Emphasis On Research
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.
From the President
University President Philip Pumerantz, PhD shares his overview of the bold new paths the university will venture down in the years to come.

Army Doc in Iraq
Major Alea Morningstar, DO ’96 writes exclusively for WesternU View Magazine about her wartime experiences during 3 tours of duty in Iraq.
Western University of Health Sciences recently completed a yearlong celebration of its 30th anniversary. Harriet and I had the pleasure of seeing many familiar faces and sharing fond memories with our WesternU Family.

But WesternU is not willing to coast on past accomplishments. We are constantly evolving and moving forward with dynamic, cutting-edge educational tools and research opportunities.

We are building new academic and patient care centers where students will become active participants in their education and patients will receive compassionate health care.

We will continue to grow, with the Graduate College of Biomedical Sciences set to open later this year and three new colleges opening in 2009: the College of Dental Medicine, the College of Optometry and the College of Podiatric Medicine.

At this pivotal moment in time, we celebrate our 30-year history and honor the staff, faculty and alumni who made this university what it is today, while also looking ahead toward a bright future with untold possibilities.

Philip Pumerantz, PhD
On Sept. 11, 2001, I was on a flight landing immediately in Phoenix. Numbed, muted conversations with a group of Army doctors slowly turned to overseas experiences. Their passion fired me to sign up.

After two years in Iraq - in Baghdad, Abu Ghraib prison and five diverse Army Units - I share mine. Iraq is sandstorms and 120-plus-degree days or rainy, cold mud in the winter.

I have held dying soldiers and Marines. Returned hostile fire. Treated and medevacked (medical evacuation by helicopter) the wounded and offered a shoulder to cry on.

Being “outside the wire” (outside secured areas) is hell. We carry 50 pounds of individual body armor, a Kevlar helmet and weapons, plus packs and ammo.

No showers, no sleep. MREs (meals ready to eat) in cramped Humvee convoys. An IED (improvised explosive device) booms. Ears ring, and the pungent syrupy smell of burning flesh and grimy smoke choke and blind you. Medics move out.
toward the screams. Small arms fire staccatos and blood casts a metallic tang in your mouth. You are in agonizingly intense survival mode, rendering care while trying to stay alive.

We pick up body parts of friends. Well over 90 percent we medevac will make it.

Once inside the wire we shower, wolf hot chow and sleep. Many soldiers, Marines and medics repeat this exhausting and dangerous cycle of patrols and missions. No one complains.

As Battalion Surgeon with the 391st MPs at Abu Ghraib Prison, my section housed over 2,000 detainees. With one PA and 26 medics, we ran an aid station for troops, and 24/7 care for detainees. (Inpatients stayed at the 115th Field Hospital.) With nonstop mortar attacks, small-arms fights and casualties—the eyes of the world watched us “Restore America’s Honor.”

One 1-153 Infantry medic had four purple hearts. They managed car bombs and IEDs where bodies burned beyond recognition or draped the scene like icicles.

Al-Asad was howling 140-degree sandstorms, over 2,000 soldiers, two medics and 24/7 days. Transportation Companies and Marines took heavy losses—we did our best.

This tour I am an ER physician. With the 21st CSH, we cared for more than 18,000 detainees!

The 399th CSH in Tikrit—Saddam’s hometown—sees massive trauma, mangled limbs, and GSWs. Whole blood and Factor 7 transfusions save many lives. It is hard, bloody work. Like an episode of M.A.S.H., this highly trained group of nurses, physicians and surgeon’s camaraderie is infectious.

I recuperate at Walter Reed Medical Center from shrapnel wounds, adrift in a sea of high tech prosthetics and troops whose courage astounds me. Most of us suffer various stages of TBI (traumatic brain injury) with short-term memory loss, headaches and dizziness. A spot in the right frontal lobe on my MRI may end my career.

I hope I am OK.

With combat experience and medals I am now a veteran—a “Wounded Warrior.” We feel “awake among the sleeping”—as everyone’s lives have gone on unchanged while our eyes are OPEN to what we have in America. There are NO WORDS—or regrets.

Army Maj. Alea Morningstar, DO ’96, has served three tours in Iraq, totaling more than two years. She graduated in 1996 from the College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific at Western University of Health Sciences. She wrote this story exclusively for WesternU View magazine about her wartime experiences while recovering from an injury suffered in Baghdad. Her e-mail address is alea.morningstar@us.army.mil.
Thirty years ago, the College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific brought together pioneering administrators, faculty and students who were willing to take chances. What formed was a bond that continues to this day.

The college, now part of Western University of Health Sciences, started out in a renovated shopping center. There weren’t really any facilities to look at when interviewing for admission, said David Ross, DO ’82, who was in the first graduating class of COMP.

“I thought, ‘I don’t know if they’re going to be able to pull this off,’ ” he said. But he liked what President Philip Pumerantz and the other founders were trying to do, said Ross, an emergency physician at Penrose Hospital in Colorado Springs, Colo.

“I like being different and a little unique,” he said. “I thought this is the type of environment that will allow me to be that way.”

The campus was small and had a real family environment in those early years, said Dr. Rafi Younoszai, COMP Professor of Anatomy/Director of International Cross-cultural Programs, who joined the faculty in 1979.
Growth at the college provided a lot of opportunities. He developed the first COMP faculty and student talent show, a wellness club and wellness symposiums, as well as other clubs that sent students to overseas exchange programs and to community service projects.

“These experiences to me were very rewarding,” Younoszai said. “I’m glad we started these programs early. Now it’s paying off.”

Students came in with varied life experiences and quickly formed a very solid, united group, said Josef Strazynski, DO ’82, who runs a private clinic specializing in treatment of vascular complications of diabetes mellitus in Israel.

He fondly remembers private chats with the faculty and fun gatherings with Harriet and Philip Pumerantz.

