On October 9, 2007, VCU School of Medicine held its 9th annual Faculty Excellence Awards Program. Several awards this year went to Department of Internal Medicine faculty.

Dr. Stephanie Call, Director of the Internal Medicine Residency Program, was given the Irby-James Award for Excellence in Clinical Teaching. The award recognizes superior teaching in clinical medicine and residency training, and encourages excellence in an increasingly complicated and challenging educational environment. Dr. Call enhanced the national reputation of our Residency Program in a very short period of time; her efforts translated into dramatic changes in both the volume and content of the learning experience. Trained in the Stanford clinical teaching methods, Dr. Call instructs clinical faculty how to teach others to become excellent educators. Dr. Call is effective, efficient, possesses tremendous enthusiasm and is clearly a visionary.

The Educational Innovation Award was given this year to the team of Dr. Leanne Yanni. Dr. Yanni’s team created a novel online program to teach medical professionals assessment and management of chronic nonmalignant pain. One of the many outstanding aspects of this innovative curriculum is its structure as a series of online modules. While the curriculum was written by Dr. Yanni, the success of the project is linked to the team she assembled, representing varying fields.

Many Internal Medicine faculty received Outstanding Teacher awards in Undergraduate Medical Education. Drs. Mark Wood, David Gardner, Melissa Contos, Laurie Lyckholm, Sara Monroe, Christopher Wise, Susan DiGiovanni, Paul Fairman and Frank Fulco were honored as Best Teachers in the Course and Clerkship. Faculty with High Evaluation Awards were received by Drs. Michael Hess, George Vetrovec, Diane Bukowski, Trey Wickham, Mitchell Shiffman, Todd Stravitz, Lenore Buckley, Kevin Cooper and Curtis Sesler.

“Our Department is committed to excellence in education, and we seek to be the best in the country,” said Richard P. Wenzel, MD, MSc, Chairman.
Faculty Profile: Dr. Shobha Ghosh

Dr. Shobha Ghosh is an internationally recognized investigator involved in groundbreaking research on the role of cholesterol in heart disease. Her work has changed the current thinking in the treatment of heart disease.

Her talents were noticed early on. Dr. Ghosh completed her Master's degree first in her class and was in the top 2% as a PhD student at the Indian Institute of Science. Following a post-doctoral fellowship at the University of British Columbia, she was invited to VCU. Currently an Associate Professor with tenure, Dr. Ghosh is a dedicated member of the Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine.

A remarkable investigator and scholar, Dr. Ghosh’s research examines the regulation of cholesterol metabolism in the liver and in macrophages. She has focused on the human cholesterol ester hydrolase gene. Recently, her work culminated in exciting findings. She showed that by purposely stimulating cholesterol hydrolisis in an animal model of atherosclerosis, she could dramatically reduce atherosclerotic plaques.

In the last few years, Dr. Ghosh has received the prestigious Gordon Research Conference’s Outstanding Poster Award, the VCU Faculty Distinguished Research Award, and recently she was named Fellow of the American Heart Association. She has a long track record of peer-reviewed publications and her external support for research is exceptional.

“We are fortunate in the Department of Internal Medicine to have provided a comfortable research work environment to retain a leading U.S. scientist like Dr. Ghosh,” said Richard P. Wenzel, MD, MSc, Chairman.

Incentive Plan

Last year a departmental committee composed of physicians and administrators reviewed the department’s incentive plan and recommended that a quarterly bonus feature be added to recognize highly productive faculty. The bonus is in addition to any salary increase that faculty members may have received. The bonus recognizes extraordinary clinical faculty and research productivity. The first payment of such incentives is to be included in faculty’s end of October MCVP paycheck and further bonuses should be in the end of January, April and July paychecks. These bonuses will be paid as long as our finances are within budget. A letter was sent to all affected faculty detailing these amounts.

A detailed description of the plan that shows PEA balances and WRVUs can be found at the Department website: www.pubinfo.vcu.edu/indadm (please bookmark).

As always, feel free to call or email me if you have any questions regarding this new incentive program.

Contribute by Don Costello
Chief Financial Officer, Internal Medicine

Medical Researcher, Children’s Author

Dr. Chris Kepley, dedicated researcher in the Division of Rheumatology, Allergy and Immunology, has recently written his first book. Both in subject and the audience may surprise many. Dr. Kepley wrote a book about an eight-year-old’s first motorcycle ride with his father.

“The book really started 10–15 years ago before we had kids, when my wife and I realized that there were no educational sources targeting motorcycle enthusiasts and their children,” said Dr. Kepley. “Some of the characters in my book are based on real life people, friends we used to ride motorcycles with.”

Dr. Kepley is certain that credit for the book’s success should also go to its illustrator, VCU graduate Nicole Pianaelli.

Charlie’s First Ride is available at VCU bookstore and also through www.kepleyenterprises.com.

Faculty Keeping Fit

Four runners from “Old and in the Way” ran from the North Rim to the South Rim, 23.9 miles, last September. Pictured are Tom Smith, Dan Miller, Michael George and Mark Guzzi (Hematology/oncology and palliative care). The next day, 3 of the 4 ran back across the canyon while one enjoyed the run. Dan Miller, Michael George and Mark Guzzi (Hematology/oncology and palliative care). The next day, 3 of the 4 ran back across the canyon while one enjoyed the run.

The group is part of the larger group that meets at Gateway every other Tuesday at 5:30 to do 6–8 loops UP the parking deck hill or the larger hills on Broad Street. All are welcome to join by emailing Tom Smith at tjsmith@vcu.org.
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“Departmental Faculty Receive Many VCU School of Medicine Faculty Awards”


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~Dr. Richard Wenzel

Dr. Stephanie Call and Dr. Jerome F. Strauss, Dean of the School of Medicine

Dr. Leanne Yanni

Faculty Publications


