

DEAN'S LETTER FOR TUFTS MEDICINE

NOVEMBER 2006

Exploring health care in India

Second-year medical students **Sohil Sud, Jessica Heath, Rupal Patel, Eiko Tubridy, Jessica Nicholson** and **Jennifer Bradford** spent eight weeks with their counterparts at Father Muller Medical College in Mangalore, India, where they got a first-hand look at tropical medicine and health care in a developing country. A tenet of the medical school's strategic plan is to provide opportunities for students to gain a global perspective.

The students learned how to treat the region's common ailments, including tuberculosis, malaria and protein malnutrition. During their visits to some of India's rural primary health-care centers, the Tufts contingent saw how socioeconomic factors affect access to care and quality of care. They also seized the opportunity to explore India's rich alternative medicine practices in homeopathy, naturopathy and yoga and ayurveda, designed to achieve physical, mental, social and spiritual harmony.

Faculty members **Harris Berman**, M.D., and **Sheena Kandiah**, M.D., and **Eric Nelson**, a graduate student in molecular microbiology at the Sackler School, and **Danielle Kauk**, M06, developed the international travel-and-learn program, which the medical school hopes to offer annually. This year's trip was made possible by the support of a generous alumna.

A new web presence

The School of Medicine's website has a whole new look and feel. The school's Creative Services team, in partnership with University Web Communications, launched a fully redesigned and restructured site at <http://www.tufts.edu/med>. The new site features a user-friendly drop-down menu that simplifies the search for information. Visitors to the site can easily locate relevant details about the M.D. program, combined M.D. degrees, public health and professional degree programs and degrees offered by the Sackler School of Graduate Biomedical Sciences.

The Creative Services team welcomes your feedback. Please submit comments and story ideas to OIT@tufts.edu.

Suburban outreach

Officials from Tufts-New England Medical Center and the New England Baptist Hospital are exploring a collaborative expansion to Boston's suburbs. The hospitals—both affiliates of the School of Medicine—would remain independent entities while sharing the new suburban campus, with Tufts-NEMC most likely providing ancillary support and medical/surgical services for Baptist's planned orthopedic unit. Tufts-NEMC and the Floating Hospital for Children will continue to be based in Chinatown. "There are many questions we must answer before we can move forward with certainty," Ellen Zane, president and CEO of Tufts-NEMC, wrote in a letter to the hospital community.

HERE & THERE

Research by **Alice Bendix Gottlieb**, M.D., Ph.D., professor and chair of dermatology, has resulted in a new drug to treat psoriasis. The anti-inflammatory Remicade—already prescribed for arthritis—received FDA approval in September. Gottlieb worked with Johnson & Johnson to test the drug's efficacy in treating chronic severe plaque psoriasis. Trials involving more than 1,200 people showed that eight out of 10 patients treated with Remicade saw a 75 percent improvement in their psoriasis after 10 weeks. "This is translational research that led to drug approval," Gottlieb said.

Allan H. Ropper, M.D., professor and chair of neurology, sat on an international panel of scientists asked to advise the Pontifical Academy of Sciences on brain death and coma. The panel, which met in September, examined the issue of whether brain death is truly death. In the past, the Vatican and the Pope explicitly endorsed medicine's definition of death; however, some physicians, theologians and philosophers have challenged that. Ropper advocated Pope John Paul II's definition of death: "... the total disintegration of that unitary and integrated whole that is the personal self." Ropper also argued that brain death is the result of modern intensive care—that ventilators merely mask death.

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LEAVING THE BUILDING

Catherine L. Squires, Ph.D., is stepping down as chair of molecular biology and microbiology on January 8, 2007, a date she chose because it's Elvis Presley's birthday. Squires is an ardent Elvis fan, a reputation that has garnered her a large collection of Elvis memorabilia, including a "truly awful" velvet Elvis that hangs in her department's computer room. She plans to move her lab to Stanford and end her career as she started it, as a researcher.

Squires came to Tufts in 1994 with her husband, Craig, who has lived on the couple's farm in Winters, Calif., since his retirement in 1998. She looks forward to being reunited with her husband and the rest of their California-based family.

"This is an absolutely wonderful department, and I feel privileged to have been associated with it for the past 11-plus years," she said.

HOMeward BOUND

You can come home again. This September, 27 Tufts medical alumni enjoyed the school's annual Campus Visit, designed to allow participants to reconnect with the school and friends in a small-group atmosphere. Participants have the chance to meet with students, faculty and administrators to garner current perspectives on life at Tufts Medicine. Alumni also heard presentations on best practices in clinical instruction and the award-winning TUSK health sciences information management system. Alumni interested in attending the next Campus Visit in September 2007 should call the Office of Development and Alumni Relations at 617.636.2977.

Online applications a hit

Applicants to School of Medicine no longer have to print and mail hard-copy documents to the admissions office. Now a secure web application lets prospective students submit everything via the web. Applicants can also check for any outstanding requirements they need to meet and keep tabs on the status of their applications. Candidates invited to interview at Tufts may select dates and times online as well as see an itinerary of the campus visit.

Since the admissions office launched the web-based application in July, more than 4,400 prospective students have completed electronic applications—with nearly two months left before the January 15 deadline for admission to the Class of 2011. Last year, the admissions office received nearly 6,700 hard-copy applications via the U.S. mail.

Sharewood hosts annual auction

To mark the Sharewood Project's 10 years of providing acute medical care to underserved populations in the Greater Boston area, organizers are hosting an anniversary celebration and auction in the Sackler Center on Thursday, November 30. A volunteer service, Sharewood generates a significant portion of its annual operating budget through its annual online auction.

The auction preview will take place from 5 to 5:30 p.m., followed by the auction, food and entertainment until 7 p.m. The cost is \$5 for students in advance and \$10 for alumni, faculty, staff and students at the door.

The Sharewood Project organizers have set an ambitious fund-raising goal of \$15,000 this year. Please help make this the most successful auction yet. E-mail **Marjory Bravard**, M09, (marjory.bravard@tufts.edu) to make donations or **Robert Goldstein**, M09, (r.goldstein@tufts.edu) with questions regarding the auction and celebration.

The Sharewood Project is managed primarily by first- and second-year medical students under the guidance of **Brian Lisse**, M.D., the medical director of Sharewood and clinical assistant professor of public health and family medicine, and **Joseph Gravel**, M.D., program director of the Tufts Family Practice Residency Program.

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.

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