“The faculty was not just our teachers, they became our friends and mentors,” Strazynski said.

Students got creative in developing places to study and relax, said Thom Horowitz, DO ’82, who has a private practice in downtown Los Angeles. One classmate convinced the owner of a sandwich shop across the street to give him the keys so students could go there at night to study, he said. They would make their own sandwiches and put money in the till. That same resourcefulness was also reflected in their medical training.

“You had to be self-motivating and study independently,” Horowitz said.

Going to COMP reinforced the idea of being persistent in achieving your goals, Ross said. He sees a similar spirit still alive today at Western U.

“Western U really impresses me today,” Ross said.

“I think some of that same motivation and drive is still there, it’s just on a much bigger scale than it was back then.”

COMP gave an opportunity to people who might not have received one in other settings, said Linda Crawford, DO ’83, a full-time family practitioner in Sierra Madre, Calif.

COMP was an inclusive university that was willing to take a chance on intelligent people, said Crawford, who had a bachelor’s in nursing when she applied to COMP.

“Administration tried to make it possible for people who had a burning desire to further their career in medicine,” she said.

Students were willing to help each other, forming a cohesive group that helped each other and shared in each other’s triumphs.

“We worked collectively to learn things, something that I think is wonderful,” Crawford said. “I carried that through to my professional life. We will do everything we can to help everyone do the best they can.”

She is proud of the growth at Western U.

“We went from being a very little school struggling to make a reputation to being a thriving mega university that puts out quality physicians and nurses, pharmacists and physical therapists,” Crawford said. “It’s wonderful to be a part of that. People now know Western U. It’s a neat thing, because we were there when nobody knew who we were.”
University Turns 30 With a Growth Spurt Ahead

By Will Bigham
Inland Valley Daily Bulletin

As Western University of Health Sciences celebrates its 30th anniversary, the downtown medical school is moving forward with ambitious expansion plans that will more than double its enrollment.

In 1977, the university was a one-room operation with 36 students. Now, situated on a sprawling 22-acre campus, the university boasts five separate schools and more than 2,000 students. In 2009, the university will open three new schools, and in 2010 will begin planning for two more. By the time the expansion concludes, officials expect enrollment to exceed 5,000. When Philip Pumerantz, the school’s founding president, arrived in Pomona with the mission to set up the university, he was working with “borrowed furniture and a broken phone,” as he characterizes those early days. The university began with one school - the College of Osteopathic Medicine - which teaches a medical discipline that emphasizes the complete treatment of a patient rather than focusing on a specific ailment.

WesternU, one of 22 osteopathic medical schools in the country, produces graduates
who first are medically competent, but “they’re also
caring and compassionate,” said Pumerantz, 74.
Since its founding, WesternU has added colleges
of veterinary medicine, pharmacy, nursing and allied
health professions. With multiple schools on
campus, students are exposed to a variety of
training methods that makes them
well-rounded doctors, Pumerantz
said. The setup
“breaks down the
silos” between
medical
disciplines, he said.
As it has grown,
WesternU has
added specialized
programs such as
the Center for Disability Issues and the Health
Profession, which aides disabled students who
attend the university. “Over 90 percent have
graduated, and a number of them have graduated at
the top of their classes,” said Brenda Premo, the
center’s founding director. Premo said WesternU’s
student body consists of “grass-roots people” who
have concern for individual patients. “They don’t
talk about the kidney in room 3, they talk about
Ms. Jones,” she said. “Students who come here, they
tend to reflect the communities they come from,
and they tend to go back to the communities they
come from.”

New Colleges Planned
Schools of dentistry, optometry, and podiatry will
open in 2009. As part of the expansion, more than
200,000 square feet of new building space is being
constructed at a cost of $120 million, Pumerantz
said. Planning will begin in 2010 for a School of

Public Health and a School of Biomedical Sciences,
Pumerantz said. After the expansion is completed,
opening additional campuses in the western United
States will likely be considered, Pumerantz
said.

Army Maj. Alea
Morningstar,
DO, ’96, a
military
physician who
has served a total of two years in Iraq, graduated
from WesternU in 1996. While serving in Baghdad
in July 2004, Morningstar was hit in both legs by
shrapnel from a roadside bomb. The injuries were
not life-threatening, and soon after she returned to
medical work. Morningstar said her training as an
osteopathic physician has been especially helpful in
her treatment of soldiers, whose injuries are often
multiple and complex. “(WesternU) prepared me
better than your typical medical school,”
Morningstar said. “I’ve learned to talk to people and
listen to people much better from being at a school
that emphasized that part of being a doctor.”

Reprinted by permission from the Inland Valley Daily Bulletin.
Western University of Health Sciences is traveling down a bold new path, one built from scratch.

The university is building new facilities from the ground up for the first time in its history. WesternU had previously renovated structures to suit its educational and institutional needs.

“We get to build the new building to suit the program as opposed to trying to alter an existing retail building into a school building, which is tougher to do in a renovation,” said Todd Clark, WesternU facilities and physical plant director.

Construction on the veterinary medical building began in August and is expected to be completed in early 2008. Three additional buildings are planned: the Veterinary Instructional Pathology Center, the Health Education Center and the Patient Care Center.

“This is an exciting time of growth for the university, both of programs and physical facilities,” said Shirley Johnston, DVM, PhD, vice president of University Advancement. “We have completed the transformation of all existing buildings on our campus, and now have the opportunity to construct new ones to serve our vision of the future.”

The new veterinary medical building will allow the College of Veterinary Medicine to house its entire faculty in one building and will double the teaching space, said Phillip Nelson, DVM, PhD, dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine. Watching the building go up is extremely exciting and fulfilling, he said.

“At the same time, it reminds me of the work that was done before me and stimulates me to make sure we continue to grow,” Nelson said. “I’m appreciative to the people that funded this project for us. At the same time I’m committed and challenged to make sure we put this building to good use.”

