News Briefs

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Within the past five years, the Department has increased the number of endowed chairs and professorships substantially. The graph below shows the remarkable increase in endowments since 1990.

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At a dinner of faculty and friends of the Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology on October 7, Dr. Richard P. Wenzel, Chair of the Department, announced the activation of a new professorship honoring the late Dr. Z. Reno Vlahcevic. Dr. Vlahcevic was a faculty member in the Department of Internal Medicine for over 30 years and former Chairman of the Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology. He was an internationally recognized expert on bile salts and an outstanding scientist, educator, and clinician. With continued efforts at funding and the pledges already in place, the professorship will become a fully funded Chair. A Chair requires $1 million funding in the MCV Foundation. In the next year, Dr. Arun Sanyal, current Chairman of the Division, will appoint the faculty member to the Vlahcevic Professorship.

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ENDOWMENT GROWTH, 1990 TO 2000

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Dear Colleagues:

One of the insidious effects of the market-based managed care era has been the erosion of time for academic physicians. The increased demands for the delivery of clinical care, documentation of effort, and disputes with insurers have increasingly limited the time available for creativity – both for improving research and for enhancing educational endeavors.

The Department of Internal Medicine has been active in responding with a broad effort to secure endowed professorships and chairs for our creative faculty. We have partnered with VCU development experts, including Micky Dowdy, Sharon Larkins, and Tom Holland, in our systematic approach. Endowed professorships and chairs require external funding of $230,000 and $1 million, respectively, and the interest derived offsets the Department’s contributions to the salaries of the endowed faculty members. Thus, endowed funds provide “protected time” for our best investigators and outstanding teachers, time needed to shore up the academic mission. We are especially proud of activating the newest professorship honoring the late Z. Reno Vlahcevic, M.D., whose illustrious career in the Department spanned over 35 years.

The focus of an excellent Department of Internal Medicine is its important mission of excellent teaching, research, and clinical care. Surely the establishment of endowed professorships and chairs is one way for us to maintain our academic focus, provide time for creative faculty to think, and help us move from prominence to preeminence.

Richard P. Wenzel, M.D., M.Sc.
William Branch Porter Professor and Chairman

Faculty Abroad: Dr. Mary Anne Peberdy

This past June, Dr. Mary Anne Peberdy was invited by the government of Brazil to spend a week teaching and evaluating advanced life support. Through an arrangement with the American Heart Association (AHA), Dr. Peberdy was one of a team of five physicians invited to Brazil. “Brazil is behind in the use of medical technology, especially for emergency medical services and advanced life support, but is anxious to improve,” said Dr. Peberdy.

Dr. Peberdy’s first stop was in Rio De Janiero where she studied the existing EMS system and made recommendations. She lectured for two days in the capital city, Brazil, on how to develop early defibrillation programs. Later she traveled to the city of El Salvador to present additional conferences and to evaluate emergency services. “Our mission was to train and recommend ways on how to strengthen the ‘Chain of Survival,’ that is, Early Access, Early CPR, Early Defibrillation, and Early Advance Life Support,” said Dr. Peberdy.

The trip culminated with a private audience with the President of Brazil and top government officials, who were briefed on the team’s efforts. A follow-up trip is being planned for May 2001.

On October 23, the Annual Excellence in Teaching Awards were presented by Deans Newsome, Hampton, and Messmer. The faculty of the Department of Internal Medicine was well represented.

One of two Distinguished Mentor Awards, recognizing significant contributions to the career development of others, went to Suzanne R. Lavoie, M.D., Associate Professor, Division of Infectious Diseases.

Outstanding Course and Clerkship Certificate Awards went to:

- Laurie Lyckholm, M.D., for BioEthics
- Thomas M. Kerker, M.D., for Microbiology
- Michael B. Edmond, M.D., MPH, for Microbiology
- Laurie Lyckholm, M.D., for Hematology/Oncology
- James R. Levy, M.D., for Endocrine
- John E. Nessler, M.D., for Endocrine
- Todd W.B. Gehr, M.D., for Renal
- Kevin R. Cooper, M.D., for Respiratory
- Anthony J. Minius, M.D., for Cardiovascular
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Endowed Professorships and Protected Time

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Internal Medicine Faculty Members Named in the Annual Teaching Excellence Awards

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