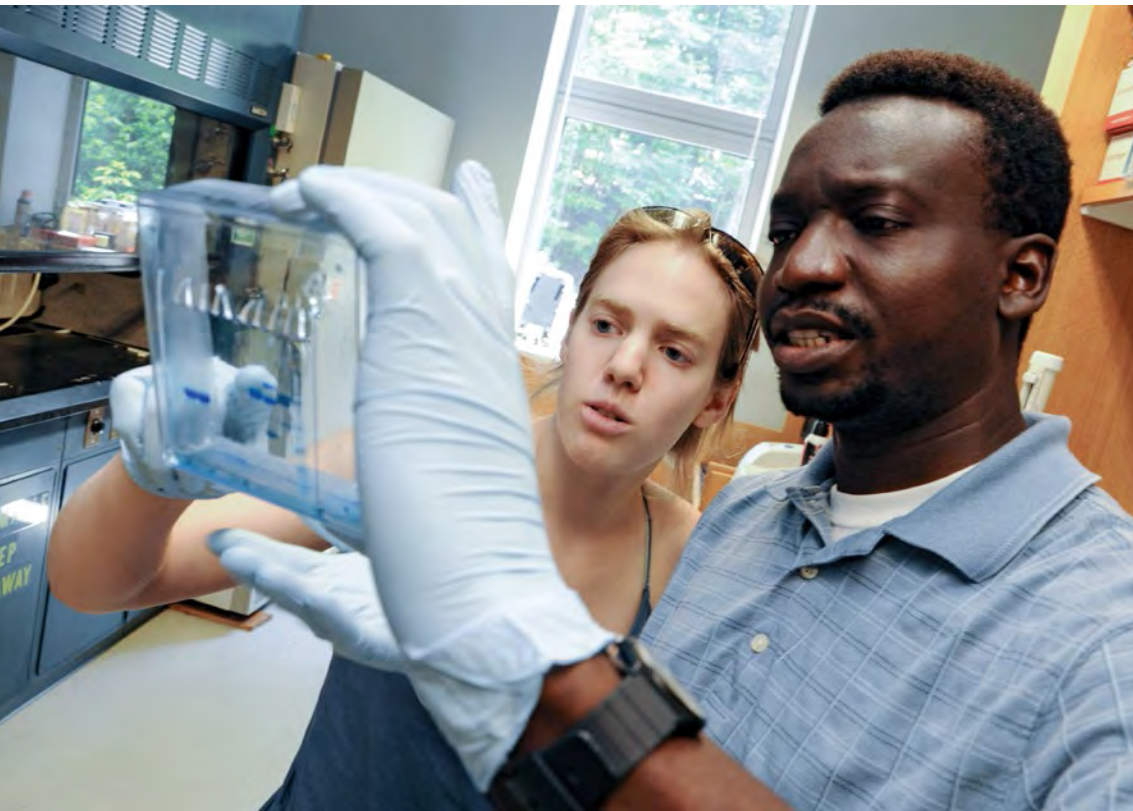


Jon Gilbert Fox



MD-PhD student Christopher Audu works in the lab with Kristina Seitler, a student at Green Mountain College who spent a summer at Geisel as part of the MD-PhD Undergraduate Summer Fellowship program.

FUTURE PHYSICIAN-SCIENTISTS

NOW IN HIS SIXTH YEAR AS A MEMBER OF GEISEL'S MD-PHD PROGRAM, Christopher Audu is well on his way to a career as a physician-scientist. But he only found out about the existence of dual-degree programs because a professor at Purdue, where Audu was an undergraduate, took him aside to talk to him about career opportunities. As the student director of Dartmouth's MD-PhD Undergraduate Summer Fellowship (MPUS) program, Audu is trying to help other students get that same sort of guidance.

For the past two summers, the MPUS program has offered undergraduates from around the country the chance to learn what it means to be an MD-PhD student. The fellows spend two months working

with researchers, physicians, and MD-PhD students at Geisel. The program welcomes applications from minority students with the goal of exposing a diverse range of undergraduates to the possibility of a dual degree.

"There are not many programs nationally that provide the kind of experience it takes to pursue a joint degree during a summer stint," Audu says.

The student fellows are mentored by Dartmouth MD-PhD students who are currently in the PhD portion of the program, spend time observing physicians at DHMC, and learn from research faculty. They also spend time with MD-PhD students outside the lab and clinic to find out what life is like as an MD-PhD student.

Jordan Hall, a senior at Duke University, found the experience valuable. It "provides carefully selected research and clinical opportunities," she says.

Another past participant, Sofia Campos, an undergraduate at the University of California, San Diego, says that "in addition to making me a more competitive applicant,

THE PROGRAM OFFERS UNDERGRADUATES THE CHANCE TO LEARN WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN MD-PHD STUDENT.

the time I spent in the lab and the clinic have given me experience that drives me toward the dual degree."

Audu says he has also learned a lot from working with the undergraduates and found himself inspired. "The students are hard-working and independent," he says, which is exactly what it will take for them to thrive if they choose to pursue an MD-PhD.

OVERHEARD

"I have never met a parent who hasn't benefited from support at some point along the way. I wish that, for parents with mental illness, it could be a normal thing to ask for help."

—JOANNE NICHOLSON, PHD, PROFESSOR OF PSYCHIATRY, QUOTED IN THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

SOPHIA SHEFNER