Mission Statement

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

From Iran to WesternU
The captivating story of Class of 2011 COMP student Bavand Youssefzadeh’s journey from Iran to the U.S., and eventually Western University of Health Sciences.

PROFILE

Speaking for those who can’t
Dr. Vicki Wedel helps identify unsolved murder victims through forensic anthropology.

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WesternU View Spring/Summer 2009 1
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Three new WesternU colleges – Dental Medicine, Optometry, and Podiatric Medicine – will welcome their inaugural classes in a few short months. With that influx of new students, and the imminent opening of WesternU’s Patient Care Center, our University is poised to embark on a program of Interprofessional Education (IPE) unlike any other in the nation. Students from all of the University’s disciplines will work together in the classroom, in small group venues, and in clinical experiences with patients, developing an understanding of other health professions and promoting a team approach to patient care and health care management.

IPE is an exciting new development at WesternU, but it’s far from the only one. The University recently received approval to offer a master’s degree in biomedical sciences, paving the way for the opening of its ninth school, the Graduate College of Biomedical Sciences. We’re also nearing completion of a multimillion dollar expansion project that includes the Patient Care Center; a Health Education Center that will be the new home of the College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific and the dental, optometry and podiatry colleges; a Veterinary Pathology Center; and a new home for the Center for Disability Issues and the Health Professions.

WesternU’s commitment to the development of compassionate, humanistic health care professionals, and our expanding capacity to evolve and improve all that we do, is reflected in the high caliber of students, faculty and staff the University continues to attract, and in the graduates it produces. We are leading the way in health-sciences education, and will remain steadfast in our mission even as we embrace the changes tomorrow will bring.

Philip Pumerantz, PhD
WesternU faculty and administrators are shaping the interprofessional education (IPE) curriculum that incoming students will begin in early 2010.

“Ultimately, our aim is to graduate health professionals who have their individual health care professional perspectives as well as collaborative patient-centered focus,” said Dr. Sheree Aston, Vice Provost and Chair of the IPE committee. “We plan on achieving this goal through an IPE program where students from various disciplines learn and practice together. It is important to begin the process early in their education.”

The goal of the IPE program, where students from all disciplines work and learn together, is for graduates to demonstrate an understanding of each other’s roles as health professionals and to provide and promote a team approach to patient care and health care management, leading to improved patient care.

A case pilot study, held in spring 2008, involved 60 student volunteers from six campus programs – osteopathic medicine, physician assistant, physical therapy, pharmacy, nursing and veterinary medicine.

The purpose was to determine the most effective method to deliver an interprofessional education course. The students were randomly split into different
classes – some blending online and face-to-face, and others entirely in person, some lasting three weeks and others lasting six weeks.

The length of the course (three weeks vs. six weeks) did not impact the change in attitudes about IPE, but the format definitely had an impact on these attitudes, said Donna Redman-Bentley, PT, PhD, Associate Dean of Research for the College of Allied Health Professions.

“The majority of students prefer face-to-face to online,” she said. “Face-to-face allows better interaction, and they could get input right away. They had their questions answered.”

The IPE program should not expect freshmen students to learn the medicine or the physiology of these scenarios but rather focus on scope of practice, the role their professions play in relation to other professions, said Steve Waldhalm, DVM, PhD, Assistant Dean for Faculty Affairs for the College of Veterinary Medicine, who served as a pilot case study facilitator.

For example, a physical therapy or nursing student will not learn the nuances of veterinary medicine, but they will learn there are common themes - family dynamics, psychosocial dynamics, legal aspects – no matter what field you’re in that affect care and the outcome of the patient, said Susan Mackintosh, DO, COMP Assistant Professor, who facilitated a three-week face-to-face IPE pilot group.

A physician may have very limited time to help someone with a chronic injury, but by working with other specialties such as physical therapy, the patient could learn about exercises to improve conditioning and prevent re-injury.

“They are basically learning to fill up gaps that no one profession can cover by themselves,” Mackintosh said. “No man is an island, and no one single medical profession is an island either.”

Pilot study participant Carissa Bortugno, PharmD ’11, said although she had experience working with physicians, she didn’t realize the broad scope of the other professions represented.

“I would say that it just really opened my eyes to how all the professions overlap in one way or another,” Bortugno said. “(Vet students) have a very broad scope of practice and they were able to contribute to the human part of the program.”

The initial meetings were awkward, because the students didn’t want to
say the wrong things, she said. As the sessions went on, people started giving their point of views more often. Bortugno suggested the IPE development team organize team-building exercises to help students get to know each other prior to working together in the classroom.

Students as a whole recommended that incoming freshmen should learn this culture of IPE from the first day, with team building during the first week of orientation, Redman-Bentley said. The students’ comfort level improved over time and they became more open to offering ideas, said Siu-Fun Wong, PharmD, Associate Professor of Pharmacy Practice and Administration and a facilitator for a six-week face-to-face IPE group.

Students got very involved in the case but felt they didn’t have sufficient background knowledge to be able to truly engage in a lot of the aspects of the discussion, Wong said. So she allowed them to conduct 30 minutes of outsider research each week. “That was not really the focus, but it’s very natural to look more into the clinical aspect of the case,” Wong said. “I let students go as long as they’re still learning. We all have to keep in mind this pilot study is a learning curve both for students and faculty facilitators. Many of us are collecting information to determine what works.”

Organizers did not want to unfairly burden pilot study volunteers with extra work, so they were generally not given outside assignments. But when the IPE program becomes part of the curriculum, Wong said she feels comfortable with students doing outside research so they feel more empowered to carry on the discussion. “I would encourage students as they are doing research to also seek help from their own professors,” she said. “They need someone to take them a little further. That would be the one thing I learned. Encourage students to go back and do a little more discussion with faculty from their college, and bring it back.”

The pilot study demonstrated that each case should be kept to three weeks, Redman-Bentley said. Students will look at five IPE cases in an academic year, working with a different group each time. The pilot study also helped the IPE team hone in on the true objectives of the program.

“It isn’t so much the content of the case scenario, it’s the interaction among students that is important,

“"The majority of students prefer face-to-face to online. Face-to-face allows better interaction, and they could get input right away. They had their questions answered."

-- Donna Redman-Bentley, PT, PhD, Associate Dean of Research for the College of Allied Health Professions
helping each other recognize what others’ roles are,” Redman-Bentley said.

Also helping to shape the IPE cases are mock case studies, with faculty reviewing the information from the perspective of first-year students. Elizabeth A. Andrews, DDS, MS, College of Dental Medicine Assistant Professor of Oral & Maxillofacial Pathology, is developing a case involving a young girl with a toothache and other health problems.

Each case will build chronologically over the age continuum, from pediatrics to geriatrics.

Each of these profiles has health histories that cut across several disciplines, Andrews said. Each college is responsible for developing one of the cases from its profession’s perspective, how the type of patient would present and what the steps are for managing such a patient.

“Interestingly, through the process of case development and going through the mock case presentations, I have learned a lot from the other faculty members and have been able to see approaches and concerns that I might not have thought of from various professions,” Andrews said. “So, this has been an enrichment for myself in this process. In turn, the other faculty members have expressed that they learned much from this process. I feel that not only will the students benefit, but all the faculty will as well.”

The main benefit of the IPE curriculum is increased communication, she said.

“Often in a patient’s health care experience, a major breakdown is the incomplete or non-existent communication between providers,” Andrews said.

“For students to see the value of this from the beginning will enable them to better serve the patient. From this particular case, I hope the students will see the role we play as dentists in a patient’s oral and overall health, as well as the importance of working together.”

While the vehicle to deliver IPE curriculum at WesternU is still in its developmental stages, the need for IPE is a certainty, Aston said. The complexity of the modern day health-care system creates an environment where individual health care practitioners are not capable of single-handedly meeting the needs of their patients.

“Navigating the convoluted path of the emerging health care system will require health care professionals to not only understand the multi-faceted roles of the different professions, but to also apply that knowledge base to affect a team-based approach,” Aston said. “Ultimately, the goal of IPE is to maximize patient outcomes and provide cost-efficient patient-centered care.”

— Rodney Tanaka
At the Western University Medical Center on Second Street in Pomona, WesternU students learn quickly what their colleagues in other disciplines have to offer.

Brenda Garibay, MSPA ’09, had never worked with pharmacy students before. But when she was paired with pharmacy students while consulting with patients, she found her PharmD colleagues to be “machines” when it came to drug interaction knowledge.

“I love them,” she said. “They quietly stand there and come up with side effects in their brain. They know their stuff. It’s nice they can expand on what you learned.”

Incoming students in fall 2009 will be the first WesternU students to officially enroll in interprofessional education courses with students from other disciplines. Nine WesternU programs will be represented in a classroom, with students learning about each other’s roles while discussing case scenarios.

But current WesternU students are also embracing IPE and taking the initiative to organize more activities that involve other disciplines. Members of the Student Government Association organized the first interprofessional health fair in January 2009.

“It’s nice for everyone on campus to be exposed to what everyone else is doing,” said Alexis Drebskaya, PharmD ’11, past SGA President. “Our programs don’t interact enough. It’s good to know people from other programs. In one way or another we’re all connected. We all have the same purpose.”
Some of the student clubs that traditionally attracted a single discipline are expanding to recruit students from other programs. The student board for the Center for Global & Community Health (CGCH) asked student clubs to make an effort to recruit students from the other colleges and let them know that they would like to become interprofessional, said Angelique Heilig, DO '11, CGCH Vice Chair.

“We discovered that clubs like PCHAT (Pomona Community Action Team) and PHOP (Pomona Homeless Outreach Program) had a history of being interprofessional, as PA and nursing students had been volunteering at health screening clinics and education nights for quite some time,” she said. “Additionally many of the new club leaders are members of different colleges, and the new student vice chair of CGCH and the student board is a student of COP.”

The WesternU Medical Center has also traditionally involved multiple disciplines – DO, PharmD and PA students.

“You get a better idea of each other’s profession,” said Melissa Lau, PharmD ’09. “It gives us a great opportunity to learn from each other. In the real world we have to learn to work with each other. This is a great staging ground.”

When entering an exam room, Lau said she typically allows the DO student to conduct the exam before getting the information she needs.

“Sometimes I jump in and ask questions of the patient,” Lau said. “After looking at the patient, I give a recommendation what should go on.”

Another program that naturally lends itself to IPE is the MSHS program, part of the College of Allied Health Professions. The Health Sciences program draws students from a range of disciplines who intend to teach in the health sciences or serve as leaders in community health programs.

“Each discipline brings to the classroom a different experience which is shared with one another, expanding the students’ knowledge beyond one specific background,” said Ani Sarkissian, MSHS ’10. Sarkissian is one of five student editors of the 2009 Humanism Journal, an annual publication that allows WesternU students, faculty and staff from all disciplines to express themselves through poetry, photography and other media.

