

Dean's Newsletter

October 7, 2002

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Town Hall Meeting with Medical Students

On Monday evening, September 30th, a Town Hall Meeting was held for medical students to review a menu of relevant issues, including an update on the planning for education facilities, the new advising system, the latest on the "Dean's Letter" and an update on the status of the Family Medicine Clerkship. Several of these important issues have evoked concern among students and faculty. The goal of the Town Meeting was to provide information as well as to solicit input and evoke discussion. Dr. Julie Parsonnet, Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education led the Town Hall meeting, which was well attended by students, and held in Fairchild Auditorium from 7-9 p.m. Following are some of the highlights:

The Dean's Letter: As discussed in prior Newsletters, efforts have been underway to revise the Dean's Letter for students applying for internships in this academic year. This is largely based on fact that we have learned from Residency Program Directors at Stanford as well as from around the country that the format of the Stanford Dean's Letter used during the past several years has not been serving our students well. Given the absence of a grading or ranking system at Stanford (which we continue to value) the recent Dean's letters are perceived as being too subjective and not providing readers objective information to accurately determine the true strengths of our students or to discriminate among them. Based on these very important concerns, a number of steps have already been taken to remedy this situation by Dr. Parsonnet, including having the Dean's letters written

by four faculty advisors (rather than one) and having them discussed by the group as a whole in order to assure that each letter is fair, accurate, and balanced in their reflections on student performance, especially during clinical clerkships. There needs to be recognition that the Dean's Letter is the official evaluation by the School of the student – and not a letter of recommendation (as it appears to have become in recent years).

A major point of controversy and debate however has been whether the final paragraph of the Dean's Letter would contain a summative statement – more specifically, identifying students as “outstanding”, “excellent” or “very good”. This is the practice of virtually every other medical school but is clearly problematic at Stanford given its longstanding practice of not ranking students. While students are evaluated during their clinical clerkships, there is also a concern that the current evaluation system is not as robust or consistent as it should be. Accordingly, Dr. Parsonnet and her staff have determined that a summative statement (e.g., outstanding, excellent or very good) would **not** be included in the Dean's Letters currently being written for this year's graduating class. That said, every effort is being made to have the information about the student's performance on clinical rotations be as complete and accurate as possible so that residency program directors are able to make the best judgments possible on behalf of our students.

At the same time, efforts are already underway to assure that the evaluation system for clinical clerkships is as outstanding as possible – and to do so immediately, so that concerns about this will not confound our ability to write an objective and evaluative Dean's Letter in future years.

Recognizing all the concerns that have been engendered, I repeat the message I offered in my Newsletter of July 2nd: “While I understand the concerns about competitive environments, and absolutely would not want to see one develop at Stanford, I do not understand how an objective process of assessment and evaluation can be viewed as negative in relation to one's performance in clinical care. The goal of every student, just like every physician, should be to carry out her or his clinical care responsibilities in the very best manner possible. The competition in clinical care is really with oneself — to do the very best possible to care for one's patients. Naturally, one's interests and abilities in various areas of medicine will further guide one's individual performance. It is erroneous to think that we all have the same skills in every area and facet of medicine — or the same level of interest.”

Moreover, as I pointed out at the Town Hall Meeting, performance evaluation is mandated in every residency program and is increasingly expected for physicians in practice. Our patients want to know that we care about our proficiency and that we take seriously our efforts to perform our clinical responsibilities in the very best way possible. I am confident that our students also want to perform their clinical responsibilities in as an outstanding a manner as

they can, and it is our mutual responsibility to help them accomplish that – and to help evaluate their performance so that they can become the very best physician they can possibly be.

Curriculum Updates: Senior Associate Dean Parsonnet also led the discussion on the plans to revise the curriculum with the goal of implementing changes for the class entering in September 2003. The key goals are to define the core curriculum, begin clinical training in parallel with basic science education and to continue these throughout all years of medical school, and develop “scholarly tracks” or “majors” for all medical students. Updates on progress to date follow:

