FORWARD.

ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND SERVICE

YEAR IN REVIEW 2009 - 2010

ROSALIND FRANKLIN UNIVERSITY
OF MEDICINE AND SCIENCE
We Are Grateful for Your Support

We are pleased to share the 2010 annual report of Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science. Within these pages, you will get a glimpse at how the University is growing and changing in response to an evolving health care environment. You also will meet some of our alumni, faculty and students, whose stories demonstrate the vital role RFUMS plays as a leader in 21st century health care education.

Our commitment to excellence is firm, but can only be sustained with the strong support of our friends. Thank you for your past generosity, which has assisted us in providing scholarships, funding new facilities and fulfilling our commitment to community service — all of which help us attract remarkable students and faculty like those featured in this report.

We greatly value your continued support. Your gifts allow Rosalind Franklin University a future of continued vitality and impact.

On the cover: Tonya Cramer, a third-year student at Chicago Medical School, examines a baby at Advocate Hope Children’s Hospital as part of her clinical rotation in pediatrics.

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Gina Pryma, Editor and Writer
Lynn Granstrom, Art Director and Designer
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Reflecting on the Past Year
We are delighted to use this message to reflect on a few additional highlights of 2010, which reveal how RFUMS is fulfilling its mission.

We Continue to Lead
In the early months of the year, the long-awaited federal health care reform legislation put in motion a number of changes that will have a major impact on the way care is provided to Americans for years to come. Amid the discussion of this new health care landscape is the recognition that there is an expected shortage of all health professionals in the coming decade. This means that the goal of health care reform — to ultimately provide universal health care coverage — will be challenged. Chief among these concerns is the growing critical shortage of primary care clinicians. RFUMS is well positioned to help address this concern. Our longstanding commitment to an interprofessional medical education model continues to prepare students for a new paradigm in health care delivery. They will leave RFUMS as health care professionals who have learned from, with and about each other with the goal of providing team-based collaborative care.
We Expanded Our Size and Scope

After years of planning, Rosalind Franklin University announced the creation of our new College of Pharmacy, which will welcome its first class in 2011. We took a further step in preparing for the new College with the groundbreaking of our new Interprofessional Education Center (IPEC). The 23,000-square-foot, three-story building will be the home of the College of Pharmacy, as well as provide additional learning space for medical and graduate health science students. The IPEC will include small group learning space for our interprofessional teams, clinical simulation suites, a case demonstration amphitheatre and educational facilities on the first two floors. The third floor will house the new College of Pharmacy, and will feature a state-of-the-art laboratory, education conference room and 14 faculty offices.

Notably, we were able to take this bold step during an extremely challenging local and national economic climate. For this, we owe a debt of gratitude to the visionary stewardship of our Board of Trustees, and to state and local representatives whose support was pivotal in our ability to make this happen. And, it is important to emphasize that the building of our IPEC will be done by local firms, an example of how RFUMS is committed to the Lake County community.

We Maintain Our Commitment

Of course, the most important accomplishment of 2010 was our continued ability to provide outstanding education for students, to contribute to the health and wellness of our local community and to further the impact of medicine through research. This report contains articles that merely hint at the enormity of these successes. We believe you will share our pride in the passion, intellectual curiosity and humanity of students from each of the University’s schools. We celebrate the physician-teachers from our health system who provide care for residents of our community and serve as inspiring role models for our students. And we are privileged to have faculty members whose focus on research enriches the educational environment and moves us closer to new understanding about disease, diagnosis, even cures.

And so, we go forward — building on a tradition of excellence as we embrace the challenges of an evolving health care environment. We hope this report serves as a useful “snapshot” of the remarkable programs and people that make RFUMS such a vital university community.

Ruth M. Rothstein
Chair, Board of Trustees

K. Michael Welch, MB, ChB, FRCP
President and CEO
Nancy Parsley’s career path took a sharp turn when she was just a college freshman. “I was a business major at Mundelein College, and had set my sights on a future in the world of finance or industry,” she recalls. Then, fate intervened. “I developed some minor foot problems and sought care from a podiatric physician,” she says. “I not only got great care, I fell in love with the profession and changed course, literally. I met with my college advisors and began taking the courses I would need in order to pursue my new dream.” She enrolled at the Dr. William M. Scholl College of Podiatric Medicine, graduating cum laude in 1993. From there, she completed her podiatric surgical residency in northern Virginia, and then worked in private practice in Maryland. She went to work at the American Podiatric Medical Association, and in 2001 was promoted to the position of Director of Health Policy and Practice. “I loved my work at APMA,” she says. “It gave me the opportunity to work on health care policy issues, including those around private insurance and hospital issues, for our profession’s 15,000 members.”

Dr. Parsley says that her work for APMA fueled her passion for the profession and her interest in being part of its continued vital role in health care. “There was no better place to do that than my alma mater, Scholl College,” she says. She returned to Scholl in 2007, serving as Associate Dean of

BUILDING ON SUCCESS
Dean Nancy Parsley, DPM

Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science
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“I still love patient care, and so I would like to be part of our students’ clinical experiences as much as possible. The benefits are reciprocal in many ways — our students’ enthusiasm, intelligence and amazing energy are a source of inspiration for me.”