The Health Education Center will be the new home of the College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific and the three new colleges opening in 2009 – the College of Dental Medicine, the College of Optometry
and the College of Podiatric Medicine.

The first floor will have four auditoriums and faculty offices. The second and third floors will have large auditoriums with 350 seats each. The College of Optometry and COMP will be on the first and second floors. The College of Podiatric Medicine and the College of Dentistry will be on the third floor and research labs will be on the fourth floor.

The construction will allow the university to design a facility that will support an innovative curriculum, said James Koelbl, DDS, MS, MJ, founding dean of the College of Dental Medicine.

“When you inherit an existing building, sometimes you have to work around limitations the physical plant provides,” he said. “We have the opportunity to imagine what the curriculum is going to look like in the future and to build in flexibility that will allow for continued positive change.”

Even now they are making changes to the preclinical space to make it as close to an actual clinic as possible.

“That will facilitate students’ entry into patient care,” Koelbl said.

The Patient Care Center will open in summer 2009. WesternU is in the early stages of developing a unique interprofessional curriculum where students will gain an understanding and appreciation for other health professionals and promote a team approach to patient care and health care management. Students will utilize these skills in improving patient care.

The building will be customized for educational programs as well as optimal patient care, said Joan Sandell, DMD, director of interprofessional clinical services.

“We’re envisioning that when our students begin treating their patients in this building their knowledge and understanding of each of the other professions will allow them to better know when to collaborate, consult, and/or refer to another professional colleague,” she said.

The Founding Napkin

A napkin’s destiny is capricious at best – soaking up a spill, cleaning a spot of spaghetti sauce. But once in a blue moon, a napkin rises above the fray and becomes part of history. This is such an occasion.

Dr. Philip Pumerantz, founding president of Western University of Health Sciences, came to Southern California 30 years ago to start the College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific, now part of Western University of Health Sciences.

The college’s founders identified a former J.C. Penny building as a potential site for classrooms and labs and bought the property with a promise to pay.

“I started to put in place all the elements you need to start a medical school,” Pumerantz said. “One is the building, the facility.”

He went to lunch one day and decided to write down his thoughts.

“I had to come up with a design, what it would look like inside with lecture halls and offices,” Pumerantz said. “At that lunch I drew out on the napkin where I thought everything would be.”

He is modest about his design skills, saying it was simple to determine where the classrooms would be based on the existing structure. But one aspect of the design played a key role in showcasing a philosophy that continues to this day: placing the offices next to the entrance. Some of the earliest COMP graduates remember walking past Pumerantz’s office every day when going to class, reinforcing the open-door policy he established from the beginning.

“I still have the same policy,” Pumerantz said.

The first COMP building now houses the research center. The building retains the same design, with offices next to the entrance.

Pumerantz keeps the napkin in a frame on the wall. And when he happens to see it when walking by?

“I just chuckle,” he said.

– Rodney Tanaka
The Many Faces of

Commencement ceremonies were held on May 10 and 11 at the Pasadena, Calif., Civic Auditorium.
More than 500 students in seven programs received their diplomas and became health care professionals.
Western University of Health Sciences welcomed 674 incoming students and their families at the annual Convocation ceremony at Pomona First Baptist Church on Aug. 11, 2007.
Each college holds a White Coat ceremony after Convocation. Students are cloaked in their first white clinical jackets, which symbolize entry into the healing professions and serves as a reminder of the awesome responsibility and the powerful influence of the healer.
Western University of Health Sciences continues to expand its research presence with new labs opening and new faculty brought in to conduct research and teach. Over the last two years, the university has more than doubled its application rate for federal and foundation grants, said Steven J. Henriksen, PhD, vice president of research and biotechnology and interim dean of the Graduate College of Biomedical Sciences.

“The primary responsibility of a medical arts graduate institution is to produce health care professionals, but there is a long-standing tradition that research and scholarly work of all kinds is a part of the responsibility of all university faculty,” Henriksen said.

Research serves as a potentially significant revenue source for universities even in the current climate of shrinking federal support for research funding. In addition, students benefit from understanding the value of research in their profession as an important component of lifelong learning, Henriksen said.

He presented his concept for three future Centers of Excellence in Research in 2007 to the Board of Trustees. The centers are based on common aspects of the major human diseases rather than separated by scientific discipline. The new centers are to be named: The Center for Molecular and Metabolic Disease, The Center for Integrated Neuroscience and The Center for Infectious Diseases and Immunology.

This concept fits into the unique interprofessional curriculum in development at WesternU that brings together students from all medical disciplines to learn how to work together and to understand and appreciate each other’s strengths. Similarly, basic and clinical researchers and students will work across traditional scientific disciplines to examine Alzheimer’s disease, cancer, cardiovascular diseases, and other health issues.

The research emphasis attracted Raj Kandpal, PhD, COMP associate professor of biochemistry, who started at WesternU in
August 2007. He is researching more effective treatments of breast cancer. Increasing research is a logical expansion for a medical school, he said.

“Our student doctors will be better trained if in addition to classroom learning they conduct research in the lab as well,” he said. “Research has an important place in medical education.”

The medicine of the future is going to be based more and more on genetic medicine, Kandpal said. Understanding how a patient’s normal and disease cells behave will have profound impact on how physicians prescribe specific treatments for a variety of diseases.

“Keeping in touch with relevant research may allow physicians to make better informed decisions about patient care and treatment,” Kandpal said.

Ying Huang, MD, PhD, assistant professor of pharmaceutical sciences, has a background in human genetics, specifically the integration of genomics and pharmacy.

“The goal is to use the right drug for the right patients,” Huang said. “Each individual has a different response to drug therapy because their genetic background is different.”

