



the pulse



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The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University
Student Affairs Newsletter

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Edward J. Wing, MD
Dean of Medicine and Biological Sciences

Dear Colleagues,
I will be discontinuing my regular column in *the pulse*, however I will still be communicating with you on a regular basis in a new vehicle called Dean's Newsletter, launching later this month. Ongoing communication with students, faculty, and staff is of the utmost importance to me as we tackle the priorities of the Division and Alpert Medical School together.

Medical Student Affairs
Phil Gruppuso, MD
Associate Dean

As we reach the midpoint of this academic year, there are a number of items that I know are on the minds of many of our med students. One of these is the availability of study space on campus – a perennial issue. I am pleased to report that I have been working with a group of students, Tovah Reis (BioMed librarian), Harriette Hemmasi (University librarian), Peter Holden (BioMed

Facilities) and Alex Morang to find a solution to our study space problem. We first arranged for additional library hours during the winter break. Ms. Reis has identified a group of study rooms throughout the library that will be made available to med students. We have identified additional study space in J. Walter Wilson for the winter break, and we will soon be able to announce the details of an arrangement to extend the availability of space in JWW to the rest of the academic year. Dean Wing has made a clear commitment to finding a fix for this situation. There will be more on this subject in the near future.

I have good news to report on another front. We have been able to more than double available travel funding for students in the current year's budget. Alex Morang will administer these funds. Dean Wing and I are working to secure additional funds for next year from outside sources with a goal of fully funding student travel to annual meetings of organizations in which we participate (AAMC, AMSA, SNMA, etc.) while also providing additional support for both national and international travel. I am certain that students will immediately

feel the impact of the increased funds.

I know that another subject on students' minds is the impact of the financial crisis on student financial aid and funding of the medical education program. I was pleased to learn recently that the University

continued on next page...

Inside this issue:

Dean's Message	1
Associate Dean	1
Financial Aid	2
Admissions	3
PLME	3
Medical Student Senate	4
PLME Student Senate	4
Office of Women in Medicine	6
Opportunities	6
Additional Opportunities	7

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will be able to make a small increase during the coming year on educational support derived from endowment. This is rather extraordinary given the depth of the financial crisis. It is also a testament to wise management by the University of its resources. While we must anticipate a negative impact on student need and the availability of scholarship funding, Linda Gillette, working with her financial aid policy-making group, is working to minimize any impact on the base loan requirement. The planning process will be complete by mid-February and an announcement will go out from the financial aid office as soon as possible. For additional information on the impact of the current lending environment on student financing of medical education, please see Linda Gillette's column in this issue of *The Pulse*.

Finally, I would like to wish all of the members of the med school community best wishes for a happy, healthy and productive new year.

Office of Financial Aid

Linda Gillette
Assistant Director

Federal Loan Funding in the Current Lending Environment

Much has been in the press in recent months about the current credit environment for both the mortgage and educational lending industries. When I hear about private lenders discontinuing their participation in the Stafford Loan Program, I take comfort in Brown's position as a direct-lending school. AMS medical students can rely on the availability of federal loan funding as they always have even in the face

of the current economic downturn.

Brown University works *directly* with the federal government to secure federal Stafford Loans for its students through a program called *Direct Lending*. Medical students may also borrow through another federal loan program, the Graduate PLUS Loan program as well to help meet their total cost of educational expenses each year. The Graduate PLUS Loan is also processed through Direct Lending. Colleges that participate in Direct Lending, by-pass private lenders and guarantee agencies, submitting loan applications directly to the federal government. Colleges then receive the loan funding directly from the federal government to be applied to the individual student's account. In repayment, students work directly with the federal government to repay federal loans, again by-passing private lenders and secondary-markets that often change frequently throughout the usual ten-year repayment period. The alternative to Direct Lending is the Federal Family Educational Loan Program (FFEL), where colleges work with private lenders to secure Stafford Loan funding for students.

Federal aid programs, including federal loans that students receive to assist with educational expenses are governed by the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA). HEOA was originally passed by Congress in 1965 and is brought before Congress usually every 4-6 years for reauthorization. The most recent reauthorization was finally signed by President Bush in August of 2008 after a period of almost 10 years. While waiting for reauthorization, Congress passed a series of bills in the last two years that have had a

great impact on the face of educational borrowing for many students in the US.