NANCY PARSLEY, DPM
DEAN, DR. WILLIAM M. SCHOLL COLLEGE OF PODIATRIC MEDICINE

Academic Affairs and Assistant Professor of Surgery and working closely with long-time Dean Terence B. Albright, DPM, who led Scholl College as it made a successful merger with Rosalind Franklin University. “Because of Dr. Albright’s leadership, Scholl not only made a smooth transition, but maintains its status as the nation’s premier school of podiatric medicine,” Dr. Parsley says. “He has been a source of great inspiration and counsel to me for many years, both in my work at Scholl and in my years at APMA. Dr. Albright has been a strong voice for our profession, and I am humbled and honored to be the one to follow him as Dean.”

Dr. Parsley says that in her role as Dean she hopes to continue to teach. “I still love patient care, and so I would like to be part of our students’ clinical experiences as much as possible. The benefits are reciprocal in many ways — our students’ enthusiasm, intelligence and amazing energy are a source of inspiration for me.” Dr. Parsley says that when she ponders her main goal as Dean, she cannot help but reflect on the choice she herself made. “I recall the excitement I felt as I began studying podiatric medicine and realizing the great potential it afforded me. I could work with patients, perform surgery, work in research, or even play a role in guiding the profession and future careers. Building on the strong foundation of my outstanding education at Scholl, I have been fortunate to do all of these things. As I look around at our students, I want them to embrace their choice... as I know many of them have...with the exuberance and commitment that will translate into great patient care and a very fulfilling future.”
The beginning of the fall term in 2011 signals a new chapter in Rosalind Franklin University’s history as a leader in interprofessional health care education. That is when the University will formally welcome the first class of its new College of Pharmacy.

“The opening of the College of Pharmacy represents the culmination of much hard work, along with great vision by the leadership of Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science,” says Gloria Meredith, PhD, founding Dean of the College of Pharmacy.

Dr. Meredith emphasizes that the creation of the College of Pharmacy addresses an increasingly important focus of medicine — the impact of medications in the management and treatment of disease. “The role of the pharmacist has evolved significantly over the last three decades,” she says. “Not so long ago, a pharmacist primarily prepared and dispensed drugs to patients. Now, pharmacists are playing an increasingly important role as the member of a patient’s health care team.

With growing numbers of pharmaceuticals available, both prescription and over-the-counter, pharmacists are working with physicians and other professionals to make sure medications are being used correctly and safely.”

The College will help educate and train this new generation of pharmacists to take on expanding responsibilities in all areas, including patient medication management, work with physicians and other professionals in hospital and specialty clinics, drug research and development, and regulation in the pharmaceutical industry and areas of government and public health.

“Our students will benefit from a 10-1 student-to-faculty ratio, and opportunities for experiential learning in private and public clinics, health systems and public health agencies in both urban and rural settings,” Dr. Meredith adds. “They will also benefit from the College’s proximity to a number of large pharmaceutical companies. On graduation, they will be well equipped to apply their education and training in any number of settings.”
Dr. Meredith says the expanding role of pharmacists makes Rosalind Franklin the ideal setting for the College of Pharmacy. “The University’s commitment to interprofessional education gives our students exposure to working as members of the health care team as part of their education,” she says. “Pharmacy students at Rosalind Franklin have a unique opportunity to train side-by-side on teams that include students in medicine, physician assistant, podiatric medicine, physical therapy and other health care programs. This approach is ideal for the pharmacy student because it mirrors an experience they will likely have once they graduate.”

The College of Pharmacy will partner with a number of undergraduate colleges and universities in the Midwest and, in an effort to attract outstanding students and offer scholarships and some tuition discounting, will enable qualified applicants to enter the College after two years of appropriate undergraduate studies. One of the partners is Carroll University in Waukesha, Wisconsin, whose Dean of Natural and Health Sciences, Jane Hopp, PT, MS, PhD, has served as a member of the Advisory Board for the new College. “The College of Pharmacy at Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science offers what I believe to be a model curriculum,” she says. “It will prepare pharmacists of the future, giving them the basic and clinical knowledge and the practical skills to practice pharmacy from evidenced and clinical decision-making foundations.” Thomas G. Moore, PharmD, President of U.S. Operations for Hospira, Inc., also serves on the Advisory Board and says the new College demonstrates Rosalind Franklin University’s responsiveness and vision. “The Advisory Board that was assembled reflects the spectrum of pharmacy expertise, including representatives from industry, retail pharmacy and academia,” he says. “We were thrilled to have the opportunity to share our ideas and help create the College ‘from the ground up.’”

The College of Pharmacy will have 25 faculty members and will be housed in the new Interprofessional Education Center, home to a state-of-the-art Pharmacy Skills Laboratory. “The curriculum is set, ground is broken for a new building, and we are putting our new faculty in place,” says Dr. Meredith. “Now comes the best part…accepting applications and admitting the first class to receive a PharmD from Rosalind Franklin University. I cannot wait to meet them—the class of 2015.”
As for himself, Dr. Feinberg acknowledges a debt to Chicago Medical School. “Of course, like everyone, I am the sum total of my experiences. But my life as a physician began at Chicago Med, and I clearly remember several experiences that helped shape my future.”

