Interim Chancellor Sam Hawgood recently presented two UCSF graduate students, Charles Morgan and Dr. Carolyn Sufrin (also a UCSF faculty member), with awards for their outstanding service to the community. These students remind us that UCSF is a place where people not only learn to do good science, but also learn to do good.

Charles Morgan

Winner of the Chancellor’s Award for Public Service, Charlie Morgan is a sixth-year student in the Chemistry and Chemical Biology PhD program working with Professor Jim Wells. Charlie has served as a volunteer with the UCSF Science and Health Education Partnership (SEP) program almost since he first began his degree program in 2008.

SEP brings together UCSF scientists and K-12 teachers from San Francisco public schools to nurture science education for all students. In Morgan’s first volunteer experience with SEP, he and another UCSF graduate student, Thomas Noriega, worked with teachers at Bessie Carmichael Elementary School in the SOMA neighborhood to spark an interest in science among second graders. This first experience clearly got Charlie hooked on teaching science.

Later, Charlie volunteered with SEP projects at Lowell High School and with City Science, through which he co-taught a UC Berkeley Extension course in science pedagogy for fifth grade teachers. As prep for this course, Charlie taught several science lessons in the classroom of his partner in the program, Kay Kirman, a teacher at Miraloma Elementary
School. The 20 teacher participants in the highly successful program praised Charlie not only for his ability to explain scientific concepts, but also for his ability to engage students and understand how younger students learn about science. The program was so successful that it was repeated the following year.

Charlie also participated in the SEP Pathways Program. Funded by the NIH, this program pairs under-resourced high school teachers with scientists in order to promote engagement in science learning among students traditionally underrepresented in the sciences. Charlie partnered with Rebecca Fulop, a biology teacher at Mission High School. ?Charlie devoted himself to helping my students understand science and the life of a scientist,? Fulop wrote in a letter.

?Being involved with the UCSF Science and Health Education Partnership has enabled me to get to know the larger San Francisco community and makes an impact on how teachers and students approach science. Sharing the process of doing science enables the youngest students to ask their own questions, invigorates everyone’s curiosity and helps empower and create informed citizens,? said Charlie.

?I believe that Charlie’s approachability, thoroughness, and expert guidance is converting students and adults who were intimidated by science into confident critical thinkers. He more than deserves this recognition, since he serves as such a wonderful ambassador for UCSF and the field of science,? said Kirman. The Graduate Division concurs.

Find out more about the SEP program [1].

Carolyn Sufrin, MD

Awardee of the Edison T. Uno Award for Public Service in the faculty category, Dr. Carolyn Sufrin will graduate from the Graduate Division’s Medical Anthropology PhD program this spring. Sufrin is also an assistant professor in the Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences at UCSF in the San Francisco General Hospital division. She earned her medical degree at Johns Hopkins and holds a master’s degree in social anthropology from Harvard.

Sufrin’s PhD dissertation, which has roots in her clinical work, focuses on the experiences of incarcerated pregnant women and on how jails cope with pregnant inmates. She concludes that the correctional system has become an integral part of the social and medical safety net in the United States.

Carolyn first became moved to help incarcerated women ten years ago, when, as a clinical resident, she delivered the baby of a woman prisoner who was shackled to a bed in a Pennsylvania jail. Wrenched by this experience, she became determined to end the practice of shackling women in labor and to improve access to reproductive health care for the over 200,000 women in the US prison system.

In 2007, Sufrin started a family planning fellowship at UCSF. With encouragement from faculty and colleagues, she soon began volunteering at the SF County Jail. Within a short time, she had organized a fully functional women’s clinic there, increasing the inmates’ access to care and even raising funds to enable the clinic to continue for years to come.

Carolyn explained the impetus for pursuing her work and research from the angle of
anthropology: ?It was working within the system, caring for women who in many cases only get medical care in jail, and seeing how the people who work in jail struggle with the ambivalence of caring in a site of punishment, that led me back to anthropology.? She told the Graduate Division that she ?feels very fortunate to be at an institution where her clinical, anthropological, and advocacy commitments can all converge.? 

Sufrin?s research has played a pivotal role in overturning the state and federal laws that had allowed incarcerated pregnant women to be shackled while in labor. She now serves on a national board that has oversight of health care in prisons, through which she continues to speak out for women inmates.

Find out more about the Medical Anthropology PhD program [2].