“Together, we combined our strengths to create a theme for the journal, solicited articles from the student body, and finally edited and selected the numerous articles received,” Sarkissian said. “Editing the articles also allowed me to learn from the various health professions, and to learn from the experiences of the authors who were veterinary, osteopathic, or allied health students.”

The end product of interprofessional education is a well-rounded, universally aware professional who is able to provide the utmost care for his or her patients, she said.

“The experience and knowledge gained from an interprofessional education is unmatched, because the students are allowed to learn from each other and produce a complete knowledge of the health sciences,” Sarkissian said.

— Rodney Tanaka
Focus on Neuro-Optometry

The College of Optometry will initially enroll between 70 and 80 students. Orientation week will be a mixture of information overload and bonding, with a lot of fun activities planned as students prepare for a rigorous curriculum, said Elizabeth Hoppe, OD, MPH, DrPH, Founding Dean of the College of Optometry.

“This inaugural class is really going to bond with each other,” she said. “They will be such an influential force.”

The college will have a special emphasis on neuro-optometry and neuro-optometric rehabilitation, which is guiding the development of three key program areas: curriculum, patient care and research.

The college has formed a neuro-optometry special interest group consisting of practitioners in the Southern California area and well-respected guests from outside the area to provide input for this process. The group is asking questions such as: “How do you define entry-level competency in neuro-optometric rehabilitation? What are the knowledge base, skill set and attitudes that graduates need to prepare them to provide neuro-optometric rehabilitation?”

“As in any educational institution, patient care services have a dual mission: service to the community and the education of our students. As we are establishing our program’s clinical aspects, we are also structuring them with the special emphasis in neuro-optometry in mind,” Hoppe said.

Our on-campus facility, the Patient Care Center, will have dedicated space for neuro-optometric rehabilitation within the optometry service.

We understand that the décor, color palette and lighting must all be suitable for patients who have been affected by neurological trauma or neurological disease processes, she said.

“No matter what they (students) choose to do after graduation, the skill set they learn with this special emphasis will help them become caring, compassionate, humanistic healers,” Hoppe said.

“When you’re involved in rehabilitation, you have to be an advocate for the patient. You have to be a creative problem solver. We know not everyone will choose to practice in rehabilitation, but the skills apply no matter what.”

Combining neuro-optometry with caring and compassion can change people’s lives.

Kristy Remick-Waltman, OD, FCVO, COD Director of Community Outreach, once helped a patient, “Gary,” who had suffered a stroke at the age of 56. He was referred to Dr. Remick-Waltman by his physical therapist because he had double vision.

At the time of the stroke he was active and working as a quality control manager at a local warehouse. He was married and had two daughters, ages 22 and 17.

Immediately after the stroke, Gary experienced weakness on his left side, his left eye was turned inward, and it was “wiggling.” Gary had recently experienced good results with physical therapy and
was now walking with a cane. His physical therapist however, was frustrated and wanted a neuro-optometric rehabilitation evaluation because Gary had to wear a black pirate patch all the time to prevent double vision, and this was affecting his balance, his ability to read, and his overall progress, Remick-Waltman said.

Prior to the stroke, Gary did not wear glasses full-time, only for reading, and was using eye drops twice a day for mild glaucoma. He had seen an ophthalmologist recently, and this eye specialist had advised that Gary keep using the same eye drops, utilize the same reading glasses, and keep wearing the eye patch over the left eye full-time. Gary stated that he was told he would always have to wear an eye patch, that “there was nothing that could be done” to help him. He did not like wearing the patch because small children thought he was a pirate, and were afraid of him.

Optometric rehabilitation therapy included the use of “press-on” prisms, full-time no-line bifocals with prism, and visual therapy. Gary was also prescribed a different type of glaucoma medication. He came for regular weekly visits and did visual therapy “homework” and after six weeks, he no longer saw double vision, his eye did not “wiggle,” he could read, and he walked without a cane. He returned to work at the warehouse and was happy again.

Gary’s wife was thrilled. She said, “Thank goodness for optometric visual rehabilitation. This treatment changed all of our lives for the better.” Gary’s physical therapist also commented that it was wonderful when professionals work together for the benefit of the patient.

“Neuro-optometry knowledge will be taught at WesternU College of Optometry, and this special training will be helpful for patients of all ages,” Remick-Waltman said. “WesternU optometry graduates will be well-trained to help patients with a variety of visual problems that stem from neurological and systemic health conditions.” — Rodney Tanaka
Dentists Help Diagnose Diseases

Dentists do far more than clean teeth and fill cavities. The College of Dental Medicine faculty utilizes cutting-edge science looking at radiographs on a computer and examining a biopsy under a microscope.

Elizabeth Andrews, DDS, MS, assistant professor, specializes in oral maxillofacial pathology, and Bruno Azevedo, DDS, MS, assistant professor, specializes in oral maxillofacial radiology at Western University of Health Sciences. Maxillofacial is an anatomical term related to the jaw and face.

“Oral pathology and radiology go hand in hand,” Dr. Andrews said. “Many common pathologies are in the jaws and will be first identified with radiology, and then biopsied for a definitive diagnosis.”

Oral and maxillofacial pathology is a specialty of dentistry that investigates the causes, processes and effects of disease, often by looking through a microscope. Oral and maxillofacial radiology is also a specialty of dentistry concerned with the production and interpretation of images and data, often by bidimensional X-ray techniques and three-dimensional CT scans.

“I’m the detective, and as soon as I find a clue I hand it off to Dr. Andrews, the person that examines the clue, like a CSI (crime scene investigator),” said Dr. Azevedo.

Dr. Azevedo looks for abnormalities while examining a radiograph. He looks at it clinically in order to provide guidance for complex dental procedures such as dental implants. Dr. Andrews is needed to further study a potential lesion. She looks at a biopsy fragment under a microscope and to determine the presence and/or extent of a disease.

“You can’t say 100 percent what a lesion is just using radiographs,” said Dr. Andrews. “Microscopically you can ID a cancer, but not always what type of cancer. Further molecular testing may be needed to determine the tissue of origin as well as for prognosis and treatment options.”

Dr. Andrews started at WesternU in August 2008 after she completed specialty training and a Master of Science degree from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill School of Dentistry. Prior to that, she was in private practice for 10 years after earning her DDS degree from the University of the Pacific, Arthur A. Dogoni School of Dentistry.

She is starting a biopsy service anticipated to open in fall 2009. Dentists from WesternU’s dental clinic and dentists from outside the University will be able to send a biopsy specimen to the service on campus. The tissue itself will be processed at an outside lab and made into a slide, at which point Dr. Andrews will analyze and diagnose it.
“One of the big keys is not only servicing our on campus patients, but also the community. It’s a unique service,” said Dr. Andrews. “There is no other oral and maxillofacial pathology and radiology service in the area. It would make this specialty more accessible to all health care providers and the surrounding community.”

Dr. Azevedo was a United States foreign exchange student in 1993-94 as a senior in high school. He went back to Brazil and finished dental school in 2000. He completed a certificate program in Oral Maxillofacial Radiology in 2002. In 2005 he was invited to come to the U.S., where he attended University of Texas, Health Science Center in San Antonio for one year as a preceptor. In 2006 he was accepted into the oral maxillofacial radiology masters program and graduated in February 2009. He started at WesternU on March 1, 2009.

There are less than 200 dental radiologists nationwide, according to Dr. Azevedo.

Dr. Andrews said she came to WesternU because she wanted to be a part of building something from the ground floor, to get back to academics and to teach students. As the College of Dental Medicine representative for Interprofessional Education, she has worked to develop a case for the IPE curriculum.

For Dr. Azevedo, the goal at WesternU is to have students learn the traditional 2-D X-ray imaging and pioneer, lecture and teach 3-D radiography applications at the same time.

“The role of radiology the past seven years has evolved from the 2-D world,” said Dr. Azevedo. “With a specific CT scanner for dentistry, called the Cone-Beam CT, we can evaluate the maxillofacial complex without superimposition of anatomical structures. This imaging modality acquires high resolution images and delivers between 50 to 100 times less radiation to the patient than traditional medical CT scanners.”

— Jeff Malet
Dr. Aksone Nouvong sees her new position as the College of Podiatric Medicine’s Chair of Podiatric Medicine, Surgery and Biomechanics as an opportunity to embrace four of her passions at the same time.

“It’s a great clinical opportunity, as a teacher; a surgical opportunity, also as a teacher; a chance to do research; and a chance to stay involved with the administrative side of things,” she said recently from her office on the second floor of the Nursing Science Center.

Teaching, surgery, research. Check. But passion for administration?

“Oh, I love that part,” she said with a laugh. “I like the planning, the figuring out of schedules, all of it.”

Sound planning and scheduling have been a critical part of Nouvong’s professional life for several years, as she’s worn several hats during her journey to WesternU. She remains chair of the Department of Podiatric Medicine and Surgery at the Department of Veterans Affairs’ Greater Los Angeles Healthcare Center, and is an adjunct professor, instructor, director or attending physician at institutions ranging from the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA to the New York College of Podiatric Medicine, the California School of Podiatric Medicine at Samuel Merritt University and the Midwestern University Podiatric Medicine program.

She also chairs the National Field Advisory Commission on Quality Assurance for the VA’s Podiatry Central Office; served as President of the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons, Division Council; and is a member of the American Diabetes Association, American Podiatric Medical Association, California Podiatric Medical Association and the Los Angeles County Podiatric Medical Society.

But that information doesn’t fully communicate her enthusiasm for what she does. What Nouvong really enjoys is working with podiatric medical students and, especially, improving the lives of her patients while using their conditions as opportunities to teach.

“I’m always excited for students to come,” either into a classroom or into clinical or surgical settings, she said. “Podiatric health is very important, and students and teachers can really come together to educate patients and help fix whatever problems they’re having.”

WesternU’s College of Podiatric Medicine will welcome its inaugural class in August. About 50 students are expected to join their fellow pioneers in optometry and dentistry as the University opens three new colleges simultaneously. WesternU’s CPM will be just the ninth of its kind in the United States.

Nouvong is excited not only about the students’ arrival on campus – “I can’t wait for them to get here” – but about the enhanced research opportunities her
position at WesternU will allow. She and some of her colleagues in other programs are in the midst of several research projects, including:

- Hyperspectral imaging, a method of study that collects and processes information from across the electromagnetic spectrum. Unlike the human eye, which just sees visible light, hyperspectral imaging can see visible light as well as from the ultraviolet to infrared. Its capabilities allow Nouvong to study microcirculation, which can help her pinpoint problems in diabetic patients with ankle and feet pathologies.

- Windowed casting, which allows for direct treatment of diabetic foot ulcers while the foot remains protected in a cast.

- A pregnancy study focusing on the enduring changes women’s feet undergo during and after pregnancy, and determining if these changes can be prevented.

- Gene therapy to locally promote and improve circulation for the treatment of diabetic foot ulcers.