Much of the new legislation affects colleges who work with private lenders to secure federal loan funding for their students through the Federal Family Educational Loan Program (FFEL). The College Cost Reduction Act (CCRA) reduced special allowances and subsidies that lenders took on each loan they made, reducing lender profitability. This measure, along with other significant economic events caused lenders to withdraw their participation in the Stafford Loan Program and/or other private educational loan programs.

The packaging policy for AMS students who apply for institutional aid uses a base loan component to first offset need and then offers AMS scholarship funds to meet remaining need. The base loan typically includes the maximum subsidized Stafford of \$8,500, an unsubsidized Stafford component and a Brown Loan component. The amount of unsubsidized Stafford and the Brown Loan components vary yearly based on available funding in each of the 7 Brown Loan programs. The Brown Loan funds do not generate new income each year to fund the programs, but their funding is dependent on collections that are recovered from previous Brown Loan borrowers who are currently in repayment.

The BioMed Office of Financial Aid is working with the Brown Loan Office and the Dean of the Medical School to ensure that the base loan component and the awarding policy for medical students is the most favorable and beneficial possible.

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While we are facing unforeseen financial hardships that will affect how students finance their medical education, we are also taking every measure possible to minimize any untoward affects of the current financial environment. We will provide information as it becomes available..

Office of Admissions

Barbara Fuller, *Director*

MD Class of 2013, and interviews continue for some 250 prospective medical students. Thanks to all of the students who have participated in any aspect of interview days: campus and hospital tours, the student hosting program, and the popular morning question-and-answer sessions. Special thanks to Lauren De Leon, MD'10, for organizing the hospital tour guides, and to Steve Lee, MD'11, for organizing the student hosting program. Thanks to Erich Kiehl, Matt Deren, Joel Huleatt, John Shuck, and Steve for providing interviewees with campus tours in all sorts of weather. To all of our student hosts (and you know who you are), I will find a way to thank you for your generosity in providing rides, meals, and your perspective on AMS to our visitors.

Congratulations to our admissions programs coordinator, Melissa Whiteley, on the birth of Jacob Dana on December 18, 2008. They are both in fine health. Marlana Gallagher has taken over for Melissa while she is on maternity leave, and she has taken all of the last-minute interview day hassles in stride. We are lucky to have her running the program while Melissa is out of the office.

The **Second Look Program** for admitted applicants to the Class of 2013 is scheduled for May 8-9, 2009. This event provides prospective students with a view of the many opportunities available to Brown medical students. If you have ideas for the program and want to get involved, please contact Barbara Fuller or Melissa Whiteley. This is the first time that we've scheduled a weekend event, and we made sure to accommodate the schedules of our MD 2011 students who will have completed the Step I exam!!

PLME Senate/Autism Project

PLME Senate/Autism Project of Rhode Island Fundraiser

Donate today, support the Autism Project of RI and help get teachers in the Providence area professionally trained in working with the whole range of autistic students! Depending on how much money we're able to raise, we can earn training credits from the Project that we can then donate to a local Providence city school. We've set the bar at \$1,500 which would earn us one training credit, but with your help, maybe we can continue to push the bar higher and higher!

If you're interested in making a donation and reading more about the Autism Project visit

<http://www.firstgiving.com/plmesenate>, and

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

PLME

Hilary Sweigart

Dean Julianne Ip

A warm welcome back to campus! We hope you have had a relaxing break whether it was spent with your family or perhaps traveling.

FRESHMEN: We are delighted to announce that **Dr. Ming Cheng** will be the speaker for the **Whole Patient Program on January 28, 5:30PM at the Faculty Club**. Dr. Cheng is Assistant Professor of Clinical Neuroscience at Rhode Island Hospital.

SOPHOMORES: Be sure to meet with your Advising Dean regarding your Educational Plan, and find a concentration advisor **early**.

