To produce, in a humanistic tradition, health care professionals and biomedical knowledge that will enhance and extend the quality of life in our communities.
Northwest Track

WesternU continues to meet the needs of the Pacific Northwest with its new satellite campus, which will be part of the Samaritan Health Services Medical Complex in Oregon in 2011.
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At Western University of Health Sciences, students, faculty and staff live out the “One World, One Medicine, One Vision” ideal each and every day. Our commitment to compassionate, humanistic health care has extended across the globe, with students traveling to Guatemala, Sri Lanka, and a host of other locales to educate and treat thousands of people in need of high-quality care.

Back home, we continue to serve the Southern California community with outreach programs like the Pomona Health Career Ladder, which targets local sixth-graders interested in becoming health-care professionals.

As the University moves into 2009, anticipation is building for the opening of four new colleges: the Graduate College of Biomedical Sciences, the College of Dental Medicine, the College of Optometry and the College of Podiatric Medicine. The response to these new schools from prospective students and faculty has been humbling; clearly, WesternU is attracting high-quality student and faculty candidates thanks to its sterling reputation and commitment to excellence.

“One World. One Medicine. One Vision.” It’s a message all of us at WesternU will continue to carry into a new year bright with promise.

Philip Pumerantz, PhD
One World.
One Medicine.
One Vision.

WesternU students and faculty reach out globally to offer aid and compassion.
“When will you be coming back?”
This was the toughest question patients would ask me during my time as a pharmacist volunteer on a medical mission to Sololá, Guatemala. For me, the question expressed the hope, need, and gratitude of the rural community we were serving. But my answer would only reveal my regret for not being able to do more.

HELPS International is a non-profit organization based in Dallas, Texas. The medical program of HELPS International began in 1988, when the first team of plastic surgeons was sent to offer assistance to the indigenous people living in a rural area of Guatemala. Since that time, teams of volunteers from communities all across the United States have made over 100 government-authorized trips to Guatemala and treated over 200,000 patients.

With a population of about 13 million people, Guatemala is the most populous Central American country. It is a multiethnic, multicultural nation with over 20 different languages spoken by the indigenous people who make up over 40% of its population. Poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition, and healthcare problems plague those who live in the more remote rural highland areas of the country.

Health care in Guatemala is vastly underfunded. According to the World Health Organization, the expenditures on health for each person in Guatemala are a scant $256 each year compared to $6,096 per person in the United States. As a result, the mortality rate in Guatemala for those younger than 5 is more than five times higher than the rate in the United States, and the adult mortality rate is more than double the rate in the United States. HELPS believes that providing
excellent surgical, medical and dental care to the rural areas of Guatemala helps to promote a positive healthcare attitude among the general population and helps to lessen the burden on the medical centers in the cities of Guatemala.

For six days in April 2008, our team of 55 health professionals (general, otolaryngology, plastic, urologic, and gynecologic surgeons, anesthesiologists, operating room and recovery area nurses, surgical technicians, internists, pediatricians, nurse practitioners, dentists, dental assistant, pharmacist and pharmacy technician) and 30 helpers set up operating rooms, recovery rooms, medical and dental clinics on the grounds of the Universidad del Valle, located just outside the small (population 9,000) highland village of Sololá. We performed 125 surgeries and treated 377 adult patients, 268 pediatric patients, and 121 dental patients. In addition, we evaluated 89 more patients during a one-day outreach to the neighboring village of San Jorge.

Every day, several patients would ask us when we would be coming back. I thought it was part of their formal politeness – offer a blessing, say gracias, shake everyone’s hands. But it was not until our very last day that I truly realized that most of the patients we were seeing would not be able to receive any further medical care until our group returned again the following year. On our last day, as I was packing up our pharmacy supplies, one of our otolaryngologists asked if I could give some antibiotics to one of his patients, a 32-year-old man with an ear problem who had returned for a follow-up visit. After I explained how to take the medications, the patient’s wife confided that her husband was suffering from hearing problems and hoped to receive an operation. I explained that he would have to take the course of antibiotics first, and then see another doctor if his hearing did not improve.

“When will your group come back to this town?” she asked.

I explained that a group would be back in April, the following year.

She nodded gravely, and asked for a document that would get her husband to the front of the line to receive an operation when we came back in one year. Seeing a local specialist, of course, was out of the question. The only hope that this young man had was the possibility of free medical treatment from our yearly clinic.

At other times, I worried whether our patients really understood how to take the medications we were giving them. Every day in our makeshift little farmacia, we would be confronted by patients who did not speak Spanish and even more who could not read their medication labels. But we soon realized that they were sharp – watching our faces and listening closely to directions, repeating our instructions and traveling with multiple family members who served as interpreters and chaperones.

“Like many other practitioners, I felt handicapped by the limited resources I had available to me. We knew the names of medications that could help some of our patients, but oftentimes did not have a supply of the medications to give.”

-- Doreen Pon, PharmD
Occasionally the patients tested us to see if we would give them an answer that was more to their liking, different from what the physicians were obviously nagging them about. One weather-worn old man with stomach pain and a diagnosis of stomach ulcers listened attentively as we told him to take his antibiotics with food.

“Chiles? Can I eat chiles with the medicine?” he asked, innocently.

Why, we wondered, was he asking about eating chiles? My pharmacy technician patiently repeated, “Take the medicine with food, like bread, rice, a tortilla, chicken…”

The patients in the waiting area giggled.

A traditionally dressed woman who had been standing near my shoulder, observing the entire proceedings, attempted to rescue us from our confusion. “He wants to eat spicy food. Will he be able to eat spicy food?” she asked, laughing.

Many of our patients had diseases that are also common in the United States, but, because of the lack of medical attention, were suffering from extreme forms of the diseases. One man came to the clinic complaining of pain in his hands and an inability to bend the fingers of his right hand. Our internist discovered disfiguring tophaceous gout deposits in his elbows, feet, and hands.

In the United States, we would prescribe treatment with a relatively inexpensive oral medication to prevent these gouty deposits from forming in the first place. For this unfortunate patient, however, the best we could do was to offer anti-inflammatory medications for the pain and the name of the medication to prevent further deposits from forming.

Like many other practitioners, I felt handicapped by the limited resources I had available to me. We knew the names of medications that could help some of our patients, but oftentimes did not have a supply of the medications to give. When we did have the medications, we generally could supply only a limited amount, and hoped that the patients would be able to afford to buy more medications once their supplies ran out. As we began to see more patients than anticipated, we economized by cutting pain pills in half, or telling patients to take their vitamins only every other day in order to make them last longer. Of course, we did have our successes, too. One day, a pregnant woman came to us complaining of severe headaches and was found to have very elevated blood pressure. We were able to supply her with an antihypertensive medication that would be safe for her to take during her entire pregnancy.

I can only wonder how many lives are lost and how many people are disabled by potentially treatable medical conditions. How fortunate we were that our gynecologists could detect and remove a (hopefully) benign 14-pound ovarian mass from a young woman before it burst and possibly took her life. But how many more people die unnecessarily because of a lack of medical attention?

HELPs International, through the work of its volunteers who donate their time, money and expertise, and with the assistance of charitable organizations that donate equipment, medications and supplies, has been able to make a small but significant impact on the health of rural Guatemalans. Everyone deserves the chance to lead a healthy life, but few people have the resources to do so. If everyone gives up just a little bit of themselves to help someone out, they will enrich not only the lives of their beneficiaries, but their own lives as well.
Members of WesternU’s International Service Club who traveled to Peru during the summer received a powerful reminder of the reasons they’re becoming doctors.

Sixteen ISC students went to Cuzco, Peru for two to three weeks, volunteering at Antonio Lorena Hospital. They handled a lot of cases of pneumonia and asthma because of the high altitude, said Ryun Lee, DO ’11, ISC president. Children came in with diarrhea and respiratory tract infections.

“For me it was like a medical pilgrimage,” Lee said. “In med school you get jaded and miss what it’s going to be like when you’re actually a physician. This was a reminder why I wanted to be a doctor, what I want to do when I go out in the field.”

The U.S. is very well off and privileged, Lee said. By visiting another country, you can compare health care in two different places, she said.

“It’s important to have cultural competency,” Lee said. “The best way to learn is actually living there, even if it’s only two to three weeks.”