The same drug treatment for a large population results in different patient response. Some have an optimal response while others suffer side effects. The goal is to predict how a patient will respond before treatment.

“If we know that before the treatment, ideally we reduce the cost and potential risk of serious side effects,” Huang said.

In addition to bringing in faculty researchers, WesternU also wants to attract more students. To that end, the university is developing the Graduate College of Biomedical Sciences, which will be essential for conducting research, Henriksen said.

“We need graduate students, students with a masters or PhD to stay on and continue research,” he said. “Our new program will guarantee a growing cadre of research-oriented students who will participate in our new research model at WesternU.”

The college is working on a fall 2008 start, initially offering a master’s in biomedical sciences, which could be directed toward basic or clinical research, as well as for post-graduate advancement for teaching or at biotech firms, Henriksen said. They hope to have a doctoral program within three to five years, he said.

Medical practitioners should learn the value of research in their professions, Henriksen said. The ability to conduct research is part of lifelong learning, he said.

“We have the best job in the world,” Henriksen said. “We have the opportunity to ask very important questions of nature and discover the secrets of nature, and the ability to cure, not just treat, the major human diseases worldwide through our work.”

Steven J. Henriksen, PhD
WesternU Calendar March-September 2008

MARCH

March 13-14 - Physician Assistant Program applicant interviews

March 16 - Alumni Reception in conjunction with the APhA Annual meeting in San Diego

March 25 - MSHS info session

March 26 - 28 - C.A.R.E.S. Symposium

March 31-April 4 - MSHS spring break

APRIL

April 10 - Pharmacy Honor Day

April 12 - East West Scholarship Dinner
(Mission 261 Restaurant, San Gabriel, Calif.)

April 16 - COMP Honors Day

April 17 - Ray Symposium

April 23 - CVM Honors Day

April 24 - MSHS info session

April 30 - Last day for Comprehensive Exams and oral defense of Thesis/Special Project
(Department of Health Sciences Education)

MAY

May 14 - Programs hold individual commencement/award dinners

May 14 - Armed Forces Commissioning Dinner

May 15-16 - Commencement

May 20 - DPTE Honors Day

May 25 - MSHS info session

May 26 - Memorial Day (WesternU - Closed)

May 27 - Classes resume

JUNE

June 7 - Spring lunch
(Welcome DPTE Class ’08 candidates)

June 11 - GNP/ICP Scholarship Golf Tournament,
Santa Clarita, Calif.

June 24 - MSHS info session

June 24-26 - Second-Year Physician Assistant Student Research Presentations

June 26 - Honor’s Day
(Department of Physician Assistant Education)

JULY

July 4 - Independence Day (WesternU - Closed)

AUGUST

August 4 - Welcome/Orientation Week begins

August 7 - President’s Ice Cream Social

August 9 - Convocation & White Coat Ceremonies,
President’s Welcome for Entering Students and their families, BBQ and Vendor Faire

August 11 - Classes resume

SEPTEMBER

September 1 - Labor Day (WesternU - Closed)

September 2 - WesternU’s 31st Anniversary
MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

The Class of 2008 was fourth in the nation for first-time pass rate on COMLEX 1 (Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Examination.) The class achieved a 93 percent first-time taker pass rate and a class average above the national mean. This is an outstanding tribute to their dedication and focus and the faculty's efforts to provide a challenging academic curriculum.

Commencement is now behind us as we sent 154 graduates onto their residencies. A new and interesting trend in residency selection is in physical medicine and rehabilitation. The OPTI West (Osteopathic Postgraduate Training Institute) sponsored by COMP did exceedingly well filling all of the first-year positions with outstanding graduates from COMP and our sister colleges.

OR’s CA (Osteopathic Residencies in Oregon and California) continues to move closer to the goal of opening a broad spectrum of new residencies in the west. Dr. David Connett (‘84) is leading our effort as the newly appointed dean for post-graduate development.

College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific

A COMP student examines a patient at the University’s Medical Clinic.

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

The College of Allied Health Professions (CAHP) supports WesternU in its mission to increase the availability of health care providers to serve the needs of the people living in the Western region of the United States. As dean, I am proud to be a part of the college as we continue to provide educational opportunities for students in the disciplines of Health Sciences, Physician Assistant Studies and Physical Therapy. Our dynamic faculty provides education in classes that are offered in an environment intended to foster respect for the uniqueness of humanity. The students are provided with classroom and clinical experiences designed to prepare them to function as competent health care practitioners.

College updates

- **Steven Lam**, MSHS ’07 is utilizing his Health Sciences degree by accepting a teaching position at UCLA.
- **Miguel Medina**, PA-C is president-elect of the California Academy of Physician Assistants (CAPA).
- **Dr. Dee Schilling**, PT, PhD is the new chair of the Department of Physical Therapy Education. In 2007, the department celebrated its 15th anniversary and October was National Physical Therapy Month.

**Stephanie D. Bowlin, PA-C, EdD**
As we begin our 11th year as a College of Pharmacy, we are often asked to provide “measures of program quality.” Let me share a few. Our student applicant pool is among the strongest in the nation with 1,590 applications for 120 positions, a ratio of over 13:1 compared to 7.8:1 nationally. Our students who graduated in May 2007 attained a 100 percent passing rate on the NAPLEX licensing exam, an amazing achievement. I am also very proud of our students who find time outside of our rigorous academic program to reach out to our local community and represent us as officers in national pharmacy organizations and who compete successfully in national clinical skills, patient counseling and business planning competitions. I couldn’t be more proud of our faculty, staff, and students as we work together to make the WesternU College of Pharmacy the very best it can be.
The College of Graduate Nursing received final approval from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) to offer a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree. The charter DNP class started in January 2008. The DNP program will begin as a doctoral completion program for RNs who have already completed a master’s of science degree in nursing (MSN). The clinical focus of the program is the care of vulnerable populations, which WASC described as “commendable.”

