Pride and Sense of Community

The Faculty of Medicine is a diverse network composed of talented, bright students dedicated to making a difference in the world. The ambitious and determined minds of the graduate students of the Cellular and Molecular Medicine (CMM), Neuroscience (NSC), Biochemistry, Immunology, Microbiology (BMI) and Epidemiology departments are all engaged in scientific pursuits to strengthen the understanding of science and conduct research that will one day save the lives of others. However, given the size of the Faculty and the dissemination of students across its many departments, affiliated teaching hospitals, research centres and laboratories, the achievements of our graduate students sometimes go unnoticed.

Sharing Good News

The graduate students have responded to this challenge by finding a way to install a sense of unity, through the creation of a bi-weekly electronic newsletter circulated to students and faculty members. Originally a CMM/NSC student council initiative, the newsletter has since been adopted by the BMI graduate student body and is now one of the most efficient up-to-date mediums for raising awareness about prominent issues surrounding the Faculty of Medicine graduate students and spreading the news about students and faculty accomplishments. “The response has been very positive from students and faculty alike,” say Margaret Czesak and Kelly McClellan, members of the CMM/NSC graduate student council who launched the project. “It’s creating a sense of community, something our Department needed. With this newsletter, we are able to connect with our peers and colleagues on a broad range of important topics.”

Dr. Ruth Slack, Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies, adds, “The graduate students’ newsletter represents a major step forward towards developing a sense of community within our graduate programs. An essential prerequisite to increasing our recognition externally is to enhance our own awareness and celebrate the achievements of our colleagues internally.”

Supporting our Students

Since its inception in July 2005, the newsletter has reported on a number of impressive research achievements, awards, as well as academic and social events. The publication also keeps students informed of important scholarship application deadlines and when these awards are granted, while also providing a forum for recognizing the recipients. Last year alone, more than $2 million in scholarships was awarded to CMM, BMI and Epidemiology graduate students. This impressive amount of funding, reported in the newsletter, is a reflection of the successful and promising research taking place within the walls of the Faculty of Medicine.

Fostering a Sense of Community

Last but not least, the newsletter promotes attendance at academic and social events taking place on campus. As part of any successful graduate community, positive social interactions between the graduate student body and faculty are a must. The CMM/NSC council has very effectively used its newsletter as a means of promoting faculty-wide Research Symposia (over the course of the past year, these bi-monthly gatherings have been underlining the various research accomplishments of graduate students). Also, last September, the graduate student community overwhelmingly participated in the successful Orientation Week. This popular event featured an Academic Success Seminar during which speakers Dr. Ruth Slack, Dr. Kathy Wright, Director, Microbiology Program, Dr. Skjerjanc, Director, Biochemistry Program, Dr. Mads Kaern, and graduate student Kambiz Mousavi all provided valuable information and gave inspiring talks to new and existing students embarking on the journey of research discovery. The broadcast to the students and faculty, through the bi-weekly newsletter, contributed to the popularity of the seminars and social activities of Orientation Week.

This solid sense of student community would not evolve without the strong behind-the-scenes effort provided by CMM/NSC and BMI student councils.
On October 22, 2005, on the occasion of Dr. Hans K. Uhthoff's 80th birthday, the Ottawa Hospital's Division of Orthopaedic Surgery, under the leadership of Dr. Jolanta Karpinski, held a Grand Rounds in the Ottawa Congress Centre. More than 100 guests attended the event, including former residents, students, con-

freres and friends. They expressed their gratitude and admiration for the training they each received and for the many accolades that Dr. Uhthoff has received from the University of Ottawa, through his fine reputation. Prior to the event, in a mark of gratitude and friendship, a number of former residents and University of Ottawa alumni made donations towards the establish-

ment of the Hans K. Uhthoff Graduate Fellowship. During the event, Dr. Geoff Denis, Chair, Division of Orthopaedic Surgery, announced that $235,000 has been contributed thus far, including donations from current Division members and industry partners. This will be matched dollar for dollar by the University of Ottawa, so that in total, $470,000 will be made available to students.

Once again, our medical school welcomed the classmates, as they

on their 70,000 sq. ft. at a cost of $26 million.

facilities for medical education. AIME will house a state-of-the-art simulation and evaluation centre and research expansion to Roger-Guindon Hall. 

training Canada's best physicians, we are

Of Medicine laun-

Dr. Lebel accompanied by his wife, Mrs. Anne-Grêt Uhthoff and Mrs. Marion Robichon, wife of the last Dr. Jacques Robichon, the first head of Department of Orthopaedic Surgery.

