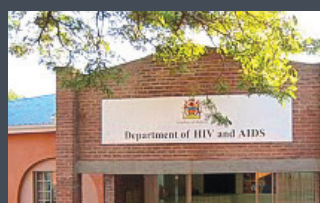
Before coming to the School of Medicine, Zach Landis-Lewis earned his master's degree in library and information science at Pitt. Now, as a PhD candidate in the biomedical informatics program, he is working with health care providers in HIV/AIDS clinics in Malawi, who use a national electronic medical record system. He is pursuing the research question, "What features of clinical performance feedback are most effective for improving health care provider performance?" Landis-Lewis is developing software that generates automated performance feedback to support clinical learning and implementation of national treatment guidelines.



GRADUATE STUDIES

Degrees of Distinction

When people think about medical school, they typically think about the MD program, which, at Pitt, has nearly 600 students. But many come to Pitt to earn a PhD or MS in one of many programs available to them. In addition to the 87 students in the combined MD/PhD program, there are more than 300 others pursuing a doctorate in programs like neuroscience, biomedical informatics, computational biology, molecular biophysics and structural biology, integrative molecular biology, and clinical and translational science. The biomedical informatics program is leading the way in online offerings, recently introducing a certificate program that can be completed entirely online.

In May 2013, the School of Medicine granted 51 PhD and 43 MS degrees. Recent graduates have fanned out and can currently be found serving as postdoctoral fellows at the National Institutes of Health, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, Emory, Yale, Harvard, Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, Stanford, the Broad Institute, and many other academic institutions as well as in the biotech industry.

John Horn, PhD, professor of neurobiology and associate dean for graduate studies, directs the Interdisciplinary Biomedical Graduate Program, which features a core curriculum combined with specialized research and dissertation work in one of the following areas: molecular genetics and developmental biology, cell biology and molecular physiology, cellular and molecular pathology, immunology, molecular pharmacology, or molecular virology and microbiology.

"Every year, the program has become increasingly competitive," says Horn. "Clearly, it's now a national program, whereas that was not so obvious just 10 years ago." Horn recently produced a map showing the home states of applicants to the interdisciplinary PhD program over two five-year periods. The first, ending in 2003, represents the period shortly after the founding of the program. Of 378 U.S. applicants during those years, 84 percent came from Pennsylvania and states that border it. Over the most recent five-year period, there were 1,275 U.S. applicants, with 55 percent coming from Pennsylvania and bordering states. Applications from the Pacific Coast states nearly quadrupled in that time; applicants from Minnesota and Wisconsin went from four to 54.

"The program continues to attract very accomplished students from around the country and the world," says Horn.