Transforming health care, especially for vulnerable populations, recognizes the critical need for clinicians to design, evaluate, and continuously improve the context within which care is delivered. Nurses prepared at the doctoral level with a blend of clinical, organizational, economic, and leadership skills are able to evaluate and apply clinical evidence and science to design systems of care delivery that are locally acceptable, economically feasible, and which significantly impact health care outcomes.

A diverse group of Graduate Nursing students.
The class of 2011 is on campus and has just finished midterm exams. So far, so good! This class (49 from California and 56 from other states) has really made a favorable impression on the faculty. We’re already working on the class of 2012 and have received more than 750 applications (a 20 percent increase) at the time of this report.

The college faculty has grown by more than 25 percent in one year, and we are but one or two positions away from filling our planned complement. The long-awaited construction of our new Veterinary Clinical Center began in June 2007 and is progressing nicely.

Presently, college personnel participated in an in-depth, self-study in preparation of our final site visit by the AVMA Council of Education – the final part of the accreditation process. The site visit and program evaluation occurred in January 2008.
The Center for Disability Issues and the Health Professions (CDIHP) at WesternU has earned a national reputation for understanding disability issues and the complexities of the health care system.

“I think over the years we probably have sharpened our goals and objectives,” said June Kailes, MSW, LCSW, Associate Director of the CDIHP. “The center works to enhance the health of people with disabilities through public policy, consulting, training, research and dissemination activities.”

One goal is to increase access to health care services for people with disabilities. The center assists clinics and hospitals in installing diagnostic, therapeutic, procedural, rehabilitation and exercise equipment, such as examination and treatment tables and chairs, weight scales, X-ray equipment, treadmills and other exercise machines that provide better access. Health care providers are trained in how to use this equipment and how to meet the needs of people with disabilities.

“We also work toward increasing the number of qualified people with disabilities who pursue careers in health,” Kailes said. “We think it’s very important for people who live this, who have user experience, to be among the people who provide support.”

The center also supports people with disabilities in their ability to be more vocal and active in their own health care, Kailes said.

The center has talked to a lot of people in California about these issues, and they’re...
beginning to see a reaction nationally, said Brenda Premo, MBA, Director of the CDIHP and Assistant Vice President of Government Relations for WesternU. There is a lot of complexity in disability issues, such as the tools people need and coordination of care, she said.

CDIHP works with organizations to assist facilities in complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Among its collaborators is L.A. Care Health Plan, a community-accountable public agency serving nearly 800,000 Los Angeles County residents through programs such as Medi-Cal, Medicare, Healthy Families and Healthy Kids.

“Several years ago, L.A. Care entered a partnership with CDIHP to learn from the experts,” said Lisa Kodmur, MPH, L.A. Care program manager for services for seniors and people with disabilities. “They have a national reputation for understanding disability issues and understanding the complexities of the health care system.”

L.A. Care helps community clinics buy height-adjustable exam tables, accessible weight scales, amplification devices for people with hearing loss and other modifications that improve access. A patient who has trouble accessing a doctor’s office may not receive the treatment and preventative care they need, Kodmur said.

The CDIHP worked with L.A. Care to assess more than 800 doctors’ offices throughout the county for how accessible they are to people with disabilities. The access information is available to L.A. Care members or anyone who wants it.

“It gives consumers information they didn’t have before so they can make choices about where to seek care based on what access they need,” Kodmur said. “CDIHP was instrumental in having that happen.”

The center has talked to a lot of people in California about these issues, and they’re beginning to see a reaction nationally.

-- Brenda Premo, MBA, Director of the CDIHP
Three Deans Work in Harmony

By Rodney Tanaka
Senior Communications Writer

Western University of Health Science was forged 30 years ago with a pioneering spirit as the College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific. Four additional colleges joined COMP through the years.

Now the university is undertaking an unprecedented expansion, with the colleges of dental medicine, optometry and podiatric medicine scheduled to open in 2009. The Graduate College of Biomedical Sciences is also in the works.

College of Optometry Founding Dean Elizabeth Hoppe, OD, MPH, DrPH, College of Dental Medicine Founding Dean James Koelbl, DDS, MS, MJ, and College of Podiatric Medicine Founding Dean Lawrence Harkless, DPM, are each creating distinct identities for their colleges.

But the timing of the colleges’ openings will also forever link them together, and they have bonded because of it. Sharing their unique perspectives with each other provides valuable insight into common issues that...
arise, Hoppe said. The five established colleges also have proven track records to draw from.

“We learn so much about what works well,” Hoppe said.

One important factor in developing a new college is recruiting respected talent within the profession, Koelbl said.

“A lot of people in the field are looking at who you hire - are they people with credibility and experience. Since there is no program to evaluate yet, the quality of the people joining the school will signal whether it’s going to be a high-quality effort,” he said.

Right now, many more students are applying to U.S. dental schools than there are seats available, Koelbl said.

WesternU’s innovative dental curriculum, with a focus on early entry into patient care, community-based education, the use of technology and a strong foundation in the basic sciences, will be a unique selling point. The university’s long tradition of humanism in education and patient care, and its continued focus on interprofessional education will also be attractive to prospective students, he said.

The university is developing a unique interprofessional curriculum where students from all disciplines will learn together in the classroom, in small group venues and in clinical experiences with patients.

The delivery of health care is a team effort, and optometry students will be side-by-side in the classroom with other health care professionals, Hoppe said.

Historically, colleges of podiatric medicine were not part of the academic health center, Harkless said. But WesternU will give the new colleges the opportunity to be fully integrated, he said.

The idea of a solo health care provider working in isolation is a thing of the past, Harkless said.

“It’s difficult for a patient to navigate the health care system and get referrals,” he said. “If we can teach in an interdisciplinary manner, it will impact students’ attitudes and thought processes. Those things tend to stay with them.”