The students thought there were enough people helping, but not enough resources, Lee said.

They rationed gloves – one pair per day – and iodine was kept in Gatorade bottles, said Ronna Parsa, DO ’11, fundraising coordinator for ISC.

Students put skills and information they learned in class into practice while in Peru, Parsa said.

“You realize you have this knowledge to help people,” she said.

International Service Club students also traveled to Ecuador and Guatemala. The club is comprised mainly of College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific students, but they plan to bring in students from other colleges for their next trip – hurricane disaster relief in Jamaica in 2009.

“Volunteerism is very important to future physicians,” said Rafi Younoszai, PhD, COMP anatomy professor and director of WesternU’s Center for Global and Community Health. Students learn how a clinic is set up in a disaster area and how to make a diagnosis and get a physical and history for a patient from another country, without the modern tools normally available to them.

“They see how medicine is practiced in another country,” Younoszai said. “They learn the language and culture. This will help them become more compassionate and adds to their humanistic experience.”

ISC is accepting donations to help with relief efforts. Contact the club by e-mail at DOISCCLUB@westernu.edu. — Rodney Tanaka
To better understand health care in the U.S., WesternU students took a weekend trip to Mexico.

LIGA International – The Flying Doctors of Mercy, a philanthropic volunteer organization, has been providing medical, dental and eye care to impoverished people in rural Mexico since 1934. Victoria Graham, PT, DPT, OCS, Assistant Professor, Department of Physical Therapy Education, College of Allied Health Professions, volunteers with the organization and took students with her on LIGA's trips to Sinaloa, Mexico in both February and June 2008.

LIGA travels to Mexico once a month from October to June. The trips last from Friday to Sunday. Graham hopes to take students three times per year on LIGA trips.

They offered rehabilitation to people who suffered preventable injuries, such as pedestrians hit by cars and people without seat belts thrown from cars.

“It reminds you what medicine looks like in another country,” Graham said. “With health care in America, you deal with people frustrated with delays. These people are willing to wait for hours. It’s a very different kind of experience.”

When Elissa Nelson, DPT ’08, awoke on Saturday morning, she saw a line of people waiting for services. Some had been there since before 4 a.m. One woman, referred to physical therapy by a neurologist, received a walker to improve her stability and efficiency to increase her independence with daily skills. They also instructed her on exercises to improve her endurance with walking. The patient did not want to accept the walker because she could not afford it.

“After clarification, the patient began to cry,” Nelson said. “She was amazed that perfect

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This trip definitely opened my eyes to what health care is like in other countries. I would like to continue to serve where I can and continue to help make a contribution in these wonderful people’s lives.

-- Amber Wade, DPT ’08

WesternU students mingled with students from other colleges and programs and observed surgery, creating a wonderful collaborative experience, Graham said.

One little school-age girl got around in an umbrella stroller. They gave her a wheelchair so she could sit at her desk and interact with other students.

“Part of our job as health care providers is to be an agent of change,” she said. “We all agree the health care system could use some changes. What better way to understand our system than to step out of it and look at others? It broadens our perspective and teaches altruism. It’s a very powerful way to see where there’s a need.”

Amber Wade, DPT ’08, said the trip was a life-changing experience for her and her patients.

“I never thought I would meet so many appreciative people, just for giving them a home exercise program or a fabricated cane,” she said. “The patients we treated never once complained about the long lines they stood in or the equipment they were offered. They were just happy to be helped.”

“This trip definitely opened my eyes to what health care is like in other countries,” Wade said. “I would like to continue to serve where I can and continue to help make a contribution in these wonderful people’s lives.” — Rodney Tanaka
Three students in the College of Graduate Nursing’s Master of Science in Nursing Entry program spent a weekend in Chapultepec, Mexico.

Chapultepec, Mexico is a small, impoverished town two hours southeast of Ensenada. In November 2007, Ivy Yen Mussack, James White and Jessica Hilliard arranged a visit through the humanitarian organization Flying Samaritans.

One of the revelations of the trip was the contributions they could make to improve the lives of others with a short trip across the border.

“You realize how valuable your skills are to people who don’t have anything,” Ivy Yen Mussack, MSN-E ’09, said.

“You realize it doesn’t take much to change somebody’s life. All of us have something to contribute.”

The trio were struck with the fact of how simple it is to get involved.

“Mexico is right there, and there’s something about crossing the border and going into another country that totally takes you out of your American bubble,” Yen Mussack said. “It bursts you out of your comfort zone, and really is life-changing.”

By the time they went to Mexico, the nursing students had compiled more than 140 hours of clinical experience. They found they had more clinical experience than the pre-med students who volunteered, and demonstrated to the Flying Samaritans that nursing students could provide organizational skills and experience in triage, Yen Mussack said.

They performed assessments on patients, saving the physician on duty a lot of time, she said.

“You’re on the front line before they hit the physician,” Yen Mussack said. “You are able to spot certain problems right away.”

The students have a passion for international nursing and want to continue performing humanitarian work, she said. She is a public health nurse working with the homeless in Orange County.

“It’s just awesome to be able to see a life change in front of me through some simple intervention,” Yen Mussack said. “With the skills we have, we could make a huge difference, not only on our patients but on society.”

— Rodney Tanaka

Ivy Yen Mussack, James White and Jessica Hilliard

You realize how valuable your skills are to people who don’t have anything.

— Ivy Yen Mussack, MSN-E ’09
For the third consecutive year an ambitious group of Western University of Health Sciences Physician Assistant students broadened their foundation of medical knowledge by immersing themselves in the practice of Traditional Chinese Medicine. A bonus in this year’s experience was the addition of students from the Riverside Community College and University of St. Francis of New Mexico PA programs. This group of 16 braved three weeks in the Chinese capital of Beijing and were taught the basics of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) by the faculty of Beijing University of Health Sciences Traditional Chinese Medicine Department.

The origin of this “Seminar in Traditional Chinese Medicine” was the result of the vision of Joseph Tate, PA-C of Hesperia, CA. While on vacation in China, his curiosity led him to ask about the health care system in China, and through fate and fortune he was able to befriend Dr. Jiang Gu, the Medical Director and Chair of Pathology at Beijing University and Shantou University. Three years ago, the first
group of students made the trip from LAX to Beijing. Since then 38 students have made new friends, colleagues, and memories that will impact their medical and personal lives forever.

For three weeks in April, the students learned the fundamentals of TCM and observed and practiced examination and treatment modalities of TCM, as well as exploring the similarities and differences of TCM and Western Medicine (WM). Aside from classroom instruction on TCM fundamentals the students were taken on tours of a TCM museum, one of the country’s largest pharmacies, and an herbal medicine garden. TCM is rooted in Chinese culture and philosophy, as the theories of harmony with nature pervade their fundamental basis of health, disease, and physiology. Not only is their point of view of pathology different, their methods of physical exam are different and insightful. The students were taught how to evaluate the severity and characteristic of a disease based upon general inspection, pulse taking, and tongue inspection.

Imagine trying to figure out a diagnosis of your patient based on a history, general observation, feeling their pulse, and inspecting their tongue. That’s the fundamental exam in traditional Chinese medicine but through this they can infer the severity and acuity of a patient’s problem in addition to narrowing down the pathologic “organs” or systems involved. Our students observed TCM practitioners in a university clinic, inpatient wards, and a cancer hospital. They observed how TCM doctors examine and treat patients, and they themselves were able to examine the patient after. The students were also able to practice acupuncture, moxibustion, and cupping therapeutics on patients.

At the conclusion of their rotation the students were split into two teams and had a spirited debate for and against “Modernization of TCM.” The students with their new knowledge and insights on both TCM and WM made good arguments. The TCM instructor, Dr. Jiang Wen-Yue, and WesternU PA instructors Tim Wood, PA-C and Ryan Junsay, PA-C, made it clear there were no losers in the debate – both teams argued impressively.

The future:
During this three-week excursion Dr. Gu, Joseph Tate, and I were able to visit a possible new site for learning TCM at the Medical School at Shantou University. The faculty of the TCM department and Dr. Gu have made an open invitation to continue instructing PA students in the practice of TCM and differences between TCM and WM. The students will be introduced to the fundamentals of TCM and will follow doctors in the two large hospitals affiliated with the university. While in the hospitals the students will observe and practice medicine in internal medicine, traumatology, oncology, and pediatric wards. In addition future students will be able to practice their clinical skills in their clinical skills facility which includes numerous chest and abdomen auscultation models, a simulated inpatient (including ICU) room, and a mock OR suite.