Dr. Lawrence Harkless, founding dean of the College of Podiatric Medicine, said he could not have asked for a better addition than Nouvong to the college faculty and administration.

“Dr. Nouvong will play a pivotal leadership role in the CPM as chairman of the Department of Podiatric Medicine, Surgery and Biomechanics,” Harkless said. “Her passion and comprehensive approach to podiatric medicine and surgery at the Greater Los Angeles VA and Olive View UCLA has provided her with a unique perspective on the integration of podiatric medicine in an academic health science center. This will serve the CPM well as we develop and become an integral part of the University.

“Her experiences will be key in CPM’s contribution to interprofessional education.” — Jeff Keating
Escaping Iran in late 1986 might have been the easiest part of Bavand Youssefzadeh’s life so far. Bavand, a DO ’11 student at WesternU and class president, said at about 4 years old his family fled on a private plane to an area near the border of Pakistan. Eventually they traveled by car, switching vehicles regularly until they traveled by camel to Pakistan. This happened quickly after his father was released from jail for one night.

A Persian Jew, his father, Mansour, was jailed many times, even on his birthday, Sept. 23, 1982. “They arrested my dad because at the moment, the government, under the Islamic Republic, was very unstable,” Bavand said. “The last time he was in jail, one of his employees printed up stuff against the Republic and that was the last straw.” Bavand described his father watching prisoners in front of him being executed. “My father realized he knew one of the guards, who in turn knew the head official and let him out for one night. He knew they eventually would get him and they were going to kill him. We escaped and left everything we had.”

Eating crackers and riding smelly camels for 14
hours were some of his few memories during his travels through the desert.

“I rode on a camel on my father’s back, my brother had his own and my sister was on my mom’s back riding her camel,” he said.

They arrived in Karachi, Pakistan and stayed for three months. The Jewish Federation helped them during their stay and provided relief to get them to Switzerland in early 1987, where they stayed for about a year.

“It was a horrible time of my life,” Bavand said about his time in Switzerland, especially at a Catholic school where he attended. “I did not speak the language, I only had one friend who was an escapee, they would always laugh at me and the nuns used to hit me every day.”

“We finally came to America as legal refugees,” Bavand said. “I remember the day we landed and seeing my uncles and cousins. I even remember asking my dad where we were, and he said we are in America.” The family settled in Arlington, Texas, because two of his uncles, who had just received engineering degrees, were living there.

“I started kindergarten,” Bavand said of his first year in school in America. “I was the last person to learn the ABCs. I remember the day I learned them, I barely even knew them, and everyone was clapping.”

In second grade he was put in ESL class (English as a Second Language) which helped him get into gear and eventually get caught up academically. “In sixth grade I was math king,” which continued through junior high school, he said.

“My father was doing very well for himself, owning convenience and liquor stores,” Bavand said. “Then my father sold the businesses and had heart surgery. “When I was 16, my father lost everything investing in the stock market,” Bavand said. “That was a pivotal moment for me. It forced me to help my family out and go to work. I got a job at Best Buy.

“It was one of the best times I ever had,” he continued. “I got a sense of how to talk to people who are above me and in management.”

Bavand also joined HOSA, Health Occupations Students of America, during his senior year. HOSA helps promote career opportunities in the health care industry. “We would go through different hospitals and rotate with different doctors every other day,” he said. “It was a good eye opener and it tweaked my interest.”

Bavand went to college, majoring in biochemistry at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, a 90 minute drive from home. To support himself, he continued to work at Best Buy full-time.

Bavand postponed applying to medical school in order to help his father run a convenience store in the “hood” of Fort Worth, Texas.

Bavand worked at the convenience store seven days a week for two and a half years because he did not want his parents to work the store at night. The area was overrun by gangs and drug dealers.

“I think it was way worse in the ‘hood, compared to Pakistan or Switzerland,” Bavand said. “The first six months, most people would not recognize you, they wouldn’t say ‘hi’. It took six months of saying hi to them for them to get to know you and accept you.

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“I think this experience gave me good insight of really how it is in the inner city. For instance, how they treat their bodies, the food they ate, drugs they take and to see them sell food stamps to get those drugs,” Bavand said. “I think it would help me become a better physician and understand a different demographic.”

Bavand applied to several medical schools, and once he was accepted to WesternU, canceled the rest of his secondary interviews.

“Once you get into medical school, you are in your own world,” Bavand said. “You could be anywhere. You’re kind of in a bubble. If you are going to be in a bubble, the best place is Southern California.”

During Bavand’s second semester in COMP, he ran for class president.

“I love being president of the class,” he said. “It’s a real great experience for me because I’ve had so many students come up to me and ask me for advice. It gives you the option to know what is going on within your class and have the ability to impact your future colleagues.”

Bavand has done such an excellent job representing the student body, that he received the Dean’s Award at the Annual COMP Honors recently according to Gisele Tackoor, JD, Assistant Dean for Student Affairs.

Bavand works closely with Dr. Clinton Adams, Dean of COMP, and Tackoor. “They really want to know what’s going on with their students. They are engaged with student life,” he said. “Being able to be a liaison between the two is very cool.”

“He already exemplifies the characteristics of a COMP osteopathic physician who is caring, compassionate and willing to be a life-long learner,” Tackoor said. “Because of his background, Bavand relates well to people of all ages and to those from various cultural, religious and professional backgrounds.”

Bavand is currently studying the gastrointestinal system.

“The thing about osteopathic medicine is, everything is inter-related,” Bavand said. “A lot of medical schools are going this way, teaching the holistic view. It’s cool because osteopathic medicine has been doing that forever.

“My past will help me with patient interactions,” Bavand said while reminiscing about the past and how he is working to become a physician at WesternU.

“The experience I had gives me a good foundation.”

— Jeff Malet
As more and more students use the Internet in their studies, scouring source material online in the comfort of their own quarters, college libraries – home to the dated, hardbound, have-to-turn-the-page-to-use-it variety of information -- are gradually becoming things of the past. Right?

Wrong, says Pat Vader. Really, really wrong, in fact. “Physical use of the library is up over the past year,” says Vader, director of the Harriet K. and Philip Pumerantz Library at WesternU. What’s more, “Circulation of actual books is up and going up. Students say they like to have the book in their hands. It’s not the same on the computer.” Students also appreciate one of the facility’s traditional roles – as a place to get away from it all. The library’s many breakout rooms allow students to meet in small groups to hash out the finer points of their studies. The building also has ample individual seating for those who simply like hanging out in the library to study, enjoy some peace and quiet, or both.

That’s not to say the library is resting on its traditional laurels. In fact, it’s as leading-edge in terms of technology as any spot on campus, and more than many.

Take “Chat With a Librarian,” for example. In days gone by, library users would have cruised by the reference desk to find an expert capable of helping them find material. Now, such requests sometimes come from literally miles away over Yahoo! Messenger, MSN or GoogleTalk, all of which allow users to hook up with a reference librarian electronically.

That online relationship can go a step farther thanks to Adobe Connect, which helps librarians and clients look at the same Web pages at the same time, live online -- a feature that’s especially helpful for WesternU’s distance-learning students, Vader says.

But as up-to-date as those services sound – they would have been considered science fiction 20 years ago – more traditional functions still play a huge role at the Pumerantz Library.

The library keeps thousands of books and journals on hand, which is a challenge thanks to space limitations and journal subscription costs, which have risen as much as 11 percent over the past year. Challenging, too, is tracking down and purchasing key materials that are out of print or about to go out of print. “That’s a university-wide issue,” Vader notes.

The addition of new colleges in 2009 means new lists of materials for the library to buy; prioritizing what’s on those lists, then finding space for what gets purchased, brings on a whole new set of challenges.

But even traditional functions get a new twist from time to time: Those who wish to see a reference librarian in person don’t necessarily need to go to the library – a “house calls” program that started this fall makes reference staff available for visits to faculty and staff in their campus offices from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

So much for becoming a thing of the past. “We don’t have any problem staying busy,” Vader says. “And the students just keep on coming.”

— Jeff Keating
"If humanism lies at the core of WesternU’s teachings,” I asked myself, “does the University fully understand what constitutes a humanistic approach, and how is humanism personified throughout the WesternU campus community? Does humanism require a conscious effort, or does it occur effortlessly?” As it turns out, no matter what the relationship—student, alumnus, faculty, staff, administrator, or external constituent—a person cannot describe WesternU without speaking of its unique humanistic tradition. I have interacted with many of WesternU’s internal and external constituents, and, like most interpersonal communications, I have observed days where humanism is revered and days when its light shines a bit dimmer underneath the tarnish of human imperfection.

Is there a universal definition of WesternU humanism? From those interviewed, I was surprised to learn that despite their varying experiences or philosophies, the overall intent of their responses were similar. The collective meaning culled was that humanism is:

- “Understanding the needs of others.
- Cultural competency – understanding the perspectives of others, the world beyond ourselves, and our differences.
- Empathy.
- Compassion.
- Caring – expressing your care with others and understanding the human condition and our individual connections.
- Mutual respect – treating all people with dignity and respect; a way of life centered on human interest; and listening and concern – enhancing the environment of others.”

How is WesternU humanism embodied? The following concrete examples of humanism at its best provide insight on the types of interactions our WesternU family may emulate to increase its humanistic pulse rate:

- An alumna shared a scenario that focused on the medical treatment of inmates from a local prison and how suspension of one’s judgment and attentive listening allows a physician to see the person rather than the patient.
- A senior executive demonstrated how the simplest humanistic gesture can deliver the most complex effect, like allowing a shopper to move ahead of you at the checkout counter. Similar to the "good deeds" commercial series for Liberty Mutual (an insurance firm) that illustrate humanism’s ripple effect, these simple gestures plant a humanistic seed.
Like the commercial tag line, “most people want to do the right thing”; many just need someone to show them how the right thing can be achieved.

- A faculty member spoke about the services provided by WesternU students, faculty, and staff via the Pomona Community Health Action Team (PCHAT), the Pomona Health Career Ladder (PHCL), WesternU’s J-1 Exchange Visitor Program, and the Veterinary Ambulatory Community Service (VACS).

- A student demonstrated how the conscious decision to remove cultural biases and remain open-minded to the ideas and gestures of others can encourage interactive dialogue among classmates and/or faculty members. This individual noted that understanding that the diverse group of people on WesternU’s campus is reflective of the diversity that will be encountered in patients as students engage in their roles as future health care professionals.

Where does WesternU humanism go from here?
The collective environmental components identified as critical to humanism were: honesty, trust, listening, self-assessment, open-mindedness, logical empathy, respect, an affinity for people, professional growth, goodwill/grace, humor, collaborative learning, removing competition, encouraging team-building, and emulation of desired behavior.

Following are key traits that should be incorporated by our WesternU family as we examine our individual humanistic pulse rates and make a conscientious effort to function at a higher level of self-awareness.

