**Department Chair Search Update**

Dr. Robert Adelaar was appointed Chair of the Department of Orthopedic Surgery effective 02/01/02. Thanks to the Search Committee led by Dr. Austin Mehrhof, for all of their hard work. *Congratulations* to Dr. Adelaar, Professor of Orthopedic Surgery, VCU School of Medicine.

Dr. David Marsland will resign as Chair on December 31, 2002, after 15 years of service and 30 years at VCU. A search committee is being formed and will be announced shortly.

The **Human Genetics Chair Search Committee** (Dr. David Wilkinson, Pathology, Chair) has made an offer to an external candidate.

**Ophthalmology Chair Search Committee** has begun work under the leadership of Dr. Richard Wenzel. Application deadline is April 1, 2002.

Dr. Russel P. Seneca has been appointed Professor and Associate Dean for Inova Division, School of Medicine, VCU. Dr. Seneca will coordinate the undergraduate medical curriculum of approximately 50 MIII-MIV students starting in 2005.

**SOM Selects Nominees for VCU Distinguished Service Awards**

Congratulations to these faculty members for their nominations representing the SOM:

**Scholarship:** Dr. John Nestler, Professor of Internal Medicine, Chair, Division of Endocrinology  
**Service:** Dr. Robert Cohen, Professor of Psychiatry, Director of the Virginia Treatment Center for Children  
**Teaching:** Dr. James Levenson, Professor of Psychiatry, and recipient of the SOM's Teaching Excellence Award in 2000  
**Excellence:** Dr. Earl Ellis, Professor of Pharmacology & Toxicology, and Director of the SOM M.D./Ph.D. program

Each departmental chair is responsible for gathering the documentation and putting together the package which goes on March 22 to the University Selection Committee managed by Dr. Trani's Office. Awards will be presented at the fall convocation.

**“Mark Your Calendar” for Upcoming Events!**

- Thursday, March 21, School of Medicine MIV Match Day, 12 Noon, Woman's Club, 211 E. Franklin St  
- Monday, April 8 – Cancer Day, lunch and “Wit” (film), contact Keane Britton at 8-3250 or kbritton@hsc.vcu.edu for details.  
- Friday, May 3, Medical Student Honors Day, 1 pm, MSB Auditorium  
- Saturday, May 18, 8 pm, School of Medicine Commencement Ceremony, Siegel Center. Don your robe and head to join us for this celebration!

**Surgery Grand Rounds Goes the Distance to McGuire VAMC**

Students, residents and faculty physicians who travel from McGuire Veterans Affairs Medical Center to attend early morning Department of Surgery Grand Rounds each Thursday now have another alternative. Beginning January 10, the 7:00am lectures have been sent to the south Richmond VAMC using videoconferencing technology. The two-way connection allows VAMC audience members to interact with presenters in George Ben Johnston auditorium on the MCV Campus by asking questions and adding comments along with the local audience. The VAMC receive site is located in room 2-L153.
While the interactivity between GBJ Auditorium and the VAMC appears transparent to both audiences, a wide range of skills and knowledge had to be assembled to make it work. Special thanks go out to Dr. Ron Merrell, Brett Harnett and the leadership of the VCU Department of Surgery; Dr. Karen Sanders and the education staff at McGuire VAMC; Dr. Katherine Gianola and the technology and telemedicine staff at McGuire VAMC; the Academic Technology and Administrative Computing staffs at VCU; and the Distance Education staff in the SOM Office of Faculty and Instructional Development.

Videoconferencing is also being used to save travel time and costs for other SOM faculty. Dr. Carleton Garrett, divisional chair of molecular diagnostics in the Department of Pathology and interim director of the Commonwealth Technology Research Fund Cancer Genomics leadership team, is using two-way video to conduct monthly meetings of CTRF team members from Inova Health System, George Mason University and VCU. Dr. David Marsland, chair of the Department of Family Practice, recently took part in a multipoint videoconference of the board of directors of the Southwest Virginia Graduate Medical Education Consortium. Dr. Mark Wood, Associate Professor in the Department of Internal Medicine (Cardiology), held a consultation session with a medical technology firm’s regional office based in Minneapolis, MN. In addition to these meetings, the SOM videoconferencing site in Hunton Hall continues to host lectures to the Blackstone Family Practice Center for residency training.