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Future students will be able to participate in four volunteering programs offered by Shantou University that bring the students into neighboring communities providing medical care and education – TCM and Western medicine. The four programs include a hospice program, medical aid for the poor, Caring is Hip, and cleft lip and palate repair. Through these programs the students will rotate with Chinese doctors and provide hospice care, eye and cleft lip services and treatments including surgery, and patient education and medical training services.

Through the partnership of Dr. Gu and Joseph Tate, this rotation has been available to PA students for the last three years. The partnership between WesternU and Beijing University has exposed over 30 students to a practice of medicine, health care delivery system, a culture, and a society misunderstood by many Americans. We are thankful for the generosity and hospitality of our hosts in China and look forward to continual sharing of ideas and spreading the PA profession throughout the world.

Special thanks to Joe Tate PA-C for help generating this rotation and Tim Wood, PA-C, instructor in the PA Department for joining me as faculty on the trip.
Wednesay, July 4, 2007

Happy 4th of July!

The first couple of patients we saw were fairly stable. The first one was in kidney failure, and we were trying to decide if he needed dialysis right away, or if he could wait until he got to Dar es Salaam (the last patient in this situation died before he could get on dialysis). We eventually did an ECG on him, but that was later into the rounds by the time the ECG machine arrived at the ward. Of course, once it did the attending doctor (the short, older mzungu I have been working with) went over and started getting things together, with the rest of the team eventually wondering over. Getting things started involved exposing his ankles, and slapping some gel into them. Then, taking off his jacket and shirt, slapping some more gel on him, and then attaching the electrodes…I realized as I was watching all of this happen (I was watching because I typically don’t actually touch the patients, that’s why I’m a pharmacist), that the patient looked scared and bewildered. He had been awake and alert, and rather quiet, from the minute we walked into the room. I realized that nobody had told him what was going on. He didn’t speak English, so the attending doctor couldn’t tell him. I asked the medical intern to let the patient know what we were doing, and he seemed to relax quite a bit.

Wednesay, August 1, 2007

Refreshing pharmacy personnel

Yesterday and today were filled with providing a 2-day course to people in the Southern Highlands Zone of Tanzania who are involved in dispensing HIV medications. These aren’t all pharmacists; in fact, only 2 of the 38 attendees are pharmacists. The rest are pharmacy assistants, pharmacy technicians, and (for the smaller facilities without actual pharmacy personnel) nurses that oversee the HIV medications (and sometimes clinics, too). I had prepared the lecture materials, and we had copies of them bound into notebooks for each participant (plus extra copies for their co-workers who were not able to join us).

Friday, August 10, 2007

In closing

There are many different cultural differences, societal differences, and resource differences between Tanzania and the U.S. But, until you actually go there, you don’t really get a clear picture of these differences…

...What I think is consistent between these two cultures is human nature. People are still people. They may have cultural ways of dealing with certain things that are different, but the underlying emotions are the same. It is uncommon to approach a hospital in the US and see a woman outside wailing, with her family surrounding her, because she lost her husband, or child, or parent. But, that doesn’t mean that people in the U.S. don’t feel the loss. The difference in the U.S. is that we try to delay that loss (the family of a person with a terminal disease saying “Do everything you can, we can’t bear to lose her…”)

...I don’t know if I did a ton of good with my time there. I won’t know if what I did was “good” until I see the opportunities I have proposed blossom into reality. I think I have done a reasonable job of assessing the current status of pharmacy services, through discussions with the Pharmacy Council (or national Board of Pharmacy), the school of pharmacy in Tanzania, a pharmacy leader within the country, and medical providers in the healthcare industry. I found that we all had the same goals, and now I hope that together we can see these goals happen. I hope and believe that I will return to Tanzania again. Will I stay for 3 months again…probably not. This amount of time is very disruptive on one’s life. But, I would like to return to be part of the progress that the profession of pharmacy in Tanzania can make. And, to see old friends.
Miguel Saggese, DVM, MS, PhD, WesternU College of Veterinary Medicine assistant professor, began working with birds of prey as a teenager in his native Argentina.

He has since traveled abroad, studying at the renowned Raptor Center at the University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine, then joined the WesternU faculty.

“I’m lucky enough to come to this country to receive a quality education,” Saggese said. “The least I can do is transmit my knowledge to other colleagues and students who are maybe not so lucky to travel abroad.”

Saggese serves as board member and director for the Southern Hemisphere of the Raptor Research Foundation, enhancing the education of Latin American students and assisting researchers about raptor biomedicine and conservation. Saggese is developing a mentoring program where experienced North American members and researchers from U.S. and Canadian universities help their southern counterparts.

He traveled to Argentina and Chile in late October and November, volunteering his time for seminars on raptor medicine.
“Rehabilitation of birds of prey is a complex issue,” Saggese said. “You can fix a leg or remove a tumor, but that doesn’t mean you can make the bird a survivor once it’s released into the wild.”

Saggese is dedicated to helping the crowned eagle, which is endangered due to loss of habitat, electrocution by power lines and human persecution. His work is motivated by several reasons. “This animal has the same right to live in this world as we have,” Saggese said. “We are sharing the world with them. We are not owners of the world.”

On a broader scale, top predators are indicators of health. The loss of these birds usually indicates the health of this habitat is not good, he said. And their disappearance may also affect the rest of the food chain.

“Raptors are top predators,” he said. “Every time you remove a predator, the ecological chain is affected. Most predators control the numbers of other animal species. They prey on rodents. Many rodents are carriers of infectious diseases like hantavirus.”

The human population is growing every day, reaching levels that cause a huge impact on the environment.

“There are no barriers between humans, domestic animals and wildlife,” Saggese said. “We are exposed to many infectious and emerging diseases. We need to learn how to live in equilibrium.”

As habitat is destroyed, humans are becoming exposed to diseases they historically had not been exposed to before.

“Being part of WesternU, we are looking at global health,” Saggese said. “We’re not just talking about humans and domestic animals, we’re talking about wildlife too. It’s important to help others.”

— Rodney Tanaka
A parade of grade-schoolers waited for Physician Assistant students from WesternU to take their blood pressure.

The 10-week physical fitness program organized by Pomona’s Community Services Department will provide fun activities that also motivate them to exercise. Their blood pressure will be taken again at the end of the session to see if there are any measureable improvements.

Community outreach allows students to practice the skills they’re learning in the classroom, and it also provides variations, said Roy Guizado, MS, PA-C, Chair of the Department of Physician Assistant Education in the College of Allied Health Professions.

“It puts PA students back in the community they’re going to school in,” he said.

“It’s important to work with kids. All kids behave differently - different sizes, different shapes. When PA students get out in practice they’ll be used to patient differences.”

Volunteering in the community exposes them to people from different ethnic backgrounds who speak different languages, said Krystal Cole, MSPA ’10. They learn to find ways to communicate and work through any barriers. Working with children also has benefits.

“We’re not only learning from it, we’re a positive influence on children, someone they can talk to,” Cole said.

Many WesternU students are learning the importance of community service through classroom activities, clubs and service learning. Pomona Community Health Action Team
(PCHAT) and Pomona Homeless Outreach Program (PHOP) organize health fairs and health screenings throughout Pomona and the surrounding communities.

College of Pharmacy students also participate in the statewide education initiative Partners in D, which helps Medicare recipients understand Medicare Part D. The students provide one-on-one sessions to provide advice about the proper Part D plan to enroll in based on their medications.

The College of Graduate Nursing’s MSN-E Class IV participated in the H Street Health Fair held Tuesday, Oct. 28 in downtown San Bernardino. A wide variety of health topics were covered, including childhood asthma, reproductive health and healthy lifestyles. Interactive booths provided education and screening for high blood pressure and calculating BMI, blood glucose levels identifying those at risk for development of, or having developed, Type II diabetes and free flu vaccine administration.

Students volunteer at the Montclair Clinic, where people without health insurance who don’t have Medi-Cal receive treatment on a sliding scale. The Pipeline to Health Careers invites students in elementary through high school to the WesternU campus to learn more about health careers.

