

NEWSLINE

School of Medicine Newsletter - October 1999 – Vol. 3, No. 2
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Medical College of Virginia Campus, Virginia Commonwealth University

Department Chair Search Update

Dr. Wayne Marshall, Department of Anesthesiology, has resigned as Chairman. **Dr. Carlos Arancibia** will serve as Interim Chair. The Search Committee is now being formed and will be headed by Dr. Ron Merrell, Chair of Surgery. The Search Committee for **Chair of Pediatrics** is holding the second round of candidate visits this month. The Search Committee is being led by Dr. Joel Silverman, Department of Psychiatry. Dr. Lindsey Grossman, Division Chair of General Pediatrics, is serving as Interim Chair of the Department. The Search Committee for **Chair of Human Genetics** is chaired by Dr. David Wilkinson, Department of Pathology. Dr. Walter Nance remains in place as Department Chair.

Welcome to the Class of 2003!

The class of 2003 started medical school on August 13th. The average GPA and MCAT has risen slightly for the third consecutive year. This group has an average GPA of 3.5 and an average MCAT of 30. Virginians continue to make up the majority of the class, comprising 70%. Women make up 43% (74) of the class. VCU is now seeing the national pattern of a decrease in the number of minority students applying and it is reflected in the drop of matriculating minorities. We now have only 5% of the class from minority groups. For the first time in several years there are no American Indians, Native Hawaiians nor Mexican Americans in the class; the entire minority population is African American.

The undergraduate schools represented continues to be varied. 20.5% of the class comes from UVa, 11% from William and Mary and 10.4% from VCU. Other schools that are very well represented are Duke, Virginia Tech, JMU, University of Richmond, Hampden-Sydney, Princeton and Wake Forest. We continue to have several students from Dartmouth, GMU, Georgetown, Stanford, and the University of California system. Some unusual places represented this year are the University of Guam and Colorado. More than 35 other schools are represented in the student body.

There is also an interesting diversity of undergraduate majors although 49% of the class majored in biology. The notable "others" are anthropology, art, classics, english, history, journalism, library science and religion. The diversity of background that our students bring to the school is one of the strengths that you often hear about from students themselves. Overwhelmingly, when asked what they like best about MCV, they respond "my class." Let's hope that continues.

LCME Accreditation Process has Begun

In March 2001 the Liaison Committee on Medical Education will be conducting its site visit for accreditation of the School of Medicine. In preparation for the site visit, a school-wide self-study will be conducted during the 1999-2000 academic year. Over a dozen committees have already been formed with the responsibility of reviewing the data required by the LCME. Each committee will draft a report of the strengths and weaknesses of their particular area. Recommendation for continuation of efforts as well as recommendations for corrections of weaknesses will be made. The SOM received maximum 7-year accreditation during our last review.

The accreditation process affords us the opportunity to integrate our Curriculum Renewal efforts over the past four years with the institutional self-study. A key component for the self-study is the development of educational objectives. In 1998 the Association of American Colleges published 27 learning objectives to be used as guidelines for medical schools. Over the past several years, these objectives have been discussed at various school committees, including the Curriculum Council. The objectives will be posted on the MCV Website for all faculty to review, with the opportunity to make comments on each objective. The URL will be emailed and snail-mailed to each faculty member during the month of October. Drs. Newsome and Kontos have asked that every faculty member take a few minutes to access these objectives and review them. Over the next several months they will be refined, and each faculty should take this opportunity to offer individual feedback. Your comments should be sent to Dr. James Messmer, Curriculum Office, P.O. Box 980565, School of Medicine or e-mailed to jmessme@vcu.edu. The next year promises to be an exciting one as we prepare for our accreditation. We look forward to having as many faculty as possible participate in this important project.

Watts Day Symposium to be held November 2 & 3, 1999, in Medical Sciences Building

Graduate and post-doctoral students will present on-going research in the form of poster sessions on the first floor of the MSB, between 3-5:00 pm each day. The sessions provide an opportunity for informal scholarly discourse with colleagues, stimulate cross-disciplinary research cooperation, and recognize the excellent work of our graduate and post-doctoral trainees.

Refreshments will be provided – please join us!

New SOM Annual Teaching Awards

On October 4 the first Annual SOM Teaching Excellence Awards Program and Luncheon Reception was held in the Medical Sciences Building. Some 200 faculty, students and guests attended to honor the award recipients. The purpose of the awards program is to recognize exemplary teaching and to emphasize that outstanding teaching has always been and will continue to be an important characteristic of a well-rounded faculty.

The awards fall into four categories: The Faculty Teaching Excellence Award, the school's highest recognition of teaching, with three additional awards to recognize excellence in clinical teaching, mentoring, and educational innovation or research. In the second category, faculty in the School's basic sciences departments were honored for their teaching in graduate and other professional student education. In the third category, the best teachers were selected by ballot of the medical student classes of 2001 and 2002. A fourth category of award recognized outstanding teaching within each of the medical student courses and clerkships.