Anyone interested in exploring videoconferencing for distance education should contact JK Stringer, Director of Video Applications and Distance Education, at 828-2821 or jkstring@vcu.edu. (article by J. K. Stringer)

**School of Medicine Professor’s Teaching Project Selected for STEP Intern Pilot**

Dr. Andrea Hastillo, Division of Cardiology, Department of Internal Medicine, has had a project selected for the STEP (Student Technology Experts Program) Pilot Project, awarded through the Academic Technology. Jamey Quinn, STEP Intern, will work with Dr. Hastillo to incorporate a digital library of heart sounds and other electronic resources into her web-based syllabus for the M2 Cardiovascular Course. Dr. Hastillo is one of five VCU faculty selected for this project.

STEP is a brand-new pilot internship program designed to encourage the use of technology in teaching and learning through the creation of online courses. Students gain 30 hours of training and a part-time paid position, and faculty gain the help they need to learn and use various web-based applications for teaching. For more information, go to: http://www.at.vcu.edu/step/facultyinfo.html or contact Sonya Moore, project director, at 828-8470 or by e-mail at somoore@vcu.edu.

**Please Attend Forbes Day Activities March 13 and 14**

The Annual Forbes Research Days will be celebrated on March 13 and 14, 2002. Student presentations will take place on Wednesday, March 13 in Room 1-044 Sanger Hall, starting at 1 pm. Awards will be presented on Thursday, March 14 at 3:00 pm in Sanger Hall Room 1-044. Please attend to support and recognize these talented student researchers!

**Join Us in Congratulating These New AOA Members**

Alpha Omega Alpha is the only national medical honor society in the world. It was founded in 1902 in order to recognize and perpetuate excellence in the medical profession. Senior medical students are elected to the honor society based on their academic performance, extracurricular activities, research endeavors, and commitment to the community. In addition, each chapter of AOA elects deserving housestaff, full-time faculty, and medical school alumni each year.

Physicians elected to the Brown Sequard Chapter of AOA at VCU SOM, January 2002:

Housestaff:
--Adolfo Fernandez, MD, Resident in Surgery
--Wes Shepherd, MD, Fellow in Pulmonary/Critical Care, Department of Internal Medicine
--Leanne Yanni, MD, Chief Resident, Department of Internal Medicine
Faculty:
--Tom Smith, MD, Professor of Internal Medicine; Chair, Division of Hematology/Oncology
--Linda Costanzo, Professor of Physiology

Alumni:
--Grayson Miller, MD, Epidemiologist, Virginia Department of Health
--John Leahy, MD, Professor and Chief, Division of Endocrinology, University of Vermont

Walter Chun, MD was selected by the chapter to receive the Volunteer Faculty Teaching Award. He is a pediatrician in private practice.

**Tompkins-McCaw Library Bits and Bytes**

**VCU opens state’s largest health education library for consumers**

A 2,225-square-foot multimedia health information center opened Feb.18 on the MCV Campus to make it easier and quicker for patients, their families and the local community to research health topics and get answers to health questions. The **Community Health Education Center**, located on the ground floor of the new Gateway Building, will offer print, online and video resources and librarian assistance – all at no charge. Nine computers connected to the Internet are part of the center, as is a computer room for private research. Two mannequins with organ systems and information cards are part of a special education area devoted to children. A Web site has been opened at www.vcuhealth.org/chec/.

CHEC will be one of the largest and most-comprehensive hospital-based health libraries for consumers in the country. “We are a vital part of the community, so we have a responsibility to educate our patients, their families and anyone who wants to learn more about their health,” said Donna Katen-Bahensky, executive vice president and chief operating officer of the VCU Health System and the visionary behind CHEC. “It is exciting to be able to offer such a comprehensive library of resources to the people of Central Virginia.”

