

## WOMEN IN MEDICINE FACULTY ORGANIZATION

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The *Women in Medicine Update* is published biannually by the *Women in Medicine Faculty Organization* at the Medical College of Virginia Campus of Virginia Commonwealth University in a effort to expand communication and to promote issues effecting University Women in Medicine.

The *Women in Medicine Faculty Organization* gladly welcomes questions or comments. E-mail may be sent to [wemo@hsc.vcu.edu](mailto:wemo@hsc.vcu.edu) Additional inquires may be directed to Joann N. Bodurtha, M.D., MPH. at (804) 828-9632 or Maia A. Eckler, M.S. at (804) 828-5161

## Women in Medicine Program Receives National Award

*VCU School of Medicine Organization Praised for Contributions, Leadership*

by Joe Kuttenkuler  
*University News Services*

Recognized for its outstanding contributions in developing women leaders in academic medicine, Virginia Commonwealth University's Women in Medicine Program was the recent recipient of the 2000 Women in Medicine Leadership Development Award from the Association of American Medical Colleges. The award was presented during the AAMC's annual Women Liaison Officers and Academic Chairs' caucus in Chicago in October.

This marks only the third time the AAMC has given the award — typically reserved for individual recognition — to an institutional organization.

"VCU is ahead of the curve in terms of recognizing the importance of professionally developing women and bringing them into the academic fold. This award truly reflects our commitment to that process," said H.H. Newsome Jr., M.D., dean of the School of Medicine who nominated the program. "Few academic medical centers have achieved what ours has in developing such a positive climate of professional development for women as well as men."

Founded in 1992, the Women in Medicine Program is a multifaceted organization in the School of Medicine. With its own governance structure — the Women in Medicine Faculty Organization — and collateral groups including the Committee on the Status of Women and Minorities, the Women in Medicine Student Organization and the Office of Faculty and Instructional Development, the program has been a catalyst for recruiting and developing women in the academic arena.

"This recognition will not only help us recruit women for top-level positions, but it says to everyone that this is an environment that nurtures women and helps them achieve their full potential," said Carol Hampton, associate dean of faculty and instructional development.

Wendy Klein, M.D., who specializes in women's health care, has watched the Women in Medicine Program flourish. She was the first president of the Women in Medicine Faculty Organi-

zation and said the success of the program is based largely on collaboration.

"The leadership in the medical school has worked very hard with our women faculty to transcend gender inequities in academic medicine. Seeing how the program has matured from our initial vision is very fulfilling."

One of the signature annual events hosted by the Women in Medicine Faculty Organization is the "Pathways to Leadership" conference, now in its ninth year. The national conference, which includes representatives from the University of Virginia and Eastern Virginia Medical School, Medical Society of Virginia, and Richmond Academy of Medicine brings together women health professionals from across the country to discuss issues affecting women in all areas of health care.

According to Newsome, the Women in Medicine Program reflects VCU's tradition of diversity. "This year, 53 percent of our freshman medical school class are women. I believe that figure is due in no small part to the fact that the word on the street is our institution is a place that values women."

In his letter to VCU announcing the award, Jordan Cohen, M.D., AAMC president wrote: "Your organization clearly has distinguished itself with its institutional commitment to helping women realize their potential and to improving the environment for women in academic medicine."

Nominations for the award were open to the entire academic medical community. Winners were judged based on individual or organizational achievement in improving the educational and professional environment for women in medicine; enhancing the development of women faculty; and nurturing students in their academic career development.

Previous institutional award winners are the University of Southern California's Medical Faculty Women's Association in 1995 and the University of Arkansas College of Medicine Women's Faculty Development Caucus in 1997. The AAMC is a non-profit association founded in 1876 to work for reform in medical education.

## ANNUAL FALL LUNCHEON AND LECTURE FOCUSES ON LEADERSHIP by Maia Eckler

### *Donna Katen-Bahensky inspires audience with a "View from the Top"*

There were so many wonderful, inspiring moments in this year's Women in Medicine Annual Fall Luncheon and Lecture, it's difficult to pick a favorite. But if I were pressed to choose one, it would have to be the moment when Donna Katen-Bahensky displayed a chart she labeled "my career path." I would have expected a typical bar chart, graphing her successes in a successive upward slope. Instead, Katen-Bahensky's career-representing line was erratic: it went up and down, side to side, back and forth, then looped around several times before going up again, landing at the top of the axis. "At last," thought this captive audience member, "here is some evidence that I may be following a potentially successful career path."