A complete listing of awards and recipients is enclosed as an insert in this newsletter. Go to website <http://www.medschool.vcu.edu/intranet/facdev/annual%20teaching%201.pdf> for a detailed description of the selection process and the prizes, which ranged from cash and faculty development funds to outstanding teacher pins, bookstore awards, and certificates. Congratulations to all of the award nominees and recipients selected among the over 900 SOM faculty.

Hospitalist Initiative Begins

The Department of Internal Medicine launched its hospitalist initiative this past July. A hospitalist is a physician whose time is dedicated to the care of inpatients, and who accepts admissions from primary providers, to whose care those patients are returned at the end of the hospital stay. In contrast to most primary care providers, hospitalists tend to have a minor ambulatory role, focusing instead on the demands of the inpatient setting, and freeing primary care physicians to focus on the demands of the office. The trend has gained considerable momentum nationally over the past 2 years, and offers potential benefits to patients, resident physicians, staff, office based physicians, practice groups, hospitals and managed care organizations.

Responding to multifactorial needs within the department, Dr. Richard Wenzel, Chairman of the Department of Internal Medicine, designed and formed a hospitalist team of 4 physicians. Joining assistant professors of medicine Dr. Andy Pinson and Dr. Steven Freer from the Division of General Medicine, are two recent graduates of the VCU/MCVH internal medicine residency program, Dr. Rajat Garg and Dr. Clay Beveridge. These 4 physicians will now cover nearly a third of the inpatient medicine service at MCVH. By devoting their time exclusively to managing inpatient problems, the hospitalists are expected to maintain or improve quality outcomes while reducing costs. By eliminating the conflicts between the demands of the inpatient service and the other clinical and research duties of faculty physicians, additional efficiencies and improved productivity in both settings may be realized. And finally, by allowing these physicians to focus exclusively on the problems of inpatient care, improved service to patients, their families, referring physicians, nursing staff, and to our physicians-in-training is expected. Dr. Wally Smith, Chairman of the Division of Quality Health Care, will direct a series of studies in which the cost, outcomes, and satisfaction levels engendered by this initiative will be examined. The experience at MCV of VCU should contribute to the debate about the direction of hospital based care in university hospitals.

Sanger Hall Peak Experience

Come celebrate the kick-off of the SANGER HALL STAIR CHALLENGE on Wednesday, October 20, 1999, from Noon to 1:30 pm in the Sanger Hall Lobby. Just what is the Sanger Hall Stair Challenge? The VCU Recreational Sports Department is sponsoring this program to support Facilities Management's Sanger Hall Elevator Renovation Project. The STAIR CHALLENGE is designed to promote stair climbing for fitness for VCU students, faculty and staff who reside in or visit Sanger Hall during the next four months when the first two elevators are renovated. It is a voluntary program for fun, fitness, health and challenge! Individuals who enroll will receive incentives and prizes just for their participation and regular recording/reporting of "flights of stairs" climbed during the challenge. Join us on October 20th to learn more about the program, have your blood pressure checked and to enroll now! If you miss the kick-off, you can register on-line and record your progress through the VCU Recreational Sports web page: www.students.vcu.edu/recsports. Rise to the challenge and climb Mt. Sanger!

Medicolegal Investigation of Death Forensic Medicine and Forensic Science Seminar to be held October 25-29, 1999

The new Virginia Institute of Forensic Science and Medicine will jointly sponsor with the Department of Legal Medicine, MCV of VCU, its first weeklong Medicolegal Investigation of Death Forensic Medicine and Forensic Science Seminar October 25-29, 1999. The program is designed for medical and law enforcement death investigators and offers a comprehensive review of concepts and principles in forensic science, clinical forensic medicine and medicolegal death investigation. It offers 40.5 Category 1 CME credits. For more information, please contact Deborah Lindenmuth at dlindenmuth@vdh.state.va.us

Departmental News

Department of Physiology

Roland Pittman, Ph.D. has been quite busy: He was an invited speaker at the Acta Physiologica Scandinavica Symposium on Skeletal Muscle Oxygen Availability and Utilization near Copenhagen, Denmark (8/19-22, 1999). He was an invited discussant and session chair of the 16th Bodensee Symposium on Microcirculation: Cytoscan -- a new tool for microcirculation research, in Bad Schachen, Germany (9/24-26, 1999), and, in addition, he was an invited speaker at the Microcirculation Physiome Symposium, Biomedical Engineering Society meeting in Atlanta (10/13-16, 1999).