The idea for CHEC was born in May 2000 when Katen-Bahensky was approached by the MCV Hospitals Auxiliary of the VCU Health System and asked for ideas on how to best spend $100,000 that the auxiliary had earned through vendor and hospital gift shop sales and donations. Katen-Bahensky suggested a community health center, reflecting the growing national trend of making it easier for consumers to access health information, particularly through the Internet. The VCU Health System matched the auxiliary’s $100,000, and another $50,000 was donated by the Richmond-based Theresa A. Thomas Foundation. The VCU Libraries also has contributed computers and staffing support.

CHEC will complement VCU’s Tompkins-McCaw Library for the Health Sciences – the largest health sciences library in Virginia. Jean Shipman, director of Tompkins-McCaw Library, said CHEC’s staff and computer resources will be a gateway to the growing body of health and medical information on the Web.

“Studies have shown that some of the most frequently visited locations on the Internet are health web sites,” Shipman said. “We will be able to point people to the sites that will benefit them most and then support that information with what we have in-house. It really will be a wellness center for the whole community.”

In addition to volunteers, the VCU Health System has hired a full-time director for the center, **Patricia A. Hammond, M.S.L.S.** Hammond has more than 20 years experience and has held positions at Western Carolina University, Bowman Gray School of Medicine at Wake Forest University and Rowland Medical Center at the University of Mississippi. In her most recent position as director of library services at the Cape Fear Valley Health System in North Carolina, Hammond was responsible for a consumer health program. Ms. Hammond may be reached at pahammond@vcu.edu or 628-2429. She welcomes your assistance to acquaint her with resources available from various programs and centers run for faculty and staff.

CHEC will be open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. *(article from University News Service)*
**Micromedex Drug Database Free to Student and Faculty**

VCU Libraries has a version of Micromedex (a drug database) called mobileMICROMEDEX for PDAs which is free to students and faculty. The database is easy to search and contains information on drug uses, dosages, etc. You can download it off the Library Homepage if you click on the Research tab, then under Databases A-Z click M for Micromedex. Click on Micromedex and then on the search screen on the right side about in the middle, there is mobileMICROMEDEX. You can download it from there. Thanks to VCU Libraries for providing this resource.

The Computer-Based Instruction Library (CBIL) in the Medical Sciences Building has a handout that walks you through the download process and describes the database more fully. It also gives you some search hints. Check at the CBIL service desk for more information. *(submitted by Brenda Sego, CBIL)*

**Department News**

**Dean’s Office**

Jan Chlebowski, Ph.D., Associate Dean for Graduate Education has been nominated for service on the Steering Committee of the GREAT (Group on Graduate Research, Education, and Training) Group of the American Association of Medical Colleges (AAMC). The GREAT Group provides a national forum for professional development and the exchange of information and ideas related to biomedical graduate education and postdoctoral training.

After eight years, we sadly say goodbye but congratulations to Ms. Aileen Edwards, Director of Admission and Minority Affairs in the Admissions Office. She was the founding director of the School of Medicine minority affairs program, developing projects for high school students (Project ACEe), medical students and residents. Ms. Edwards worked closely with minority faculty to develop mentoring opportunities for medical students and residents. She has accepted a new position as Assistant Dean of Thomas Jefferson University’s Office of Diversity and Minority Programs. Ms. Edwards will be working with offices across the whole spectrum of medical education including Admissions, Faculty Affairs, Student Affairs, Curriculum Development, and Clinical Affairs. We wish her well in her new position!

Several members of the Dean’s Office faculty are presenting at the Southern Group on Educational Affairs conference in Charleston, SC, March 14-16. Two posters presentations were accepted: What Constitutes a Successful Electronic Curriculum? by Robby J. Reynolds, MPA, Anita M. Navarro, MEd, James M. Messmer, MD, MEd, and The School of Medicine Curriculum Innovation Project: Evaluation of Initial Steps in the Process, by Robby J. Reynolds, MPA, Katherine L. Stevenson, MEd, J. Dennis Hoban, EdD, James M. Messmer, MD, MEd. Paul Mazmanian, Ph.D. and Kathy Kreutzer, MEd., are presenting as part of a pre-conference workshop entitled Competencies Across the Curriculum, and John Boothby, M.S.W., is participating as a presenter in a workshop entitled Accept, Revise, Reject: Reviewing Educational Research Manuscripts.