Incorporating the Platinum Rule:
The golden rule of “treating others as you would like to be treated” was cited by many interviewees; however, one faculty member and college administrator spoke of the “platinum rule,” which asks you to examine “what is this person seeking from me?” and encourages you to “let others know that you understand them.” Unlike the golden rule, which focuses on egocentric assumptions, the platinum rule uses an altruistic approach to interacting with others. The platinum rule delivers improvement to one’s self, which in turn transfers to others in our shared circles of influence.

The Power of Active Listening:
Desy Safán-Gerard, PhD—a Chilean-born artist and psychoanalyst—astutely noted that “many of us achieve only the semblance of communication with

Continued on page 22
Continued from page 21

others; what we say is often not congruent with what the other has just said, and neither of us is aware that we are not communicating.” When we take the time to actively listen, we gain the valuable gift of understanding others and opening ourselves and our respective paradigms for everyone’s betterment. As Max Ehrmann—a poet and attorney—wrote in his poem “Desiderata,” “…remember what peace there may be in silence”; there is a sense of peace that engulfs not just the active listener, but also the speaker, for each of us has a desire to be truly heard. Active listening is the conduit by which positive action can occur, and thus humanism.

The Role of Critical Thinking:
Critical thinking plays a pivotal role in the actualization of humanism, particularly when incorporating the environmental components of selflessness, open-mindedness, respect, and grace. Critical thinking removes the negative aspects created by egocentric thinking and encourages a more altruistic forum for true collaborative exchange. Drs. Linda Elder and Richard Paul, in “The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking Concepts and Tools” note that: “egocentric thinking results from the unfortunate fact that humans do not naturally consider the rights and needs of others...[or] the limitations in their own point of view. They become explicitly aware of their egocentric thinking only if trained to do so...” As indicated in the chart on page 21, the processes involved in critical thinking remove egocentric perspectives, encourage an understanding of others, promote open dialogue and team-building, and thus create the best humanistic environment.

The Integral Relationship of Dissension to Humanistic Cooperation:
As poignantly noted by one faculty member, “critical debate is fundamental to the scientific method, whose premise is based on testing to falsify or contradict a hypothesis rather than prove it.” This individual further noted that cooperation is best achieved when “dialogue encourages and embraces critical debate, and strength is achieved from voicing individual, and at times, differing opinions while exploring issues to achieve resolutions for the greater good.” Disagreement when examined rationally and conscientiously provides insight into the best humanistic and cooperative method.

What are the benefits of WesternU humanism?
Most participants noted that the dominant benefits were a happier sense of self, a sense of value, well-being, stress reduction, a greater sense of connection to others, enhanced physical, mental and emotional health, open communication, and trust. The greatest humanistic benefit is the sense of freedom and ownership imparted to recipients, which ultimately boosts their respective productivity levels and loyalty. As authors James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner note in “A Leader’s Legacy,”…”Let’s all have the humility to remember where we started...the humanity to offer others the same...When the time comes for them to speak of your legacy, is there anything better to be remembered for than ‘You made me want to be a better person?’”

WesternU’s humanism, at its best, makes each member of our WesternU family “want to be a better person,” a fundamental element to the University’s uniqueness and success. As one interviewee eloquently noted, WesternU’s humanism is “shaping a new culture that is shared across disciplines and centered on its commonalities of service, respect, and quality.” Today, the collective pulse of WesternU’s humanism is strong, and the University is equipped to address the individual challenges necessary to span its humanism—far into the future—through its students, alumni, faculty, and staff.

S. Evadney Hamilton is Academic Affairs’ Executive Relations Associate
MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific

William Anderson, DO, past president of the American Osteopathic Association, was awarded the Doctorate of Humane Letters after a stirring and bluntly provocative commencement speech.

Dr. Anderson was born in Americus, GA, barely one-and-a-half generations removed from slavery. He dreamed of becoming a physician, and one day his father introduced him to his family physician, who was an osteopath. After shadowing Willie Joe Reese, DO, Dr. Anderson said, “I want to be just like him.”

The rest is history. Dr. Anderson completed his medical training and moved back to Georgia, where he befriended Martin Luther King, Jr. and Ralph Abernathy, and became the focus of the Albany Movement.

His message to the College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific’s 195 graduates was “live the dream of service to the community in which you live.” Osteopathic medicine’s holistic approach prepares the graduate to fulfill the COMP mission statement of becoming a caring, compassionate, lifelong learner with the distinctive osteopathic philosophy.

We are truly grateful for role models that inspire us by their actions, deeds and sacrifices.
MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

College of Allied Health Professions

In the College of Allied Health Professions, Interprofessional Education (IPE) has enhanced our didactic and clinical curricula by providing and promoting a team approach to patient care and health-care management. Here’s how we’re accomplishing our IPE goals.

• Drs. Redman-Bentley, Gugelchuk and Harmer presented a poster at the American Physical Therapy Association Combined Sections Meeting in Las Vegas titled “Four Approaches to a Case-Based Interprofessional Education Curriculum: A Randomized Control Trial (2-2009).”

• Physical Therapy faculty/students worked as a team in Mexico with other health care professionals, and faculty published collaborative research.

• Physician Assistant faculty provided lectures to Physical Therapy students on Hematologic/Medical lab findings, lectures to College of Osteopathic Medicine students on X-Ray interpretation/preventable medicine, and lectures to nursing students on pathophysiology. One faculty member is working with the College of Optometry to provide a venipuncture workshop for practicing optometrists.

• Health Sciences students participated in a variety of health education presentations at the first WesternU IPE Health Fair, where community members were provided resources on local health and human services. They also presented lectures/presentations on a variety of wellness topics: best practices in nutrition, healthy lifestyle choices, prevention of heart disease, and intervention and prevention of family violence.
Each year we celebrate the graduation of another group of outstanding young pharmacists who will face challenges and opportunities that we could not imagine. The future is truly in their hands as they discover new ways of improving health care outcomes and controlling health care spending. They will implement new systems to improve drug safety, and they will be a voice for positive change in the profession.

I am proud to say that our graduates are well prepared to face the future. They have received the finest in pharmacy education thanks in large part to the faculty and staff who work tirelessly to deliver one of the most challenging and innovative curricula in the country.

This year we celebrated receiving continued full accreditation status through June 2013. Our graduates have attained a 100 percent pass rate on the national licensing exam in three of the past four years, and our entering class for 2009 promises to one of the best ever.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to our alumni, friends and corporate sponsors, who help us achieve our goals through their generous and continuing support.
The College of Graduate Nursing continues to expand its offerings to meet the nursing workforce needs in our state. Dean Hanford, Dr. Diana Lithgow and Dr. Jan Boller have been the driving forces behind the launch of a much-needed program for associate degree-prepared nurses to achieve a Master of Science degree and advance the educational workforce in our state. California has a very high percentage of nurses prepared at the associate degree level (more than 70 percent), and while this meets the need for “front line” nurses, it does not prepare long-term strategies to increase nursing leaders and faculty for our state and profession.

CGN has a niche in this market due to offering high-quality programs that are Web-based, with two campus sessions per semester. This format provides a unique advantage for working professional nurses to advance their education while maintaining their employment.

CGN continues to be a leader in Southern California and beyond. The Doctor of Nursing Program will admit its third class in fall 2009, and the applicant pool has increased, demonstrating the need for the program and highlighting its excellent reputation.
The concept of “One Medicine, One Health” seems to have become a phrase in vogue in the medical community. It is certainly not a new concept. Long before the development of clinical specialization in human and veterinary medicine, many early medical discoveries were achieved in large part based on concepts developed in comparative medicine.

Veterinary medicine provides critical contributions to the public’s health care system in a variety of ways. By providing critical oversight in food safety, or preventing emerging infectious and zoonotic diseases from entering our country, or maintaining the health of our pet population to reduce or prevent the transference of diseases from animal to man, veterinarians are on the front lines of an integrated health care system that works best when all participants work for the public good.

The continual refinement of specialization in human and veterinary medicine places considerable strain on effective communication between the medical professions. The College of Veterinary Medicine believes that by participating in the newly developed IPE curriculum, WesternU will produce graduates that understand and appreciate the skills and talents provided by each profession (including veterinary medicine) to the public’s health care system.
It has been a rewarding and exciting year as we continue to prepare to welcome our inaugural class of students in August 2009.

Our specialized accreditation site visit was conducted in October 2008 and resulted in no recommendations and no suggestions. As a result, we received initial accreditation from the Commission on Dental Accreditation in January 2009.

We received more than 2,300 student applications through the national application service; members of our Admissions Committee conducted a “whole file” review of applicants; we interviewed more than 300 highly qualified candidates; the entering class was filled early in March; and we have developed a robust pool of alternates.

We continue to add faculty members with unique and varied skills, including an oral pathologist; an oral radiologist; and a DDS/PhD who is conducting exciting research on genetic markers. Thanks to the efforts of many individuals within the University and the College, we have had great success in fundraising. As part of a $5.1-million pledge to the University by Drs. Daljit and Elaine Sarkaria, the College will receive $1 million to create its first endowed professorship. We have also seen the establishment of our very first Scholarship Fund.

The College of Dental Medicine is pleased to be part of Western University of Health Sciences, and we look forward to working with all the members of the WesternU team to help continue the University’s tradition of excellence and caring.
MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

College of Optometry

On August 3, 2009, I will have the privilege of welcoming the newest members of the WesternU family when the inaugural class of the College of Optometry arrives for orientation week. We are very excited to see the hard work preparing for this moment finally pay off.

What kind of person will we see in the entering class? We have all of the usual statistics about undergraduate GPA, scores on admissions tests, home state, gender, etc., but these statistics don’t capture that “something special” that comes with being part of the first-ever class.

Photographs hung in the hallway of the Student Services Center show the start of the College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific. My favorite photo is of the inaugural graduating class, who earned their degrees on June 13, 1982. Every time I look at this photo, I think about how brave these men and women were to join a new program. All of the respect and admiration that I have for that bold group of individuals also applies to the College of Optometry’s inaugural class. What an amazing and special group of people this will be. I can’t wait to welcome them to the family!

Elizabeth Hoppe, OD, MPH, DrPH
Years ago, Nancy Sinatra sang, “These boots are made for
walking.” However, boots or any kind of footwear won’t get
us very far without healthy feet and ankles. While most
Americans have visited their family doctor, dentist and
optometrist, far fewer have seen a podiatrist. Consequently,
most pre-health students are unaware of the opportunity for
a prestigious, rewarding occupation in podiatric medicine.

According to a survey completed by the APMA in 2008, our
profession guarantees graduates one of the highest average
salaries in the medical field, with a wide range of practice
options, including surgery. To “Keep America Walking,”
WesternU is committed to recruiting the best and brightest
students to meet our nation’s increasing need for lower-
extremity care.

