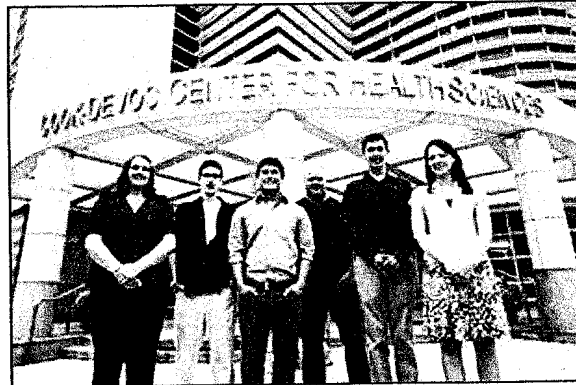


First group of GVSU students selected for MSU medical school admission

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From left, Beth Fetzer, Casey Key, Caleb Ortega, Alex Glide, Mitch Sydloski, Bobbye Koning

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. -- Six Grand Valley State University pre-med students comprise the first group to be admitted to the Michigan State University College of Human Medicine through an agreement that was signed last fall between the two universities.

The students are Elizabeth Fetzer, from Belding; Alex Gilde, McBain; Casey Key, Adrian; Bobbye Koning, White Cloud; Caleb Ortega, Saginaw; and Mitch Sydloski, Wyoming, Mich. (Background on each student is below.) They will be among the 200 students who comprise MSU's class of 2010. Half of the students will be starting their curriculum that year in the Secchia Center in Grand Rapids; the other half in East Lansing.

Last September Grand Valley and MSU signed an agreement, the Early Assurance Program, that links pre-med GVSU students to MSU's medical school. The EAP provides an enhanced opportunity for admission to medical school to qualified pre-med students who wish to practice in the underserved areas. Preference for admission will be given to students who are the first generation to attend college, students who graduated from a low-income high school, those eligible for Pell grants, or those who express interest in a high need medical specialty area.

Jean Nagelkerk, vice provost for Health at Grand Valley, said this partnership provides a seamless transition for students who are interested in attending medical school. "By identifying and developing students for the Early Assurance Program, Grand Valley makes a substantial contribution to the physician work force of the future," Nagelkerk said.

Dr. Christine Shafer, assistant dean for admissions for the College of Human Medicine, said she and others on the selection committee viewed the Grand Valley students as highly qualified and who fit the goals of the program well. "We're excited to welcome them to the MSU-CHM family," Shafer said.

All six GVSU students are juniors and members of the university's Pre-Medical Club. They were mentored through the application process by Amanda Cuevas, senior academic advisor for the CLAS Academic Advising Center. Students interested in the EAP can contact Cuevas at cuevasam@gvsu.edu or x18585.

- Fetzer volunteers at Spectrum Health United Memorial Hospital in Greenville; she also coaches the Belding High School girls' indoor soccer team. She would like to be a pediatrician and hopes to provide preventative and affordable health care for rural families.
- Gilde is a defensive linebacker for the Laker football team. He has twice been named to the GLIAC All Academic Team. He would like to become an orthopedic surgeon and return to his hometown of McBain. "It's my dream to give back to my community as a physician, as a volunteer at a low-income clinic, and as a volunteer physician for my local high school sports teams," he said.
- Key is a certified nursing assistant and volunteers at an Adrian nursing home. As president of Grand Valley Students for a Peaceful Africa, he hopes to continue supporting underserved people in East Africa. Inspired by his mentor, Dr. Paul Gietzen of Adrian, Key said he hopes to "establish the friendships that only seem possible through a rural practice."
- Koning works part time as a nurse assistant at Spectrum Health in Grand Rapids, and volunteers services to families who have a child battling cancer or other life-threatening disease. Raised in an underprivileged rural community, Koning said she eventually wants to provide medical care for residents in similar situations.
- Ortega is a grandson of a migrant worker. He would like to serve the disadvantaged Latino community after

completing medical school. "My family history and the rise of poverty in my hometown have provided me with an innate responsibility to reach out to the underserved," he said. He is a prolific volunteer, including stints at St. Mary's Hospital in Saginaw and working with troubled youth at a National Guard Camp in Battle Creek.

- Sydloski works as a patient care assistant and lab assistant at St. Mary's Health Care in Grand Rapids. He also volunteers at Guiding Light Mission, which sparked his interest in helping the underserved. "Hearing these men's heartbreaking stories of how they have lost their families to drugs or alcohol and how they strive to get their life back is empowering," he said.