Starting at the same time will be something the three deans will always have in common, Koelbl said.

“We will always be members of the same entering class,” he said.

The accreditation process has been similar for all of us, Harkless said.

“The data we share has been great,” he said. Hiring people means convincing them to move to California and follow the dream, Koelbl said.

“People come because of the adventure and excitement about starting a new school,” he said.

That sense of adventure binds the university’s founding with today’s growth.

“There’s something to be said for those pioneer days,” Hoppe said. “We are innovative and we attract students and faculty who have that pioneer spirit.”
A health professional can serve a patient better if they understand and appreciate how colleagues from other disciplines can enhance that patient’s care.

Western University of Health Sciences wants to make this a reality. The university is in the early stages of developing a unique interprofessional curriculum where students from all disciplines will learn together in the classroom, in small group venues, and in clinical experiences with patients. The learning outcomes are that WesternU graduates demonstrate an understanding of other health professionals and to provide and promote a team approach to patient care and health care management, leading to improved patient care.

“Interprofessional learning enables one discipline to enrich another, and leads to a breadth of knowledge that makes health professionals unique and better equipped to care for people,” WesternU President Philip Pumerantz said.

An Interprofessional Education Committee has been divided into work stream groups which are meeting to develop specific aspects of the Interprofessional Education initiative. They are: Clinical, Communication, Didactic, Environmental Scan, External Funding, Facilities, Faculty, Implementation and Recruitment/Support Services, Program Evaluation and Research.

The Didactic Committee is working hard to develop an IP case to be pilot tested in spring 2008. IP case studies will become part of Western University College Curricula in 2009.

Members of the IPE Committee are also evaluating the steps needed to implement interprofessional didactic and clinical learning activities among the existing colleges and those colleges in development.

Vice Provost Sheree Aston, OD, MA, PhD, joined WesternU in summer 2007 to coordinate the development and the successful launch of the Interprofessional Education Initiative.

Interprofessional education will allow future graduates to respect and appreciate other disciplines, Aston said.

“If they understand and respect other health professionals and promote team-based health care, the patient benefits,” Aston said.

It’s important that faculty come up with ideas and ways to implement those ideas, Aston said.
“The faculty is the keeper of the curriculum,” she said. “The faculty is the key to doing this.”

To that end, a series of luncheon meetings were held recently so faculty members could share their ideas, contribute to and learn more about the initiative. Among the faculty suggestions were the importance of inclusion and sharing of information, said College of Graduate Nursing Assistant Dean Diana Lithgow, chair of the faculty working group of the IPE committee.

“Communication of project status needs to be done along the way as the project evolves and not just at the end,” Lithgow said.

Suggestions for cases and scenarios that could be used for instruction were great, such as a disaster situation, Lithgow said. Also discussed was the IPE draft committee mission statement: Craft, implement and assess a distinctive new learning model of interprofessional health education leading to improvement of health.

Students will not be the only ones developing better interaction skills. One idea suggested at the lunch meetings was for a directory of faculty organized by the subjects they teach. Once this directory is developed, a pharmacy professor teaching ethics, for instance, could easily find colleagues from other colleges teaching similar courses in order to collaborate and share ideas.

A short electronic faculty survey on content expertise was distributed in December 2007. The responses will shape the topical directory.

“We want to encourage interprofessional teaching,” Aston said. “Let’s make it easy for them.”

Students from different disciplines, including osteopathic medicine, physician assistant studies and pharmacy are currently working together at the Western University Medical Center – 2nd Street, in a natural blend without a formal interprofessional program, said Joan Sandell, DMD, who joined WesternU in summer 2007 as director of interprofessional clinical services.

“We want to continue and enhance these activities,” Sandell said. “We feel that keeping the interprofessional care practical and meaningful for the patient and the student will foster an excellent health care model.”

Interprofessional activity will not detract from the main focus of each college, Aston said.

“Everybody is going to learn their craft,” she said.

But interprofessional education will require a change in the university’s culture, a breakdown of the silos found at educational institutions and in the health care industry, Aston added.

People know WesternU graduates are caring and compassionate. Having interprofessional skills will provide an added value to their education.

“The world is watching us and we want to show them what we can do,” Aston said.

To learn more information about the Interprofessional Education initiative, e-mail Dr. Sheree Aston at saston@westernu.edu.
More than 500 guests at Western University of Health Sciences’ annual fundraiser A Tribute to Caring stepped back in time to a classic Hollywood-style party on Nov. 10, 2007 at the Beverly Hills Hotel and Bungalows.

The annual event raises money for student scholarships and honors local organizations and individuals who contribute to the community. L.A. Care Health Plan and its chief executive officer, Howard Kahn, received the first Access to Caring award. The Helen Woodward Animal Center and its president, Michael Arms, received the Corporate Humanitarian award.

The master of ceremonies was Frank Mottek, who hosts the KNX Business Hour on KNX 1070 and serves as a reporter and business news anchor on the KTLA Channel 5 News @ Ten and the KTLA Morning Show.
Thank you to the generous sponsors of the 2007 A Tribute to Caring gala

**Gold $25,000**
Banfield, The Pet Hospital & Drs. Daljit & Elaine Sarkaria

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**Crystal $3,000**
California Emergency Physicians; Inter Valley Health Plan; Osteopathic Physicians & Surgeons of Oregon, Inc.; Pacific Hospital of Long Beach; The Tessier Family
Scott D. Campbell, DVM, chairman of the board of directors of Medical Management International, Inc., which provides veterinary care under the name Banfield, The Pet Hospital.

Banfield has a long-standing relationship with WesternU. The university’s new veterinary medicine building, which is expected to be completed in early 2008, will include a Banfield, The Pet Hospital that will occupy most of the ground floor.