“It’s important they understand how community medicine affects every individual,” said Susan Mackintosh, DO, Assistant Professor in the College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific.

Through service learning, students begin to understand the medical needs of the community, which will help them design more effective interventions. They can determine if these interventions are successful and they learn the importance of working together as a health care team.

“In this day and age of limited resources, it’s important to work collaboratively toward the goal of health and wellness for the community,” Mackintosh said.

College of Veterinary Medicine students learn clinical skills at multiple locations, including the Veterinary Ambulatory Community Service (VACS) vehicle, which travels to shelters to help care for stray, abandoned and rescued animals. Community service aligns with the college’s Reverence for Life philosophy, promising that animals will not be harmed in its teaching programs, said Christine Tindal, Associate Professor in the College of Veterinary Medicine.

“We don’t use animals for the purposes of training,” Tindal said. “These students are already coming to us thinking along those lines. For them, they want to not only help the community, they want to help animals in the shelters as much as they can. A lot of them are already thinking about reducing the need for euthanasia. They are already very community oriented.”

Students receive a wide range of experience with VACS working with rabbits, guinea pigs, gerbils and other animals they might not otherwise examine.

“They are also really getting exposure to the need the community has for those services,” Tindal said. “Going out on VACS reminds us that being a veterinarian is being a responsible person in the community.” — Rodney Tanaka
WesternU’s five-year, $60-million campaign for new equipment and facilities to support a major campus expansion was nearing $26 million in total gifts and pledges as the fall/winter edition of WesternU View went to press in mid-November.

Funds raised in the campaign are being used to equip five new buildings taking shape on the WesternU campus between now and 2011, an expansion that will push the campus boundary east to Towne Avenue. The buildings will house new health care professions colleges – including the new dental, optometry and podiatry colleges opening in August 2009 – to create a constellation of learning unique in the country.

The new structures include the Banfield Veterinary Clinical Center, which opened in August 2008; a Health Education Center; a Patient Care Center; and a Veterinary Instructional Pathology Center. A Center for Disability and Health Policy will be constructed at the SW corner of Second Street and Elm Street.

The capital campaign, which officially launched in July 2006, also supports faculty chairs, student scholarships and an innovative Interprofessional Education curriculum in which students from all colleges will learn together in the classroom, in small group case-based studies, and in clinical experiences with patients. The goal is for WesternU graduates to demonstrate an understanding of other health professions than their own, and to provide and promote a team approach to patient care.

Commitments to the capital campaign are recognized on several levels:

- Naming a College - $20 million.
- Naming a Building - $10 million.
- Equipping the new Health Education Center - $10 million.
- Equipping the new Patient Care Center - $10 million.
- Naming the Interprofessional Education Curriculum - $5 million.
- Endowing a Faculty Chair - $2 million.
- Endowing a Full Tuition Scholarship - $700,000.
- Creating a Scholarship Endowment - $20,000 minimum, generates $1,000 per year.

“We are nearly halfway to our goal in Capital Campaign gifts and pledges, much of which is contributing, even today, to construction of new facilities on campus,” said Dr. Shirley Johnston, vice president for university advancement. “Individuals, foundations and corporations continue to invest in the future of WesternU and its unique vision.”

For more information on making a gift or pledge, please contact Dr. Shirley Johnston, Vice President, University Advancement at sjohnston@westernu.edu or (909) 469-5270. — Jeff Keating
MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific

It seems like just yesterday that we were in Pasadena at the commencement of our DO Class of 2008, and now we already are several months into the new academic year.

The Class of 2008 won recognition as “First in the Nation” on Part II of the COMLEX Clinical Skills examination. This part requires a trip to Philadelphia to do a live testing session on standardized patients. The focus is on the biomedical/mechanical aspect of practice and humanism. The humanistic tradition of WesternU is truly being tested.

The entering class of 2012 comes extremely well prepared, with the highest credentials to date. They number 222 and come from all walks of life. We are eager to engage them in our curriculum and the COMP tradition of outstanding graduates.

Clinton E. Adams, DO, MPA, FACHE
MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

In today’s world, the poor tend to die prematurely and log more life years ill or suffering. They have limited access to health care.

The World Health Organization says it doesn’t have to be that way, and we all have a part to play.

Mark Lochte, PA-C, has traveled to Kenya five times and the Sudan once in the role of a medical missionary. The care he provided was the only care the people in those Third World countries received.

PT faculty member Vicky Graham and two PT students traveled to Mexico with Liga International. The Liga “Flying Doctors of Mercy” travel to Sinaloa each month to provide health care services to the poor living in the mountains and country outside town.

Sarah Cooper, PA-2009, decided to take up the charge in the U.S. along with her husband. They were involved in an inner-city church, working with junior high and high school students and their families addressing spiritual, emotional and physical needs. To provide a high level of service, Sarah decided to attend the WesternU PA Program.

WesternU alumni, faculty and students are answering the call of one medicine, one world, one vision.
Few would argue that medications are an increasingly important part of the health care equation. The ability of drugs to improve health and enhance the quality of life, when used optimally, is unequaled by any other form of treatment.

Yet medication safety and the rising cost of medications are issues that affect nearly all Americans. Today’s pharmacists are prepared to use their unique knowledge, skills and professional abilities to partner with patients and other health care professionals to provide care that optimizes drug therapy outcomes for all.

The WesternU College of Pharmacy is proud of its education and research programs, which prepare our graduates for the present and future practice of pharmacy. Together, our faculty, students and alumni are making important contributions to scholarship within their fields and to the health care outcomes of the communities and populations they serve. Being part of such a talented team is a dream come true.
MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

College of Graduate Nursing

It is with considerable pride in our students, alumni, faculty and staff that I note these recent accomplishments in the College of Graduate Nursing:

• **Self-studies** for the Master of Science in Nursing Entry (MSN-E) and the Master of Science in Nursing/Family Practitioner (MSN/FNP) programs recently were completed. I’m pleased to note that students reported 85-90% satisfaction with faculty and “good to very good” for the curriculum.

• **CGN’s Nursing Skills and Simulation Lab** has expanded to an approximately 4,800-square-foot area in the Health Sciences Center.

• We accepted **48 MSN-E, 42 MSN/FNP, and 19 DNP** students this fall term.

CGN also is initiating an Associate Degree RN (ADN) to Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program, which will allow ADNs to obtain their master’s degrees without going back to school for their BSN. WesternU will seat its charter class of the ADN/RN to MSN track in fall 2009.

Providing a high-caliber nursing education is more important now than even before in our history. The collaborative work being done at the College of Graduate Nursing will shape education as we move into the coming decade.
The College of Veterinary Medicine began the academic year celebrating the long-awaited occupancy of the Banfield Veterinary Clinical Center (BVCC). Construction of the Center was funded in part by Banfield™ the Pet Hospital. Completion of the auditorium, multidisciplinary laboratory and audio-visual classroom were completed due to the generous donations of, respectively, Dr. Scott and Mrs. Sandra Campbell, The Bosack–Krueger Foundation, and the Gretchen Wyler Estate.

A celebration dinner was held in the BVCC on August 8, 2008, in honor of our generous donors. It was a glorious night and a wonderful tribute to friends of the College who have had a significant impact on the development of our programs. The support of friends like these is a testament to the value of the programs we are committed to deliver. We understand the importance of what we do. We appreciate the investment of those who also recognize the value of our dreams.

Phillip Nelson, DVM, PhD
MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

College of Dental Medicine

It has been a rewarding and exciting year as we continue to prepare for our inaugural class of students in August 2009.

During this past year, we have welcomed several new faculty members; completed our substantive change application for WASC; been accepted for membership in the American Dental Education Association; held the first meeting of our College Advisory Council; initiated numerous contacts with potential funding partners; conducted 16 programs for pre-dental students both on campus and at universities around the state; and are reviewing more than 1,300 applications from prospective students.

Our initial application for accreditation to the Commission on Dental Accreditation was reviewed by staff and a team of consultants, and was deemed to meet the requirements necessary to conduct an onsite visit of the program. That site visit was scheduled for Oct. 14-15, 2008.

The College of Dental Medicine is pleased to be part of WesternU, and we look forward to working with all the members of the WesternU team to help continue the University’s tradition of excellence.

