Steady leadership amid change

I was honored to accept the role of dean of the OHSU School of Medicine in July (see page 4). I believe that among the reasons OHSU President Joe Robertson chose me was my deep knowledge of the institution across missions and my record of steady leadership as a department chair here, useful traits after a year of transition following the tragic loss of Dean Mark Richardson September 2, 2016.

In mid-October, these traits became even more important. Dr. Robertson announced his retirement after a decade of visionary leadership at OHSU (see page 5). Now I will join other OHSU leaders – including Elena Andresen, provost, John Hunter, now chief clinical officer, and Healthcare CEO Mitch Wasden in supporting Dr. Robertson’s transition. We will all deeply miss Joe. Yet we are feeling good about the thoughtful plan the president and the board are forging. In short: we can do this.

A little more about my background. I’m a true academic. I’ve spent my OHSU career working in each of the school’s missions – education, research and clinical care – and I’m passionate about advancing all of them. Another passion of mine is improving the professional lives of physicians and scientists here at OHSU – with a focus on creating opportunities to collaborate, engage and lead. One initiative underway is our work to expand the ranks of physician scientists, of which I am one. Other initiatives are around provider wellness, a crucial focus at OHSU that you will read more about in this issue.

As we secure the next leader of our great institution, we will also remain focused on the many important initiatives underway in the school, from integrating our clinical enterprise with community health systems to igniting discovery across campus, expanding the sites where our residents and fellows serve, and building out our new Ph.D. curriculum to create truly multidisciplinary programs.

Integration also extends to you, our alumni community. Through the dedication of the school’s Alumni Council and our OHSU Alumni Relations team, we work to bridge the distance of time and geography to keep you involved and connected.

Thank you for your advocacy, partnership and support of the school. I invite you to contact me anytime and look forward to our work together.

Sharon Anderson, M.D. R ’82
Dean
Introducing Dean Sharon Anderson

n May, OHSU President Joe Robertson appointed Sharon Anderson, M.D. R ’82, dean of the OHSU School of Medicine. She assumed her role on July 5, succeeding Interim Dean John Hunter. (See page 2 for her dean’s message.)

Dr. Anderson, a nephrologist, earned her M.D. from Louisiana State University Medical Center. After internal medicine residency training at OHSU, she completed her clinical nephrology training at the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and her research training at Brigham and Women’s Hospital, Harvard Medical School.

She came to OHSU in 1991 as an assistant professor of medicine in the school’s Division of Nephrology and Hypertension and a staff physician in the Nephrology Section at the VA Portland Health Care System. She quickly moved into leadership roles, starting in 1994. From 2003 to 2007, she served as vice chair for clinical affairs in the Department of Medicine, concurrently serving as associate dean for faculty development and faculty affairs in the school from 2004 to 2007. She spent the next six years as vice chair for VA Affairs in the Department of Medicine and chief of the Division of Hospital and Specialty Medicine in the VA, before becoming chair of the school’s largest department, the Department of Medicine, in 2015.

In addition to her clinical care, administrative and teaching responsibilities, she led – until recently – a highly successful research program investigating the progression of chronic kidney disease.

She’s published more than 150 chapters, books and scholarly articles and received dozens of awards and grants. In the school, she’s won multiple faculty teaching awards and the Dean’s Award for exceptional service in 2001 and again in 2014. “She’s willing to share her path and gives excellent career advice,” said Jia Luo, M.D., chief internal medicine resident in the Department of Medicine, OHSU School of Medicine. “It’s rare to get a role model who is a truly adept physician, scientist and educator. In this day and age, it is nearly impossible to be able to do it all well – she is the triple threat.”

As dean, Dr. Anderson oversees nearly 2,500 faculty representing 28 clinical departments, seven basic science departments and multiple research centers and institutes. She also continues to care for patients at the VA Roseburg Health Care System. – EHB

OHSU President Robertson retires

OHSU President Joe Robertson, M.D. R ’82, M.B.A., retired after nearly 40 years at the university but will stay until June to support a transition.