Campbell met WesternU President Philip Pomerantz about 10 years ago, before the College of Veterinary Medicine got started. “I instantly liked him, and I think we have almost identical core philosophies and beliefs,” Campbell said. “Reverence for life is very important to our practice and important to me personally.”

The new Banfield Hospital will be fabulous for veterinary students, he said. “Veterinary medicine is changing and so is how to teach veterinary medicine,” Campbell said. “I think the way Western teaches veterinary medicine and that particular facility is going to set an example for veterinary medicine around the world for future decades. That’s really exciting. Plus it will also help faculty and staff with better, more efficient offices.”

The majority of veterinary medicine students who graduate from WesternU may not ever join Banfield, but a rising tide raises all ships, Campbell said. “As long as we’re making the whole profession better, it’s a great thing,” he said. “I think we always try to make it a win-win not only for Banfield and Western and students, but the whole veterinary profession as well.”

James Lally, DO, ’91, chief medical officer for the Chino Valley Medical Clinic has a simple response when asked why he donates to his alma mater. “Why not? That’s my question,” he said. School afforded him the opportunity to have a pretty nice lifestyle, Lally said. Everything is factored into the cost of doing business, such as overhead expenses and malpractice insurance.
“Why can’t you put some money aside for what helped you get here?” he said. “Anybody that educated me gets money. WesternU gets the most.”

He didn’t appreciate his medical education until he completed it.

“No one can ever be happy when submerged in a system that’s helping them,” Lally said. “Only after getting out are you able to be in a position to appreciate what you received.”

“It’s unfortunate when people say they will never support their alma mater when they get done because of something that really turned out to be insignificant regarding their education may or may not have occurred while they were in school,” Lally said.

“They are missing an opportunity to help someone behind them reach their dream...”

James Lally, DO

Western University of Health Sciences most sincerely thanks and salutes Mrs. Gloria Austin, her children, Charles S., Douglas J., Lynette L. and their families for their recent decision to establish The Dr. Robert L. Austin Endowed Lectureship in Pediatric Medicine and Pediatric Health Policy. This lectureship will enrich the curriculum not only in the College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific but in WesternU’s other disciplines as well.

Dr. Austin, a pediatrician and Gloria’s husband, spent his medical career practicing in a field he loved, providing health care to children and studying childhood development. He earned his Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) degree from Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine in 1946. In 1962, Dr. Austin took the MD degree when the American Medical Association formally recognized California DOs as qualified MDs.

Dr. and Mrs. Austin were early supporters and proponents of the College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific when it was established in 1977. In fact, Dr. Austin was so committed to the college’s mission and the practice of osteopathic medicine that he became a faculty member and taught until his retirement in 1981.

WesternU is truly proud to be able to include the Austin family among its long-time friends and supporters. Our hats are off to this philanthropic family.
Good Neighbor Pharmacy and the Institute for Community Pharmacy held their 6th annual GNP/ICP Scholarship Golf Classic on June 13, 2007 at Robinson Ranch Golf Club in Santa Clarita, Calif. More than 200 golfers participated in the event, which raises money for students interested in independent community pharmacies. WesternU and the University of Southern California each received $50,000 for scholarships.

The GNP/ICP Scholarship Golf Classic was co-conceived by Mike Quick of GNP, Walter Cathey of ICP, and David Breslow and Dave Dyke of UPNI.

Sam Shimomura PharmD, Associate Dean for College Advancement attempts to sink a putt during the 2007 event.

The next Golf Classic will be held on June 11, 2008 at Robinson Ranch Golf Club. If you would like to sponsor or play in the tournament, call Reid Shibata, director of advancement for WesternU’s College of Pharmacy, at (909) 469-5678 or e-mail rshibata@westernu.edu.
Participants from the entire campus, along with the local community, alumni, and clinicians joined in the celebration of the 15th anniversary of the Department of Physical Therapy Education. On Friday, Oct. 19, the department’s students, faculty and staff hosted an Open House and Health Fair with several stations that assessed an individual’s grip strength, standing balance, posture, body composition and reaching ability. Persons could also experience sitting on large, inflatable rubber balls for exercise activities and have an ergonomic assessment while seated at a computer station. Pedometers to measure walking distance and hand grip springs to increase strength were some of the gifts available to those who participated in the health fair. A representative from state Sen. Gloria Negrete McLeod’s office presented a letter of congratulations and acknowledgement for the contribution made to the community by the PT program and Western University. An iPod was given as the grand prize and selected from those persons who completed all five stations, and a reception area completed the event with fresh fruit and granola bars available for all.

A half-day educational presentation followed by a luncheon took place on Saturday, Oct. 20. An internationally-recognized physical therapist, Shirley A. Sahrmann, PT, PhD, FAPTA, professor of Physical Therapy/Neurology/Cell Biology and Physiology at the Program in Physical Therapy, Washington University School of Medicine, St. Louis, spoke on “How Should Physical Therapy Move to Optimize its Role in Healthcare?” About 50 DPT students and alumni, along with the program faculty and clinical education faculty, had a special opportunity to hear this approach to defining movement system impairments from such a distinguished member of the physical therapy profession. Dr. Sahrmann signed two copies of her book, “Diagnosis and Treatment of Movement Impairment Syndromes” which were donated by the publisher, Mosby and Company, and given as gifts to the day’s attendees. University President Philip Pomerantz, PhD, along with Gary Gugelchuk, PhD, senior vice president for executive affairs; Stephanie Bowlin, EdD, dean of the College of Allied Health Professions; Dee Schilling, PT, PhD, chair, Department of Physical Therapy Education; and Georgeanne Vlad, PT, MA, associate chair/director of clinical education, Department of Physical Therapy Education, welcomed the audience and acknowledged the history and founding of the physical therapy program, along with plans for opening three additional colleges at the university in 2009.
Downtown Pomona was once the hub of economic activity in the Inland Empire. Downtown business owners believe the area will rise to prominence again, and Western University of Health Sciences will be a key contributor.