THE DEAN'S MESSAGE

respond positively when we begin sollicitations,

in medical education. The Faculty needs your financial assis-

My fervent wish is to leave the deanship with

mandate in June 2006. I have watched, with

I have had the privilege of serving this great

occupy 70,000 sq. ft. at a cost of $26 million. 

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This was my last Homecoming as Dean. I want to thank all our former guests, and especially the Faculty of Medicine for their support of our great Faculty for 10 years and will be ending my mandate in June 2006. I have watched, with great pride, the accomplishments of our stu-

Many former students are invited to attend these talks,

Students, residents, fellows, faculty, staff — and anyone interested in hearing about a fascinating medical career — are invited to attend these talks, during which our invited speakers will share their experiences.

On October 25, the Faculty greeted

Dr. Marie-France LaRouche, RSC (Obstetrics & Gynaecology) and Senior Scientist at the Ottawa Hospital Foundation. Dr. T sang is was presented to him at the Canadian Hypertension Research Consortium.

Dr. Paul Odell (Oto-Rhino-Laryngology) was named President of the Canadian Society of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery, the national specialty society for otolaryngology in Canada.

Dr. Jolanta Karpinski (Medicine) assumed the position of Director of Faculty Development for a five-year term. She was the program director of The Ottawa Hospital's Adult Nephrology Training Program from 1999 to 2005, and is currently Specialty Chair for Nephrology with the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons Canada.

Dr. Geneviève Moineau (Pediatrics) has been appointed as Assistant Dean, Undergraduate Medical Education for a five year term.

Dr. Paul Bragg (Anesthesia) took on the role of Acting Assistant Dean, Postgraduate Medical Education for a one-year period, effective August 1, 2005.

Dr. Michael Hirsh (Family Medicine) has been confirmed as Director of Distributed Medical Education for a five year mandate, from September 1, 2005.

Dr. Zemin Yao.

The Ottawa Life Sciences Council recently presented Dr. Zemin Yao (Biochemistry, Microbiology and Immunology) with a Basic Research Award, in honour of his outstanding research into the fundamental mechanisms underlying the cause and prevention of disease. Dr. Yao's laboratories recently revealed the first direct link between lipoprotein and cancer.

KUDOS TO STUDENTS

Congratulations to the following Faculty of Medicine students who were identified by the Ottawa Citizen on their summer medical research projects: Meghan Anderson, who worked with Dr. Holack studying genes that allow cells to survive under stressful condi-

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On October 25, the Faculty greeted the first of its guests, Dr. François Lebel ('77), who has more than 15 years of experience from the launch of the Aesculapian Society, Dr. Lebel says he

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The ability of cells to regulate

complex molecular networks by switching between mobile and static states has been uncovered by Karim Mekhail, Ph.D. student (Cellu-

lar and Molecular Medicine), and his supervisor, Dr. Stephen Lee. Findings of their work, published in the August issue of the Journal of Cell Biology, have already been highlighted by several scientific journals including the journal Nature.

DR. BENJAMIN K. TSANG

Dr. Benjamin K. Tsang (Obstetrics & Gynaecology) received the 2005 Researcher of the Year Award, presented to him during The Ottawa Hospital Foundation's 2005 Gala for Research. Dr. David Park's research focuses on neuronal death, and has been funded by the Michael J. Fox Foundation, CIHR, and through awards including the Premier's Research Excellence Award, the University of Ottawa's Young Researcher of the Year award, and the Glaxo Wellcome Award. A specialist in Parkinson research, Dr. Park is one of the leaders of the newly created Parkinson Research Consortium.

MARLENE SHEHATA

Dr. Lea Renaud, Director of Research, Department of Medicine, and Associate Director and Senior Scientist, OHRI, has been appointed the first Dr. J. David Grimes Research Chair at the University of Ottawa. The OHRI, GlaxoSmithKline Inc., the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the University of Ottawa partnered to fund the $2 million Grimes Chair.