He recalls that, as a third-year student, he and his classmates were paired off and asked to assess a patient. “We reported our findings, the results of a physical ‘examination,’” he says. “But the teacher kept asking us, ‘But what did you see?’ We answered again, and he sent us back to the patient, and then pressed again: ‘What did you see?’ This happened several times over the course of an hour or so. In the end, we learned that our patient had signs of scleroderma, a dermatological disorder in which the skin hardens. Since we were not asked to look for that specifically we didn’t see it. That episode taught me a valuable lesson about really seeing my patients.

“Another important experience was a psychiatry rotation with a remarkable physician on the South Side of Chicago, in an area where most of our patients were poor. Early on, he taught me that you cannot treat people independent of their personal situations. I learned from him that I must care for the whole person, in the context of their lives, not just the disease or symptom that brought them to my office. That man, Dr. Carl Bell, really taught me how to be a doctor.”

Dr. Feinberg, who is triple board-certified in child and adolescent psychiatry, adult psychiatry and addiction psychiatry, also recalls working as a researcher with

Students come to Rosalind Franklin University to follow a career path that will help them make a difference. Whether they choose to practice, teach or do research, their futures will impact the lives of people for generations to come.

The student journey is marked by the influences of others. Daily, they engage with their teachers on campus or in one of the school’s affiliated hospitals, clinics or laboratories. As well, our students can learn from those who went before — from the thousands of RFUMS alumni currently in practice across the U.S. and throughout the world.

One of those alumni is Dr. David Feinberg (CMS ’89), Chief Executive Officer of the UCLA Hospital System. Just three years into this role, Dr. Feinberg has distinguished himself for his determined focus on patient-centered care. “I am privileged to be part of a hospital that is consistently ranked in the top five in the U.S.,” he says. “But our clinical and research excellence is diminished if we forget what matters most — that we treat our patients with genuine concern, kindness and compassion. We must constantly think: Do we give them the information they need? Do we make them feel safe? Do we treat them like human beings?”

Under Dr. Feinberg’s leadership, UCLA has transformed the patient experience, leading to remarkable turnaround in satisfaction scores. He defers credit for these results. “This is a team effort,” he says.
Dr. Seymour Diamond at Chicago’s Diamond Headache Clinic. “Dr. Diamond was remarkable, treating patients from all over the country,” he says. “Though he sometimes had 20 to 30 patients in his caseload at one time, he was engaged with every one of them, remembering details about their families, their hometowns and their interests. All the while, the care provided was efficient, with great ‘throughput,’ as we now call it.”

What did Dr. Feinberg learn from these experiences, all part of his CMS education? “I learned to look closely and really see my patients. I learned that it’s impossible to truly take care of a patient without considering the context of their environment. I learned that being engaged with patients, getting to know them and treating them like human beings can go hand in hand with efficient, effective care. In short, I learned a great deal about how to be a good doctor and, I believe, a good human being.”

And what can today’s students learn from David Feinberg? He believes students at Rosalind Franklin in all the health care specialties have profound opportunities. “Health care is at a turning point,” he says. “Rosalind Franklin University, with its visionary commitment to interprofessional education, is uniquely poised to prepare excellent practitioners for a new system of health care. I will be watching with interest and encouragement as our next generation of health care professionals take their next step.”

The Feinbergs say it hasn’t always been easy to accommodate their separate career paths. “Over the years, we have had some challenges dealing with our respective residency, fellowship and career moves,” he says. Board-certified in psychiatry, Dr. David Feinberg currently serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the UCLA Hospital System. Dr. Andrea Feinberg went on from CMS to complete a residency in internal medicine at the Wadsworth VA Medical Center, part of the UCLA Health System, and then completed a fellowship in pulmonary medicine and critical care. Today, she sees patients and is medical director at a practice in the Los Angeles area. “We also are the parents of two wonderful kids,” she adds. “We have a daughter who just began college and a son in high school. Our lives are busy and full—just like they were during our student days at CMS. That was a time we look back on with great fondness.”

Dr. David Feinberg agrees. “When I chose to come to the Midwest for medical school I could not have foreseen how dramatically this decision would impact both my personal life and professional future. It was a very good choice on both counts.”
“I was a pretty impressionable five-year-old,” she recalls. “And I clearly remember two experiences that affected me greatly. One was a television program about the benefits of eastern medicine. The other was a show featuring circus performers. Of course, being five, the performance option was more accessible, and I began what would be a lifelong love of dance.” Her studies led to Tonya’s participation, at age 15, in a folk dance exchange program in Latvia and to her acceptance in the prestigious London Contemporary Dance School. Returning to the U.S., she attended Towson State University in Maryland, where her studies focused on the arts. She later wrote and published poetry and worked as a performance artist in New York, pursuing the art of Butoh, an expressive dance form from Japan.