Among the proposed projects downtown is The Artisan, with 271 condominium units and 35,000 square feet of ground-floor retail on two and a half city blocks on West Second Street. Other businesses are also in development, which should increase foot traffic, said Frank Garcia, executive director of the Pomona Chamber of Commerce.

“WesternU will be a catalyst for continuing to develop downtown Pomona,” he said. “The university is poised to be at the onset of the resurgence taking place downtown.”

Downtown Pomona stores have benefitted greatly from WesternU’s presence, said Irma Horvath, Pomona’s business development manager. Students and employees eat at local restaurants and shop in the area, she
said. Also, being exposed to the downtown area helps them form positive opinions, she said.

“We hear comments that the downtown is really very eclectic, with something for everyone,” Horvath said.

The city recently started a new marketing campaign, “A Piece of Pomona,” with the idea that all businesses and organizations contribute to the city.

“It's like a puzzle,” Horvath said. “If you have one piece that's missing then it's not a complete picture. We all bring something, be it the hospital, Fairplex, Cal Poly Pomona, WesternU and various other organizations.”

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-- Irma Horvath, Pomona's business development manager"

Montclair Plaza took business from Pomona, Armstrong said. By the late 1970s, most of the downtown storefronts were vacant.

WesternU’s founders, including President Philip Pumerantz, upgraded and renovated downtown storefronts and created a place people want to visit, he said.

“Philip Pumerantz had a vision,” Armstrong said. “Nothing was going to stop him from building the school. He had the tenacity to continue when most people would have stopped.”

WesternU took some of the old buildings and converted them to useable, attractive space, he said.

“Without the university, the downtown would not have progressed near what it has today,” Armstrong said.

WesternU has brought enough people to the downtown to create opportunities for others to bring in new businesses, Armstrong said. There is a need for more clothing and shoe stores, he said. And the university continues to expand, with plans to open three new colleges in 2009.

“As more faculty and students come in, this obviously is going to create demand for some goods and services,” Armstrong said. “Right now there’s a wonderful opportunity for restaurants. Everybody’s got to eat.”
On October 1, the COMP Classes of 1982, 1987, and 1997 celebrated their landmark 25th Reunion, 20th, Reunion and 10th Reunion in conjunction with the AOA 112th Annual Convention in San Diego.

The Pharmacy Class of 2002 celebrated its 5th Reunion on November 17. Alumni from Southern and Northern California gathered in Brea, Calif., to celebrate.

The Student National Medical Association (SNMA) and the Latino Medical Student Association (LMSA) hosted their first reunion the weekend of October 12-13. Alumni from both organizations joined with students, WesternU staff and faculty, and friends to network and celebrate. The weekend began with a reception and dinner on Friday night. Saturday morning, the reunion participants partnered with the Western University Medical Center to host a health fair in Pomona. That afternoon, students had the opportunity to interact with an alumni panel to discuss “Life After WesternU” and information about specialties. The reunion concluded with a celebratory dinner and dancing.

In celebration of their 10th Anniversary, The College of Graduate Nursing opened the doors to their new state-of-the-art simulation lab and the Nursing Sciences Center to the public on November 7. Tours of the building and lab were offered to the WesternU community in the morning. In the afternoon, invited guests arrived for tours and a presentation by Tricia Hunter, MN, RN, executive director of the American Nurses Association California. During the program, Ms. Bobbie Stahl and Ms. Marion Kramer were honored for their years of service to the nursing profession and their support of the university.
Congratulations

Todd R. Ashby, MSPA ’02, and his wife welcomed their fourth child, Sadie, on March 18, 2007.

Sandra I. Baik, DO ’00, welcomed her second baby, Mia, on March 15, 2007. Her son, Cameron, is now 2-years old.

Gabriela M. Belinsky, PA ’98, and her husband welcomed their fourth child, Ruth Marie, on December 11, 2006.

Rebecca A. Black, DVM ’07, welcomed her baby boy, Charles John, on May 17, 2007.

Paul E. Emmans, III, DO ’00, was recently elected as President Elect 2008 for the Washington Osteopathic Medical Association.

Dustin W. Helvey, DPT ’06, and Danielle D. Newton, DPT ’06, were married on July 7, 2007 in San Diego.

Johanna C. Lizaola, MSPA ’07, was married to Dustin Bulmer on August, 10, 2007.

Marc McCollaum, PA ’96, recently was elected to the Florida Academy of Physician Assistants (FAPA) as President Elect. Marc resides in Naples with his wife, Monica, and their son, Nicholas.

Mitchell K. Pratte, DO ’96, participated in the Kona Ironman World Championship in October 2007, and finished in just over 12 hours.

Daniel A. Smith, II, DO ’07, welcomed his daughter, Sara Alexandra Smith, on April 15, 2007.


Barbara E. Walker, DO ’84, was elected to the AOA Board of Trustees as the Second Vice President in July 2007.

In Memoriam

Jeanie C. Gillinta, DO ’02 passed away on May 31, 2007, of bone cancer, which she battled even as a student at COMP.

Katrina Jean Kish, FNP ’05 passed away on December 10, 2006, in an air ambulance crash in the Cajon Pass.

The WesternU Office of Alumni Relations is excited to announce the launch of a new comprehensive alumni online community: WesternU Connected. Features will include: personal profile pages, searchable alumni directory, expanded career resources, customized news and announcements, membership management tools, event registration and networking on-line. What better way to stay in touch with your friends and classmates than to participate in this exciting new benefit. Watch your mail and e-mail for more information regarding the launch date and registration! If you have questions or suggestions, please contact the Office of Alumni Relations at (909) 469-5233 or dbuchanan@westernu.edu.
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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