DR. PAUL ODELL

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Digital copy: Dr. Hans K. Uhthoff, last head of the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, receives congratulations from former residents, students, colleagues, and friends. He is a proud uOttawa graduate.
Faculty of Medicine Honours its Finest

O

n Friday September 30, guests gathered at Roger-Guindon Hall for the annual Dean’s Reception and Alumni Awards ceremony. Following tradition, the reception was the kick-off for the Faculty of Medicine’s Homecoming weekend. Classes that end in 5 and 0 were honoured, and classes of ’55 (A and B) and ’65, celebrated their 50th and 45th anniversary since graduation, respectively.

Dr. Peter Walker, who will be leaving the Faculty next June, noted that it would be the last opportunity for him to greet the alumni at their homecoming. He expressed his appreciation for their unwavering support of the Faculty – the two classes of ’55, for instance, have given more than $250,000 in the last three years. He also underlined the importance of the class of ’65, who has given major gifts in the past years.

Dean Walker also spoke of AIME, the Academy for Innovation in Medical Edu-

cational, a new initiative for the Faculty and a project he hopes will become a priority for all. Created in partnership with the Faculty’s affiliated teaching hospitals, once operational, it is expected to revolutionize the training of doctors. AIME will focus on promoting innovation in education and curricular design, research and assessing new methods of teaching, and sharing such knowledge with professional communities.

The Dean called upon the alumni’s support for helping the Faculty raise the private funds that will make this vision a reality.

Award of Merit

Dr. Leo Renaud (’65) Associate Director and Senior Vice-President, Office of Research of Department of Medicine, University of Ottawa, received the Award of Merit. A founding member of the Montreal General Hospital Research Institute, Dr. Renaud set up the first basic neurophysiology laboratory, where he initiated a career in neuroendocrinology. His research continues to improve our understanding how brain cells control body fluid balance and maintain cardiovascular stability. A founding member of the McGill Centre for Research in Neuroscience, Dr. Renaud’s research contributed to major advances in neuroendocrinology. In 1990, he returned to Ottawa to develop a research base within the Neurology Division at the Civic Hospital. Working with the Loeb Health Research Institute and the University, he helped create a basic and clinical neuroscience program revolving around themes of cellular communication and neuroprotection. Dr. Renaud was appointed the first Dr. J. David Grimwood Research Chair at the University of Ottawa.

Award for Professionalism

The Alumni Award for Professionalism was presented to father and son Drs Mark Dover (’55A) and Jeffrey S. Dover, ’65. Ottawa-natives Dr. Mark Dover received the award in honour of a dedicated career that spanned over 50 years. Alongside his career in general surgery, which he practiced at Riverside Hospital as well as at the CHEO, Dr. Dover played a major role in the development of the Faculty of Medicine and the University of Ottawa. He served as Chairman of the Faculty’s Division of General Surgery, Director of the Postgraduate Program in General Surgery and was elected to the University’s Senate. Within the larger medical community, Dr. Dover spent many years with the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, as Executive Secretary, Corresponding Member and Examiner. A sample of his accomplishments, these activities speak to Dr. Dover’s commitment to his community.

Dr. Jeffrey Dover’s interests are in general dermatology, laser medicine and cosmetic surgery. Currently Director of SkinCare Physicians of Chestnut Hill (MA), he is Associate Clinical Professor of Dermatology at Yale University School of Medicine and Adjunct Professor of Medicine at Darmouth Medical School. Founding editor of Journal Watch Dermatology, author of over 300 scientific publications, and co-author/editor of 17 textbooks, Dr. Dover was listed among the top dermatologists in the U.S. in Boston Magazine, The Improper Bostonian, Who’s Who of American Medicine, Guide to Top Doctors, and The Best Doctors in America. Dr. Dover Junior wasn’t able to attend the reception; his sister, Dr. Karen Dover, accepted the award in his place.

Award for Community Service

The Alumni Award for Community Service was presented to Dr. Mamta Gautam (’85), a psychiatrist in private practice in Ottawa and a specialist in physician health and well-being. Hailed as ‘The Doctors’ Doctor’, physicians make up her patient population. She has worked to ensure that physician health is recognized as a topic of importance and given the attention it deserves. Founding Director of our Faculty Wellness Program and initiator of Physician Appreciation Day in Ottawa, Dr. Gautam serves as a mentor, both in the University of Ottawa Mentorship Program for Medical Students, and in the Department of Psychiatry Mentorship Program. She created and conducted over 100 innovative seminars and practical workshops on physician stress and mental health for physicians. Author of Iron Age: Practical Stress Management Tools for Physicians, she writes a regular column, Helping Hand, in the Medical Post on Physician Health.

