

DEAN'S LETTER FOR TUFTS MEDICINE

Partnership addresses doctor shortage in Maine

In an effort to overcome the shortage of physicians in Maine, the School of Medicine and Maine's largest hospital have established a new partnership with a unique curriculum, the "Maine track," which will emphasize rural and small-town practice.

The 36 students on the Maine track—which will start in August 2009—will be jointly recruited by the medical school and the Maine Medical Center, located in Portland. Twenty of the 36 seats will be reserved for legal residents of Maine or those with ties to the state.

"Tufts has a strong track record of training Maine physicians, and there are more than 300 Tufts-educated doctors now living in Maine," including 60 Tufts physicians on the Maine Med staff, said medical school Dean **Michael Rosenblatt**, M.D. From the 1930s through the early 1980s, federal funding provided Tufts students opportunities to work in Maine hospitals, including Maine Med. "We are excited to re-establish and revitalize this important relationship," Rosenblatt said.

Students enrolled in the program will spend their first two years at Tufts, and then do their third-year clerkship at Maine Med. In the fourth year, students will spend a portion of their monthly rotations at Maine Med. Graduating students will receive a combined diploma from Maine Med and Tufts.

The partnership is the result of months of planning and negotiation by a steering committee and three medical schools vying to partner with the medical center. The hospital chose Tufts, over Dartmouth College and the University of Vermont, because of what committee chair **Peter Bates**, M.D., chief of medicine at Maine Med, calls the "perfect match of needs and philosophy" between the two institutions.

The Maine Hospital Association estimates there are about 200 vacancies for primary-care physicians across the state, and that number is expected to grow as doctors retire and baby boomers age.

Introducing Tufts Medical Center ...

In a move that reflects its close relationship with Tufts University, Tufts–New England Medical Center changed its name to Tufts Medical Center on March 4. The hospital, founded in 1796 and Boston's oldest, is the principal teaching hospital for the School of Medicine.

"Our new name showcases the exceptional partnership we have with Tufts University," said **Ellen Zane**, M.A., president and CEO of the medical center. "It is this robust and unwavering collaboration that allows Tufts Medical Center to offer the highest level of academic medicine and research to the patients, families, referring physicians and communities whom we serve."

"Thousands of Tufts medical students have gained superb clinical skills as a result of their training at the medical center. This relationship is a source of strength and excellence for both institutions," Tufts President **Lawrence S. Bacow**, J.D., Ph.D., said.

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HERE & THERE

John Kauer, Ph.D., professor of neuroscience, spoke about neural mechanisms coding olfactory processing and recognition at the 2008 Boston Regional Brain Bee at MIT's Picower Institute for Learning and Memory in early February. The annual Brain Bee is a live Q&A competition testing the neuroscience knowledge of high school students. Kauer's company, CogniScent, produces systems capable of detecting airborne traces of explosives, mold and other substances.

Hope Schreiber, Psy.D., assistant clinical professor of psychiatry, co-edited *Adult Learning Disorders: Contemporary Issues*, with Lorraine Wolf and Jeannette Wasserstein. Published by Psychology Press on March 26, the book addresses how neuroimaging and genetic mapping technologies have enhanced our understanding of neurodevelopmental disorders in adults.

Philip N. Tschlis, M.D., the Jane F. Desforges Professor of Hematology and Oncology, has been elected to the Association of American Physicians (AAP). He directs the Cancer Center at Tufts Medical Center and is executive director of Tufts' Molecular Oncology Research Institute. He joins just 10 other Tufts-affiliated physicians to receive the AAP honor.

Tufts | School of
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RUSSO GRANTS

Four faculty members have been awarded Russo Grants, established by the Russo Family Foundation Charitable Trust to support cutting-edge science at the medical school.

Daniel G. Jay, Ph.D., professor of physiology, and **Peter Chang-Hwa Juo**, Ph.D., will use their funding to study the function of single proteins in living neurons. Jay, an expert in using light to inactivate proteins within living cells, and Juo, an expert in the nervous system of a nematode worm called *C. elegans*, which is a powerful model for the human nervous system, will engineer special strains of worms in which light can be used to inactivate a specific protein in a single neuron, allowing them to examine behavior changes. The technology could be expanded to study complex behaviors and understand the way neurons function in mammals.

F. Rob Jackson, Ph.D., and **Kathleen Dunlap**, Ph.D., will work to understand how glia, one of two major cell types in the nervous system, influence the behavior of neurons. Working with fruit flies, Jackson has shown that glia make a protein required for normal behavior, a result that suggests that glia are important for control of complex behaviors. Jackson and Dunlap, a specialist in electrophysiology, will extend these studies to determine if glia play a similar role in influencing behaviors in mice. Their work could change current thinking about the way glia and neurons interact and contribute to the function of the nervous system.

A new chief science officer

Michael E. Mendelsohn, M.D., a cardiologist, has been appointed the chief scientific officer for Tufts Medical Center and is charged with advancing the hospital's research enterprise in cancer, cardiology, pediatrics, genetics, neuroscience, psychiatry and transplantation/immunology. He will also spearhead major recruitment efforts and develop new multidisciplinary programs that bring together the talents and research of diverse departments at the medical center and Tufts Medical School.

He is the Elisa Kent Mendelsohn Professor of Molecular Cardiology and Medicine at Tufts School of Medicine and is known for his groundbreaking research in cardiovascular disease, estrogen and the molecular regulation of blood vessel function and blood pressure. He received his M.D. from Harvard Medical School in 1982. He joined the medical center's Cardiology Division in 1993, and in 1997, became the first director of the hospital's Molecular Cardiology Research Institute.

Mendelsohn is the principal investigator on numerous NIH grants and currently directs an \$11.2 million study of the molecular mechanisms regulating blood vessel tone and blood pressure. He is an invited speaker for the 2008 Nobel Conference on "Recent Advances in Understanding Estrogen Signaling," which will take place in Stockholm, Sweden, in the fall.

In memoriam

A funeral Mass was held February 25 at St. Joseph's Church in Somerville for **Joseph B. Perry**, director of information technology at the medical school, who died on February 21 after a courageous battle with cancer. He was 44.

Perry had worked at Tufts for more than 20 years. Friends and colleagues recall his contagious smile and giving nature. In his last days, as an organ donor, he gave sight to two people who otherwise might not have regained their vision. Among his survivors are his two children and his fiancée.

Tufts Medical Center, *continued from previous page*

Both institutions will continue to operate independently. Bacow and medical school Dean **Michael Rosenblatt**, M.D., serve on the medical center's board, while Zane holds a seat on the medical school's Board of Overseers and is an assistant professor of medicine.

The Floating Hospital for Children retains its name, highlighting its status as a free-standing children's hospital and its place in the Tufts Medical Center organization. The hospital is now the Floating Hospital for Children at Tufts Medical Center.

FEEDBACK

The *Dean's Letter for Tufts Medicine* is published eight times a year by the Office of the Dean of Tufts University School of Medicine. We welcome comments and story ideas. Contact Editor Jacqueline Mitchell at jacqueline.mitchell@tufts.edu or 617.636.3602.