**Department of Anatomy**

Please note that the Anatomy Department is now the “Anatomy and Neurobiology Department”, following approval by the Board of Visitors last month. The title is intended to better reflect the expertise and breadth of Department faculty.

**Department of Internal Medicine**

Laurel J. Lyckholm, M.D., Sidney G. Page, M.D. Professor of Bioethics and Humanities in Internal Medicine, and Pat Coyne, R.N. Clinical Director of the Thomas Palliative Care Unit and OR Clinical Nurse Specialist for Pain/Palliative Care, have been selected as Soros Faculty Scholars in the Project on Death in America in the spring of 2001. This two-year project, Identification of Barriers to Good Palliative Care in the Underserved Population, is funded for $140,000.

Arun Sanyal, M.D., professor and chair of the Division of Gastroenterology, has been awarded a $1.5 million, five-year grant from the National Institutes of Health to study the causes and treatments of a common yet poorly understood liver disease.
Known as nonalcoholic steatohepatitis, or NASH, the disease affects three to four percent of Americans whose livers store unusually high levels of fat. Over time, 20-30 percent of those affected may develop cirrhosis that can in turn lead to life-threatening liver failure and the need for a transplant.

Because the disease is strongly related to obesity, Sanyal cautions that the U.S. could be facing a significant health problem over the next few decades. "We think that the longer someone is obese, the more likely it is that they will develop NASH. And unfortunately, obesity has turned into a national epidemic, even among our children."

Sanyal is Associate Chair of Research in the Department of Internal Medicine and principal investigator on two other NIH grants, including an NIH career development award to study the mechanisms and treatment of liver disease. The newly awarded grant is scheduled to begin in May 2002. (thanks to Erin Lucero, SOM Development Office, for this item)

Department of Microbiology
Madeline Knighton, the wife of one of our very early faculty members, Professor Holmes Knighton, died Sunday at age 91. Professor Knighton retired from the Department in 1973; his photo is one of two in the Department Library. His primary appointment was in the School of Dentistry, and he taught the dental microbiology class for many years. The common saying among the students was that when Dr. Knighton spoke in class, you could hear a pin drop. Take a moment to remember Dr. Knighton and his wife.

Dr. H.J. Welshimer, researcher, died February 12, 2002. Dr. Welshimer, 81, was a celebrated research scientist in infectious diseases and former professor of microbiology. Dr. Welshimer was a creative teacher and committed scientist. A strain of bacteria, Listeria Welshimeri, is named for him.

Department of Neurology
A number of new grants have been awarded to faculty in the Department:

P.I.: Churn, Severn B. Institution: NIH-NINDS
Total Amount: $1,090,400 (direct) over 4 years
Title: Molecular Mechanisms of Receptor Function in Status Epilepticus

P.I.: Churn, Severn, B. Institution: R.W. Johnson Pharmaceutical Research
Total Amount: $92,376 (direct)
Title: Topiramate in Refractory Status Epilepticus

P.I.: Parsons, J. Travis (Churn) Institution: Epilepsy Foundation of America
Total Amount: $40,000 (direct)
Title: Status Epilepticus-Induced Alteration of Intracellular Basal Calcium Homeostatic Mechanisms. This grant is a training fellowship that is highly competitive. Dr. Parsons is one of eight National recipients of this award.

Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery
Daniel M. Laskin, D.D.S., M.S., Professor and Chairman of the Department, was awarded an honorary membership to the Japanese Society of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeons. He is the first American Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeon to be receive an honorary membership. Dr. Laskin was honored "for outstanding contributions to oral and maxillofacial surgery in Japan and in the development of the Japanese Society of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeons."