Montfort Hospital Double in Size

Provincial investment of $250 million will virtually double the current size of Montfort Hospital, Ottawa’s Francophone teaching hospital, and will allow expansion of services and programs such as the Family Medicine residency program.

After coming this close to closing less than a decade ago, Montfort Hospital now only a few miles from the teaching hospital outside Quebec, recently embarked on its largest redevelopment project yet. Last July, Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty announced that his Government will support the expansion of the hospital, with an investment of $250 million. For many, this announcement is a well-deserved victory after a long, hard-fought struggle.

To put the true value of this investment, we must recall the attempted closure of Montfort, in the 1990s, by the provincial government in power at the time. This restoration was met by a fierce opposition from the general population. Notably, the Franco-Ontarian community united to create an unprecedented popular movement, SOS Montfort. As a result of their determination, the matter was sent to court, and the Ontario Division Court handed a unanimous decision striking down the closure of Montfort Hospital, on the grounds that the proposed closure violated the unwritten constitutional principle of respect for the protection of minorities.

Montfort’s status as an essential institution of the Franco-Ontarian community is indisputable. But is also has a significant academic role, involving the provision of clinical training in French for Franco-

phone students and residents from the faculties of Medicine and Health Sciences of the local Universities and Colleges. In this capacity, Montfort Hospital is a key partner of the Faculty of Medicine. Since its creation, the Hospital’s Office of Academic Affairs has worked closely with the University of Ottawa. In conjunction with the Faculty of Medicine’s Bureau des affaires francophones (BAF) and the Centre national de formation en santé (CNFS), Montfort provide an ideal setting for teaching and training in a Francophone environment. According to Dr. Jean A. Roy, Director of the BAF, “With this expansion, Montfort Hospital will be able to offer even better services to the community, by having among its ranks a greater number of professionals and student interns. This will be in an excellent position to fill, along with the Faculty of Medicine, an important part of its mandate: training health care professionals who will eventually provide their services to Francophone communities across Canada. This is, for all of us, excellent news!”

Access to Montfort by members of the community is another significant enhancement by this major redevelopment project, as will the learning experience of students. The expansion project, expected to be completed in the winter of 2008, will add more than 450,000 square feet of departmental space to the existing building (more than doubling the hospital’s current size) to create new services and programs and upgrade existing ones.

Montfort will be able to accommodate 500 students in 36 different disciplines, including 180 University of Ottawa medical students. The residency program in Family Medicine will expand, going from 12 to 24 new residents per year and will rank among the largest Family Medicine programs in Canada. New residency programs will also be developed, in Internal Medicine and in Obstetrics and Gynecology. Montfort’s academic mission will be further enhanced with the addition of the Montfort Research Institute, specializing in population health. This new facility is already attracted recent graduates in scientific research from around the world, and will continue attracting more of the best and brightest minds to Montfort Hospital.

Award recipients: Dr. Mark Dover (’55A), Dr. Mamta Gautam (’85) and Dr. Leo Renaud (’65), with Dean Peter Walker.
Motivated by the belief in the need for more mental illness education and in the medical community’s responsibility to take a lead in this process, Patrick MacGillivray (’07) founded in 2003 Medical Students for Mental Health Awareness (MSMHA), dedicated to increasing community awareness of mental health issues and to dispelling harmful stereotypes about those with mental illnesses.

Patrick, who experienced clinical depression first-hand, was himself confronted with the stigma and isolation endured by those living with a mental illness. He realized that “having a mental illness is like having a double burden. You not only have to deal with the illness, which can be devasting in itself, but you are often unable to share your experience with your family, friends or acquaintances due to the lack of understanding and negative stereotypes that are widespread in society.” Fortunately, he had access to the resources that helped him deal with his illness, but most people are not so lucky. He is determined to help fill this gap. “I will never be too busy to do my small part in making the world a more friendly place for those struggling with mental illness.”

When Patrick defines as a “small part” is actually tremendous. Since its foundation, MSMHA has spread across the nation, with branches at the universities of Ottawa, Alberta, British Columbia and Calgary, and at Dalhousie, McGill, McMaster and Queen’s universities. At U of O, 70 students are involved in MSMHA, either in its organization or as members. They are fulfilling the association’s mandate on many fronts, namely through a Seminar Series for medical students and a Community Outreach Program.