Along the way Tonya was invited to join a theatre troupe that performed on tall ships at stops along the East Coast. It was there that she was asked to learn to perform as an aerialist. “In a way, my childhood circus dream had come true,” she says. Tonya’s training in aerialist arts continued after she left the troupe. She later became an instructor at the Toronto School of Circus Arts and has continued to use her aerial arts expertise as a way to reach out to at-risk youth.
“During my interviews, I sensed that Rosalind Franklin University was interested in me not in spite of, but because of my nontraditional background. I could see that this was a school at which I could be myself.”

From the start, Tonya distinguished herself as a student leader. During her first year, she was a CMS class of 2012 representative to the Executive Student Council (ESC). In 2010-2011, she serves as Student Dean, a role in which she represents all four classes of current CMS students, relaying information to and from CMS faculty and administration.

Her interests and commitment extend to local and international issues, too. Between her first and second years at CMS, Tonya participated in Rosalind Franklin University’s International Health Interest Group (IHIG), an innovative student-run organization that encourages students to increase their awareness of global health issues and provides access to information about clerkship and summer internship opportunities overseas. Through IHIG, she traveled to Zambia, where she spent the summer working in a pediatric hospital. “I was overwhelmed by the sharp contrast between the warmth of the people and their dire situation, being almost completely without medical resources,” she says. “This was a powerful experience.”

Closer to home, she served as a co-president of the Health Care Project, which operated out of the PADS shelter in North Chicago.

Now a third-year medical student, Tonya is busy with clinical rotations. “I am excited to be working in clinical settings, where I can use the approach to care I have learned at CMS — which is to view things from the patient’s perspective.” She maintains an appreciation for her interesting life so far, and for her eventual decision to become a doctor. “My past experiences and dreams for the future brought me to CMS,” she says. “The school didn’t want me to conform to an idea of what a medical student was, or should be. Instead, it was clear from the start that the administration and faculty wanted me to bring the full measure of my life experience to my studies and to my eventual career as a physician. I know I have made the right choice.”

While working in Toronto, Tonya’s interest in medicine was rekindled. “I met a young man who was HIV positive, and I was deeply moved by how much this diagnosis affected every aspect of his life,” she says. “It seems like such a simple truth, but his experience made me think about the great impact medicine can have. I had always loved science, and as a dancer and performer I had an appreciation for the human body. I decided to change directions and apply to medical school.”

Tonya was aware that her education and experience lacked some of the science-oriented foundation she would need before applying. She completed several additional classes and took a position in a research laboratory at Yale University School of Medicine. Fortified by these accomplishments, she began the application process.

“Eventually, I received several acceptances, but the decision to attend Chicago Medical School was an easy one,” she says. “During my interviews, I sensed that Rosalind Franklin University was interested in me not in spite of, but because of my nontraditional background. I could see that this was a school at which I could be myself.”
Confronting a challenge sometimes leads to an inspired idea. That was the case in the mid-1960s, when physicians at Duke University considered how to address the increasing shortage of physicians — especially those providing primary care. Their efforts led to the establishment of a new profession — physician assistant — a physician extender who practices medicine with physician supervision. Concurrently, another health profession emerged. To address the increasing shortage of pathologists — medical doctors who study the nature, causes and effects of disease — the pathologists’ assistant profession was born. Today, the RFUMS Pathologists’ Assistant Department in the College of Health Professions, is heralded as one of the country’s premier resources for students pursuing this profession.

“A pathologists’ assistant is trained to do much of the work that is done by pathologists,” says John Vitale, MHS, PA (ASCP) CM, Assistant Professor and Acting Chair, Pathologists’ Assistant Department. Other than microscopic examination and diagnosis, which are performed exclusively by a pathologist, “a pathologists’ assistant performs many of the tasks historically done by pathologists, including postmortem examinations and the gross analysis and prosection of surgically resected specimens, ranging from biopsies to complex resections for malignancy. Having a pathologists’ assistant as part of the team contributes greatly to the quality of a pathology department because it frees up the pathologist to perform the microscopic examinations that are critical to the patient’s correct diagnosis and treatment for disease. With dwindling numbers of pathologists, the pathologists’ assistant can contribute greatly to the effective and efficient delivery of care.”

The RFUMS Pathologists’ Assistant program is an intensive, 22-month curriculum that ensures students receive a high level of professional training, and culminates in a master’s degree. “Our program prepares students to hit the ground running upon graduation,” Vitale says. “In addition to classroom and lab work on campus, students also benefit from laboratory experience at our affiliated clinical sites, which include community and academic hospitals and independent reference laboratories throughout the country.” The RFUMS program is considered one of the best in the U.S., and Vitale attributes this to a number of factors. “We are fortunate to
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JOHN VITALE, MHS, PA (ASCP)CM
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR AND ACTING CHAIR,
PATHOLOGISTS’ ASSISTANT DEPARTMENT AT
COLLEGE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS

have many resources to offer, due to the leadership and support of our dean, Dr. Wendy Rheault,” he says. “This includes four full-time pathologists’ assistant faculty members and excellent laboratory facilities. Another strength relates to the University’s commitment to interprofessional health care education, which means that our students participate in classes and activities in the didactic and clinical settings with students from other programs. This enhances their experience and gives our students a sample of the kind of teamwork they can expect in their future work.”