James J. Koelbl, DDS, MS, MJ
MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

College of Optometry

The theme of this issue of WesternU View reminds me of when I was starting my career as a clinical preceptor. While caring for a patient, we observed some findings that suggested she might be under an unusual amount of stress. We learned that the patient’s adult daughter had been in a car accident that had left her severely brain injured, unable to work or live alone. The injured woman was a single mother, so our patient was taking care of her daughter and her grandson 24 hours a day. The burden was overwhelming, and of course the stress level was incalculable.

We were able to assist our patient in getting her daughter enrolled in special rehabilitative programs. But I think about all the other missed opportunities over the years, and how these opportunities will now become fully realized because of the integrated approach to health professions education and patient care services here at WesternU.

By teaching all of our students that it truly is one medicine, one world, and one vision, we will be impacting lives in ways we never could before. We can turn to our trusted colleagues across campus “to teach, to heal, together.”
The 1967 movie “The Graduate” includes a conversation that has become a classic:

"I want to say one word to you. Just one word."
“Yes, sir,” the young Dustin Hoffman character, Benjamin, replies.
“…. Plastics.”

Plastics represented sure success for Benjamin as he stepped into the future in 1967. Forty years later, the word that ensures success is “podiatry.”

The reasons are clear:

- An aging population.
- An expectation by those baby boomers of continued activity well into advanced age.
- An unfortunate reality for some of experiencing the complications of diabetes and vascular disease.
- A high percentage of uninsured Americans without adequate preventative care.
- A rising number of Americans with a minority background and the prevalence of diabetes and hypertension that this population experiences.

College-bound students are largely unaware that a career in podiatric medicine and surgery exists and that it is a branch of medicine that can provide patients with life-saving treatments and practitioners’ families with abundant lifestyles.

The key to success is podiatry.
WesternU is continuing to grow as it becomes the premier health sciences campus in Southern California.

As part of this process, the University anticipates opening its new Graduate College of Biomedical Sciences (GCBS) in 2009-10. The new College, which will initially offer a Masters in Biomedical Sciences degree and a post-baccalaureate degree (non-thesis Masters), will accelerate the pace of scientific research conducted at the University as it trains graduate and medical students in evidence-based practices based on the research model. In the future, a doctoral degree program is planned for those interested in research academic/biotechnology careers.

The new College will provide faculty and students with ample opportunities for both biomedical and educational scientific investigation, and it will play a major role in transforming and enhancing the University's research efforts on an institutional level.
Western University of Health Sciences held five commencement ceremonies on May 15-16, 2008 at the Pasadena Civic Auditorium. About 600 students graduated from the colleges of Allied Health Professions, Graduate Nursing, Pharmacy, Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific and Veterinary Medicine.
About 700 new students, their families and friends received an introduction to Western University of Health Sciences at the Convocation and white coat ceremonies on August 9, 2008. Convocation, held off campus at Pomona First Baptist Church, welcomes and honors the entering classes each year. Each college holds a white coat ceremony, which symbolizes students’ entry into the healing professions, and serves as a reminder of the powerful influence of the healer.
Pomona Unified School District students are encouraged to dream big when they think about possible careers.

“I want to be a doctor and take care of people,” said Raquel Quinones, 11, of Harrison Elementary. “I want to learn how to care for people when they’re sick, and what I need to do to help them.”

Raquel was one of 36 students who visited Western University of Health Sciences in October to take the first step in making this goal a reality. The Sixth Grade Linkage Academy will be held six times through the 2008-09 academic year as part of the Pomona Health Career Ladder, a partnership between PUSD, Cal Poly Pomona and WesternU.

The Career Ladder will identify math and science scholars in Pomona schools, guide them through an undergraduate health/science degree at Cal Poly Pomona and into health professions programs at WesternU through a program-based network of outreach, guidance, mentoring and financial assistance. In addition, the parties hope to generate support groups to provide private sources of financial aid for these scholars. The ultimate goal is to produce health care professionals who will serve the Pomona community.

During the first linkage academy, WesternU students provided hands-on demonstrations of how they help patients. Parents also received an orientation so they could better understand how to help their child reach their career goals.

“For you parents, I should say that today is about dreaming. Dreaming about what could be,” said WesternU President Philip Pumerantz, PhD. “It’s about aspirations, too – to aspire to something that’s worthwhile.”

The Career Ladder kicked off on June 11 with a signing ceremony by Dr. Thelma Meléndez de Santa Ana, PhD, superintendent of Pomona Unified School District, Dr. J. Michael Ortiz, PhD, president of Cal Poly Pomona, and Dr. Pumerantz.

The three organizations are all involved in the Pomona Youth and Family Master Plan, which addresses problems such as gang violence and poor academic achievement by fostering a caring community that promotes positive youth development through
collaboration. The Career Ladder is one of their major contributions to this effort.

The Career Ladder provides a wonderful option for PUSD students, Meléndez de Santa Ana said. She recalled a famous quote from comedian Milton Berle, who said, “If opportunity doesn’t knock, build a door.”

“We’re building a door to a whole range of new possibilities,” Meléndez de Santa Ana said. “Our parents want more options for our students.”

The Career Ladder will guide and assist the many Pomona students who have aspirations to enter the medical field, Ortiz said.

“By providing the incentive, goals and opportunities, it’s going to have a significant impact on our community,” he said.

An advisory committee composed of representatives of all three institutions was established to create the details of the program, establish selection criteria and develop the processes of mentoring and supporting students throughout their time in the program.

The board members are: Dr. Elizabeth Rega, Dr. Gerald Thrush and Dr. Susan Mackintosh from WesternU, Dr. Don Straney and Dr. Frank Ewers from Cal Poly Pomona and Dr. Mark Maine, Dr. Brent Woodard and Melvin Young from PUSD.

A fully binding, legal agreement between Cal Poly Pomona and WesternU’s other colleges, Rega said.

The advisory committee is considering admissions criteria, the number of students to be let in and potential funding sources.

The linkage academy is a good way for WesternU students to interact with younger students.

“It’s nice to speak to young people who might go into our health field,” said Jenny Chang, PharmD ’12.

Gricelda Celio, 12, of Fremont Elementary, said she wants to be a pediatrician.

“I like helping kids,” she said. “Our teacher told us this is where we’d learn how to be a doctor or a nurse or a children’s doctor.”

In a few short years, these sixth-graders can be doctors, Pumerantz told the parents and students.

“It doesn’t take that long,” he said. “I can see into the future. I can see where you’re going to be. You have to see it, too.” — Rodney Tanaka
James Lally, DO, MMM, COMP ’91, president and chief medical officer of Chino Valley Medical Center, got an inside view of the historic 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

Lally serves as Chairman of the International Shooting Sports Federation Medical Commission. The federation represents more than four million shooters worldwide.

The medical commission is responsible for the safety and welfare of shooting athletes as well as doping control for the shooting venue at the Olympics. Lally supervised 22 volunteers and four doping control officers.

The Beijing Olympics had 10,700 athletes, and there were 4,500 doping tests for the Games, Lally said. Thirty-eight athletes withdrew from the Games to avoid the potential of being disqualified, he said.

“It’s definitely a cleaner game,” he said. “What we see is an ongoing, evolving issue. We have potential cheats who always try to stay one step ahead of testing.”

Lally is also the team physician for the United States Shooting Team and is president of USA Shooting, the national governing body for Olympic Shooting Sports.

The U.S. team returned from Beijing with two gold medals (men’s skeet and men’s double trap), two silver medals (men’s 50m rifle prone and women’s skeet) and two bronze medals (men’s 10m air pistol and women’s trap).

Lally witnessed some of the most talked-about highlights of the Olympics, including the Opening Ceremony and the U.S. Men’s Swim Team’s 4X100m freestyle relay victory that contributed to Michael Phelps’ record-setting eight gold medals.

“You could feel the tension in the air,” Lally said of the swim venue. “Even the Chinese were rooting for him.”

Beijing was immaculate and the entire experience was positive.

“They did what no other country could do,” he said. “I can’t say enough good things about the Chinese. There were blue skies. It was perfect.”

The Olympics remain a special, singular event in sports.

“There was palpable excitement,” Lally said. “It’s still the world’s stage.” — Rodney Tanaka
Medical students often become like family after spending years studying, stressing and succeeding together. Ben and Mandi Hudson had a head start. They met in 2000 as undergraduates at Willamette University in Salem, Ore. and married in 2002, but at the time neither had the intention of entering medical school. They worked various jobs - Ben taught at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo and also worked as a manager for an Apple store and Mandi worked in student services and as a medical assistant in an OB/GYN clinic.