SENIORS: You are expected to attend The PLME Senior Luncheon with medical students, to be held on **Wednesday, February 4, 12 noon to 1PM in the Faculty Club**. Unless excused for class/lab conflict, we expect all seniors to attend this event where you will have the opportunity to hear first- and second-year medical students (former PLMEs) talk about the medical school curriculum and the transition from college. **THIS IS A MUST.**

SENIORS: Mark your calendar for the PLME Graduation Reception for seniors and your families on **Saturday, May 23, at 5:30 PM in Leung Gallery**. PLME pins will be distributed at this wonderful champagne reception.

We encourage ALL students to make appointments with your advising dean this semester to discuss your ongoing performance and academic progress.



OPPORTUNITIES:

1. **Summer Research Assistantships–Biomedical Sciences**

are made available annually on a competitive basis to students enrolled in the PLME. This is an excellent opportunity to become engaged in a research project **under the supervision and mentorship of a Brown faculty member** in the area of biomedical science. Visit http://med.brown.edu/plme/SRA_PLME.html for more information and application materials. Deadline is February 16, 2009.

2. **Summer Research Assistantships–Emergency Medicine**

are available annually to students enrolled in the PLME or Medical School. Interested students must contact **ONLY** the EM faculty who have listed their research on the web site at http://med.brown.edu/plme/SRA_EM.htm, where you can also download the application materials. Deadline is February 16, 2009.

3. **Medicine In Action Program (MIAP)**

http://med.brown.edu/plme/MIAP_plme.html — provides physician shadowing experiences with Brown medical faculty during the semester, and with Brown alumni across the country during vacation periods. This is a great vehicle for seeing different specialties in action and to network with biomedical faculty who might be involved in some interesting research.

4. **International Health**

http://bms.brown.edu/plme/International_Health.html — As a PLME or Brown medical student, there are several international exchange programs that you may become involved with, some with funding and others that you have to

fund yourself. Find out more about the **International Health Travel Scholarship** program at http://bms.brown.edu/plme/IHTS_packet_2009.doc the deadline for which is March 31, 2009.

5. **Summer mini-courses in Germany**

— For several years, Tuebingen University (*not confirmed as of 12/9/08*) and Rostock University have each offered 2-week mini-courses to which Brown medical students and PLME juniors and seniors can apply. Find out more about these opportunities at http://bms.brown.edu/plme/Summer_Germany.html. Deadline is March 31, 2009.

The Medical Student Senate

Kartik Venkatesh, President

Michael Gart, Vice President

Liz Niemiec, Treasurer

Lauren De Leon, Secretary

The exams page for first and second years with the most updated exams we can release is now up and running. We are also considering the option of setting up wiki pages for various aspects of medical school life, including exam/boards preparation, research planning, and applying for residencies.

We are continuing to work with the medical school and library administrations to identify more optimal study spaces for medical students this semester. The library subcommittee headed by Patrick Worth has been examining a variety of possible options that can be implemented in the short-term. Please let senate members know of any ideas you may have to address the need for more study space. We are also working with the administration to address the need for expanded support

for research and conference travel.

The treasury committee led by Liz Niemiec and Nitin Aggarwal are working to get funding in place for student groups for the semester. Your social and class reps headed by Almaz Dessie are in the process of planning a variety of exciting class events for the semester, so do provide them with your ideas in regards to what you would like to see happen.

PLME Student Senate

Co-Presidents

Jack Cossman '10/'14

Maya Barsky '09/'13

The PLME Senate has happily ended a successful fall semester. Although even more fun and interesting activities and lectures await us next semester, we look in retrospect to our accomplishments of this semester. Our Whole Physician and Patient Programs successfully hosted four speakers, social events attracted a solid showing of PLME pride, and fundraising efforts had never been as good as they were. Further, groundwork for our new community service initiative focused on The Autism Project of Rhode Island was laid, and the PLME Senate established a new position, the MD Curriculum Committee representatives. Thank you to those who participated in our activities, and we eagerly encourage everyone to attend more events and Senate meetings next semester!

This semester, the Whole Physician and Patient Programs excellently welcomed four physicians to speak to the Brown community and PLME students. Dr. Christine Montross, author of *Body of Work*, spoke to PLME students about her book, her experiences in anatomy lab from the



perspective of a poet, and her plans to balance work with family life. Later on in the semester, the Whole Physician chairpersons hosted and introduced Dr. Bernie Siegel to a large audience that came to hear his well-known thoughts on the power of love, compassion, and understanding in medical practice. This event brought PLMEs and non-PLMEs, faculty members, and the community to a very influential lecture, truly reflecting the PLME Senate's commitment to integrate the Brown campus and community at large.