In September, Dr. Robertson shared with the OHSU Board of Directors and campus community that he was diagnosed with a mild form of multiple sclerosis. “My diagnosis was a shock to me and my family,” he said. “While my doctors assure me that I could continue to execute my role as president, this news has compelled me to reevaluate my future and my family’s well-being.”

Dr. Robertson officially retired October 31. He continues to serve as president through the academic year without salary because he began receiving his PERS retirement benefits Nov. 1.

“My purpose in offering to serve into retirement is to ensure continuity for OHSU during the search for the next president,” Dr. Robertson said.

Dr. Robertson completed his residency in ophthalmology at OHSU in 1982 and joined the faculty in 1985. He served as chair of ophthalmology and dean of the school before becoming president.

The board is launching a national search for OHSU’s next president. – BH

New department, new chairs

In another historical landmark for a medical field pioneered at OHSU, the Dotter Interventional Institute achieved full-fledged departmental status July 1, becoming the Charles T. Dotter Department of Interventional Radiology and the school’s 27th department. John Kaufman, M.D., M.S., institute director and Frederick S. Keller Chair of Interventional Radiology, is inaugural chair of the department. “This is a huge step as it acknowledges the importance of image-guided intervention in medicine and positions OHSU at its leading edge worldwide,” said Dr. Kaufman. – EHB

Alejandro Aballay, Ph.D., is the new chair of the Department of Molecular Microbiology and Immunology, following a national recruitment search. Dr. Aballay (right) comes to OHSU from Duke University Medical Center, where he served as professor of molecular genetics and microbiology and director of the Center for Host-Microbial Interactions. – RS
Landmark discovery advances gene editing

A team led by OHSU scientists made worldwide headlines in August when it demonstrated an effective use of a gene-editing tool to correct a disease-causing gene mutation in human embryos and stop it from passing to future generations.

The new technique uses the gene-editing tool CRISPR to target a mutation in nuclear DNA that causes hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, a common genetic heart disease that can cause sudden cardiac death and heart failure. The research, published in Nature, demonstrates a new method of repairing a disease-causing mutation and preventing it from being inherited by succeeding generations. This is the first time scientists have successfully tested the method on donated clinical-quality human eggs.

Daniel Dorsa, Ph.D., senior vice president for research at OHSU, said, “By using this technique, it’s possible to reduce the burden of this heritable disease on the family and eventually the human population.”

The study provides new insight into a technique that could apply to thousands of inherited genetic disorders affecting millions of people worldwide. The gene-editing technique described in this study, done in concert with in vitro fertilization, could provide a new avenue for people with known heritable disease-causing genetic mutations to eliminate the risk of passing the disease to their children. It could also increase the success of IVF by increasing the number of healthy embryos.

The study also demonstrated a way of overcoming a crucial problem in genome editing in embryos known as mosaicism—an outcome when not all cells in a multicellular embryo get repaired and some cells still carry a mutation. As a result of initiating the repair process at the time of fertilization, every cell in a multicellular embryo had exclusively the mutation-free DNA.

“The ethical considerations of moving this technology to clinical trials are complex and deserve significant public engagement before we can answer the broader question of whether it’s in humanity’s interest to alter human genes for future generations,” said Daniel Dorsa, Ph.D., senior vice president for research at OHSU.

The study noted that “genome editing approaches must be further optimized” before moving to clinical trials. – ER

Investing in American Indian, Alaska Native health

OHSU is now home to the Northwest Native American Center of Excellence (NNACOE). Funded by a five-year $3.4 million grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, with significant backing and support from the school’s Office of the Dean, the program will enhance the pathway for American Indian/Alaska Native students to realize their dreams of becoming health professionals.

The OHSU center – with the backing of all 43 Pacific Northwest tribes and in partnership with Portland State University and the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board – will focus on the recruitment and retention of American Indian/Alaska Native students in both the M.D. and P.A. programs. The mission of the NNACOE is to engage all health professional training programs to increase the presence of American Indian/Alaska Native students, beginning with outreach efforts as early as middle school. The program will also focus on supporting students once they come to OHSU with opportunities to participate in their culture and connect with tribal health experiences. – JEB

What’s new in the school

■ Numbering 160 students, the school welcomed its largest M.D. class ever this fall. Eighty-five percent of the incoming students are Oregonians; 54 percent are women; nearly 38 percent identify with a racial background other than Caucasian; 22 percent are from rural communities; and three students have served in the military.