Department of Pathology
PATHOLOGY GRAND ROUNDS
Every Friday at noon during the academic year, the Department of Pathology hosts Grand Rounds in Sanger Hall 4-026. This informative lecture series features a wide variety of invited speakers from this and other academic institutions. The academic topics are as broad and varied as the speakers themselves. Attendance is open to everyone, and accredited continuing medical education (CME)
credits are available. Sixty hours of CME are now required biennially by physicians for the renewal of their Virginia medical licenses. We extend our warmest welcome to everyone in the SOM community to make Pathology Grand Rounds a regular part of your Friday schedule.

**Farrukh Azmi, M.D., Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor, joined the department on December 15th. Dr. Azmi is a dermatopathologist who completed his fellowship at the Indiana University School of Medicine in June, 2001. In 1999, he completed residency training in anatomic and clinical pathology at the Medical College of Ohio in Toledo.

**Jose Mira, M.D.** joined the faculty as Associate Professor on December 1st. He came to us from Texas Tech University in Lubbock. Dr. Mira is a surgical pathologist specializing in cytopathology, gynecologic and breast pathology. He completed his residency in anatomic pathology at the University of Maryland Hospital, Baltimore in 1986 and a fellowship in Surgical Pathology at the University of Texas Health Sciences Center in Dallas in 1987.

**Suhail Nasim, M.D., Ph.D.**, Associate Professor, also joined us on December 1st. He was well known to the department as a pathology resident and fellow in the Division of Molecular Diagnostics from 1993 to 1997. He had most recently been at Eastern Virginia Medical School and the Sentara Health System. Dr. Nasim will spend his time equally between Molecular Diagnostics and Surgical Pathology.

**Andrea Ferriera-Gonzalez, Ph.D.** was elected to the Nominations Committee for the Molecular Pathology Division of the American Association for Clinical Chemistry. Dr. Gonzalez was also selected to serve on the Subcommittee on Nucleic Acid Sequencing Methods in Diagnostic Laboratory Medicine for NCCLS.

**Alphonse Poklis, Ph.D.** was appointed Affiliate Professor in Chemistry and Forensic Science in the Department of Chemistry, VCU College of Humanities and Sciences. He will teach a new undergraduate course in Forensic Toxicology, PATH/FRSC 445, as part of a new VCU interdisciplinary program that offers a Bachelor of Science degree in Forensic Science.

**Celeste N. Powers, M.D., Ph.D.** was elected Vice President of the American Society of Cytopathology. Her term started in November, 2001. By virtue of this election, she will be President-Elect next year, and President in 2004.

**Shawn E. Holt, Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor, was awarded a grant for “Molecular Mechanisms of Prostate Cancer Progression”. The project, in the amount of $350,000 for three years, was funded by the Department of Defense Prostate Cancer Research Program. The goal of the study is to elucidate the mechanism of tumorigenic transformation in prostate cancer cells.

**COMMUNITY SERVICE**

The Pathology residents held a holiday food drive for families from the southside Bainbridge area. They also purchased Christmas presents for a family in need. These activities were coordinated by the Pathology Housestaff Council.

On September 22nd, **Lynne Elmore and Shawn Holt**, lab members (past and present), participated in the 5th annual Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation "Walk for a Cure" in Byrd Park. Inspired by Robert, Lynne’s son who has had type 1 diabetes since age 6, Team "Diabetes Dementors" raised $2,000 for diabetes research. The lab thanks colleagues and collaborators for their support and encouragement.

**PATHOLOGY HONOR SOCIETY**

On November 9th, 2001, a ceremony was held in Sanger Hall to honor thirty M-I students who earned the grade of A in the Pathogenesis course. These students were recognized by Dr. Enrique Gerszten for their academic excellence with induction into the Pathology Honor Society, a national academic organization sponsored by the Association of Pathology Chairs. Each student received a certificate and a lapel pin. This year’s inductees are: **Tania K. Arora, Nisha L. Bhatia, Marcus S. Briones, Amanda A. Britt, Brad Carlson, Arash Chehrazi, Aaron J. Clark, Aurora J. Comerford, Sara P. Daniel,**

Congratulations to this year’s Honor Society class.