Ben tore his ACL while playing semi-pro football, which introduced him to the medical field. “I decided from a patient perspective, I like this a lot more than teaching,” he said. “I came to that revelation, talked to my wife about it, and she decided that’s what she wanted to do.”

They were both accepted to the Northwest Track of COMP and are in their final year, completing rotations in Oregon.

“It can be difficult when two people are married, one in medical school and the other in the workforce or raising a family,” Ben said. “They don’t really understand what’s going on. But we actually had a huge advantage. We’re both involved in school. We knew exactly what the other was going through.”

They did not compete against each other in class, mainly because they have different strengths.

“Ben is very book smart,” Mandi said. “He’s very good at studying and taking tests, and I think I’m more practical. He excelled in the first two years of school.”

Mandi has phenomenal organizational skills and excels at getting involved, Ben said. She served as the coordinator of the Montclair clinic and they started the Explorers program, which morphed into the Pipeline project. She got him involved in a lot more activities than he would have done otherwise, Ben said.

They won the Dean’s Award the same year.

“It was special that we both won it together,” Mandi said. “It showed how we were able to support each other to make the experience better.”

Going through medical school brought them closer together, Ben said.

“When you go through these trials in life, the people you go through it with you build a connection with you never will forget,” he said. “Having that experience with my classmates, and especially so with my wife made us closer and better.”

— Rodney Tanaka
Scholarships provide much more than monetary assistance to students. They offer hope and motivation.

That was the message from Army Maj. Alea Morningstar, DO ‘96, who received the Elie Wiesel Humanism in Healing Award at the 2008 A Tribute to Caring gala at the Beverly Hills Hotel and Bungalows on Nov. 1, 2008.

The annual event raises money for student scholarships, and Morningstar said she would not have been able to graduate from the College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific without the financial and morale boost scholarships provide.

“It’s not only the money,” she said. “Someone else you don’t even know believes in you, your goals and your dreams. A scholarship makes dreams a reality.”

Morningstar served as an ER physician and surgeon during three tours of duty in Iraq. As a mobile field surgeon, she ministered to warriors injured by small arms fire, mortars and roadside bombs, she said. As battalion surgeon, she supervised 3,000 detainees’ medical care as well as soldiers and Marines at the infamous Abu Ghraib Prison.

Shrapnel from a roadside bomb caught Maj. Morningstar’s leg and arm, her shoulder was irreparably torn, and multiple blast exposures left her with a traumatic brain injury. She spent 11 months at Walter Reed Army Medical Center before transferring home to Hawaii. Her medical license has been deactivated while she undergoes rehab. She wants to help soldiers with post-traumatic stress disorder, a passion stemming from her osteopathic training and experiences in Iraq, where soldiers came to her to express their emotions during traumatic times in the field.

“They have to let that grief out,” she said. “My DO training at WesternU prepared me for the caregiving I needed to provide in Iraq. I was taught how to reach somebody in pain.”

The theme of ATC, “One World. One Medicine. One Vision,” celebrated the caring and compassion displayed by WesternU faculty, students and alumni who volunteer around the globe in humanitarian efforts.

Rear Adm. Richard R. Jeffries, DO, served as a special guest presenter and introduced Morningstar. The evening also featured a special presentation by Assemblyman Mervyn Dymally to College of Podiatric Medicine Dean Lawrence Harkless. Frank Mottek, anchor and reporter for KNX 1070 Newsradio and KTLA Channel 5 News@10, served as emcee.
Western University of Health Sciences would like to express its heartfelt thanks to all of our sponsors and for their generous support towards the “A Tribute to Caring” gala dinner.

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Cindie Fike and her daughter, Lisa McAfee, took different paths to earn their doctorates. They hope their journey can inspire others to strive for greater things.

Fike is in the inaugural Doctor of Nursing Practice class in the College of Graduate Nursing, which began in January 2008. McAfee, DO ’09, is completing her final year in the College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific. Both are scheduled to graduate in May 2009.

Fike, who is Senior Director of Patient Care Services at Community Hospital of San Bernardino, has talked to young Hispanic students about staying in school and earning a college degree.

“Daughters bring their mothers who are against them going to school,” Fike said. “The tradition is to stay home and take care of the children.”

These students are trying to stay in school while their families are pulling against them, McAfee said. She and her mother are only a few generations removed from women coming from Mexico with nothing in their pockets, McAfee said. For her nieces to see them earn doctorates is a major accomplishment.

They can set an example for women trying to redefine their role in life.

“We were expected to be married with children and to take care of the home,” McAfee said. “That’s recently been redefined.”

Fike said she did not plan on earning a doctorate, since PhD programs have more of a research focus rather than clinical perspective, but the DNP program fit perfectly with her work.

“I’m surrounded by attorneys and physicians,” Fike said. “To be able to expand my knowledge where I’m working and clinically apply my doctorate is a huge advantage.”

Fike followed in the footsteps of her mother, who was a nurse, and she expected McAfee to also follow that tradition, but is proud that she decided a different path. McAfee did not choose the same career path, but her mother’s determination through the years served as inspiration.

“She’s always choosing to advance herself and in her education give back to people,” McAfee said. “That’s the reason why I’m in school now.”

McAfee did not immediately pursue higher education, working as a tech after high school.

“Sometimes the path will throw you off a little bit. The direction given to you as a child always brings you back to the right path,” McAfee said. “There is no one way to get where you’re trying to go, as long as you plug away at it.”

— Rodney Tanaka
The new Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program at WesternU’s College of Graduate Nursing is preparing graduates to serve as leaders in strengthening practice and health care delivery.

The clinical focus of the DNP program is the care of vulnerable populations. Vulnerable populations are often defined by disproportionately poor health outcomes attributed to inequities in the access to or the distribution of health resources. Increased morbidity and mortality, the burden of disease and other adverse health experiences occur when risk for disease, illness, social conditions, social policy, and even health care “culture” conspire to undermine health and create barriers to care. DNP program graduates will possess the knowledge, skills, and abilities that are important to the care of vulnerable populations across health care settings.

“Nursing has always worked with vulnerable populations, but not in a systematic way,” said DNP Director Ellen Daroszewski, PhD, APRN. “This program prepares doctoral level clinicians with the skills for complex decision making, sophisticated communication, independent and interprofessional clinical practice, the evaluation and application of theory and evidence to practice, and the transformation of the health care delivery system.”

The inaugural class of 19 students started in January 2008 with most of the class anticipating finishing on an accelerated track in 2009. The second class started in August 2008 and will finish in spring 2010.

Students in the inaugural class will publicly present and defend their dissertations beginning in summer 2009 as the final step in the dissertation process. The university and entire community will be invited to the presentations, Daroszewski said. These will be the first dissertations completed at WesternU.

Christine Magladry, MSN, RN, FNP-C, assistant professor of CGN’s MSN/FNP Program, is a member of the inaugural class. Her dissertation will focus on the development of a pilot program to screen high school students for mental health disorders, which fits with the emphasis on vulnerable populations, she said.

She entered the DNP program to enhance her academic skills and to become a better instructor, mentor and professor, Magladry said. The DNP program is going to encourage a lot more advanced practice nurses to pursue a doctorate, she said.

“The doctoral program is designed to help us become tomorrow’s nursing leaders,” Magladry said. “Nursing is desperately in need of strong leadership. I certainly envision myself getting involved at the local or state level in nursing leadership. A clinical doctorate gives my voice more authority.” — Rodney Tanaka
Every WesternU graduate is special, but a small group of them inside the larger graduating class of the College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific (COMP) last May were especially noteworthy.

While most of COMP's graduates completed their studies within driving distance of WesternU's Pomona campus, several members of the Class of 2008 spent at least half of their four-year regimen literally hundreds of miles away, logging class time in hospitals and clinics in Oregon, Washington and Idaho.

COMP developed its Northwest Track program in response to numerous calls and requests from Northwest facilities, physician groups, and students. The college has set aside 30 seats in each class for students who permanently reside in or possess a degree from a four-year college or university in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming or Alaska.