■ Doctoral student Gabriel Romero in the Physiology and Pharmacology Graduate Program was one of a select few across the country to receive the Howard Hughes Medical Institute 2017 Gilliam Fellowship for Advanced Study. Last year, Antoinette Foster, a doctoral student in the Neuroscience Graduate Program, was the first OHSU graduate student to receive this prestigious fellowship.

■ Christopher Swide, M.D. ’91, professor of anesthesiology and perioperative medicine, was appointed associate dean for graduate medical education. Dr. Swide oversees strategic, programmatic and policy issues related to resident and fellow training.

■ Six-year-old Astoria resident Jude Rachon (above) tried out his new 3-D printed prosthetic hand and forearm developed by nationally-recognized trauma surgeon Albert Chi, M.D. (above, left), associate professor of surgery, OHSU School of Medicine.
Dr. Choo’s bravery emboldened Ainab and became one of many examples of how faculty, students and leaders are supporting and inspiring each other to deepen efforts to improve diversity and inclusion at OHSU.

Ainab enlisted the OHSU chapter of the Student National Medical Association, of which he is president, and invited Allison Empey, M.D., chief resident of pediatrics, to help moderate a panel discussion Sept. 6 with Dr. Choo, George Mejicano, M.D., the school’s senior associate dean for education, and Brian Gibbs, Ph.D., OHSU vice president for equity and inclusion.

Called “In the Face of Hate,” the panel became a forum for students, residents and faculty to continue the conversation and wrestle with the challenge of addressing racism when it occurs in clinical encounters. More than 250 people attended.

Among the takeaways: OHSU has a clear protocol that patient requests for providers based on race, ethnicity or creed will not be honored.

In the school’s graduate programs, faculty and students are teaming up to not only enroll but retain diverse students and faculty in biomedical research Ph.D. programs that, across the country, tend to lack diversity.

Neuroscience Graduate Program Director Gary Westbrook, M.D., and senior scientist in the Vollum Institute, made a point of connecting OHSU Library Assistant Professor Letisha Wyatt, Ph.D., with Ph.D. student Antoinette Foster. Together with neuroscience classmates Kathleen Beeson and Lucille Moore, they founded the Alliance for Visible Diversity in Science.

The alliance – with additional mentorship from Damien Fair, P.A.-C., Ph.D., associate professor of behavioral neuroscience and psychiatry, OHSU School of Medicine – is an affinity and ally group that engages students at recruitment events and beyond to let them know they won’t be alone.

“‘If we let students know that there is an identifiable group here for them, it already seems less intimidating to come into this space,’” Foster said.

In all of these efforts, leadership with a big and a small “l” is a key factor, as an example last spring illustrated.

Nina Lamble, M.D., fellow of hematology and medical oncology, confronted a group of construction workers at the Center for Health & Healing after observing them deride a transgender individual who was walking by outside. Dr. Lamble relayed the experience to OHSU leadership. The interaction resulted in the worker being fired.

In June, President Robertson presented Dr. Lamble with the President’s Distinction Award at the OHSU Diversity and Inclusion Awards Ceremony.

Dr. Lamble accepted her plaque amid a standing ovation: “I had the courage to say what I said because I knew that OHSU leadership would stand behind me,” she said. “You have been very vocal; it’s important and it’s appreciated.”

Clockwise from top left, OHSU President Joe Robertson, Dr. Nina Lamble, Ibrahim Ainab, Dr. Esther Choo, Letisha Wyatt, Antoinette Foster, Kathleen Beeson and Lucille Moore are among those working to ensure all are welcome at OHSU.

Hearing from [Dr. Choo] and seeing the supportive response she got from faculty and administration showed me that speaking out isn’t a death sentence – speaking out is what you should be doing. — M.D. student Ibrahim Ainab
Mark Meyers, M.D. ’96, stumbled over the word, as if he just couldn’t get it past his lips.