In addition to the events of the Whole Physician Program, the Whole Patient Program hosted two insightful dinners for PLME freshmen. The first physician was Dr. Edwin Forman, a pediatric oncologist who, together with his patient, conveyed to the students the importance of amiable dynamics between a physician and a patient. Second to come was Dr. Martin Miner, a men's health specialist who explained that a doctor must, above all else, make his patient feel comfortable and welcomed. His patient, a school principal, earnestly emphasized that students must follow their ambitions and be fully sure that they enjoy their professions.

Speaking of enjoyment, the social events, in conjunction with fundraising activities, helped PLMEs from all years to meet, bond, and have fun. The picnic in September had a large showing of PLMEs, and the kickball game in October pitted the different advising groups against each other—the competition was mitigated by the apple cider and baked goods provided by Deans Brescia and Ip! The two student-run baking parties were also exciting, not to mention lucrative—resulting in good earnings from the Family Weekend bake sale. In addition to this fundraising, a record number of or-

ders for Reading Period care packages was received. We arranged care packages with a variety of snacks delivered in recyclable shopping bags. For next Reading Period, the Senate suggests that all PLMEs encourage their parents to invest in a care package for the benefits of stress relief and filling an empty belly!

In terms of community service, most attention has been focused on initiating an ongoing commitment to autism awareness and support. In addition to hosting physician and family lectures to increase awareness next semester, the community service committee is beginning to raise funds for The Autism Project of Rhode Island. Besides making contributions directly to the foundation (www.firstgiving.com/plmesenate), interested people may also purchase a puzzle piece at grocery stores, to be placed collectively on a wall to demonstrate the unity in solving autism's mystery. To culminate next semester, the Senate will send a team to Warwick to participate in a fundraising walkathon. Please lend your support to our community service efforts either by walking, donating, or helping run our fundraising efforts!!

Finally, after the Senate copresidents met with Deans Wing and Gruposso, the medical school's curriculum committee is adding two PLME students to its regular meetings. In order to increase communication between the undergraduate and medical components of the PLME, the MD Curriculum chairpersons will carry information between the MD Curriculum Committee and the Senate. Congratulations to

Erica Alexander ('11/'15) and Ruhan Nagra ('10/'14) for being chosen as the first pair of representatives! Please share your thoughts with the representatives as they will relay the undergraduate sentiment at the monthly meetings.

As this semester ends, the PLME Senate already has set high goals for next semester. For instance, the Whole Physician Program will organize a panel of medical researchers to speak to PLMEs about that possible career path. Also, class representatives will organize a series of events sponsored by the Senate to promote intra- and inter-class bonding! In closing, thank you again for taking interest in the Senate and visit our website for monthly updates on our progress and to order newly designed PLME apparel, tote bags, and decals!



Office of Women in Medicine

Debra Abeshaus, *Director*

The Association of Women Psychiatrists (AWP) has announced the *2009 Leah J. Dickstein, M.D. Award*. The award recognizes a female medical student who best exemplifies the spirit of creativity, energy and leadership that Dr. Dickstein epitomizes and seeks to foster in others. Two nominees can be nominated from each institution. For guidelines and more information, please see – <http://www.womenpsych.org>. If you would like to be considered as a nominee from Brown, please submit your completed application and references, at least one from a faculty member, by **January 31, 2009** to: The Office of Women in Medicine, Alpert Medical School, Brown University, Box G-A132, Providence, RI 02912. Please let us know if you have questions by calling 401-863-2450/7960 or by e-mail to: debra_abeshaus@brown.edu.

Looking ahead — Save the date for the *Women in Residency Fair*. This annual event will be held on **March 10, 2009, 5:30 pm** at the Brown Faculty Club. The program offers an opportunity to learn more about residency and career paths from the perspectives of women faculty, fellows and residents. Details will follow.

The Stanley D. Simon, MD Lecture!