If you know of a friend or family member considering a
future in the health professions, please recommend them to
us for a happy, satisfying career keeping our aging
population functioning.
MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

Graduate College of Biomedical Research

Following years of concerted planning, I am delighted to announce that Western University of Health Sciences has received interim approval from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) to establish a Master of Sciences degree program in biomedical sciences, paving the way for WesternU’s ninth college to open: the Graduate College of Biomedical Sciences (GCBS). I am proud to serve as the founding Dean of the college.

WASC’s Substantive Change Committee commended the University for “the well-conceived and appropriate institutional learning outcomes that it has developed.” This was high praise for our application and validated the efforts of many individuals from University Academic Affairs, college faculty and our senior leadership team.

WASC’s approval allows us to recruit our founding class of graduate students. We plan to matriculate our founding class in Spring 2010, coinciding with the planned occupation of the new Health Education Center and its state-of-art fourth floor research laboratories, which will provide outstanding research opportunities for the founding class.

Our innovative curriculum, with its strong focus on research relevant for the biotechnology, pharmaceutical and bio-instrumentation fields, will give graduates a knowledge base relevant for industry and academia.
Western University of Health Sciences held commencement ceremonies for its five colleges.
2009

on May 14-15, 2009 at the Pasadena Civic Auditorium, conferring degrees upon 658 students.
A National Geographic cover story on dinosaurs sparked Matt Wedel’s imagination when he was 3 years old. Most kids grow out of their fascination with dinosaurs. Wedel made a career of it. Wedel, PhD, teaches gross anatomy for the College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific and serves as COMP’s liaison with the College of Podiatric Medicine. He came to WesternU with his wife, Vicki Wedel, PhD, also an anatomy professor as well as a forensic anthropologist, in September 2008.

“Originally I was excited about the exploration aspect,” he said of his interest in dinosaurs. “These extinct animals essentially lived on a different planet. But it’s a world we could explore through the fossil record.” He specializes in sauropods – behemoths such as Brachiosaurus – and air-filled bones, which he uses to track the origins of dinosaurs’ respiratory systems.

“I’m never going to find fossilized lungs, so I look at indirect evidence,” Wedel said. “I’m wringing as much evidence as possible out of evidence limited by what Mother Nature gives us. I’m using fossils as a time machine or tool to examine a lost world.”

Air-filled bones are the footprint of bird-like respiratory systems, and sauropods had air-filled bones similar to birds.
Modern birds have a far more efficient breathing system than humans. When birds inhale, some of the air bypasses the lungs and enters posterior air sacs. Each breath is in a bird for two full cycles, and the bird gets fresh air into its lungs while inhaling and exhaling.

Wedel is studying birds to better understand the respiratory system of dinosaurs. Sauropods had a growth rate faster than elephants.

“If you want fast growth, you need a respiratory system that supplies enough oxygen,” Wedel said. This also leads to a better understanding of living animals.

“A lot of great basic anatomy is described because of paleontologists,” Wedel said. “I am falling into doing novel research in birds because they’re the only dinosaurs I can get my hands on and play with.”

A project Wedel is working on with Elizabeth Rega, PhD, COMP associate professor of anatomy, provides another example of studying the present to understand the past. They are looking into the abundance of fused vertebrae in sauropods.

They are in an enviable position because they can ask their colleagues in the College of Veterinary Medicine to see horse skeletons, Rega said. They will also examine many other animals, such as alligators and cows, as they investigate the reasons for these fusions.

“Each question brings up a bigger question,” she said. Not only are dinosaurs big, they get really big really quickly. The growth rates in really large dinosaurs like Apatosaurus or T. rex, which reached full size in under 20 years, are at the extremes of what is observed in living animals, Rega said.

These vertebral fusions may be a consequence or footprint of bone biology, according to Wedel. They will look at many different living animals, because extinct dinosaurs are not exactly like anything else. This drive to satisfy their curiosity points to another benefit of his job.

“To go out and answer a question you’re curious about has to be one of most enjoyable experiences you can have,” Wedel said. He teaches human anatomy to his COMP students, but he injects his own expertise into his lessons.

“When I’m teaching students, my responsibility is to teach human anatomy, but I try to sneak in evolution and development, where parts of the body came from, to broaden their horizons,” Wedel stated. “Humans are amazing and special, but we’re also just big, smelly mammals. No sense trying to hide from it. We can’t help our evolutionary history – but we can learn from it.”

He continues to be active in the field. Wedel believes that working on site is hard on the body but good for the soul.

“When I get out to the field, all that matters is what I’m doing right at that moment,” he remarked. Once, at a site in southeast Oklahoma, unearthing a dinosaur hand took much longer than expected.

“We found a rib cage buried vertically, so we dug a 6-foot-deep hole, which took two days,” Wedel said. “Part of the excitement is you don’t know what you’re going to get. It’s 110 degrees. I’m covered in bugs. It’s like trying to work covered with a hot, wet blanket. But none of that matters once you find something. It’s unbelievably exciting to find part of a living animal from 110 million years ago.” — Rodney Tanaka
For 37 years she was Jane Doe, victim of an unsolved murder in Central California, buried in an anonymous grave.

But with the specialized help of Vicki Wedel, PhD, assistant professor of anatomy at WesternU’s College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific, she was identified as Mary Alice Willey and given a proper burial with family in attendance.

“It was really rewarding, because you never want a loved one of yours in that predicament, the limbo of not being identified,” Wedel said. “Now the family can mourn the loss and erect a proper headstone, and provide detectives as much information as they knew surrounding her disappearance.”

Wedel is a forensic anthropologist. She examines skeletons and determines their age at the time of death, as well as their stature, sex, ancestry and whether disease or trauma contributed to their death. Her research focuses on the practical application of determining the interval between when they died and when they were found.

“My lab is the only lab in the world determining the season at the time of death from a cross section of teeth,” she said. “Teeth have rings like tree rings. The bands are light in the summer and dark in the winter.”

She does not determine cause and manner of death, nor does she positively identify people. That’s the medical examiner’s mandate and is a process that usually involves dental records or DNA.
“The type of information I provide is to limit the number of missing person records they’re combing through,” she said.

With Mary Alice, Wedel’s expertise led investigators to a different set of missing person records. Willey was murdered in 1971; her body was found in the Delta Mendota Canal. Her age at the time of death was estimated at 15 to 20 years old.

After an examination, Dr. Wedel estimated her age at between 23 and 30, not 15 and 20. That age range resulted in a completely new avenue of investigation, since police originally thought she might be a runaway, said Kristi Ah You, Chief Deputy Coroner for the Stanislaus County Coroner’s Office.

“One of the things I found most interesting, I saw her teeth, very white and very straight, and she looked like she was very well cared for during her life,” Ah You said.

Wedel, who at the time worked at UC Merced, was part of a team that helped determine Willey’s identity. Sculptor Gloria Nusse of Clay & Bones re-created Willey’s face based on forensic evidence and a photograph taken after her death.

James Ehleringer of IsoForensics Inc. performed an isotope analysis of Willey’s hair segments, which told investigators that she had been consuming water in the local region over the last 12 months of her life, Ah You said.

Her information was placed into the Doe Network (www.doenetwork.org), an international center for unidentified and missing persons, and NamUs (www.NamUs.gov), the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System.

Corey Oiesen, Willey’s first cousin once removed, had spent hundreds of hours in the past decade searching for her. While Google searching “Jane Doe 1971,” she finally came across an online newspaper story about the case.

She contacted Ah You on July 22, 2008. With a mitochondrial DNA sample and presumptive factors presented, Mary Alice Willey finally got her name back after 37 years as Jane Doe.

Willey was reburied on Halloween with a proper headstone. Homicide detectives are continuing their investigation into her murder.

“We have a lot of work to do, but it’s very gratifying to bring the family back and, through established partners, provide a burial at no cost,” Stanislaus County Sheriff Adam Christianson said. “This was a community-based response to a violent homicide. It’s been very gratifying and very rewarding to help bring this family some closure.”

Wedel has consulted for 10 years for 18 Northern California counties. She also contributed to the analysis in the Laci Peterson case.

“I let local medical examiners and the coroner’s office know I’m available,” she said. “There are about 150 people doing this across the country. There are probably eight to 10 of us in California, so we’re spread pretty thin.”

“My lab is the only lab in the world determining the season at the time of death from a cross section of teeth. Teeth have rings like tree rings. The bands are light in the summer and dark in the winter.”

-- Vicki Wedel, PhD

Continued on page 38
Wedel has also been named to DMORT, one of nine teams across the country that set up portable morgues in the wake of disasters, both natural and man-made. Each team has forensic specialists put on ready status and deployed if there is significant loss of life.

Her adviser was put on standby after the Twin Towers were struck in the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, but West Coast teams were kept on standby in case something happened in this region.

“She wasn’t deployed, but we shared a sense of helplessness that we couldn’t be there to use skills that could help get remains processed more quickly,” Wedel said. “When the next tsunami or hurricane hits, DMORT will be deployed.”

Wedel was a biochemistry pre-med major in college, then decided she was most interested in deceased patients. She completed her criminal justice master’s degree, then served a practicum in the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner in Oklahoma City.

“During the federal (Oklahoma City) building bombing trial, I spent the summer working death scenes,” she said. “I was most interested in piles of bones in the woods and how they got dead.”

She teaches gross anatomy and head and neck anatomy to first-year DO students in COMP. She uses the phrase “get dead” in teaching and training to focus a person’s mind on an instance of, say, blunt force trauma, instead of the moment of violence for the person.

“There’s something evocative about saying she was shot execution-style, but when you’re teaching and training students, doing training for the FBI evidence recovery team, you want people focusing on the entrance and exit of a gunshot wound, not the more emotional aspects of the crime,” Wedel said. “There is a time and place to do teaching and training in how to cope with the trauma and violence you see, but not in context of the analysis itself.”

Wedel also hopes to establish grant funding for summer internships that will bring students into her lab to learn forensic anthropology.

“I’m paying forward experiences I was given,” she said. “You can’t know if you’re going to be good at something until you get in the trenches and do it.”

— Rodney Tanaka
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Two research scholars are currently on campus through the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program. Natarajan Venkatesan, PhD, from Chennai, India, is working with Guru Betageri, PhD, Professor of Pharmaceutical Sciences for the College of Pharmacy and Assistant Dean for the Graduate College of Biomedical Sciences, on drug delivery systems using liposomes.

Ibrahim Mohamed Ahmed El-Sabagh, PhD, MSc, from Cairo, Egypt, is studying the immune response of birds to avian influenza with Ellen Collisson, PhD, Professor of Microbiology for the College of Veterinary Medicine.

Collisson visited El-Sabagh’s colleagues at the University of Cairo, which led to his WesternU research visit. Obtaining tissue cultures and other materials for research is cheaper and easier than in Egypt, El-Sabagh said. Obtaining the materials takes longer in Egypt, so the research takes a lot of time, he said.

“I am very glad and very appreciative,” El-Sabagh said. “The progress of my work is more rapid than in Egypt. The system is optimized, so it gives me a chance to progress in my research as soon as possible.”