Vitale notes that the RFUMS Pathologists’ Assistant program is the nation’s largest, admitting 33 students per cohort. “It is the westernmost program in the U.S.,” he adds. “Currently, there is no Pathologists’ Assistant program located west of the Mississippi, which means that we are the program of choice for many students from the West Coast, for example.” He says about one-half of the current students come from the upper Midwest, with the remaining half representing just about every region in the U.S. In addition, he adds, the program partners with the Cleveland Clinic and the University of Nebraska, with students from these two schools coming to RFUMS to complete coursework.

Justin Berry, a first-year student in the Pathologists’ Assistant program, came to RFUMS after receiving an undergraduate degree in medical technology from Purdue University and working in a reference laboratory for several years. “I love lab work, but I wanted to find a career that would allow me more responsibility and autonomy,” he says.

The program’s graduates are in high demand. “Our students typically receive two or three excellent job offers before they even finish,” Vitale says, adding that RFUMS graduates are employed by some of our nation’s most esteemed universities and hospitals, including Harvard, UCLA, Medical College of Wisconsin and The University of Chicago to name just a few. One alumna, Lisa Dionisi, MS, PA (ASCP)CM, taught gross anatomic pathology in an academic hospital and has returned to RFUMS as a faculty member to serve as the Assistant Program Director. “This is an exceptional career,” she says. “I deeply enjoyed teaching in the clinical setting, but was interested in coming back to teach and guide students in a program that is now a national model for this specialty.”

“From the start, I was happy with my decision to come to Rosalind Franklin University,” adds Justin Berry. “I am getting great, very demanding classroom training and am challenged by its strong focus on critical thinking. Additionally, this program is giving me a perspective on the health care environment, both today and as we face the future.”
Jennifer Miklos says she had an inkling about her future long ago, when she was a little girl “helping out” at her dad’s podiatric practice. “I just liked to be there,” she recalls. “Over the years, I spent time at the office, filing, straightening up — simple things like that. But the best thing was that I got to see my dad in action. I got to witness how his patients loved him, how much he helped them. That made a lasting impression on me.”

Last year, her career dream came full circle when, having completed her podiatric medicine residency, Jennifer Miklos, DPM, Scholl ’07, joined her dad, Robert Miklos, DPM, Scholl ’80, in his practice on the southwest side of Chicago. “I’ve always worked alone, but I can’t think of a better way to grow my practice than to welcome my daughter,” he says. “First, she’s an excellent podiatrist. Second, because she has spent so much time in my office over the years, many of my patients already know her.”

Dr. Miklos adds that he fully expects his two-person shop to grow again in a few years, when his son David, Scholl ‘10, joins the practice. Currently, David is doing his residency at Chicago’s Mercy Hospital, where his father has been an attending podiatric physician for many years. “My decision to attend Scholl, along with my residency at Mercy, were both influenced by the example my dad has set,” Dr. David
“The strong teaching foundation continues, but I can see that today’s students also benefit from better access to technology and from a strong focus on their role as part of the 21st century medical team. I believe that Jennifer and David are both well prepared to help address health concerns such as diabetic foot care, which will be increasingly important as Americans continue to live longer.”

ROBERT MIKLOS, DPM  DR. WILLIAM M. SCHOLL COLLEGE OF PODIATRIC MEDICINE GRADUATE

Dr. David Miklos (center) celebrates his graduation with his sister, Dr. Jennifer Miklos, and his father, Dr. Robert Miklos.

Miklos says. “He has been very involved in the residency program at Mercy, and for many years his practice has welcomed students and residents alike. I feel at home there.”

Jennifer Miklos echoes her brother’s sentiments about Scholl. “I liked the idea of attending the same school as my dad,” she says. “I know what a wonderful doctor he is, and so I knew I would get great training.”

Dr. Robert Miklos notes that he has enjoyed comparing his school experiences with his son and daughter. “The strong teaching foundation continues, but I can see that today’s students also benefit from better access to technology and from a strong focus on their role as part of the 21st century medical team. I believe that Jennifer and David are both well prepared to help address health concerns such as diabetic foot care, which will be increasingly important as Americans continue to live longer.”

Dr. Robert Miklos adds that David’s graduation last spring was a special thrill. “Because my daughter and I are both alumni of Scholl, we were invited to present David with his degree,” he says. “What a moment that was for our whole family! My daughter and son, embracing the career I chose for myself back when I was their age. I couldn’t be more proud.”
A mere month after their fall term began, a group of RFUMS first-year students gather to discuss a patient’s care plan. A student leader describes the case:

“The patient is a 63-year-old woman with a history of diabetes. She has a small wound on her right foot and a high lipid level. In addition, her family reports that she has had a poor appetite, has been unable or unwilling to ambulate on her own, is inconsistent about taking her medication and seems to have a lack of interest in her home life or recreational activities.”