- ***The Committee to Define the Core Curriculum***, chaired by Dr. Neil Gesundheit, has been charged to define the core concepts that each medical student should master to be an outstanding clinician. The Committee has divided the preclinical curriculum into four "affinity" groups, each of which is comprised of courses that share common themes and in which teaching synergy is likely to occur. The affinity groups are entitled "Structure," "Molecular Science," "Disease and Therapeutics," and "Clinical Science," and the groups are led by Drs. Larry Mathers, James Ford, Donald Regula, and Peter Rudd, respectively. In addition, there are four student committee members, Vedant Kulkarni, Elizabeth Langen, Brett Pariseau, and Al Taira, and three staff facilitators, Elizabeth Moreno, Margaret Sequeira, and Jenn Stringer. The Committee has been asked to examine ways to improve instruction methods and efficiencies, with the goal of achieving a 20% reduction of instruction time during the preclinical years. The reduction in instruction time will allow students to take graduate courses and seminars in areas of special interest and to pursue research either through the current Medical Scholars or the emerging "scholarly tracks" programs (see below). The goal of the Committee is to present a draft of the new curriculum to the Committee on Courses and Curriculum (CCC) this fall and to the Faculty Senate and Executive Committee for their review in winter. If consensus is achieved, the new curriculum would be ready to begin during the 2003-04 academic year.
- ***The Committee on Scholarly Tracks*** is chaired by Dr. Gary Schoolnick, along with Rosalinda Alverado (Medical Student), Margaret (Minx) Fuller (Developmental Biology), Brian Hoffman (Medicine/Endocrinology), Emmet Keeffe (Medicine/GI), Ted Leng (Medical Student), Yvonne (Bonnie) Maldonado (Pediatrics), Doug Owens (Medicine/GIM), Audrey Shafer (Anesthesiology), Tim Stanton (PriSMS), Charlie Taylor (Surgery/Vascular Surgery and Engineering), and David O'Brien (Institutional Planning). Because of a prior commitment, Dr. Schoolnick was unable to attend the Town Hall Meeting but Dr. Parsonnet gave an update on the status of the Scholarly Tracks. Specifically, plans are underway to issue RFAs for the support of the initial Scholarly Tracks, each of which will need to

develop a program of course work, mentoring and research opportunities for students. It is expected that all students will eventually participate in a Scholarly Track, making their selection during their first year but with the flexibility to change tracks based on evolving interests. Work is also underway to develop a general study track for students who require more independent study. Again, it is anticipated that the initial Scholarly Tracks will be available for students entering in September 2003.

Education Facilities Planning: I gave an update on the progress we have made in interim facilities renovation of classrooms, student lounge areas, library, etc. and the timeline for their completion during the next academic year. I also gave a status report on the SMILE (Stanford Medicine Information and Learning Environment) Project, including its current scope, planned location and approximate timeline. This is my highest priority project for capital development for the School and it is our very definite hope to complete it by no later than 2008-2009. Parenthetically, those years are respectively, the centennial of the founding of the Stanford University School of Medicine, and the 50th Anniversary of the location of the School and Hospitals on the Stanford campus. I also described the site that will likely house SMILE, which is adjacent to the Clark Center and Beckman Center – more details will follow shortly.

Family Medicine Clerkship. Recognizing the important and valuable role that the family medicine clerkship provides to our students, I am pleased to announce that we are forming a Center for Education in Family and Community Medicine within the Office of Student Affairs. Dr. Sam LeBaron, Associate Professor of Medicine (Family Medicine) will serve as the first director. In addition to overseeing the clinical clerkship in family medicine, it is my hope that this new Center will provide an umbrella over the various important community based initiatives within the School. I very much value the many contributions made by faculty and students to improving the lives of our broader community through care, education and research. The new Center provides further evidence of the School's commitment to this important area.

Restructuring Plans for Information Resources and Technology

Senior Associate Dean for Information Resources and Technology (IRT), Dr. Henry Lowe, has asked me to inform you that on October 1, the School launched a new organization dedicated to providing innovative and effective information technology (IT) and knowledge access services to the Stanford biomedical community. Since it was established in March of this year, the Office of Information Resources and Technology (IRT) has been developing a new organizational structure that combines the exceptional talents of the staff of Lane Library, MedIT and SUMMIT with those of recently recruited IT professionals to create a newly integrated organization that will effectively support the Schools clinical, research, educational and community outreach missions. Under the direction of Dr. Lowe, this organization is currently engaged in a comprehensive IT

strategic planning process, while also working on a number of urgent IT problems related to data center services, wireless networking infrastructure, IT security, database support, HIPAA-compliance, knowledge access tools and learning technologies. The overall goal of IRT is the development of an innovative information technology infrastructure and knowledge access environment that can support Stanford's biomedical community. This infrastructure will be designed to address critical, real-world problems that face our community. It will be developed collaboratively using a process that brings together information technology, library science and biomedical domain expertise both from within Stanford and from regional, national and international partners. The new Stanford Biomedicine information technology and knowledge resource infrastructure will be standards-based, innovative, user-centric and designed to support the essential systems inter-operability that will ensure the free flow of the data and knowledge that drives patient care, research and education. IRT is committed to providing our community with access to information to support their missions while protecting the privacy and confidentiality of that information.