El-Sabagh has added to researchers’ understanding of avian influenza, Collisson said. He is a really easy person to work with and very hard working, he knows a lot of basic virology, and has a lot of competence in these areas, she said.

Egypt has reported outbreaks of H5 avian virus, known as “bird flu.” The goal of this research is to increase the effectiveness of vector vaccines.
“It’s a biosecurity threat, so it’s important to work with countries that have the virus so we can help them contain it,” Collisson said.

Venkatesan is also working on research that cuts across countries and cultures — cancer treatments. He became familiar with Betageri’s work on drug delivery systems through his publications and patents.

Working with a well-established researcher speeds up the process of obtaining necessary materials and resources, Venkatesan said.

“It’s better when somebody is already working on that area,” Venkatesan said. “He established his own lab, which is convenient for me. I’m not able to get things done as fast elsewhere.”

Betageri’s research involves the use of liposomes to reduce the toxicity, and therefore the side effects, of chemotherapy.

“Cancer drugs are very toxic, with very serious side effects,” Venkatesan said. “Using liposomes brings down toxicity and reduces side effects.”

Venkatesan joined his laboratory in July 2008 as a post-doctoral fellow, Betageri said.

“He has strong research background in formulation and drug delivery research,” Betageri said. “He has worked in pharmaceutical companies as well as conducted post-doctoral research in Japan. He is assisting in developing novel formulations based on our patented technology, as well as working on developing new technology to address problems associated with certain drug molecules. His contribution to our research program is very valuable.”

The J-1 Exchange Visitor Program is administered by the U.S. Department of State’s (DOS) Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs under the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961. The purpose of the Exchange Visitor Program is to promote international educational and cultural exchange in order to develop mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries. Exchange visitors enter the United States in J-1 visa classification to participate in an educational or cultural program in a specific program category such as a professor, researcher, specialist, or short-term scholar. The program at WesternU is managed by Jeannette Riley, University Policy and Procedure Administrator/J-1 Program Responsible Officer.

“The goal is to internationalize the campus, to become culturally aware,” Riley said. “We’re playing the central role in bringing international scholars to our campus. This represents the university’s commitment to ensure students, faculty and staff the opportunity to play a decisive role in the global community.”

She ensures that WesternU’s visiting researchers are comfortable and properly adjust to a new culture.

“My job is to acknowledge their customs, to make sure I understand and communicate in an appropriate manner,” Riley said. “It’s a lot more than just bringing a scholar to our country. It’s truly a cultural exchange. They learn about us, we learn about them.”

WesternU students, faculty and administration will benefit from learning about other cultures, and the J-1 Exchange Program helps build WesternU’s international reputation.

“How we treat our visiting scholars is how they will go back to their country and talk about WesternU,” Riley said. “It is important that we connect globally in education and research to prepare our future generations for a global society. Communication at a global level is our effort toward world peace.”

— Rodney Tanaka
The Physical Therapy Department at Western University of Health Sciences recently purchased the SMART Balance Master, a machine used for balance retraining and testing.

At least half of the U.S. population will experience balance problems sometime during their lives, especially as they get older, according to http://www.BalanceandMobility.com, a Web site that helps increase awareness of balance disorders and available treatment options.

People rely on balance for everyday activities such as shopping at a grocery store, bending over to put on their shoes, walking through their home and driving a car.

“This piece of equipment dates back to work with returning astronauts who experienced balance and dizziness deficits post-time in space,” said Mary Hudson-McKinney, PT, DPT, NCS, Assistant Professor of Physical Therapy Education. “It’s now used for a wide variety of patients with varying ages, from pediatric to geriatric, and wide variety of diagnoses, including individuals with orthopedic, neurologic, post-amputee, vestibular and balance dysfunction.”

Dr. Hudson-McKinney completed her advanced master’s degree in Physical Therapy at USC, collecting normative data using this system. She also used the machine during her clinical practice, and has a special interest in balance control, fall prevention and management strategies to reduce fall risk and improve function.

The primary use will be collaborative research, student preparation and education,
and to help complete “patient days” in the PT program when patients come in to work with students during their didactic preparation. The students will now have access to the SMART Balance Master for comprehensive assessment and treatment, according to Dr. Hudson-McKinney.

“More and more clinics are utilizing this equipment in clinical practice. Our students will now have an edge over other schools in their level and degree of preparation,” Dr. Hudson-McKinney said.

Several members from Physical Therapy Education took part in training when the system arrived, learning basic navigation of the menus. They also put Associate Professor Casey Chaney, PT, PhD, ODC, CSCS, on the balance machine during a Sensory Organization Test.

During the test, Dr. Chaney said, “I’m doing real well. This tells you I use my eyes a lot for balance, Whoa!”

After being tested, she said she felt a little disoriented, like she just got off a boat but could still feel the motion of the water.

The SMART Balance Master objectively identifies abnormalities in the patient’s use of the three sensory systems that contribute to balance control: sensation from the legs, vision, and the inner ear.

More than one-third of all adults 65 and older fall each year. Costs are projected to reach $43.8 billion in non-fatal injuries by 2020, according to Dr. McKinney-Hudson.

The College of Allied Health Professions’ Dean Stephanie Bowlin, Dr. Donna Redman-Bentley, and Dr. Dee Schilling all played key roles in bringing the system to WesternU.

“The equipment is designed for use by clinicians and multidisciplinary teams,” said Nicholas Kostechko, III, Regional Sales Executive at NeuroCom International, Inc., the maker of the SMART Balance Master. “One of the primary benefits of the product is that it provides complete assessment and patient management information which increases the clinician’s efficiency and effectiveness for patients with balance impairments.”

The SMART Balance Master has definite cross-over ability to DO, optometry, and podiatry programs, Dr. Hudson-McKinney said.

The College of Optometry and the College of Podiatric Medicine both expressed interest in collaborative research, depending on their new faculty, Redman-Bentley said.

“We are hopeful that those colleges may be able to assist with acquisition of additional apparatus for this basic system to expand our research and teaching opportunities,” she said.

Dr. Chaney and Dr. Vicki Graham will travel to Portland, Ore., sometime in the summer for additional training at NeuroCom’s headquarters during a collaborative training session with other physical therapists from across the country.

Students started to utilize the SMART Balance Master in a few classes such as “Evaluation & Treatment of Neurological Disorders” and “Differential Diagnosis of Neurological Disorders.”

If you are interested in a self evaluation to help determine if you may be at a risk for a fall, check out the Balance Self Test on http://www.balanceandmobility.com/patient_info/printout.aspx.

— Jeff Malet
Imagine knowing you want to be a doctor, a veterinarian or a pharmacist at the age of 11 or 12. Now imagine being offered an early start to that education.

A group of Pomona Unified School District sixth-graders were recognized for completing the first year of Pomona Health Career Ladder Sixth-Grade Academies. Western University of Health Sciences held its final session along with an awards presentation for 11 students Saturday, April 25, 2009 on campus in Pomona.

Academy student Lucy Saldivar, who wants to be a veterinarian, anxiously rummaged through the green bag she received with goodies like a WesternU T-shirt and a reflex hammer. She looked to her grandmother and told her she was really excited, and had been waiting for this very moment.

“It’s a wonderful feeling. I’m really happy because I get to see her go into a medical field,” said Lucy Lambaren, Saldivar’s grandmother. “She’s always rushed and ready to go on the day of these classes. I see a wonderful future for her.”

PUSD and WesternU partnered with California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, in guiding students through their education and into careers as health care providers.

The first year of the program, which began in the 2008-09 academic year, consisted of six monthly academies held on campus at WesternU, starting in October, said Dr. Elizabeth Rega, associate professor of anatomy and director for PHCL. Students and their parents were introduced to careers in medicine, pharmacy, physical therapy, physician assistant, veterinary medicine, podiatry, optometry and dentistry.

Pipeline to Health Careers (PHC), an interprofessional club on campus, with
experiences in high school outreach, helped coordinate each Saturday academy with the help of volunteers. Brian Kellert, DO ’11, past club president, Brenda Moore, DO ’11, past vice president, and other Pipeline to Health Careers club members organized the student workshops around that month’s theme.

“It’s always worth the effort, and hugely rewarding to see parents excited about their kids’ experiences and opportunities, and to see the kids learn useful information while enjoying themselves,” Moore said. “Over the course of the year, I’ve seen kids who were strangers in October become friends who are excited to learn, excited to talk to their parents and excited to teach their friends and brothers or sisters.”

The students who graduated will enter next year’s Academy, which will begin in September, and have greater responsibilities as seventh-graders. They will be known as biochemical scholars, will receive white coats, and will be asked to design a workshop and teach the incoming sixth-graders.

“Kids are the reason I come,” said Ben Lee, DO ’12, newly elected president of PHC. “They are interested in learning, and I’m more than interested in teaching.”

After the first session, students, parents and volunteers took voluntary and anonymous surveys compiled by the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness at WesternU.

Students unanimously felt they learned more about health careers, 71.9 percent thought it was possible to pursue a health career, and 90.6 percent thought they would go into a health career.

For parents, 95.5 percent felt their child would go into a health career and 90.5 percent learned more about health careers. “I’ve got a lot of information about different opportunities that my kid has in health careers,” said one of the parents on the survey.

In separate themed lectures during the six Saturday sessions, parent involvement was critical and mandatory. The program introduced the family to variety of health careers, the benefits of choosing such a career, how to plan the academic path, how to choose a career and financial aid possibilities.

The first session in October, “Introduction to Health Careers,” was attended by 39 students and parents. The following session in November, “Healthy Lifestyles,” 32 attended. In January, 47 attended “Microorganisms.” In February, 40 attended “Heart Health,” and in March, 14 attended “Sports Medicine.”

Students who continue with the program will, as part of WesternU’s partnership with Cal Poly Pomona, earn an undergraduate degree in health/sciences.

“Eligible Cal Poly students will be assured of early acceptance to a spectrum of health professional programs at WesternU,” said Rega.

Clinton Adams, DO, MPA, FACHE, dean of the College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific, recognized each student during the final session with a certificate and a reflex hammer for attending at least two-thirds of the PCHL Saturday sessions. Three students with perfect attendance received a stethoscope.

“In 2025, one or all of these students may be walking across the stage to receive their doctorate degree, a degree that will position them in a role of serving society, caring for us, holding our hand as we contemplate the reality of death,” Adams said. “So I can think of no more important responsibility than to mentor those who will follow us.”

— Jeff Malet
Family Affair is a new feature that focuses on family members who work together at Western University of Health Sciences. Each issue will feature a new family.

The Tatums, clockwise from left: Daniel, Andrea and Christina.

There are more than 25 families, and still counting who work at WesternU.

The Tatums are three strong. There is Daniel, a Client Technology Analyst in IT; Andrea, a Data Entry Specialist in EDS; and Christina, an Advancement Associate in University Advancement.