The Fifteenth Annual
Stanley D. Simon, MD Lecture

Monday, February 2, 2009
5:00 PM – 6:00 PM
Salomon Hall - Room 101

Keynote Speaker
Christine Montross, MD '06
(Author of *Body of Work*)

**“Dissection and Doctoring:
What the Dead Teach Us About
Healing the Living”**

Book Signing and Reception to follow
Upper lobby area of Salomon Hall

Sponsored by Student Affairs

INTERNATIONAL HEALTH TRAVEL SCHOLARSHIPS

Approximately ten (10) International Health Travel Scholarships (IHTS) of \$500 are awarded to PLME undergraduate or medical students annually to support travel to international locations to pursue educational experiences, such as attending summer seminars, conferences, programs, or research that will benefit the students' professional development. The deadline for submission of an application is **5PM on MARCH 31, 2009**. Applications (available at http://bms.brown.edu/plme/IHTS_packet_2009.doc) will be reviewed for merit (potential impact of the award on the student's professional development; contributions to a broader educational plan), and awards will be announced by mid-April.

2009 PISACANO SCHOLARS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Application deadline for the 2009 Pisacano Scholars Leadership program is **March 2, 2009**. The application is available online at www.fpleaders.org, and may be submitted as the original application. Students may submit their applications by email (except transcripts) to jireland@fpleaders.org.

Students who have made a commitment to the field of family medicine and who will **enter their fourth year in medical school in the fall of 2009** may apply. The PLF will award scholarships with a maximum value of \$28,000 each for the 2009-2010 academic year.

Again, please remind students that the applications must be **received by March 2, 2009** to be considered.

If you would like any additional information, please contact Jane Ireland: jireland@fpleaders.org or 888-995-5700, ext. 1249.

opportunities



Medical and Graduate Student Scholarships from the Scholarship Foundation of Santa Barbara

Scholarship applications are available to applicants who fit the following criteria:

- ◆ Applicant must have attended at least four of the six secondary grade school years and graduated from a high school in Santa Barbara County, California.
- ◆ Applicant must be a full-time medical student or graduate student in the 2009-2010 academic year at an approved U.S. college or university. Areas of study include medicine, law, dentistry, pharmacy, veterinary medicine, business, education, and a variety of Master's and Ph.D programs.
- ◆ The Foundation assists students studying in standard academic programs on a traditional academic calendar. The Foundation does not offer aid for weekend programs, night programs, summer session, research, part-time studies, correspondence, online or off-site studies.
- ◆ Applicant must complete a Scholarship Foundation application online and submit all supporting materials by January 30, 2009. A personal interview in Santa Barbara, California is required in March 2009.
- ◆ Scholarship Foundation eligibility requirements are not flexible. Please do not request an application if you do not meet all of the criteria listed above.

Online Student Aid Application available at our website www.sbscholarship.org

Call (805) 687-6065 for questions
info@sbscholarship.org

APPLICATION DEADLINE: JANUARY 30, 2009

additional
opportunities!

The Chinese American Physicians Society is offering five scholarships of \$2000 to \$5000 each to needy medical students this academic year. We are in the progress of accepting applications from students who are currently enrolled in your medical school. The closing

date for applying will be February 28, 2009. The recipient of the scholarships will be notified by email before the end of March 2009. The awards will be presented at our society's annual banquet in Oakland, California on Saturday April 4, 2009.

For your information, our society was established by a group of concerned physicians of Chinese descent in 1977 in the San Francisco area. However, our current membership consists of various ethnic groups and races. The applicants are judged according to their academic achievements, financial needs, community service records and their views on the practice of medicine as expressed in their essays.

Information about our scholarship program and the application can be obtained from the website address: www.caps-ca.org/scholarship. We will not mail out printed applications requested by students without self addressed **stamped** (42 cents) envelopes. We would like to eliminate future paper work and postage by the use of e-mail and the internet. Please help us by sending your e-mail message with the following data to awards@caps-ca.org. Data needed include: 1) name of medical school, 2) address and telephone numbers, 3) contact person and email address, 4) estimated number of students needing financial assistance each year, 5) deadline for inclusion of the scholarship information in your institution's **financial** aid booklet if one is published.

