bachelor of Science in Physics from Dillard University in May 2008.Under the excellent mentoring ship of Professor Abdalla Darwish, Bryn was able to carry out a major research in granule with University of Chicago . Afterwards, he enrolled in the Masters program for Physics at the University of Chicago. During his time in Chicago, he studied condensed matter/materials science. This afforded the opportunity for his research to be published (Phys. Rev. E 78, 011305 (2008)). During the course of his research, Bryan also had the opportunity to receive the Core Radiological Training Certification from Argonne National Laboratory. " I've always been enamored with the natural sciences, specifically physics, from a very young age." Currently, Bryan resides in Detroit, MI, and is working as a technical support representative for Apple, Inc. "I have received certified training that allows me to support any device running the iOS operating system (i.e. iPhone, iPod, iPad, Apple TV, etc.). "This area still gives me the opportunity to apply the technical aptitude that I have gained during my studies at Dillard University, and I am happy for that."

Shantia White

Shantia White graduated from Dillard University in 2005 with a degree in Physics and worked with Dr. Darwish in studying the nonlinear optical effect of laser in optical materials. This opened the door for me to research in many fields of optics and materials . She is currently pursuing a Masters in Environmental Engineering at Southern University and A&M College. In her recent employment she worked on the Jefferson Parish Department of Environmental Affairs as an Environmental Quality Technician II. Her past internship and research opportunities are as follows: the Georgia DOT Office of Materials & Research, the Materials Research Science and Engineering Center and the Advanced Materials Research Institute. Shantia asserts that is was "My participation in Dillard University's LS-LAMP Summer Transition Program the mentorship of Dr. Abdalla Darwish that exposed me to STEM and nurtured my love for math and science."

Undergraduate Students

Benson V. Dabney Junior Physics 3/2 Major Expected Date of Graduation: Fall 2013

Benson Dabney is a junior transfer student at Dillard University. He is Physics 3/2 major who's pursuing dual degrees in Physics and Electrical Engineering. His focus is on renewable and sustainable clean energy through nanotechnology. Currently Benson is an the LS-LAMP scholar under the mentorship of Dr. Abdalla Darwish where he is working in building a Weather Balloon part of NASA LA SPACE consortium . As a member of LAMP Benson has participated in the ERN Conference as a poster presenter for research performed under his mentor. Benson has also attended several other conferences broadening his knowledge of STEM programs, REU's, and graduate opportunities. His plans are to pursue a PhD in Electrical Engineering and perform research to help reduce our current energy crisis.

Shelby Leigh Edwards Sophomore Chemistry Major Expected Date of Graduation:

Shelby Leigh Edwards is a sophomore at Dillard University. She participated in Dillard's HBCU-UP Math, Science, and Research Institute Program the summer following her high school graduation. Upon arrival, she was undecided; however, at the end of the program, she decided to major in chemistry and participating in research under LAMP and the mentorship of Dr. L. Agwaramgbo. This has allowed her to develop critical, technical, and creative thinking skills that are necessary to succeed in school. Her dedication and commitment to the sciences grounded in civic engagement and strong work ethics catalyze her participate in two environmental research studies in two Louisiana communities after the Deep Water Horizon oil spill. She is a co-author of a paper submitted to the Journal of Environmental Protection in August. She plans to pursue graduate education and LAMP program will provide her with the opportunities to network and visit top graduate schools.

Ebone' B. Pierce Junior Physics/Pre-Engineering Major Expected Date of Graduation:

Ebone' Brienna Pierce attends Dillard University in a 3-2 program where she is currently pursuing dual degrees in Physics and Mechanical Engineering. She attends the Louisiana Alliance Minority Program (LAMP) Undergraduate Research Day at Dillard University every year and has placed 2nd in the Research Competition. "LS-LAMP has provided me with opportunities to compete in research competitions all over the world. I am a Science Math And Research For Transformation (SMART) Scholarship Program recipient, which allows me to intern at NASA for every summer upon graduation and continue my research under the mentorship of Dr. Abdalla Darwish. I realized STEM was for me because it allows me to build and create things that will benefit others."