At the conclusion of this brief case description, the students, who are members of HMTD 500, RFUMS’ interprofessional education class, and who represent most of the health care professions, tell how they would approach this case.

A Chicago Medical School student explained that he would delve deeper into the issues related to control of blood glucose and the high lipid levels and the patient’s apparent noncompliance with medication management. A student in the physician assistant program concurred, adding, “I would make sure we looked at other vital signs, too, including her blood pressure, and determine if there had been any recent weight gain or loss.”

Articulating her role on the team, a student from the Scholl College of Podiatric Medicine said she would look closely at the patient’s foot wound and skin sensation to determine a course of treatment that would correct any nerve damage and help prevent infection and any worsening of the wound.

“That assessment would be useful in my efforts to develop a physical exercise plan for this patient,” said a student from the physical therapy program. “I would work closely with the podiatric medicine physician, along with the rest of the health care team, to make sure an exercise program met the patient’s need safely and effectively.”

The patient’s overall well-being was further addressed by a clinical psychology student, who expressed concern about the patient’s lack of interest in activities. “She may be suffering from depression, and that might keep her from compliance with a number of the prescribed strategies. I would do an assessment to determine if a diagnosis of depression was correct, and would then discuss strategies to address this with the rest of the team.”

Other students weighed in, too. A student in the nurse anesthetist program expressed concern that this woman might be at higher risk for complications should surgery be needed. The pathologists’ assistant program student added that if surgery would ever be required, she might be asked to look at the surgical specimen.
The discussion concluded with the student leader acknowledging that the patient’s care would indeed require a team approach. Much information had been shared among the professional groups, providing insight into how collaboration could improve the patient’s outcome.

“This interaction reflects the goals of interprofessional education at RFUMS, and provides a snapshot of how we help live up to our commitment from the very beginning of the students’ experience,” says Dr. Susan Tappert, who along with Dr. Judith Stoecker and Professor Diane Bridges, is a co-director of the course. She explains that the classroom exchange described occurred in week 5 of HMTD 500, a course that is required for all first-year students at RFUMS during their first semester. Each class has about 16 students and is carefully assembled to include students from each of RFUMS schools and reflect a range of disciplines. “From the outset, our students not only hear about interprofessional education, they participate in it,” Tappert adds. “This gives them an early advantage when they graduate and move on to careers in 21st century health care, which increasingly incorporates the very team approach demonstrated in our HMTD class ‘case conference.’”

Professor Bridges explains that the HMTD class also prepares students in all disciplines for another health care reality. “No matter what career they choose, our students will eventually practice in the context of a community,” she says. “For first-year students, that community is our own Lake County. So, as part of this class they participate in a health status assessment that will culminate in a service learning project that takes them into the community. Over the years, our first-year students have embraced this opportunity and have brought enthusiasm and energy to projects aimed at educating residents on a number of issues, as well as doing hands-on work in such efforts as health fairs and screening events. In these activities, as in the classroom, students representing a spectrum of health care specialties learn from one another in pursuit of a common goal—to do their best for the people they serve.”
Science beckoned Neelam Sharma-Walia when she was a little girl. “I always liked to know how things worked,” she recalls. Losing her mother to cancer at an early age furthered young Neelam’s resolve and future direction. “I knew I wanted to pursue something that would help people someday.”

That quest has led Neelam Sharma-Walia, PhD, to her current position as Research Assistant Professor in the Microbiology and Immunology Department of Chicago Medical School, and to her pioneering research into virus-related cancers. Specifically, Dr. Sharma-Walia’s work focuses on Kaposi sarcoma-associated herpesvirus, which has recently been identified to be cancer-causing and is linked to Kaposi sarcoma and to two lymphoproliferative neoplastic disorders—primary effusion lymphoma (PEL) and multicentric Castleman’s disease (MCD). “There is a critical need to understand the potential of chemotherapeutic drugs that can eliminate the viral genome responsible for these conditions,” she says. “As part of this effort, we must decipher the pathways that have been intervened in order to eliminate the phase in which this genome persists and can lead to disease.” Dr. Sharma-Walia’s preliminary studies show that the upregulation of certain prostaglandins and leukotrienes—which are hormone-like substances involved in a wide range of body functions—in the endothelial cells play an important role in inflammation, angiogenesis and cell survival. Dr. Sharma-Walia’s research is helping to clarify the role of prostaglandins and leukotrienes in the development of Kaposi sarcoma, PEL and MCD, and may lead to further exploration of the therapeutic potential of such drugs as COX-2 inhibitors in controlling Kaposi sarcoma and other cancers.

Dr. Sharma-Walia’s work is part of an increasingly robust research environment at RFUMS. In fact, in 2010, research award monies increased 15 percent over the previous year, and funding awards from the National Institutes of Health increased more than 14 percent over the same interval. Research awards reflect work in all of RFUMS colleges, and represent a wide range of faculty interests.
“I feel privileged to work in a university that is named for one of our most important female scientists. I try to live up to the standards of excellence in research inspired by Rosalind Franklin and be involved in efforts to encourage young women to pursue the sciences. As a teacher, and as a mother of a young girl who also hopes to pursue science, this is a commitment that is very meaningful to me.”