The family physician from Springfield, Ore., was on the phone, making his first appointment with a psychologist. And he had a tough time admitting out loud, to a stranger, that the word might apply to him.

“Depression.”

It was 12 years ago, six years into Dr. Meyers’ medical career. His wife and children had been in a serious car accident the year before. The children were okay, but his wife had suffered a severe head injury.

While she recovered, Dr. Meyers did the laundry, cooking and got the children to school. That, on top of performing his job as a physician and partner in an independent family practice group.

“My focus at work was deteriorating,” Dr. Meyers said. “I was irritable. I was becoming forgetful and distracted.”

It was his wife’s psychologist – whom she was seeing for her own recovery – who asked Dr. Meyers one day how he was doing. How he was really doing.

Not so great. Dr. Meyers realized. He got a referral for another psychologist and made the phone call. A dozen years later, he is forever happy that he did.

Dr. Meyers’ stress was significantly impacted by his family’s accident. But stress in general and its effect on physician wellness is something the medical world is just beginning to talk about.

Some studies suggest upwards of 45 percent of physicians today are exhibiting signs of psychological distress. Fifty to 60 percent are suffering “burnout” in their jobs, other studies document. About 400 physicians commit suicide every year in the United States, twice the rate of the general population.

More medical leaders are insisting on a fourth aim – caring for the provider – in addition to the traditional triple aim of improving population health, increasing patient satisfaction and reducing overall health care spending. The goal is to increase physician engagement and satisfaction and support well-being. In many ways, Oregon – and OHSU – have been pioneers in this area for well over a decade.

From grief, a model for others

The OHSU Resident and Faculty Wellness Program began 13 years ago after the suicide of an OHSU resident in 2002, a suicide believed to be at least partly related to the resident’s work stresses.

In the wake of that devastating event, the school’s Graduate Medical Education office – led at that time by Donald Girard, M.D. ’73, M.A.C.P. – leapt into action. It established and paid for a free resident wellness program staffed by faculty from the Department of Psychiatry.

Wising up to wellness

Written by Todd Murphy, illustrated by Maggie Wauklyn
The culture of medicine – one of invincibility, of always being a rock – has been the major problem.

—from Dr. George Mejicano

From its beginning, the OHSU program was set up to deal with barriers. “We knew it was important to address all of the fear – and it is real fear,” said Mary Moffit, Ph.D., associate professor of psychiatry, OHSU School of Medicine, and director of the OHSU Resident and Faculty Wellness Program. “If I sought treatment, would I be considered weak? Would I have to report receiving counseling on licensing or credentialing applications?”

As a result, confidentiality is vital to the program, Dr. Moffit explains, and all records are kept outside of OHSU’s electronic health record. Participating in the wellness program isn’t reportable to the Oregon Medical Board nor on professional applications, she says.

Participants meet with the team in a private, non-clinical OHSU location and learn effective ways to help relieve stress and restore well-being. The team may introduce cognitive behavior strategies, teach mindfulness and breathing exercises and restore well-being. The team may introduce cognitive behavior strategies, teach mindfulness and breathing exercises and restore well-being. The team may introduce cognitive behavior strategies, teach mindfulness and breathing exercises and restore well-being. The team may introduce cognitive behavior strategies, teach mindfulness and breathing exercises.

Invincibility

People who pursue medicine are generally very accomplished students, explains Sydney Ey, Ph.D., professor of psychiatry, OHSU School of Medicine, and associate director of the Resident and Faculty Wellness Program. “Once in residency, they describe a ‘deep learning curve,’” she says, and they worry about making mistakes in patient care decisions.

“They have a high standard for themselves and for other people,” said Dr. Ey. “And they have concern about meeting other people’s expectations.”

Healthy types of coping such as exercise, adequate sleep and spending time with friends and family, says Dr. Ey, become more difficult due to long duty hours as a resident.

Research has shown that by the time medical students become residents, up to one-third of them may be clinically depressed, with up to 12 percent of them reporting having thoughts of suicide.

