

## DDS/PhD TRAINEES

### Baylor's Scientific Training Program for Dental Academic Researchers: B-STARS 2008-2012



**Albert Yamoah** - Albert began the dual-degree program a year ago when he successfully completed his first year of dental school. During his second year of the T32 program, he will concentrate on graduate courses. During summer 2009, he began his research in the lab of Dr. Chunlin Qin, where he is working on a project on biomineralization patterns of DSPP using MC3T3-E1 cells. He attended the Preparation and Analysis of Mineralized Tissues course as well. He will resume his dental studies in 2010-2011 to finish his remaining three years of DDS training, after which he will concentrate on completing his PhD work. Albert already holds a BS in Biology from Baylor University and an MS in Kinesiology from the University of North Texas. After completing his DDS/PhD, his goal is to become a dentist scientist focusing his efforts on clinical research. He comments that "the cutting edge of dentistry can only be sharpened by research. Obtaining the DDS/PhD dual degree at an institution such as Baylor College of Dentistry with a faculty involved in so many aspects of dental research will give me the tools and network needed to stay at the forefront and thrive."

**John Bonds** - John is starting his first year on the grant. He began his D1 year in August 2009. During summer 2009, he attended the Preparation and Analysis of Mineralized Tissues course offered by the Department of Biomedical Sciences and earned graduate credit in research in Dr. Rena D'Souza's lab. John was awarded a BS in Biochemistry from the University of Texas, Austin, and had started a PhD program in Cell and Molecular Biology at the University of Texas at Dallas when he heard about the dual-degree program. John is interested in performing research in the area of gene regulation in the developing tooth bud and would like to eventually be both a researcher and a professor. He believes that "to be awarded a grant that combines my two passions, dentistry and research, is a great honor. My ultimate goal is to improve the overall health of society by bridging the gap between dental and clinical research. My hopes are that one day my future contributions will make an impact on the way the dental profession handles current problems."



**Anika Voisey** -Anika is a new trainee on the grant who is beginning her DDS/PhD program with a year of graduate studies. She earned a BS in Biology from Texas A&M University and completed 18 hours toward a MS degree in Biology at the University of Kentucky before transferring to the program at Baylor College of Dentistry. She also took the Preparation and Analysis of Mineralized Tissues course offered by the Department of Biomedical Sciences this past June. During this first year, Anika will concentrate on taking PhD courses and performing research in Dr. Jerry Feng's lab. Her previous project at the University of Kentucky included designing and creating a mouse model to characterize the the biochemical link between apoptosis and autophagy through the deletion of the BH3 domain from Beclin 1, a tumor suppressor protein. She says that "The DDS/PhD program presents a great opportunity for individuals, like myself, to successfully integrate a strong interest in dentistry with a passion for research. I was incredibly excited to discover the existence of, and be admitted into this dual-degree option. My objective is to maximize the learning potential this program offers, enabling me to achieve my long-term career aspirations to practice dentistry, perform cutting-edge dental research, whilst also developing into an effective academic mentor".