



Women in Medicine & Science

School of Medicine MCV Campus

newsletter

Women in Medicine & Science
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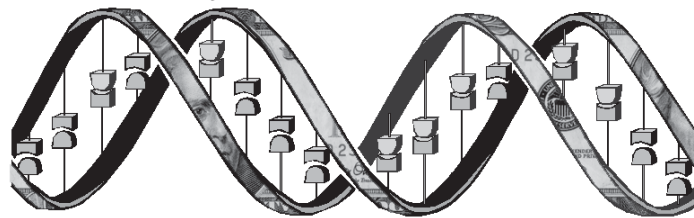


Joann Bodurtha, MD, MPH

President's piece: Genes, money, and me

Our genes unfold as long as we live. Genes matter, but differently in different environments. Is one of our evolutionary tasks coming to terms with what role money will take in our lives?

I headed off to college with plans to become a math professor. After 3 semesters of college math, it was down to two guys, a little Wang computer, and me. I realized I was more social than that and switched to premed. Some advisors who gave me attention and elective experiences in medical school cemented genetics as the best way for me to integrate math, science, and helping others. Public



health training and our Chippewa reservation experiences challenged and reinforced my hope to deliver state-of-the-science care to individuals as part of larger equitable systems of care. How much of my attempting to balance high-tech genetics with commitments to children and persons with disabilities is a reflection of my own personal genetic unfolding? Why do you do what you do?

In *Unnatural Selection: The Promise and the Power of Human Gene Research*, Lois Wingerson writes, "[We] need to understand the rock-bottom truth that most geneticists take for granted – not the molecular esoterica of how genes operate, but the reality that 'genetic' only rarely implies 'inevitable' or 'incurable' or 'fully understood'... we are who we are not just because of what our genes contain, but because of what has happened to us since our birth and how we use

that unique genetic endowment, day after day."

We change and grow each day, or we don't. The students tease that I am "older than DNA." I wish that I could impart to everyone sufficient genetic literacy to make good choices for themselves, communicate their family histories effectively, and use information for prevention. *New Yorker* columnist John Seabrook wrote, "People really don't have a personal relationship with their DNA yet. It's been thought of as a chemical, basically. But ... it's a part of your history. Think of how far your genes have come to get to you. They survived the Ice Age, lived lives very different from the lives we live now."

After 3 years as President of Women in Medicine and Science,

I recognize that my personal evolution and the high-speed interstates and bumpy gravel roads of health care delivery require me to focus on money. Post-Enron, an editorialist in *The Nation* wrote, "People do not live and work in order to buy stocks. People exist in complex webs of relationships with family, work, community and many other rewarding adventures and obligations. The larger purpose of the economic order, including Wall Street, is to support the material conditions for human existence, not to undermine and destabilize them."

We face significant challenges in generating resources to support faculty development and jobs with benefits for housekeepers, to insure that all have a seat at the table of decision-making, and that mission-based management will find a

(continued on p. 2)



Del. Viola Baskerville

Del. Baskerville: teaching and living leadership *By John Priestley, MA*

“Leadership begins from the daily question, ‘What can I be doing to overcome my current challenges?’” This was the first of many insights shared by Virginia General Assembly Delegate Viola Baskerville in her Women in Medicine and Science Professional Development seminar, “Journey into Leadership,” November 11, 2002.

Baskerville credits her spiritual foundation and the influence of several strong women mentors in her youth as key to surviving the Virginia General Assembly as a “triple minority” (African-American, female, Democrat). But she is undaunted by her outsider status, noting that “what makes diversity work is the courage to state opposing perspectives.” In support of this notion she recounted an anecdote from her recent political experience. When she caught wind of a poison-pill amendment being attached to a bill she supported, she resolved to speak out against the amendment. Some of her associates cautioned her against it, reminding her that the author of the amendment was a very powerful legislator and chair of a committee that would soon be reviewing a separate bill she was sponsoring. But Baskerville was not dissuaded; she initiated what became “a frightening debate” on the amendment, and succeeded in producing the simple majority vote needed to kill the amendment.