Daniel is married to Christina. They carpool, save a lot on gas, and get to have lunch together often. “Being able to relate to each other’s stories when we talk at the end of the day” is a nice advantage to working with his wife, Daniel said.

“It brings us closer together because we drive together and see each other throughout the day,” Christina said of her husband.

Andrea is Daniel’s sister, and more like a best friend to Christina than a sister-in-law.

“Working with family gives you a sense of ease in the workplace,” Andrea said. “You know you always have someone close to you there for you.”

Daniel has been working at WesternU for nine years. Christina has worked here about three years, and Andrea has been here more than two years.

— Jeff Malet
A GUARANTEED INCOME

For the rest of your life, Western University of Health Sciences will send you a check every 90 days or once a year. While the economy may rise or decline, your payments are GUARANTEED. You can count on this because we back our commitment with the full assets of WesternU.

The total amount of money you will receive is determined in advance and depends on several things, including your age, whether you want to include a second income recipient, and the amount you give to establish the contract. For example, if you’re 75 years old, you’ll receive more than someone 10 years younger who gives the same amount.

The planned giving arrangement that provides these guaranteed payments is the CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITY.

Here are the rates WesternU currently offers for one-life Charitable Gift Annuities:

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Dear Friends at WesternU:

☐ Please send me free information on charitable gift annuities.
☐ Please send me free information about other planned giving opportunities.
☐ Please contact me by phone. The best time to call is ____________________.

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For the rest of your life, you will enjoy the satisfaction that your **CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITY** will someday provide the University and its students with needed financial resources. By allowing WesternU to help you with lifetime financial support, you enable us to educate future generations of health-care providers who will save lives and change lives.

The IRS favors these arrangements and provides the donor with a charitable deduction. Year in and year out, it is the most popular life income planned giving vehicle available.

Would you like to learn more about **CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITIES** and how they can benefit you and WesternU? Just fill out and return the response card provided. If you include your age or ages, a sample scenario will be prepared for you. Olive Stephens, WesternU’s administrator for planned giving, will provide you with a free information packet.

**A GUARANTEED INCOME YOU CAN’T OUTLIVE? YOU CAN MAKE IT HAPPEN AT WESTERNU!**

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**Olive B. Stephens**  
Planned Giving Administrator  
Western University of Health Sciences  
Phone: (909) 469-5211  
FAX: (909) 469-5215  
ostephen@westernu.edu
The College of Graduate Nursing has set the standard for Web-based learning, as demonstrated by a recent visit from the California Board of Registered Nursing. The BRN is a state governmental agency responsible for evaluating nursing programs throughout California.

CGN faculty provided training to 10 nursing education consultants from the BRN.

“WesternU has been a leader in online education,” said Ruth Ann Terry, MPH, RN, Executive Officer for the California Board of Registered Nursing. “We know they are the experts.”

Technology changes quickly, and more nursing programs are adopting online programs, Terry said. This training ensures there is consistency in how they evaluate programs, she said.

“We want to be on the same page, so we can help programs not as far along as WesternU move in the right direction,” Terry said.

The BRN asked for a day of training, which CGN was happy to provide, said CGN Dean Karen Hanford, EdD, MSN, FNP. The training will help these evaluators in examining other online programs.

“This will increase their ability to assess if it’s a good program,” she said.

Dawn Stone, MN, RN, ANP, CGN Associate Professor, talked to the BRN visitors about methods of online learning. Online learning allows students to create knowledge and meaning, rather than providing facts and information that is memorized, she said.

Distance learning requires at least as much time as on-campus courses, or more. Students surveyed say that distance learning courses are as hard or harder than on-campus courses.

“Considering the shortage of nurses and the healthcare demands of Californians in urban and rural regions, it is exciting that the BRN is eager to learn more about distance education,” Stone said.

“Nursing can continue to grow its workforce thanks to education offered this way - the WesternU way.”

— Rodney Tanaka
Individuals and corporations have made substantial financial commitments to Western University of Health Sciences since the start of the new year, with their contributions going toward everything from a patient care unit in the new Patient Care Center to a professional development laboratory in the College of Pharmacy.

Chief among the major commitments made since January 2009 is $5.1 million pledged by Drs. Daljit and Elaine Sarkaria of Orange, who have previously helped fund WesternU’s research on Alzheimer’s disease and the molecular mechanisms of Parkinson’s disease.

The Sarkarias’ gift has three parts:

- $3 million to provide $1 million apiece to the College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific (COMP), the College of Dental Medicine and the College of Veterinary Medicine.
- $2 million to secure the naming rights for the research center being built on the fourth floor of the new Health Education Center on the WesternU campus.
- $100,000 to create the Dr. Philip Pumerantz Distinguished Lectureship in Interprofessional Education.

“This impressive commitment to WesternU by the Drs. Sarkaria reaffirms their belief that education is the key to improving the human condition, and that the work being done at WesternU – training tomorrow’s health care professionals – is powerful and meaningful,” said Dr. Pumerantz, WesternU’s founder and president.

Other recent major gifts and commitments to the University include:

- A West Hollywood residential property valued at $2.1 million, from the estate of Dr. Lawrence Gosenfeld, a psychiatrist at the Veterans Administration Hospital in Los Angeles and a clinical adjunct faculty member at WesternU from the 1980s until his death on July 19, 2008. Dr. Gosenfeld asked that money from the sale of his property be used to establish a Gosenfeld Family Fund at WesternU to provide low-interest loans to students.
- 50 percent of a residential property owned by Diane Boeke, as part of her will. Ms. Boeke’s property is valued at $500,000, making the amount pledged to WesternU $250,000.
- A pledge of $60,000 from Irwin Kronenberg, vice president of the specialty division of Haag-Streit USA, to the Capital Campaign/College of Optometry. In appreciation of the gift, WesternU will provide name recognition on behalf of Haag-Streit USA in a special testing room in the new Patient Care Center.
- $50,000 from Walgreens to the College of Pharmacy (COP), to support creation of a
multi-purpose professional development laboratory. The funds will be used to build a simulated model pharmacy within the laboratory to provide a training environment that supports contemporary patient-centered practice. “This laboratory will help to ensure that graduates are prepared to deliver the highest-quality patient care,” said Matt Sesto, RPh, Vice President of Store Operations at Walgreens.

- $50,000 from Target to the COP for the professional development laboratory, plus another $5,000 to fund a contemporary language development center within the laboratory under a diversity initiative. COP has committed to increasing health professions workforce diversity and to narrowing the gap in health disparities. “Partnership is big at Target – having strategic partnerships that drive results,” said Guy DiPasqua, RPh, group pharmacy leader for Target. “WesternU has always produced great students who thrive in our environment.”

- A $50,000 pledge by Dr. Herbert Mendelson, MD, founder of Mendelson Orthopedics in Livonia, Mich., in memory of his brother, Dr. Sol Mendelson, a member of COMP’s charter class in 1978. Dr. Sol Mendelson graduated from COMP in 1982 and was a general practitioner in Temecula, Calif., for 24 years. He passed away in 2006. “Sol left a lasting impression on his classmates and on his professors because of his compassion and concern for others,” Dr. Philip Pumerantz said. “Sol was truly an inspiration for all whose lives he touched.” In appreciation of the gift, WesternU will name a patient care unit at its new Patient Care Center “The Dr. Sol Mendelson Memorial Interprofessional Patient Suite.” Biographical information and photos will accompany a plaque at the entrance of the suite.

- A pledge of $25,000 from Dr. Guillermo Valenzuela of Colton to the Capital Campaign/College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific. In appreciation of the gift, WesternU will provide name recognition and biographical information in memory of Robert Avina, MD, in a Small Group Learning Room on campus.


— Jeff Keating
The PCC will house a pharmacy, optometry clinic (including vision therapy and optical dispensing areas), outpatient clinics in osteopathic and podiatric medicine, and an outpatient dental clinic. All clinical areas will be open to the public, will be staffed by WesternU faculty and staff, and will provide outpatient care and professional student learning rotations.
Construction of the Health Education Center (HEC), financed by bond revenues, began in early 2008 in preparation for housing faculty and administration for the College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific, the College of Dental Medicine, the College of Optometry and the College of Podiatric Medicine in early 2010.

The HEC will be a 180,000-square-foot, four-story building housing lecture auditoriums, classrooms, small group learning rooms for the Interprofessional Education curriculum, teaching laboratories in dental medicine and optometry, research laboratories, commons areas, conference rooms and faculty offices.

Photos by Jeff Malet
Richard Sugerman, PhD, brings his passion for gardening to work at Western University of Health Sciences. He likes to develop a culture by sharing flowers with co-workers.

“I think flowers add warmth,” said Dr. Sugerman. “Every Monday I bring flowers and put them on some desks.”

Dr. Sugerman has been gardening for approximately 54 years. Growing up, his family owned one home with three levels to take care of. His father was busy working and his brother had asthma, so at the age of 10 he began to mow the lawn, tend to plants and water trees.

People occasionally stop by his office to admire his flowers or to ask for advice about gardening.

Josie Hostetler, COMP
Administrative Assistant, came by recently to ask about his yellow and white daffodils, which were decorating his desk. She admired them for a few seconds before asking whether she could get a few of his bulbs to plant.

“His passion for flowers and plants is obvious when visiting his office, which is usually surrounded with fresh flowers of the season,” Hostetler said. “Dr. Sugerman is always ready to listen to my garden concerns and victories. He is dedicated, loyal, and a generous person.”

“They (co-workers) do me a favor.” said Dr. Sugerman. “I grow so many flowers. I would rather give them away.”

“IT’S MY CATHARSIS, WHAT I DO TO RELAX.

-- Richard Sugerman, PhD
Air plants are Dr. Sugerman’s favorite plants because they initially look like dried up little succulent plants, but become spectacular purple and red blooms. Air plants absorb what they need through their leaves, not their roots. You can put them in anything, like driftwood or a cup. Many prefer to hang them in baskets.

In the past, Dr. Sugerman had plant sales to raise money for the Hillel club on campus, which would help offset the cost of providing a Passover Seder dinner WesternU helps host. "If the club needed money, I have the plants pretty much ready to go," he said.

Dr. Sugerman joined the faculty of the College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific in July 1980. He received his PhD in Biology from University of New Mexico in 1975. He is currently Assistant Vice President for Academic Program Development, making sure each of the new colleges-dental, podiatry, and optometry-are accredited.

Despite his busy schedule, he always makes time for his garden.

“It’s my catharsis, what I do to relax,” he said.

For more information about air plants:
http://airplantcity.com/

— Jeff Malet

Sugerman’s Care of plants (March)

Iris - Grandma’s Bearded Purple: plant 2 to 3 inches deep, 18 to 24 inches apart. Full sun/part shade. Normal watering.

Narcissus – White flowers on a tall stalk and very fragrant. Place two inches deep and in clusters of three bulbs. Full/part sun. Water normally after they emerge in the early spring. After the plants die back they should be kept dry during their hibernation period.