By contract, the students complete their first two years of basic sciences at COMP's campus in Pomona, then return to the Northwest for their required third- and fourth-year clinical clerkships.

The inaugural Northwest Track class that graduated in May numbered just 25 students, but what they represent – and what WesternU is trying to achieve with the program – defies conventional measurement. It's nothing less than an effort to improve and expand health-care options for millions of people in the Pacific Northwest, while at the same time establishing humanistic health sciences education environments physically far removed from WesternU’s main campus, but philosophically right next door.

That’s some pretty lofty stuff, but certainly not out of reach based on the program’s success so far, Northwest Track Director Dirk Foley said.

“We’re on the cusp of the next growth phase, ramping up to bricks and mortar in Lebanon,” said Foley, referring to the Samaritan Health Services medical complex project in Oregon’s mid-Willamette Valley that will include a WesternU satellite campus.

A preliminary development plan went before the Lebanon Planning Commission during the summer. Officials hope to break ground on the complex next year and seat the first college class by 2011.

Plans for the 50-acre complex include a conference center, a hotel, a restaurant and
some retail and office space. That’s in addition to one or more schools: WesternU, and perhaps satellite campuses of Western Oregon University and Linn-Benton Community College.

The complex property is across the highway from Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital, which is one of the rotation sites for Northwest Track students. A skybridge would connect the two facilities.

Once the Lebanon complex is built and WesternU’s satellite campus is in place, “the Northwest Track will cease to exist, and those students will become the first class on our Northwest campus,” Foley said.

His main task these days, he said, is “doing a better job of painting the picture” of the program for students. “But overall, it’s working the way we thought it would.”

Michael Finley, COMP’s Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs and Postgraduate Training, said the Northwest Track program is an asset for two key groups: Northwest communities that need doctors, and would-be doctors who want to go back home after receiving their medical training.

“It’s community-based education, so it grounds them (students) in what their practice would be like once they’re on their own,” Finley said. “And they have a pre-ordained affinity for the Northwest, since they’re from there. They want to go back.”

A third entity that benefits, of course, is WesternU. The University’s philosophy of humanistic, whole-person care is geographically extended thanks to the Northwest Track program, which had as one of its impetuses the closure of Eastmoreland Hospital, an osteopathic hospital in Portland that was shuttered in January 2004.

The Northwest Track program, though “not for everybody,” Finley said, is distinct from other osteopathic schools not only because of its affiliation with WesternU, but because of its many training sites. Foley is based in Portland, and many of the program’s 30 Northwest clerkship sites are along the Interstate 5 corridor, including in Seattle/Tacoma, Portland, Corvallis/Lebanon and Medford/Ashland.

“Our strengths are that we have a physical presence, clerkship directors at all our sites in the Northwest, and relationships with four-year schools – Oregon State University, Seattle Pacific, Portland State, BYU-Idaho,” Finley said. “We’re distinguishing ourselves as something someone would really take a look at.”

— Jeff Keating
Research Partners

The momentum continues to build for collaborations between Western University of Health Sciences and Charles Drew University of Medicine and Science.

The two institutions held their second Research Retreat on Oct. 29, 2008 on the WesternU campus. The first retreat was held in downtown Los Angeles on July 15, 2008, where pilot funding was announced to stimulate collaborations.

Steven Henriksen, PhD, Western University of Health Sciences Vice President of Research and Biotechnology, opened the second retreat by reiterating that the continued success of the collaborations depended on the participants and their colleagues and their ability to recognize, and act on, opportunities available before them.

Dr. Henriksen then released the participants for an extensive tour of Western University’s research laboratory facilities that provided a hands-on opportunity to observe WesternU scientists at work in their research setting.

Following the tour, the participants returned to the Nursing Science Center for the announcement of the successful applicants for the collaborative intramural awards, and a brief presentation of their proposal.

Many of the projects emerged from connections made at the first retreat. Stacey Teruya, EdD, program director of the Charles R. Drew University Division of Endocrinology, Metabolism and Molecular Medicine, said he talked with WesternU Assistant Professor Roger Gallegos, PhD, about a potential collaboration at the first retreat.

He subsequently met with WesternU College of Veterinary Medicine Assistant Professor Kris Irizarry, PhD, and WesternU College of
Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific Assistant Professor Katherine Mitsouras, PhD, at another seminar. The result was the project, “Integrating genomics and clinical data in a ‘systems biology’ approach for understanding depression, with an emphasis on the molecular basis of stress response, sleep architecture and SSRI treatment efficacy,” which received $12,000 in funding.

“The idea is we’re a team of equals in a true collaboration,” Teruya said. “Everybody worked hard. No one’s going to do it for you.”

Participating in the first retreat prompted Kevin Heslin, PhD, Health Services Researcher at CDU’s Research Centers in Minority Institutions, to e-mail Brenda Premo, MBA, director of WesternU’s Center for Disability Issues and the Health Professions. They partnered with Ken Schonlau, Sober Living Network of Southern California, for the project, “Development of an Intervention to Increase Access to Supportive Housing for Disabled Individuals Recovering from Substance Abuse,” which received funding of $7,500.

“We’re taking Brenda’s expertise and applying it to the sober living community,” Heslin said.

Their collaboration also extended to his classroom, where Premo served as a guest lecturer.

“I learned a lot from her,” Heslin said. “This has been a great learning experience.”

The second retreat brought together a good group of people who are eager to collaborate, said Kevin Jones, PhD, COMP Assistant Professor of Pharmacology. He identified three people as potential collaborators, both at CDU and within his own university, during the morning’s opening introductions.

“This is very exciting,” Jones said. “The two universities have complimentary strengths. They merge together very well.”

A good number of project proposals were submitted, said Keith Norris, MD, Charles Drew University of Medicine and Science (CDU) Vice President for Research, and he expects more than just the four that were funded to move forward.

One important factor in choosing the awards was the types of teams coming together, such as the pairing of a senior and junior investigator, which is helpful from a mentoring perspective, he said.

“I see even more energy and enthusiasm,” Norris said. “It looks like momentum is building.”

— Rodney Tanaka
Jared* knew that his father fought a valiant battle against cancer. After visiting Western University of Health Sciences, the 6-year-old also knows that his father is a hero.

Jerry died last year after battling cancer and his family chose to donate his body to Western University of Health Sciences’ Willed Body Program, which provides vital anatomy lessons to students.

Jerry’s wife, Dawn, and their son Jared visited WesternU a year later to learn more about the program. Jared was happy and proud to learn that his father is teaching doctors, Dawn said.

“I wanted my son to see the campus,” she said. “They went all out to make him feel like a special little guy that day. They told him his dad’s a hero.”

Representatives from the College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific and the Willed Body Program took the family on a tour of the campus and gave Jared a plaque. Dawn said she was impressed with the school, and the people were polite and nice. Visiting campus was much nicer than visiting a cemetery, and she would recommend donating to the Willed Body Program to everybody, she said.

“I could see students were very serious about their studies,” Dawn said. “It made me feel good about the decision.”

Jerry had fought cancer for five years, but it spread from his lungs to his liver, adrenals and bones.

“We just thought because it was so extensive someone could learn from it,” Dawn said. “This could possibly help cancer patients in the future.”

Jared was 8 months old when his father started cancer treatment.

“One of his first words was ‘doctor,’” Dawn said. “We never hid it from him, but we always tried to put living first and cancer second.”

Jerry was just shy of 67 years old when he died. Dawn was referred to WesternU by Loma Linda University Medical Center, where her husband received treatment.

“I think to donate a body like this removes you from the stress of a regular funeral,” Dawn said. “This focuses you more on life rather than death. I was really happy we did it.”

Niña McCoy, Body Donation Program Director, is dedicated to the needs of the donors and their families.

“I understand how precious these donors are to their families and their communities,” she said. “As much as they’ve given to their community,
they feel like it’s important to make this great donation to mankind. It’s incredible and it’s inspiring, and it gives me hope because it’s people who give above and beyond.”

She helps the faculty and students understand the importance of these donors. Students value the lessons learned.

“You only learn so much from a book, said Jared Acevedo, a third-year Physical Therapy student. “Anatomy is the foundation for what we do day in and day out.”

The anatomy lab gives students a greater appreciation of the human body, said Allan Belcher, DO ’11. They hold a memorial service at the end of the session.

“We end in the right way, recognizing them as people,” he said.