NEELAM SHARMA-WALIA, PHD RESEARCH ASSISTANT PROFESSOR IN THE MICROBIOLOGY AND IMMUNOLOGY DEPARTMENT OF CHICAGO MEDICAL SCHOOL

“Rosalind Franklin University has cultivated a very stimulating research community, one in which all of us support one another,” Dr. Sharma-Walia adds. “My projects could not have been accomplished without the extraordinary, untiring efforts and devotion of my students, support from colleagues and great scientific environment in the Microbiology and Immunology Department. Importantly, the University’s commitment to support research enhances the educational environment, providing a rich ‘classroom’ for the young people who are the clinicians and physician-scientists of tomorrow.”

Dr. Sharma-Walia also emphasizes that, as a woman, she is ever mindful of her responsibility as a role model. “I feel privileged to work in a university that is named for one of our most important female scientists,” she says. “I try to live up to the standards of excellence in research inspired by Rosalind Franklin and be involved in efforts to encourage young women to pursue the sciences. As a teacher, and as a mother of a young girl who also hopes to pursue science, this is a commitment that is very meaningful to me.”

Dr. Sharma-Walia adds that this has led to her involvement last year in Take Your Sons and Daughters to Work Day at RFUMS, on which she hosted visits to her lab, along with other female scientists at the University, for the benefit of visiting children and teens.

She notes that her current research, while focused on prostaglandins and leukotrienes, may also shed new light on diseases that affect the lives and futures of women. “My research is helping me understand more about lipid metabolism,” she says. “Lipids are fat molecules that contribute to a number of diseases, including cardiovascular conditions and, of course, to obesity. My work may someday lead to further understanding about obesity and breast cancer. There is a definite relationship, but we have yet to clarify the ‘why’ behind this link. I hope my research will help lead us there.”
A toothpick was the culprit. “I know that sounds funny, but it’s true,” says Shirley Simmons-Clark, of Zion, Illinois. “I stepped on a toothpick and it cut my left foot.” Shirley, who was diagnosed with diabetes several years ago, recalls that at first she was not concerned about the cut. “But it didn’t seem to be healing and eventually the pain got pretty bad,” she explains. At first, Shirley sought care from the Lake County Health Department/Community Health Center. Realizing that she needed specialized care, they referred her to the Scholl Foot & Ankle Center, which is part of the Rosalind Franklin University Health System. There, Shirley was seen by Martin Yorath, DPM, Medical Director of the Health System and a member of the faculty at the Dr. William M. Scholl College of Podiatric Medicine.

Dr. Yorath explains that since Shirley has diabetes she was at increased risk for complications of a foot injury, even one as seemingly minor as a toothpick cut. “Diabetes can affect blood flow and nerve endings, and sometimes results in neuropathy, a condition in which the nerves are compromised,” he says.

“When diabetic neuropathy occurs, it often affects the feet, resulting in diminished sensitivity to pain, cold or heat. As a result, a small cut can turn into a big problem.”

That was the case for Shirley, who was diagnosed as having an infection in her foot. At first, Dr. Yorath performed a minor procedure in the operating room at the Scholl Foot & Ankle Center to try to clear the infection. However, subsequent visits revealed that Shirley’s foot was not responding to treatment. “She needed more aggressive intervention, including intravenous antibiotics and surgery to prevent losing her foot,” he says.

This was troublesome news for Shirley, who, like many Americans, has a job but does not have adequate health insurance. “My insurance didn’t cover the kind of care I needed,” she recalls. “But Dr. Yorath came to my rescue. He used his connections to make it possible for me to get appropriate treatment.” Dr. Yorath, who is also on the staff
of Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center on Chicago’s North Side, helped Shirley apply for uninsured assistance that made it possible for her to be admitted to the hospital. Along with receiving intravenous antibiotics, in the hospital and at home, Shirley underwent surgery in which Dr. Yorath removed the infected bone and stabilized the big toe joint with an external fixator device. “This prevented her big toe from developing contractions that would make it difficult for her to walk,” he explains. “After a few weeks, I was able to remove this device and put a replacement joint into her big toe. Our goal is to help Shirley walk pain-free, without the risk of losing her foot to infection.”

Shirley’s experience underscores the benefit of the Rosalind Franklin University Health System, which, in addition to the Scholl Foot & Ankle Center, includes the Behavioral Health Center and the Reproductive Medicine Center in Vernon Hills, Illinois. The Health System has approximately 7,500 patients who logged 14,300 visits this past year. Approximately 35 percent of the patients served by the Health System are either uninsured or underinsured.

“Shirley’s experience shows how access to good health care can make a critical difference in a person’s life and future. Without proper treatment, she very well may have lost her foot, and possibly her life.”

“Shirley’s experience shows how access to good health care can make a critical difference in a person’s life and future,” Dr. Yorath says. “Without proper treatment, she very well may have lost her foot, and possibly her life.”