The vote on the bill itself then passed 99 to 1, with the sole opposing vote coming from the author of the amendment. As her bill came before his committee, she braced herself for retaliation. But the bill passed the committee review, and her adversary applauded her courage (although he used a decidedly sexist expression). In this male-dominated profession (historically, she notes, less than 2% of representatives have been women), she decided to take that as a compliment, but says in fact she learned fearlessness from her predecessor Jean Cunningham, another woman legislator.

Baskerville, who also runs a private business that offers training to prevent or transform conflict in the workplace, offers this advice to women leaders: When negotiating with an entrenched opponent, consider personal angles, and look for allies with whom he or she might communicate more positively. Always close the discussion amicably to allow for cooperation on future issues.

Hinting at another secret to her success, she cites trauma psychologist Silke Maier-Witt’s observation that “women succeed in chaos, where there is no status quo to limit them.” While it’s difficult to imagine an environment without a status quo, there are certainly moments of egalitarian opportunity in political circles; perceiving this fact may be what drives Baskerville as a politician. But she takes care to maintain her unique perspective, observing that

too often professional women reproduce patriarchal authority structures because they fail to look into themselves for validation of their essential values.

Baskerville exhorted the emerging leaders in the audience to give themselves what they need for continuing growth:

- Encouragement – Surround yourself with supporters, while being careful to solicit and consider critical feedback.
- Education – Learn continuously from every experience.
- Goals – Decide what you want for yourself and work toward it. Goals will change, but they must be set nevertheless. It is better to fall short of your goals than never to have set them.

Finally she urged, “Dare to do just what you do. Be just who you are, and dance whenever you want to as you make your journey into leadership.” We look forward to watching her courage and commitment unfold into a stellar career in leadership. *Thanks to Wendy Klein for securing Delegate Baskerville as our speaker and for providing information for this article. ?*

Baskerville’s list of Top 10 Leadership Mistakes:

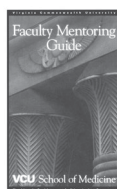
10. Repeating your mistakes
9. Not acknowledging your past
8. Commanding instead of leading
7. Failing to listen
6. Thinking of your own needs first
5. Thinking your leadership is forever
4. Seeing things in only black and white
3. Failing to teach
2. Not accepting change
1. Failing to have a sense of humor

President’s piece (continued from page 1)

way to provide the kind of expectations and incentives that motivate individuals to collaborate for the betterment of a university health center. It remains a privilege to work with women and men who think about such things and try to keep a hospital and medical school going for the benefit of the wider community.

I am particularly grateful to the leaders and mentors here and elsewhere, women and men, who have given me the opportunities to blossom and unfold my DNA in work that I enjoy. It is now my job, and our job, to make the money to nurture and sustain the things we value. I write another grant with overhead to help pay for today’s version of the Wang computer in order to employ creative individuals who want to serve others. We donate to the endowment funds to sustain things we care about long after we are gone. I try to figure out how to see more patients more effectively to help keep someone available to answer the phone and do the billing. We continue to evolve in how we choose to spend what we create together.

Jessie Ball duPont wrote, “Let there be no resting on laurels; get on with good work while there is yet time.” Thanks for listening, sharing, and caring.



“Mentoring relationships have proven to be an excellent way to enhance professional growth....”

—From the foreword to the Faculty Mentoring Guide. Pick up a copy of the VCU School of Medicine Faculty Mentoring Guide from the Office of Faculty and Instructional Development, or find it online at www.medschool.vcu.edu/intranet/



Lenore M. Buckley, MD, MPH

Update from the VCU Health System Board

The VCU Health System (VCUHS) Board meets every three months and had a day-long retreat November 22, 2002 to review progress with the recommendations made by The Hunter Group (THG) at the September board meeting. THG made the following recommendations:

- Restructure the VCUHS leadership.
- Establish a system of authority and accountability throughout the organization that relies less on process and more on individual accountability and quick decision-making.
- Reorganize the MCV Physicians (MCVP) board into a smaller, more decision-oriented executive board. (This was implemented in the December VCUHS board meeting.)
- Incorporate feedback from the THG physician survey into the goals and objectives for the new MCVP board. (The areas of greatest faculty concern identified were leadership, governance, and lack of communication.)
- Consolidate the ambulatory care clinics.
- Reorganize the Stony Point Practice into its own multi-specialty group practice.
- Give department chairs separate responsibilities in each business unit (hospital, practice, education, research).
- Make department chairs accountable to the head of each unit for activities in that unit; formally evaluate chair performance in each area.
- Improve OR operations and decrease ED diversions.

THG found potential revenue increases through improvements in self-pay and point-of-service collections, charge capture and

coding improvements, and price adjustments. About one third of the increased funds identified by THG was through contract negotiation and reconciliation with health insurance companies. THG also suggested changes in personnel management including productivity assessment using CARTS (clinical, administration, research, teaching, service) methodology.

At the December 9th meeting of the VCUHS Board, the new MCVP Board was approved and includes Dr. Wenzel as President; Drs. Cifu, Laver, Seeds, and Silverman, as chair members; and Drs. Levinson, Nettleman, Vetrovec, and Ward as nonchair members. Other issues discussed included the yearly audit report for VCUHS, revision of the Bylaws and Rules Regulation of the Medical Staff, contracts with managed care providers, the update on the progress of Virginia Premiere – the VCUHS Medicaid managed care product. If you have questions or comments, the MCVP physician members of the VCUHS board include Drs. Buckley, Cardea, Merrill, Nettleman, and Ward. ♀

WIM Student Organization Activities

Lunch lecture series. The Women in Medicine Student Organization is hosting a series of lunch lectures on women's health-related topics. Elective credit will be offered to medical students for attending these lectures. Lectures on contraception and reproductive issues and breast cancer were given in January and February; the remaining lectures in the series are listed in the calendar below.

T-shirt orders. The WIM Student Organization is selling T-shirts bearing the slogan "I want to be the doctor my mother always wanted me to marry." Proceeds help support the organization. Contact Jessica Neidig or Harjit Kaur (see below) to order a shirt, or find the shirts on sale at the Pathways to Leadership Conference, February 21.

Student Representatives: Karen Annis, MII, annisk@vcu.edu. Shea Bethea, MII, betheasw@vcu.edu. Jessica Neidig, MII, neidigja@vcu.edu. Denise Dietz, MI, dietzdm@vcu.edu. Kerry Eley, MI, kdwillia@vcu.edu. Harjit Kaur, MI, s2hkaur@vcu.edu.
Faculty Representatives: Cynthia M. Heldberg, PhD. Wendy S. Klein, MD.

Calendar of Events

| Date/Time/Location | Topic | Speakers |
|---|--|--|
| Friday, February 14 12-1 pm MSB 104/5 | WIM Student Organization Lunch Lecture Series: Contraception Update | Nancy Harris, NP |
| Friday, February 21 7:30 am - 5 pm Richmond Marriott | 11th Annual WIMS " Pathways to Leadership " Conference. Theme: Preparing to Lead. | Keynotes: Nancy Nielsen, MD, PhD, Vice-Speaker of the American Medical Association. Carol Nadelson, MD, Ex-President of the American Psychological Association |
| Wednesday, February 26 4-5 pm Sanger 1-006 | WIMS Executive Committee Meeting | |
| Wednesday, March 26 4-5 pm Sanger 1-006 | WIMS Executive Committee Meeting | |
| April 2003 12-1:30 pm Location TBA | Lessons in Leadership | TBA -- look for an announcement by email and flyer. |
| Monday, April 7 12-1 pm Sanger 3-016 | WIM Student Organization Lunch Lecture Series: Care of Older Women. | Catherine Kelso, MD, and Catherine Nichols, MD |
| Friday, April 18 12-1 pm MSB 104/5 | WIM Student Organization Lunch Lecture Series: Women's Health Residency. | Wendy Klein, MD, and MCVH residents |
| Wednesday, April 23 4-5 pm Sanger 1-006 | WIMS Executive Committee Meeting | |
| Wednesday, May 28 4-5 pm Sanger 1-006 | WIMS Executive Committee Meeting | |
| Wednesday, June 25 4-5 pm Sanger 1-006 | WIMS Executive Committee Meeting | |

Announcements and Resources



Mid-Career Women Faculty Development Seminar

Target Audience: This seminar is for women at the assistant and associate professor levels with a minimum of four years in the position. It is targeted primarily for physicians but is also pertinent for PhD scientists.