To learn more about the new IRT organization visit its website at <http://www.med.stanford.edu/irt/> or email IRT at irt@med.stanford.edu

Farewell and Welcome

October 4th was the final day for Ms. Beverly Simmonds, Special Assistant to the Dean. Ms. Simmonds leaves for Boston with her husband who is being relocated to that fair city. Bev joined the Dean's office just a year ago, having previously been the DFA for Biochemistry. Since joining the Stanford community nearly four years ago, Bev has done an outstanding job in every position she has held. I will miss her tremendously as will her many friends and at the School and the University. I want to take the opportunity to thank Bev for all the helpful and important work she has conducted for the School and especially for her invaluable role as Special Assistant.

While wishing Bev a fond farewell, I am also very pleased to announce that Kathryn Gillam, Senior Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs and Foundation Relations will replace Bev Simmonds as Special Assistant to the Dean beginning October 28th. Dr. Gillam has had an extremely distinguished career at Stanford during the past 12 years and I am enormously pleased that she has agreed to join the Dean's Office in this important position.

I am also pleased to welcome Ms. Ellen Waxman who will assume the new position of Director of Academic Reviews and Investigations reporting to Dr. David Stevenson, Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Ms. Waxman previously served as university ombuds and director of the Stanford Mediation Center. We are extremely pleased that she will be joining the Dean's office in this new and important position.

Past Events

- **Graduate Student Dinner:** On Tuesday evening, September 24th our incoming Graduate Student Class joined faculty for a festive welcoming dinner at the Arrillaga Center. Dr. James Nelson, Senior Associate Dean for Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Education served as the host. Once again, as noted in the September 23rd Newsletter, we are fortunate to have attracted another spectacular class of graduate students to Stanford.
- **Stethoscope Ceremony:** On Wednesday evening, September 25th the Annual Stethoscope Ceremony was held to welcome incoming medical students and their families to Stanford and the School of Medicine. While most schools herald the transition to medical school with a “white coat” ceremony, Stanford has been unique in providing a stethoscope to each student as an emblem and tool of the career on which they are about to embark. The concept of a Stethoscope Dinner is attributed to Dr. Elliot Wolfe, the Director of the Office of Medical Student Professional Development, and I am personally grateful to the focus of this event since historically and to this day, the stethoscope has been used to connect physicians to their patients whereas the white coat, while symbolically significant, tends to create more of a distance and professional separation. The Ceremony was a true celebration of a new beginning for our students – and their families.
- **Blackhawk Event:** On Tuesday evening, September 24th I joined faculty of the Department of Urology for a special education event and reception at the Blackhawk Museum in Danville, CA. Sponsored by Mr. Kenneth Behring, currently Founder of the Wheelchair Foundation and founder of the Blackhawk Museum, the evening featured Dr. Linda Shortliffe, Professor and Chair of Department of Urology, who provided an overview of the field of urology to an audience of over 100 interested members of the community. Dr. Joe Presti, Associate Professor of Urology then gave an update on the screening and testing for prostate cancer and Dr. James Brooks presented an overview of preventive strategies as well as new approaches for diagnosing urological malignancies. The presentations were followed by a lively and informed discussion with a very interested and participative audience. This event helped us to bring an update on the important work going on at Stanford to the east bay community.
- **Addiction and the Brain.** In order to provide a better understanding of addiction, the Stanford Brain Research Center coordinated a program that attracted more than 400 participants to a symposium held in the Fairchild Auditorium on Friday, October 4th. The symposium was made possible through the generous support of Mr. T. Robert Burke and featured presentations by leading investigators in the field including Ting-Kai Li, who was recently named the new Director of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. Special thanks for organizing this important event go to Professors Dick Tsien, Bill Mobley, Rob Malenka, Ben Barres and other members of the SBRC.

Future Events

- **How to be a Stanford Faculty Entrepreneur: Role Models and Resources:** I have been asked to let you know about special program exclusively for Stanford faculty members that focuses on the practical side of entrepreneurship at Stanford. The Stanford Office of Technology Licensing (OTL), the Stanford Technology Ventures Program (STVP), and Concept2Company (C2C) sponsor this event.

The program will be held on Wednesday, November 5th from 12:30-5:30 p.m. at the Arrillaga Alumni Center. The seminar will feature a welcome by Jim Plummer, Dean of the School of Engineering, and an interactive interview with John Hennessy, Stanford University President, both of whom are successful entrepreneurs.

This event is intended for Stanford faculty members who are interested in learning how to evaluate the commercial value of their academic research, how to work with the Stanford licensing office, and how to take advantage of all of the resources in the Silicon Valley community. Panels of industry experts and experienced entrepreneurs will provide a guide to resources available to prospective faculty entrepreneurs and advice from those who have traveled this path before. A reception will follow the formal program, providing an opportunity to talk informally with other faculty members and panelists.