“I have a job, a family and a young granddaughter who means everything to me,” Shirley says. “Losing my foot would have affected everything in my life. I owe a lot to Dr. Yorath and his staff, and I am grateful that we have these kinds of medical services here in Lake County. This was a difficult ordeal at times, but I got great care and am on the road to recovery. I feel very blessed.”
Laura’s research has garnered the attention of the diabetes and podiatric medical communities. In 2008, she received a three-year Clinical Scientist Training Award from the American Diabetes Association — the only podiatric medical student to win this award. In 2009, she was selected as the American Podiatric Medical Students’ Association National Outstanding Podiatric Medical Student of the Year.

In 2010, Laura addressed graduates at the RFUMS commencement, where her closing comments seemed to prophecy the future that Laura herself can anticipate: “You are like no other—and you will change the face of medicine. Hold on to the optimism and passion that brought you here.”
Cynthia Abban brings a global perspective to her work as a student researcher. A native of Ghana, the sixth-year student in a combined MD/PhD program at RFUMS, says lack of access to medical care for a large percentage of the people in her home country sparked her interest in becoming a physician-scientist. She chose to pursue this dream in the United States, doing her undergraduate work at Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa. There, Cynthia’s passion for biology and computer science led to her self-created major — computational biology, and to the school’s eventual introduction of a course in this topic. Following graduation, she worked at a DuPont laboratory, cultivating her research skills and solidifying her plans to pursue a combined MD/PhD degree.

At RFUMS, Cynthia has worked in the virology laboratory of Dr. Patricio Meneses, and is the recipient of a five-year Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award fellowship. Her work has led to her publication of novel research on the herpesvirus 16, How HPV16 and BPV1 Infection Can Be Blocked by the Dynamin Inhibitor Dynasore. She has also published Usage of Heparin Sulfate, Integrins and FAK in HPV16 Infection.

“Rosalind Franklin University has provided me with so many opportunities,” Cynthia says. “It has provided me with access to academic resources, research facilities and a nurturing environment in which I can pursue work on a newly developed HPV vaccine.

“HPV16 is known to cause cervical cancer and is a contributing factor in the development of a number of other diseases,” she says. “My hope is that my research may someday lead to therapeutic interventions in cervical cancer and other diseases. This truly is translational research. I hope to bring benchside discoveries — the things learned in the research laboratory — to the bedside, for the benefit of girls and women throughout the world.”
Operating Results

Revenues

The University’s operating revenues are primarily comprised of tuition and fees, sponsored research support, endowment spending and private contributions. While tuition rate increases averaged 3%, total tuition revenue increased 15%. Demand for health sciences education is strong and the University increases enrollment where the appropriate level of capacity and resources exist. In FY 10 student enrollment increased 6%. The College of Health Professions had an enrollment increase of 9%; the Physician Assistant’s program, the Biomedical Science program and the Interprofessional Health Care programs are particularly strong. The Scholl College of Podiatric Medicine had an enrollment increase of 6% and the College of Medicine 3%.

Sponsored research support accounts for 14% of the University’s operating support. Approximately 72% of that support was received directly or indirectly from the federal government. In FY 10 grants for sponsored research increased 13%. The increase is a reflection of the federal research stimulus funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) and increased research activity. The number of grant application submissions has increased 43% over the past five years.

Endowment spending is a modest source of operating revenue for Rosalind Franklin University. The University utilizes a 5% spending policy for transfers to operations. In light of the decline in the value of the University’s endowment, the endowment payout declined 18% in 2010. It is projected to decrease an additional 16% in FY 11 and 12% in FY 12 before it begins to improve.

Expenses

Over the prior two fiscal years, the University has been able to realize significant cost reductions through the combined efforts of administration, faculty and staff. While revenues have increased, overall operating expenses have declined. Total expenses for the University have been decreased by 3%. Salaries and related expenses decreased 2% by eliminating vacant positions and redeploying faculty and staff to areas within the University that were under-resourced. In addition, significant savings were achieved by reducing professional fees and services and general operating costs. The University’s Reduce, Reuse and Recycle program has resulted in an 8% reduction in facility operating costs.

The result is a more cost-efficient operation and positive net operating results.

Looking Forward

Despite the financial challenges that the University has experienced as a result of the economic downturn, Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science has emerged from the crisis a stronger and more resilient University. We have reduced operating expenses, begun rebuilding our endowment and reserve funds and invested in our facilities to ensure the highest quality educational experience continues and grows for our students. In July we began construction of a new Interprofessional Education Center that will house state-of-the-art classroom and laboratory space and our new College of Pharmacy. Construction will be completed in summer 2011 in time for our inaugural class of Pharmacy students. We are firmly positioned to meet the nation’s health care needs with a new generation of health care professionals and leaders.

Audited Financial Statements

The financial information provided has been excerpted from the audited financial statements.

Rosalind Franklin University’s fiscal year 2010 financial statements were audited by Crowe Horwath LLP, and an unqualified opinion was rendered. A copy of the audited financial statements is available by writing to the Controller, 3333 Green Bay Road, North Chicago, IL 60064.
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