Donna Katen-Bahensky holds a Master's degree in Health Administration and is presently the Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer for the Clinical Enterprise Administration of the VCU Health System. Her talk, which took place in Sanger Hall on November 13, 2000 was titled, *A View from the Top: Lessons in Leadership for Faculty, Housestaff and Students*. Katen-Bahensky's lecture kicked off the 2000-2001 Women in Medicine Leadership Development Series.

Katen-Bahensky articulated that the ability to become a leader is already instilled in each of us, "Leadership is everyone's business, and each of us has the capacity to lead." Katen-Bahensky cautioned her audience that the journey to become a leader is difficult, ever-changing, and continuous. "Being on top," she said, "isn't always the most fun." One of the drawbacks of leadership is the constant spotlight: a leader is required to be "on" at all times, you cannot walk the halls looking sad, tired or sick. Every day you need to be a model for others, exemplifying your own values. "If you can't encourage folks, you can't be a leader—no one will want to follow," said Katen-Bahensky.

Katen-Bahensky said there are four key components to becoming a successful leader. She labeled these necessary traits E<sup>4</sup>, representing Energy, Energizer, Edge, and Execution. These characteristics are best achieved not through formal education, but through self-education. Self-education may be viewed as a gradual process of picking up new skills and taking advantage of on-the-job opportunities that will help you broaden your proficiency. "Experience leads to expertise," said Katen-Bahensky.

Katen-Bahensky emphasized the importance of taking advantage of and making a difference in every position you hold while building your career. It is essential to focus on your current job performance, even while planning for the future. "Make a difference in every job you have," said

Katen-Bahensky, "develop a reputation for delivering results." Keeping this in mind, often a lateral career move can be just as beneficial as an upward move.

To build upon your expertise, start off by focusing on the strengths you already have, look for opportunities that will allow you to apply these strengths in a broader context. Building a strong functional competence is a matter of managing your career so you can evolve from cross-functional assignments.

Assume ownership of your position, commit yourself to continuous learning, focus on developing skills rather than accumulating titles, and remember, others may be able to provide you with advice, but ultimately, you are responsible for the job you have now, and for your career.

Katen-Bahensky urged the audience to seek out challenges and to increase their on-the-job visibility: this means accepting the 'hard' position, volunteering to work on the projects your business or institution considers important, and seeking out assignments that will help get you noticed. "Many times we notice leaders because they are out of their niche," said Katen-Bahensky.

No one creates a successful career out of a vacuum. It is necessary to employ the support and advice of those we may label 'mentors', 'supporters', or 'role-models'. "It's too hard to get noticed by yourself in an organization. Women need mentors—real ones—who will act as your support and backup; you need an honest critic on your side, one who does not envy you and really wants you to achieve success," said Katen-Bahensky.

One can seek out mentors while on the job by assuming positions with different managers, and working for people who will take the initiative to challenge you. You may build upon these relationships through persistence and seeking out constructive input. "If you treat the job you're on today like it's the last job you're ever going to be on, and do it better than anyone else, then you won't be in that position for long," said Katen-Bahensky.

In the future, our need for leadership will only increase. Now is the time to take initiative to challenge the process, inspire a shared vision, model the way, encourage the heart and enable others to act. Katen-Bahensky concluded her talk quoting Max DuPree, author of *Leadership is Art*, "To be a leader means, especially, having the opportunity to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those who permit leaders to lead."

### Women Faculty Attend AAMC Professional Development Seminar

Three VCU women faculty members recently participated in a Professional Development Seminar for Junior Women Faculty sponsored by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC). The AAMC is the principal professional organization representing American Medical Schools. The participants included: Dr. Diane Biskobing, Assistant Professor, Department of Internal Medicine, Dr. Paulina Essah, Assistant Professor, Department of Internal Medicine, and Dr. Stephanie Spottswood, Assistant Professor, Department of Radiology.