Daffodils – Yellow (and other colors) flowers on a tall stalk. Plant three inches deep and in clusters of three bulbs. Full/part sun. Water normally after they emerge in the early spring. After the plants die back they should be kept dry during their hibernation period.

Calla lilies – Plant four to five inches deep and 18 inches apart. Keep ground moist. They multiply rapidly. Calla lilies are shade plants.

Succulent – Sedum and sempervivum plants. Sun but they can be damaged by too much direct sunlight. They do well in the ground and like to be kept moist.

Sugerman’s June/July Planting Tips:

Put in heat loving plants, if you haven’t already: corn, cucumbers, okra, green beans, lima beans, pumpkin, zucchini, melons, eggplant, squash.

Fertilize your roses, annuals, citrus and avocado trees, vegetables, lawn and container plants.

Apply 2 to 4 inches of mulch around established plants, shrubs, and trees leaving a 5-inch radius around plants to save water and add nutrients.

Remember you save “water dollars” during hot weather months by utilizing drought tolerant plants in your garden.
At the ripe old age of 9, Michelle entered a story, “My Sister Amy,” in a young authors’ contest at the library in her hometown of Lafayette, CA. The story won the library contest, and went on to win similar events at the county and district level.

The tale would have ended there for most fourth-graders. But after hearing judges at the competitions say how much they were moved by the book – to the point of needing to pass around Kleenex boxes – and that it should be published, Michelle and her parents took the story to the next level. They found a book agent, and after a couple years’ effort, “I’m the Big Sister Now” made its way into libraries and classrooms across the country and the world.

“I’m the Big Sister Now” tells the story of Michelle’s relationship with her sister Amy, who was born severely handicapped with cerebral palsy. The title alludes to the fact that although Amy was five years older than Michelle, the younger Emmert took on the duties of an older sibling, since Amy could not sit up, walk, talk, read, write, or do most of the things typical children do.

After seven years at WesternU, it’s no surprise that Director of University Student Relations Michelle Emmert is well known on campus, thanks to her involvement in everything from student clubs to the new Prospective Students Web site.

But Michelle’s name is known far beyond the campus boundaries. Thanks to something she did as a young child, she’s recognized across the United States, in Canada, and even as far away as Finland.
“Even though she can’t do very many things, she is still a great sister, and I would like to tell you about her,” then 9-year-old Michelle writes in the opening paragraphs of the book. What follows are Michelle’s observations about her sister’s life, including the effort that went into her care, her school, her interactions with those who didn’t understand her disability, and the ways Michelle and her sister had fun and shared special times.

The book, published in 1989 by Albert Whitman & Co., was used in fourth-grade readers at several schools in the U.S. and Canada, and found a home in countless school libraries. The book itself is no longer for sale, but the story continues to be published in new readers.

Despite her status as a young – very young – author, Michelle said the novelty was lost on her until students started sending her letters.

“It was cool, because I started getting fan mail,” she said. “I’ve probably been written 60 or so different times. Kids want to know if Amy is still alive, if she’s gotten better…they ask a lot of questions.”

Though Amy Emmert died within a year of the book’s publication – she was 18, Michelle 13 -- her story as a 14-year-old with special needs continues to be told between the pages of “I’m the Big Sister Now,” which -- though technically out of print as of a few years ago -- remains in circulation at schools and libraries.

In fact, interest in the book has held up for so long that Michelle said she will try to get the publisher to do another printing. She also wants to establish a relationship with the Pomona Unified School District so that she can visit classes and tell Amy’s story, using it as a object lesson in acceptance of others regardless of their physical, social or personal characteristics.

The little/big sister still gets an occasional letter that reminds her why she started telling Amy’s story all those years ago.

“The thing that makes me tear up is when someone says, ‘I learned that I should be nicer to someone who’s handicapped cause he can’t help being that way,’” she said.

— Jeff Keating

_PROFILE_

‘I’m the Big Sister Now’ tells the story of Michelle’s relationship with her sister Amy, who was born severely handicapped with cerebral palsy. The title alludes to the fact that although Amy was five years older than Michelle, the younger Emmert took on the duties of an older sibling...

-- Michelle Emmert
College of Graduate Nursing
Patricia Marie Odum, MSN/FNP ’04, is currently working in a small internal medicine practice in Los Osos, CA. She is making it a point to give back, taking on the challenge of representing the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society’s Team by completing “America’s Most Beautiful Ride,” a 100-mile “century” bicycle ride in Lake Tahoe, CA. The ride’s focus is to raise awareness about blood-related cancers and raise funds for research.

College of Pharmacy
Congratulations to Bhavesh Desai, PharmD ’02, who was elected to the Academy of Pharmacy Owners (APO) board.


Kristina Reyes, PharmD ’08, writes that she is now working in her dream job in the medical information department at Amgen in Thousand Oaks, CA.

College of Allied Health
A pat on the back to Nancy Westbrook-May, PA-C ’94, who recently saved the life of a fellow surfer in San Onofre, CA. She administered CPR when he stopped breathing, and kept the situation under control until paramedics arrived. The story was covered in the Orange County Register, the California Academy of Physician Assistants News and in an interview on KNX radio. Well done!

Christina Shaw, PA-C ’00, has been a physician assistant student preceptor since 2006. She recently joined the Mission Christian Organization going to Ecuador with a medical, dental, pharmacy, and optometry team, along with a group of people working on water filtration systems, home repair, and children’s activities. Ms. Shaw reports that it was an amazing and life-changing experience.

Congratulations to Richard Blada, PA-C ’95, who was recently appointed Director of Employee Health at Los Robles Hospital & Medical Center in Thousand Oaks, CA.

Kudos to Carole Adele Sussman, DPT ’06, who in June 2008 was given a lifetime achievement award from the World Union of Wound Healing Societies for contributions to the development of the practice area of wound care.

Congratulations to Tina Meyer, PA-C ’92, MSHS ’05, who has been selected as the female Professional of the Year representing Academic Medicine in Cambridge Who’s Who Executives, Professionals, and Entrepreneurs.

Kudos to Joachim Brown, DO ’05, MSHPE ’06, who accepted the 2007 Clinical Instructor of the Year Award while teaching at COMP as well as accepting the 2008 Intern Team Player Award while working at Arrowhead Regional Medical Center. In his words, going from academic medicine to the first-year resident program is like “merging from the 10 freeway to the Autobahn.”

Warm congratulations to Amber Jo Hollenbeck, MSPA ’04, who was married May 31, 2008.

Shelley Jeannette Dolkas, MSPA ’03, gave birth to a daughter, Sofie Adelle Lickl, on Sept. 3, 2008. Congratulations on the new addition to your family.
Alumni Class Notes

College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific

Kudos to Barbara Walker, DO ’84, who was honored at the North Carolina Osteopathic Medical Association annual meeting on Aug. 1, 2008. The association established the Barbara E. Walker, DO, North Carolina Heritage Award and Memorial Lecture. Dr. Walker was also named President Emeritus of the North Carolina Osteopathic Medical Association.

Kudos also to Susan Melvin, DO ’84, who was awarded the California Academy of Family Physicians Foundation’s 2008 Barbara Harris Award for Educational Excellence. Dr. Melvin has served as Long Beach Memorial’s Residency Director since 1998. She is also Secretary/Treasurer of the Osteopathic Medical Board of California.

Kudos to Ishmael Jaiyesimi, DO ’86, who in 2006 was appointed Director of the Medical Oncology Fellowship Program at William Beaumont Hospital. Dr. Jaiyesimi is certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine and its subspecialty boards of hematology and medical oncology. He is also a Fellow of the American College of Physicians.

Congratulations to Gregory Stone, DO ’90, who was installed as the new President of the Utah Osteopathic Association during its annual fall symposium held in Salt Lake City, UT. Dr. Stone will serve a two-year term as president.

Ayaz Khan, DO ’04, finished his ophthalmology residency in June 2008 and is now practicing in La Mirada, CA. He is married with three children.

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.

Warm congratulations to Loi Tran, DO ’96, and his wife, who welcomed their baby boy, Ryan Tran, into the world on Sept. 13, 2008. Little Ryan weighed 6 lbs., 3 oz. and was 19 inches long.

Congratulations to Daniel Augustus Smith II, DO ’07, who is the proud father of Sara Alexandra Smith, born April 15, 2007.

In Memoriam

Rand Feinstein, PA-C ’95, passed away 7/22/07
Greg Bales, DO ’97, passed away 11/04/08
Stephen McKay, DO ’96, passed away 2/1/09

New Alumni e-mail Policy

For more than 10 years, WesternU has provided the continued use of its graduates’ @westernu.edu email addresses as alumni. A recent evaluation of the University’s computing resources, however, showed that several hundred of these alumni email accounts were no longer being used. These inactive accounts not only take up electronic storage space but also are potential targets for misuse by hackers and spammers. Therefore, the University has adopted a new policy regarding alumni email accounts:

WesternU will deactivate email accounts for alumni who do not login and check their individual WesternU email within six contiguous months. If no request is made to reactivate an account within the following six months (meaning there will have been at least a full 12 months of no account activity) then the account will be permanently deleted.

This policy will take effect on July 1, 2009, so it will immediately affect accounts that have not been logged into since before January 1, 2009. Alumni whose accounts are deactivated on July 1, 2009, will have until January 1, 2010, to request their account be reactivated before it is permanently deleted.

In addition, the University is considering phasing in a storage limit (possibly as low as 100MB) on all alumni email accounts. So please clean out your email accounts by saving large attachments onto your personal computers and deleting old messages. Additional tips on how to clean out your email account will be emailed to you soon.

For questions, or to update your preferred email address with the University, please contact the Office of Alumni Relations at (909) 469-5274 or alumni@westernu.edu. If you have technical questions regarding your alumni email account, please contact Western University Technical Support at (909) 469-5432 or techsupport@westernu.edu.
On Saturday, March 21, 2009, family and friends of Dr. Rafi Younoszai, professor of anatomy at WesternU, gathered to celebrate his semi-retirement and support his International & Cross-Cultural Health Scholarship. This event raised $8,550 from generous individual donations, bringing the total amount to $29,025. Additional support is greatly needed to give medical students the opportunity to provide medical assistance in developing countries. To learn more about Dr. Rafi Younoszai and the Scholarship in International & Cross Cultural Health, visit: www.westernu.edu/rafi. Your generous support will enhance students’ clinical education and broaden their cultural and medical perspectives.
HELP DISCOURAGE WASTE

If you receive duplicate mailings, want to be removed from our mailing list, or want to change an address, contact (909) 469-5274 or alumni@westernu.edu.

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COVER ART

Interprofessional Education

WesternU students from left, Kelvin Akhigbe, DO ’10; Melissa Lau, PharmD ’09; and Jennifer Turney, PA ’09, review a patient’s chart at Western University Medical Center.

Photo by Jeff Malet

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