In a unique experiment, the editors of The New England Journal of Medicine have offered VCU’s Medical College of Virginia Campus free access to its content for a year. The offer came after discussions with Richard P. Wenzel, M.D., M.Sc., Chair of the VCU Department of Internal Medicine. As a result, the students, faculty, and housestaff at the MCV campus will be the only medical school group in the country with free access to the leading medical journal. One goal is to track what sections of the journal are most frequently accessed via Internet users at a leading Medical Center.

Dean H.H. “Dicke” Newsome embraced the experiment and set into motion the experts on campus to arrange Internet access. Dr. Newsome said that the school is pleased to be a testing site for the benefit of much of an experimental nature. Dr. Newsome was hopeful that Dr. Bruce Hillner and Dr. Wenzel are able to measure the effect.

Dr. Hillner, the Associate Chair for Information Services in the Department of Internal Medicine, is hopeful that the School can learn even more from this special one-year pilot. He said, “During the project, we expect to track from where, when, and for how long, and what elements of the website are accessed. At least initially, users of the site will be totally anonymous.”

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We will try to make the most out of this exciting opportunity.
Housestaff Directorship Changes

Dr. Michael Edmond has announced his decision to step down from the position as the Director of the Internal Medicine Housestaff Program after five years. The program benefited greatly from Dr. Edmond’s leadership—he earned tremendous respect from the Internal Medicine housestaff, his energy, support, and wisdom left a lasting impression on the residents, many of whom continue to see him as a role model. Dr. Edmond’s ability to be an advocate for the housestaff was particularly valued.

Dr. Tom Ferro, Chief of Medicine at the McGuire VA wrote: “Although there is always some sadness when we reach the end of an era (I am sure we will refer to these past few years as the ‘Mike Edmond era’ for the training program), there is also cause for celebration. We celebrate your great accomplishments, and we also rejoice at the likelihood of a bright future. You have made a great contribution to the Department’s teaching environment, not the least of which is your transformation of a once-shaky program into a very solid one. The health of the program is obvious, and you are clearly the #1 reason it continues to flourish.”

Dr. Lisa Kaplowitz wrote the following: “I want to thank you for all your efforts with the housestaff program. The program has continuously improved under your leadership and the quality and the efforts of the housestaff are outstanding.” Dr. Wade Smith wrote: “I want to you to know that this colleague at least recognizes not only the superb job and the unprecedented success you have achieved in developing the finest training program I have ever seen, but also the grace, dedication, steadfastness and love with which you have served all of us.”

Richard P. Wenzel, Chairman of the Department of Internal Medicine, said that “Dr. Edmond is recognized as a staunch housestaff advocate and an excellent educator with an extraordinary vision for the residency program. He has a steady record of great accomplishments. His input in the educational process in the Department will continue in his role of the Assistant Chair for Education.”

Dr. Steven Freer has accepted the position of Residency Program Director. He joined VCU faculty in 1992 and subsequently served as Medical Director of the Fan Free Clinic, A.D. Williams Primary Care Clinic, and MCVH Hospitalist Program. Throughout his career, Dr. Freer has distinguished himself as an excellent clinician and esteemed teacher of medicine and has been playing an important role in housestaff education in recent years.

In his initial statement sent to the faculty, Dr. Freer stressed his plans to carry on the tradition of strong advocacy for the housestaff and a strong sense of pride in the program among the residents, both in the program and in the quality of their individual work. Dr. Freer will be meeting with each of the division chiefs individually to begin to redefine the relationship between the program and the various divisions. He hopes to improve the experience of our residents in the subspecialty rotations, especially in the ambulatory component, and, where possible, to cultivate individual mentoring relationships between residents and faculty.

(continued on next page)

Sherwin Nuland, M.D., Noted Author and Physician, Gives Medical Grand Rounds

Dr. Sherwin Nuland, national-book award-winning author of the best-selling How We Live and How We Die, presented Medical Grand Rounds on March 15th. Dr. Nuland is a medical historian and clinical professor of surgery at Yale University School of Medicine and has gained a national reputation for his ability to help people confront death rationally by providing clinical descriptions of how it occurs. In his Grand Rounds presentation, Dr. Nuland concentrated on the mythology of the body and read parts from his recent book, The Mysteries Within.

Julie Fitch, RN, MSN, Offers Nurses Art and Nursing Course

Every other month, usually on a Thursday night, a group of nurses wanders through the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. Some stop to contemplate works of art, some jot down notes. Their task is to find a work of art that reminds them of being a nurse or of an event that happened at work. They write about what they see, think, and feel. They channel their emotions and frustrations with work stress.

This interesting project is initiated by Julie Fitch, RN, MSN, a clinical nurse specialist on the Internal Medicine Service and is inspired by recent innovative work of nursing scholars from Sweden. The program’s goal is to give nurses the opportunity to explore and discuss the burnout feelings they may have about their work through the medium of art. It helps senior nurses cope with work stresses and reaffirm their professional ideals and dedication to the chosen profession.

Some of the nurses’ writing will be presented at this year’s week of the nurse. Ms. Fitch also harbors plans for putting together a book of the nurses’ compositions.
The New England Journal.com

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