Department of Internal Medicine

Z. Reno Vlahcevic, M.D., Professor and Chairman, Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology, has been named as the recipient of the 1999 VCU Distinguished Scholar Award. Dr. Vlahcevic was nominated for the award by several faculty members of the School of Medicine. After being nominated, the Awards Committee received over 130 letters of support from local, national, and international faculty peers familiar with Dr. Vlahcevic's research. The Award was presented during VCU's Convocation, September 8, at the VCU Performing Arts Center. Dr. Vlahcevic joined the faculty of the Department over 30 years ago. He has published over 200 papers, chapters, and reviews. He is the 1994 recipient of the Adolph Windaus Award for Outstanding Publications in the Field of Bile Acid Research, presented by the Falk Foundation. In the 1980s he established the Lipid Research Group for studies on lipid metabolism and in 1996 he established the MCV Liver Center dedicated to basic and clinical research of liver diseases. He is currently a full-time faculty member at the McGuire VA Medical Center.

Michael B. Edmond, M.D., Donna McClish, Ph.D., and Richard P. Wenzel, M.D., M.Sc., along with co-authors from the University of Iowa, have recently reported the three year results of the SCOPE Study (Surveillance and Control of Pathogens of Epidemiologic Importance). The report was published in *Clinical Infectious Disease*, 1999, 24:239-244. The study focused on infections caused by bacteria resistance to antibiotics. "The resistance of some organisms is increasing rapidly, making the infections harder to treat, and resulting in longer hospital stays," said Dr. Edmond. This study is significant because it is national in scope. The study team looked at over 15,000 nosocomial infections in 49 hospitals. The hospitals were chosen for geographic diversity, and represent all sections of the continental U.S. The northeast U.S. was found to have higher rates of resistant infections. The cause of this finding is uncertain.

Dr. Edmond noted that the SCOPE study is unique. Similar studies by the CDC have focused on ICU and hospital-wide infections. The SCOPE study covers a wide area, is conducted with the cooperation of academia, the pharmaceutical industry, and multiple institutions. It is the first nongovernmental surveillance project for nosocomial infections.

Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation

Jeffery Johns, M.D. joins the Department as an Assistant Professor, Co-Director of Community NeuroRehabilitation, and Co-Director of Subacute Rehabilitation. Dr. Johns is also Medical Director of Rehabilitation Services at Bon Secours Stuart Circle Hospital. Dr. Johns, who completed his residency on VCU's MCV Campus as Chief Resident, will also assume the duties of Associate Residency Director. Dr. Johns has been selected as a scholarship winner in the NIDRR-sponsored Research Enrichment Program for Psychiatrists 1999-2000 at the Missouri Arthritis Rehabilitation Research and Training Center.

Brian Greenwald, M.D. joins the Department as a Brain Injury Fellow and Instructor. Dr. Greenwald, who completed his residency at UMDNJ-Kessler (New Jersey) as Chief Resident, will also assume the role of Co-Director of Community NeuroRehabilitation.

Jeffery Ericksen, M.D. has been named Medical Director of the HealthSouth Medical Center's Rehabilitation Unit in Richmond, VA. Dr. Ericksen, who is an Assistant Professor in the Department, is also Director of Outpatient Rehabilitation Services at Health South Medical Center. Dr. Ericksen joined the Department in 1998 after several years in private practice in Massachusetts. He completed his PM&R training at Jefferson Medical College.

Mark Huang, M.D., Assistant Professor, has received a grant from American Cancer Society and Kiwanis Fund to investigate "Functional Outcome and Quality of Life in Patients with Brain Tumors." The one-year demonstration grant, Co-Directed by Jeffrey Kreutzer, Ph.D. (Professor), was co-sponsored by VCU's Massey Cancer Center. Dr. Huang, who is also Associate Medical Director of VCU's MCV Campus Rehabilitation and Research Center joined the Department in 1996, after completing training at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago

Herman J. Flax, M.D. an alumnus of the Medical College of Virginia Class of 1940, has been approved by the Board of Visitors of VCU as Clinical Professor in the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. Dr. Flax is a long-term monetary and emotional supporter of the department. Dr. Flax donated a valuable book collection of nearly 500 volumes in five languages dating back to 1573 to Tompkins-McCaw Library and the Department. Dr. Flax has established, through the MCV Foundation, an endowed professorship in his name (*The Herman J. Flax, M.D. Professor*). He has also established an endowment to fund an annual resident leadership award and monies to support the resident education fund.

VCU Office of Research Offers Training Programs

The Office of Research is offering a series of training programs for all faculty, students, fellows, and staff. For more information, please contact Ms. Debra G. Mallory, 828-0732 or by email: dmallory@hsc.vcu.edu. Reservations are not required. **SCHEDULE:** Thursday, Oct. 14, 1-2:30 pm, Sanger 1-044: **Workshop on Entrepreneurial Opportunities at VCU; Thurs., Oct. 21, 1:30 – 3:00 pm, Sanger 1-044: Entrepreneurial Opportunities and Small Business Start Ups in Central Virginia**



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Newsline is designed to better inform the faculty about activities and plans affecting the School of Medicine and to encourage open communication. So much that happens is a moving target, so we'll do our best. Send comments and questions and we'll try to find the folks who know the answers (if they'll tell us...). You can also submit items for the newsletter to Kathy Kreutzer at Box 980565 or KKREUTZER@vcu.edu.

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