Seminar Series
Each academic year, MSMHA offers about 15 seminars on campus, involving presentations on mental health disorders such as depression, schizophrenia, eating disorders, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, first episode psychosis, etc. As well, MSMHA has offered seminars on related topics, such as “The Impact of Mental Illness on the Family,” “Self-Injurious Behaviour,” “Child Abuse” and “Mental Illness in the Homeless Population.”

Seminars normally feature someone who was affected with the mental illness of interest (not uncommonly a medical student or physician) and is open to sharing their experience, and a clinical expert (psychiatrist, social worker, psychologist) with medical and technical aspects of the illness. According to Patrick, the participation of the “consumer-survivor” is essential; “this firsthand account from someone who has struggled with a mental illness has proved to be the most powerful way of dispelling stereotyped perceptions among students.”

Community Outreach
MSMHA is also reaching out to the general community, through presentations in local elementary and high schools. In teams of 2 to 3 students, MSMHA addresses individual classes and larger assemblies. The interactive presentations feature digital presentations, quizzes and examples of famous people who were affected by a mental illness. “This is a great way to demonstrate to students that anyone, even the people they look up to, can suffer from mental illness, but still be successful and have a meaningful impact on the world,” says Patrick. Evidently, the method is working – the response from students is very positive and schools are eager to welcome MSMHA in their classroom.

“Schools realize that our message resonates. That they deal with many people experiencing a mental illness for the first time. Also, they are aware that education at a young age is key to preventing the propagation of erroneous stereotypes.”

Future Plans
On campus, although the Seminar Series is open to everyone, MSMHA doesn’t advertise outside of our Faculty for the simple reason that they don’t have access to rooms big enough to accommodate larger audiences. However, the association is currently working with graduate students from other faculties on a number of collaborative initiatives, including residence and departmental presentations and a possible mental health fair. MSMHA also hopes to expand to include other community groups and increase their support of other mental health awareness initiatives.

“Having a mental illness is like having a double burden. You not only have to deal with the illness […] and you are often unable to share your experience with family, friends or acquaintances due to the lack of understanding.” — Patrick MacGillivray, MSMHA Founding President

The Balancing Act
Despite an impressive academic workload, some students, like Patrick, make a point of reserving a respectable portion of their time for extracurricular activities. When he is not in class, studying, or conducting research with Dr. Costello and Dr. Hakim, Patrick not only devotes time to MSMHA, but also to intramural sports and various councils and committees. “These activities allow me to try to improve myself as a person, to try to make a positive difference in the world, to set goals and try to achieve them, and certainly to maintain great balance in my life.”

Through this type of involvement, changes can be brought about at individual and global levels. Every effort to make the world a better place is among the most precious gifts one can offer society. Could we ask anything more from our future doctors?

For more information on MSMHA, please visit www.med.uottawa.ca/msmha or write to msma996@yahoocu.ca.

The MSMHA symbol represents all that the association stands for. The shining sun represents the opening of minds, education and the elimination of harmful and negative stereotypes. The anonymous profile represents the countless individuals affected directly and indirectly by mental illness, as well as those the association aims to educate. The stethoscope, which represents the participating medical students, is heart-shaped for their compassionate and caring approach. The garnet colour of the lettering and the stethoscope represents the origin of MSMHA, here at the University of Ottawa.

On October 28, with the spirit of Halloween in mind, the OWANSCC council embarked on a mission to make the science fair as fun as possible. Students donned silly costumes, earned stamps, and had a great time. From left: Andrew Andrews (Banting & Best Department of Medical Research, University of Toronto), Anne Dell (Division of Molecular Biosciences, Imperial College in London), Michael Snyder (Yale Center of Genomics and Proteomics, Yale University), Brenda Andrews (Banting & Best Department of Medical Research, University of Toronto). Ruedi Aebersold (Institute for Bio technology, ETH Zurich, and Institute for Systems Biology in Seattle), and Marc Vidal (Center for Cancer Systems Biology, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, and Harvard Medical School). The symposium will be held at the NRC-IBIS Auditorium (100 Sussex Drive, Ottawa). For more information, please visit www.osib.ca.