The seminar, which took place in Savannah, Georgia in early December, is a nationally competitive meeting of women selected from a large cadre of applicants from academic medical centers in the U.S. and Canada. It is tailored to women in their first faculty appointment who are aiming for a position of leadership in academic medicine. Included were sessions on: *Meeting the Challenges of Academic Career Building*, *Conflict Management*, *Effective Meetings: Running them and Presenting Them*, *Financial Negotiations*, *Clinical Investigation: Characteristics of Productive Researchers and Their Careers*, *Enhancing your C.V.*, *Demystifying the Promotion Process*, *Financial Basics: Getting Smart about your Department*, *Writing for Professional Journals*, and *Moving into Administrative and Policy-Making Roles*.

The women intend to use this knowledge to serve as resource persons to female fellows in medicine, newly hired female faculty, as well as other junior women faculty aspiring to pursue a career in academic medicine. Dr. Biskobing, in the Division of Endocrinology and Metabolism, has research interests in osteoporosis and bone metabolism. Dr. Essah, in the Division of General Medicine, has research interests in minority healthcare and primary care issues. Dr. Spottswood, in the Section of Pediatric Radiology, has research interests in pediatric cardiovascular disease, pediatric oncology, and pediatric nuclear medicine.

Drs. Biskobing, Essah, and Spottswood are very grateful to their department chairmen, Dr. Richard Wenzel (Internal Medicine) and Dr. James Tatum (Radiology); and to Ms. Carol Hampton, Associate Dean of Faculty and Instructional Development, who helped make this opportunity possible with time away, notification of the event, and matching funds for tuition support. The Office of Faculty and Instructional Development has funds for future conference participants on a first-come, first-served basis which should be matched with departmental or divisional funds.

**P**RESIDENT'S PIECE

by, Joann N. Bodurtha, MD, MPH

"Who's missing at the table?" Every day I ask myself this question. Do you find yourself in rooms or situations where diversity is minimal? Do you find your viewpoints heard? Do you remember what it felt like, or feels like, to be older or younger, lighter or darker, more or less educated, in some way different from others in the room?

If the others at the table respect and listen to your input, being in the minority can be empowering. Other times, however, being ignored or put-down leads to personal discouragement. Minus one person's participation, the group becomes a less thoughtful, less comprehensive, less inclusive, and less creative force than it could have been.

Prior to completing her two-year term as President of the *Women in Medicine Faculty Organization*, Dr. Lenore Buckley summarized the results of a brief needs assessment conducted this year of WIM members. Women faculty indicated that two of their top three priorities are increasing the number of women in leadership positions, and fostering leadership development.

In a previous study (*Academic Medicine*, March 2000) Dr. Buckley and her co-investigators assessed faculty and career development issues. One finding of particular note revealed a gulf between the values of male and female physicians: women tend to value teaching and patient care; while men's values cluster towards accomplishments more often considered crucial to promotion: national recognition, leadership and scholarship. While we can only guess, is it possible that an open-physician election, resulting in two new women members of the previously all male VCU Health

System Authority Board, has inspired women to hope and plan for a greater presence at the table?

52% of the first-year medical school class are women. Contemporary leadership literature emphasizes that preparing others to lead is an essential component of leadership. What can we do? What must we do so that all medical students and faculty, women and men, sense that their voices will be heard and that opportunities will be available equitably?

The *Women in Medicine Faculty Organization* is continuing discussions with the institutional leadership and welcomes your suggestions and concerns.

Among the growing suggestion list are: supporting women and men faculty's participation in the Grace Harris Leadership Institute, as well as other leadership opportunities such as ELAM and AAMC programs; including leadership development of faculty as a criterion in the evaluation of the chair; creating vice chair positions in departments so that more direct managerial and academic leadership experience could be gained by a broader group of faculty; encouraging chair search committees to look actively for the best women candidates; and insuring that leadership opportunities throughout the University and Health System on committees and with appointments are fully open to all faculty.

How can we optimally "improve the count?" Our professional development committee, chaired by Drs. Lindsey Grossman and Marcia Carney, will be prioritizing our potential strategies.

The Committee on the Status of Women and Minorities, chaired by Dr. Karen Sanders, and the newly established Committee on Professionalism, chaired by Dr. Walter

Lawrence, will be looking at available data and strategies to address equity and professionalism issues. We will have two lunch-time speakers on leadership development, Donna Katen-Bahensky, CEO of MCVH, on November 13 (Sanger 3-016, 12-1:30) and Anne Petera, Secretary of the Commonwealth, in spring 2001.