**Department of Physiology**

Please welcome the 16TH ANNUAL DISTINGUISHED LECTURER IN PHYSIOLOGY - Gordon M. Shepherd, M.D., D. Phil., Department of Neurobiology, Yale Medical School, New Haven, CT will present on “The Neural Basis of the Sense of Smell” on Thursday, April 4, 2002 at 4:00 P.M., Sanger Hall, Room 3-016. Reception Following Lecture: 5:00 - 7:00 P.M., Sanger Hall, Room 3-025.

**Department of Radiation Oncology**

In early February, Zong-Ping Chen, Ph.D., joined the Department as an Assistant Professor in Clinical Physics. Now serving as the Chief Clinical Physicist at the VA McGuire Medical Center, Dr. Chen joins us from the University of Miami Medical Center in Miami, Florida, where he was involved in a wide array of clinical activities, including the clinical implementation of intensity-modulated radiation therapy (IMRT). Prior to his work at the University of Miami, Dr. Chen was a faculty member at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, where he focused on brachytherapy, Gamma Knife radiosurgery, and IMRT. Dr. Chen had substantial clinical training prior to these academic appointments, including a Postdoctoral Fellowship in Medical Physics at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia, and as a Research Scientist at the University of Arizona Medical Center in Tucson, Arizona, where he earned his Ph.D. and performed clinical research in hyperthermia techniques.

**Department of Surgery**

Operation Kids, a non-profit organization founded in 1985 by Dr. Austin Mehrhof, Chairman of Plastic Surgery, completed its thirteenth surgical mission in Guatemala on February 24. The team consisted of Drs. Mehrhof, Pozez, Canoun, Chen & Montante from the Division of Plastic Surgery; Dr. Mike Estes from the Anesthesia Department at St. Mary’s Hospital, Thomas Bowman CRNA and Margaret Hallisey CRNA from the VCUHS and OR nurses Tanya Richardson, Kathy Kenney and Trudi Mehrhof. In five operating days the team performed over fifty reconstructive procedures on forty-seven pediatric patients. The majority of the patients had either acquired deformities such as burns or congenital deformities, in particular cleft lip and palate.

Operation Kids has worked with the Richmond-based Christian Children’s Fund since 1985. This has provided the local support which is so essential in projects such as this. Local surgeons work with the team to provide pre-operative patient evaluation as well as postoperative care when the team departs. Since its beginning, Operation Kids has completed projects in Kenya, Turkey, Russia and Guatemala. Approximately 1000 children have received care during these projects; care that they might otherwise not have received.

**Women in Medicine & Science Professional Achievement Award Announced**

Dr. Sandra Welch, Professor of Pharmacology & Toxicology, received the Professional Achievement Award presented by the VCU Women in Medicine and Science Faculty Organization on Friday, March 1, 2002. The award was presented during the 10th Annual Pathways to Leadership Conference, Jefferson Hotel, Richmond. The award was established in 1993 to acknowledge the special contributions and accomplishments of women faculty in the SOM. Others nominated were Dr. Lisa Brathe, Pulmonary Medicine; Dr. Chris Gennings, Biostatistics; Dr. Joanne Hudson, Anesthesiology; Dr. Wendy Klein, Internal Medicine, Primary Care; Dr. Sara Monroe, Infectious Diseases, and Dr. Monica Morris, Radiation Oncology. Details about the award and previous winners are listed on the new Women in Medicine & Science website: www.womeninmedicine.vcu.edu

This year the VCU School of Dentistry established a similar professional achievement award which went to Ann Adams, DDS, and former graduate student in microbiology, and was announced at the
The Conference attained it largest attendance ever with some 340 academic physicians, scientists, dentists, medical and graduate students, housestaff, and community practitioners from 16 states participating in the one-day event. Partners for this multi-organizational collaboration included VCU SOM, UVA SOM, EVMS, Medical Society of Virginia and the Richmond Academy of Medicine.