Prior to the most recent memorial service, McCoy went into the lab to make sure everything was ready. Each body was covered with a white cover. On top of each cadaver was a single long-stemmed red rose.

“In my 10 years here, this had never happened,” McCoy said. “I had received flowers from the class at the Memorial Services in the past, but this was far more moving...far more appropriate to honor the donors and their family’s sacrifices.” — Rodney Tanaka

* Donors to the Willed Body Program are anonymous, so family members in this story are identified by first names only.

Tabitha was an abandoned alley cat who found a loving home with the Trinidad family in Santa Clarita. Sofia Trinidad, 28, received Tabitha as a Christmas gift from her godmother at age 12.

“Coming home from school every day, I would open the door and she was always waiting,” Sofia said.

Sofia moved out in 1998 to work at UC Irvine, and Sofia’s mother, Mary, said Tabitha became her pet as well.

“Every time I go to bed, she climbs in bed and stays with me,” Mary said. “She gives me comfort when I’m alone.”

Mary wouldn’t let Tabitha get under the covers, so she knew to wait until Mary pulled the comforters up to jump on the bed.

“She knows to come to me to sleep under the covers,” Sofia said.

Earlier this year, Tabitha started having health problems. She was put on medication, and Sofia
would take a two-hour train ride from Irvine to Santa Clarita to give her medicine.

Tabitha had cardiomyopathy, when the heart muscle becomes inflamed and doesn’t work as well as it should. Doctors told the family that surgery would only prolong her life for three months.

Tabitha died on July 17, 2008. The hospital staff told the Trinidad family about WesternU’s Willed deceased Animals for Veterinary Education (WAVE) program. The College of Veterinary Medicine was founded on the Reverence for Life philosophy and it relies solely on the WAVE program for cadaver-based studies.

“We will not harm or kill animals in the name of education,” said Tami Miller, WAVE director. “Students are completely dependent on the program for their studies.”

All animals donated to WAVE must have died or been euthanized due to serious illness or injury. Animals without owners that are killed secondary to the overpopulation problem will not be accepted.

“We’re in this profession to save pets,” said Amaris Pao, DVM ’11. “It doesn’t make sense to kill them in the process.”

The college holds a memorial service at the beginning of each school year to honor the pets and their families.

“We remember to treat them with a lot of respect,” Pao said. “They all belong to someone who loves them.”

Tabitha is an important part of the Trinidad family, as evidenced by the loving stories they tell about her and the sadness they continue to feel. But they were also encouraged by the respect shown at the memorial service, which they attended.

They hope that students can learn more about Tabitha’s condition so they could help others down the road as veterinarians, Mary said.

“It’s very good that students have a memorial before the start of the program to honor the pets. I think it’s very nice,” Sofia said. “I wish all the students the best. I hope they learn something from Tabitha’s experience.”

For more information about the WAVE program, call 909-469-5597 or e-mail cvm.wave@westernu.edu or tsmiller@westernu.edu. — Rodney Tanaka
Construction is underway on the Health Education Center (HEC) and the Patient Care Center (PCC). The Health Education Center will be the new home of the College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific and the three new colleges opening in 2009 - the College of Dental Medicine, the College of Optometry and the College of Podiatric Medicine. Also under construction is the Patient Care Center, which will combine educational programs and optimal patient care in an environment where students from all disciplines will gain an understanding and appreciation for other health professionals. The buildings are expected to be completed in 2010.

The two-story, 31,200-square-foot Banfield Veterinary Clinical Center opened in summer 2008. The ground floor includes a Banfield, The Pet Hospital of WesternU, a clinical skills laboratory named the “Thing Laboratory,” an audio-visual learning room named for the late actress Gretchen Wyler, and a student commons.
Alumni Class Notes

Eileen Schweickert, DO ’90, has been out of communication due to illness since about 2001, when she had to retire from practice due to MS. She still lives in northern Michigan and is fully retired, though her illness has stabilized and actually improved. She’s begun to do some writing, and had a book, “Funny Farm,” published about her experiences with MS. Most of her time is spent these days with her ranch animals. She and her husband, Dan, now raise bucking bulls. She says she still uses her manipulative skills, only now on cows!

After his family practice residency at San Bernardino County Medical Center, Dan Brown, DO ’92, completed a three-year stint with the Air Force at Edwards Air Force Base. He then moved to the San Joaquin Valley and lives in Visalia, where he has been practicing full time Emergency Medicine ever since. He is a staff physician at Kaweah Delta Medical Center, where the ER volume is over 72,000 patients per year. He and his wife, Sylvia, have four children, ages 14, 14, 11 and 7. Some of his fondest memories of COMP include playing volleyball in the street, playing basketball, and catching up on his sleep during pathology and a few other lectures.

Kim Minesinger, DO ’98, is a partner in a growing primary care group in Corona/Norco: Citrus Valley Family Medical Associates, where she practices family medicine and wellness/weight loss with 12 other doctors, including one other COMP alumna, Melissa Taylor, DO ’99. Kim completed her family medicine residency at Arrowhead Regional Medical Center, where she was Chief Resident in 2001. She’s also Board Certified in Family Medicine. She recently was named Hospice Director for Corona Regional Medical Center, and her wellness/weight loss program was recently written up in a story for Inland Empire Magazine. She and her husband, Ken, an estate and financial planning attorney in Corona, recently celebrated their 14th wedding anniversary. They live in Corona with their daughter Erin, 6.

Accomplishments

Heartfelt thanks to Allea Morningstar, DO ’96, who received the Elie Wiesel Humanism in Healing Award at WesternU’s annual A Tribute to Caring event in November for outstanding service to country and fellow man. Dr. Morningstar has served numerous tours of duty in Iraq, one as the medical officer at Abu Ghraib prison, and has recently been recovering from injuries sustained while overseas.

Kudos to Marina Lukovsky, PharmD ’01, the second author on a paper titled “Rituximab and Intravenous Immune Globulin for Desensitization during Renal Transplantation,” published in the New England Journal of Medicine.

At the Western States Conference for Pharmacy Residents, Fellows and Preceptors in May 2008, fourteen Class of ’07 Pharmacy alumni presented their residency projects. Kudos to all who participated: Annie Chhay, PharmD, Micah Hata, PharmD, Bryan Katuin, PharmD, Cindy Le, PharmD, Jenny Lin, PharmD, Karen Lin, PharmD, Amy Phillips, PharmD, Michael San Agustin, PharmD, Mannhu Ton, PharmD, Ann Vu, PharmD, Elke Wong, PharmD, Jason Wong, PharmD, Sylvia Young, PharmD and Carol Young, PharmD.

California Emergency Physicians (CEP) has hired a significant number of WesternU PA graduates. Some of those grads have worked their way up the administrative chain: Cama Garcia, PA-C ’95, has been a regional PA Lead for CEP PAs in the East Bay area.

Jane Salinas, PA-C ’98, has recently been appointed as a new regional PA Lead for the San Diego/Georgia region.
Congratulations

Chi Q. Nguyen, PharmD ’04, gave birth to daughter Chloe Ly in June 2007.

Theresa Henry, PA-C ’98, and husband Gus celebrated the birth of daughter Addison Rose on May 26. Congratulations!

Joyce Suzuki, MSPA ’03, married Richard Bond on Sept. 29, 2007.

Amber Hollenbeck, MSPA ’04, was married on May 31, 2008.

Marie Gutierrez, MSPA ’05, married Seth Egge on May 25 in Jamaica.

Josef Strazynski, DO ’82, writes, “I am happy to announce that as of Dec. 21, 2007, I have joined the grandfather club! My oldest son Robert and his wife Miriam have a baby girl, Abigail Chana. She was born at 6 a.m. at Meir Hospital in Kfar Saba, Israel, and as you can imagine, she is the most beautiful girl in the world. Shalom.”

David Zebrack, DO ’89, is busy with private practice in Temecula, CA, and caring for his daughter and twin boys born on Oct. 3, 2007.

Arpita Amin, DO ’04, and her husband Neel welcomed daughter Ria in December 2007.

In Memoriam


Marc Lazzara, DO ’97, died unexpectedly of a heart attack the morning of July 15, 2008. He is survived by his wife Bernadette, and children Audrey, 17, and Kurt, 18.
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-Beth Yaskin, Doylestown, PA

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