The hard collaborative work of many individuals and committees led to our organization winning this year's national award for leadership in women's programs in medicine from the AAMC (please see related article). In order to move forward, we must look at our own table, literally represented in the Executive Council. We may have been perceived as a women's physician organization, but we hope to extend beyond that. We need to encompass and better address the shared concerns of Ph.D. and other faculty. As a physician member of a basic sciences department, I am keenly aware of the need to straddle multiple domains as well as our commonalities. Research, both basic and clinical, is central to the mission of academic medicine.

The appointment of Dr. Marcia Torr as Vice President for Research is symbolic of our need to foster women's success in research: both for the future of all medicine, and with heightened focus on women's health issues. These include the funded Women's Health Institute, directed by Dr. Susan Kornstein and the funded grant for building interdisciplinary research careers in women's health helmed by Principal Investigator Dr. Roy Pickens and Program Director Dr. Mary Nettleman. I hope we can address research issues, such as grantsmanship, in our lunch series in 2001-2002. Our goal is a table where all are welcome and encouraged.

9<sup>th</sup> Annual

Women in Medicine

Presented by  
the three Virginia Schools of Medicine  
Virginia Commonwealth University  
University of Virginia  
Eastern Virginia Medical School

In Collaboration with the  
Medical Society of Virginia  
Richmond Academy of Medicine

PATHWAYS TO LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE  
*"Changing the Culture"*

Friday, March 2, 2001 | The Jefferson Hotel | Richmond, Virginia

*Keynote Speaker: Bernice R. Sandler, Ed.D.,  
National Association for Women in Education*

For more information, please contact Conference Manager Carole R. Hettema, B.S., VCU Office of Continuing Medical Education at 800/413-2872 or 804/828-3640 or email crhettem@vcu.edu

**P**ROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

**AAMC Professional Development Seminars**

<http://www.aamc.org/>

**for Junior Women Faculty**

December 1-4, 2001

Santa Fe, NM

*Program announcement available in July*

**for Mid-Career Women Faculty**

(formally known as Senior WIM)

July 21-23, 2001

Washington, DC

*Program announcement available in January*

**ATTENTION!**

Some matching money for conferences is available on a first come/first serve basis from the Office of Faculty & Instructional Development. Contact Carol Hampton at 828-6594 or [carol.hampton@vcu.edu](mailto:carol.hampton@vcu.edu)

*Women's Health 2001:  
Clinical Insights for the Practitioner*

*Sponsored by the VCU Institute for Women's Health & the VCU Office for Continuing Medical Education*

Friday-Saturday, March 23 & 24, 2001

The Jefferson Hotel, Richmond, VA

Contact: Carolyn Stone, Conference Manager, VCU OCME  
804.828.5415 or [cstone@vcu.edu](mailto:cstone@vcu.edu)

**NETWATCH**

Anybody wanting to know about the so-called "chilly climate" for Women in Science should check out The Women in Biology Internet Launch [pingu.salk.edu/~forsburg/bio.html](http://pingu.salk.edu/~forsburg/bio.html)

MomMD™, an online community for mothers who are practicing physicians.

<http://www.mommd.com/index.html>

Visit the new VCU Institute for Women's Health web site. IWH seeks to improve health of women through health education, research, clinical care, and leadership development.

<http://www.womenshealth.vcu.edu/>

**MARK YOUR CALENDERS**

Wednesday, January 10, 2001

Sanger Hall, Room 1-038

*Women in Medicine Professional Development Series Presents:*

**"Promotion and Tenure Planning"**

Mary D. Nettleman, M.D., M.S.,  
Professor & Chair, Division of General Internal Medicine & Primary Care

Medical College of Virginia Campus of Virginia Commonwealth University

**Women In Medicine Faculty Organization**

Established in 1992, the purpose of the *Women in Medicine Faculty Organization* is 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. 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 Amy Foxx-Orenstein, D.O. at [aefoxx@hsc.vcu.edu](mailto:aefoxx@hsc.vcu.edu) or Deborah Lebman, Ph.D. at [dalebman@vcu.edu](mailto:dalebman@vcu.edu), Co-Chairs of the membership committee. Dues are just \$30 per year of membership. Checks should be made out to the *Women in Medicine Faculty Organization* and sent to Margaret Roberson, M.D., Treasurer: P.O. Box 980102 Richmond, VA 23298, Phone: (804) 828-5323 or e-mail: [mroberso@vcu.edu](mailto:mroberso@vcu.edu)