Application: Each applicant should submit a supporting letter from her dean and section or department head describing how her goals for attending the seminar relate to her work and professional aspirations. Enrollment will not exceed 120.

Date: July 19-22, 2003

Location: Fairmont Hotel, Washington, D.C.

Application Deadline: March 10, 2003

More Info: www.aamc.org/meetings

2003 Women in Medicine and Science Pathways to Leadership Conference

Target Audience: Women and men community practitioners, academic physicians and scientists, administrators, medical and graduate students, residents, and other health care professionals and community leaders.

Date: February 21, 2003--full day conference

Place: Richmond Marriott

Description: Participants will examine strategies, barriers and opportunities, and career advancement skills.

Registration: See www.medschool.vcu.edu/cme/calendar.html or call Carole Hettema: (804) 828-5416

We Want Your Input!

The Executive Council of the Women in Medicine & Science Faculty Organization invites all faculty members to participate in our meetings, currently held in Sanger 1-006 on the fourth Wednesday of each month from 4:00 to 5:00 pm. See the calendar inside for meeting dates.

Kudos



Susan Kornstein, MD, Professor of Psychiatry, will receive the 2003 WIMS Professional Achievement Award at the Pathways to Leadership Conference, March 21. Join us to congratulate her. For award details, see www.womeninmedicine.vcu.edu



Ann Fulcher, MD, was appointed Chair of the Department of Radiology. Dr. Fulcher is currently the only woman clinical department chair in the VCU School of Medicine.



WIMS Vice-President and President-elect **Bela Sood, MD**, FAACAP, was appointed Chair of the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Medical Director of the Virginia Treatment Center for Children.



WIMS Past-President **Lenore M. Buckley, MD, MPH**, was reappointed by Governor Mark Warner to a 3-year term on the VCU Health System Board of Directors. Read her report from the Board in this issue.

Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine, MCV Campus

Women in Medicine & Science Faculty Organization

Mission: Established in 1992, the *Women in Medicine & Science Faculty Organization* seeks to further the professional goals of women doctors and scientists at the Medical College of Virginia Campus of Virginia Commonwealth University. As a sponsor of forums for open communication, the organization facilitates networking, mentoring, and collaboration among women faculty, housestaff, and students.

Membership: Full memberships are available to all full and part-time faculty in the School of Medicine, including clinicians, basic health scientists, and administrators. Associate memberships are also available to students, housestaff, alumni of the School of Medicine and its training programs, and retired faculty. For more information about becoming a member of the *Women in Medicine Faculty Organization* contact Deborah Lebman, PhD, Chair of the Membership Committee, at dalebman@vcu.edu. Dues are \$30 per year and should be renewed each year on July 1. Checks should be made out to the *Women in Medicine Faculty Organization* and sent to Julia Nunley, MD, Treasurer: P.O. Box 980164, Richmond, VA 23298, phone: (804) 828-9595 or e-mail: jnunley@vcu.edu. For additional information, visit the web site at www.womeninmedicine.vcu.edu

Newsletter: *Women in Medicine & Science Newsletter* is published semi-annually by the *Women in Medicine and Science Faculty Organization* at the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine on the Medical College of Virginia Campus, Richmond, Virginia, in order to expand communication on issues affecting university women in medicine and science. We welcome your questions and comments. Contact President Joann Bodurtha at bodurtha@vcu.edu or (804) 828-9632, or Newsletter Editor John Priestley at jwpriest@vcu.edu or (804) 828-3919.