Breanna Ryan Sophomore Biology Major Expected Date of Graduation: 2014

Breanna Ryan is a sophomore Biology major at Dillard University. She has presented and won awards at various local conferences. She is majoring in STEM because she has always loved sciences. Her work has expanded her goals in pursuit of her Ph.D. Breanna's research under the direction of her mentor, Dr. Bernard Singleton, has a broader impact on society because it deals with medical issues concerning the environment. She will be presenting her research at ABRCMS National Conference 2011. She has been offered an internship at the University of Colorado at Boulder for next summer, 2012.

Michael Sagapolutele Physics/Pre-Engineering Major Expected Date of Graduation:

Michael Sagapolutele is a Physics and Computer Science major. He plans to complete the 3-2 program to receive dual degrees in both Physics and Computer Science and go on to become a professor. He became interested in LAMP Program through his advisor, teacher, and mentor Dr. Abdalla Darwish. "The LS-LAMP helped and supported my research in the Nanomaterial–laser research lab under the excellent mentorship and the advising of Dr. Darwish who support my travel to conferences to present." Michael continues to conduct

research and plan to publish his first Journal paper next semester.

Jazzmin Smith Junior Mathematics Major Expected Date of Graduation: 2013

Jazzmin Smith is a Junior Mathematics Major. She is a Dean's List scholar with a natural ability to conquer logical problems. Since the 6th grade, she realized her joy of mathematic; partly due to the fact that she disliked reading stories and knowing the logic of sentence structure. It was just not for her. She is also a member of the Women's Basketball team at Dillard University. "Being a student athlete pushes and guides me to be my best at all things, especially my academics. My legs can only take me so far. I have yet to find an internship in my undergraduate year, but I am looking forward to participating in one this upcoming summer. I would really like to work for the government; therefore I am looking for interns in that field. My research project this past spring was on cryptography, where Dr. Hong Dai served as my mentor. The logic of the security is provides and its mathematical bases drew my attention as soon as I was introduced to it."

Shonte' R. Walton Senior Mathematics Major Expected Date of Graduation: 2012

Shonte' R. Walton, a native of Saginaw, Michigan, came to Dillard University in 2008. Her attributes her decision to major in mathematics can to mentor Dr. Hong Dai, and advisors Dr. Peter Frempong and Dr. Haewon Lee. The LAMP program supported her research in statistics and allowed her to travel and present findings at various conferences, including the National Technical Association 83rd annual conference and the National Society of Black Physicists Joint Conference, both in 2011. Additionally, Shonte' participated in the Smooth Transition for Advancement to Graduate Education (STAGE) at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette where she explored two research topics subject to future publication. Ms. Walton has always had a drive to succeed. Her ambition is to obtain a doctoral degree. For Shonte', becoming a Dillard University LAMP scholar meant more than just a stipend, the LAMP program helped to equip her for the next level.

Simeon Wilson Physics/Pre-Engineering Major Expected Date of Graduation:

Simeon Wilson is a Junior Physics student, he joined LS-LAMP three years ago and works in the laser-Nano surface materials lab at DU which was funded by multiple grants from DOD-AFOSR and Navy. LS-LAMP systemic research mentoring program at the School of STEM changed my way of life and my vision to my future. Working with Dr. Darwish and in the AFOSR projects enabled me to publish two papers and attend over seven scientific conferences to present my research finding. I am a co-author of two peer review publications 1. Darwish, A. M., Wilson, S., Alkahby, H., Koplitz, B., "Preparation of BaTiO3 thin films by double-pulse-lasers deposition" and A. Darwish, Simeon Wilson, Brent Koplitz "Pulsed laser deposition of epitaxial BaFeO3 thin films" in Photonic Fiber and Crystal Devices: Advances in Materials and Innovations in Device Applications V, SPIE Vol. 8120 ,2011.

Valencia D. Wise Senior Computer Science Major Expected Date of Graduation: Fall 2011

Valencia Wise is a student athlete with a passion for excellence. She is a member of Beta Kappa Chi Honor Society, tutors, and has received numerous awards as a member of the Dillard University Volleyball Team. Valencia conducted a LAMP research under the mentorship of Dr. Lynda R. Louis. In the summer of 2011 she completed an internship through the Multicultural Access to Research Training (SMART), University of Colorado at Boulder, Computational Biology Lab. A publication is in process, headed by her summer mentor, Dr. Goldberg. Valencia plans either to attend graduate school, or work with Teach for America Program. She says of herself “I have a passion to explore new opportunities even if I have to go out and find or create them.”