To view the agenda, learn about the speakers and panelists, and to register for the conference, please visit: <http://sen.stanford.edu/senfacultyseminar/> Space is limited and registration is required. To register contact <http://sen.stanford.edu/senfacultyseminar/registration.fft>. If you have any questions, please contact Sally Hines at: sally.hines@stanford

- **Reception for New Faculty of Color:** On Monday, October 21st, Provost Etchemendy will host a reception to welcome new faculty members of color to the Stanford community. The reception will be held in the Stanford Faculty Club from 4:30-6:30 p.m. This event is the result of a coalition between the Committee on Black Performing Arts (CBPA) and other Ethnic Centers on campus. On behalf of Professor Elam and the Provost, I would like to extend an invitation to the School of Medicine faculty and community to attend this reception.
- **Invitation to Moonlighting:** Arghavan Salles, one of the newly elected members of SMSA, has extended an invitation to the faculty and staff of the School of Medicine to attend “Moonlighting” the medical school’s annual semi-formal dance on November 9th. It will be held in the Great American Music Hall in San Francisco from 9:00 p.m. – 1:00 a.m. Tickets are \$25 for students and \$40 for everyone else. The contact person for tickets and information is Gladys Martin – gladys.martin@stanford.edu. This is the first time that faculty and staff have been invited to this event and it is a lovely opportunity to develop new connections within our broader community. I want to thank SMSA for extending this invitation.

- **Etta Kalin Moskowitz Memorial Lecture:** Dr. Sanjiv Sam Gambhir, Director, Crump Institute for Molecular Imaging, UCLA School of Medicine, will be this year's Memorial Lecturer. The title of his lecture is "Molecular Imaging in Animals and Humans: Opportunities for the Next Decade". Dr. Gambhir's lecture will be held on Thursday, November 21st at 5:30 p.m. in the Lucile Salter Packard Children's Hospital Auditorium. A reception will follow in the lobby.

Announcements

- **Dr. Thomas M. Krummel**, Emile Holman Professor and Chair of the Department of Surgery, was recently inducted into the Halsted Society. This is one of the oldest and most prestigious surgical organizations in the country with an active membership of only 75. He becomes the second Stanford Chair of Surgery, after Dr. Robert Chase, to be elected to this organization.

The Halsted Society was created in April 1923 and named after William Stewart Halsted, M.D. as it was felt that he had given the surgical profession a new philosophy and a basic scientific approach to surgery (Dr. Halsted had died just the year before on September 7, 1922).

Today the Halsted Society is a vigorous organization of professional men and women who support the purposes listed in Article II of the Society's constitution: to perpetuate the memory of Doctor William Stewart Halsted; to further the scientific principles and ideals for which he stood; to encourage exchange of ideas, free and informal discussion, and a spirit of sociability and good fellowship among its members.

- **Dr. Mark McClellan**, Associate Professor of Economics and of Medicine, has been nominated as Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration by the Bush Administration. Dr. McClellan, a faculty member in the Department of Medicine and CHP/PCOR is currently on leave at the White House in order to fulfill this important duty. Dr. McClellan's nomination has already achieved broad bipartisan support recognizing his remarkable credentials and attributes for this most important position.
- **Terence A. Ketter, M.D.**, Chief, Bipolar Disorders Clinic, and Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Stanford School of Medicine has received the eighth annual Outstanding Faculty Physician Award for excellence in specialty care of students. The award was presented by the Vaden Health Center. Dr. Ketter's outstanding diagnostic skills and his expansive knowledge of psychopharmacology have made him an outstanding clinician and an invaluable consultant for CAPS staff. "His knowledgeable approach has enabled many Stanford students to continue their academic careers," said Dr. Alejandro Martinez, Director of Vaden's Counseling and Psychological Services.

- **Anna Dapelo-Garcia**, Business Operations Manager for Clinic Administration for Stanford Hospital and Clinics, was given the sixth annual Vaden Award for Exceptional Service in facilitating health care of Stanford students. These awards were presented at the annual fall seminar of Vaden staff on September 18, 2002. Dapelo-Garcia, a thirteen-year employee of Stanford, was honored for ensuring that the logistics of referrals between Vaden and Stanford Clinics proceed smoothly and in a timely manner. Jane Meier, Associate Director of Vaden, noted her recent key contribution dealing with changes in students' insurance coverage.

Vaden offers medical care, counseling and psychological services and health promotion services to 14,000 Stanford students and their spouses and domestic partners. By referral from Vaden, clinics at Stanford Medical Center had more than 2,000 visits last year by Stanford students.

Congratulations to all!