Of course, stresses apply to physicians as well, because while the work schedule improves after residency, many physicians continue to experience incredible work demands, burnout and increased risk for depression and anxiety.

Underlying all that is a certain mindset. “The culture of medicine – one of invincibility, of always being a rock – has been the major problem,” said George Mejicano, M.D., senior associate dean for education, OHSU School of Medicine. “It’s a culture that propagates that any sign of weakness is a failure.”

Opening up

et, the culture is changing. The attitude of invincibility is much less common among residents and younger physicians, say Drs. Ey and Moffit.

Megan Furnari, M.D. R ’36, now a neonatal hospitalist at OHSP; Doernbecher Children’s Hospital and instructor of pediatrics, OHSU School of Medicine, participated in the program all three of her residency years, she says, and is grateful for the strategies and resources it provided.

Even among older physicians, that mindset has softened significantly. On several occasions, Drs. Ey and Moffit recall, they were giving presentations about the wellness program to residents when senior faculty members volunteered they’d been helped personally by the program. The self-disclosure had an effect on everyone in the room, says Dr. Moffit.

“This is an indication that the paradigm is shifting,” she said.

In Springfield, Dr. Mark Meyers also sees change – starting in himself. “I wasn’t suicidal, but I was clearly overloaded,” he said of his mindset before that first counseling appointment.

“And stressed. And struggling.” After several sessions with the psychologist, “things improved,” he said.

Dr. Meyers tells his story – in fact he’s often been open about his story – because of something that’s very important to him: that physicians and other medical professionals understand the stress in their lives, how it might affect their mental health and their work and to get help when they need it.

The Lane County Medical Society, for which Dr. Meyers served as president from 2014 to 2015, started its free Provider Wellness Program in 2012 after three physicians committed suicide over an 18-month period. This year, the program was expanded to include nurse practitioners and physician assistants.

Over the years, Dr. Meyers says, he’s learned to recognize when stress is affecting him. At times, he’s pulled back on the number of committees he serves on. He started playing piano again, something he loved to do in college.

And he remains grateful for that caring intervention from his wife’s psychologist. “Part of it was just knowing I wasn’t crazy – that there were good reasons for me to be feeling the way I was feeling. And, there were things that I could do.”

Power of peer support

A diverse medical events – whether caused by medical mistakes or another unexpected or tragic outcome – can be devastating to health professionals and trigger distressing emotions, explains Dr. Mary Moffit.

Last year, the Resident and Faculty Wellness Program initiated a Peer Support Program to support OHSU School of Medicine clinicians who experience an adverse event or other professional distress – referring these distressed physicians to trained colleagues who volunteer to provide one-on-one peer support.

When an adverse event occurs, a peer supporter – often practicing in a related area – reaches out to the impacted clinician and offers an informal meeting with ongoing follow-up, says Dr. Moffit. A physician’s colleagues can also refer to the program, or the physician can self-refer.

Peer support is also available when physicians experience other professional distress, including being named in a lawsuit involving the care of a patient or experiencing verbal abuse or threatening behavior by patients or family members.

To date, 29 faculty members and 24 residents have been trained as peer supporters. – TM
THE SCAR PROJECT

Photos by Dr. Kelly Griffith-Bauer, text by Rachel Shafer

Strength. Overcoming bad times...proof that you are stronger than what tried to kill you.

- SCAR Project participant
As an OHSU dermatology resident, Kelly Griffith-Bauer, M.D. ’12 R ’17 (right), snapped hundreds of photos documenting patients’ skin as part of her clinical exams. But as she photographed excision scars on patients who were undergoing treatment for melanoma, she noticed their reactions. “Some tried to hide their scar,” she said. “Some were proud of it. I became fascinated by the dichotomy. But no one liked the photos I took in clinic. They’d say, ‘I hate that photo. I hate seeing that photo.’” So in her personal time, Dr. Griffith-Bauer decided to take portraits that better reflected patients and their relationships to their scars.

It was familiar territory for Dr. Griffith-Bauer, a self-taught photographer who enjoys taking pictures of people in her spare time. In particular, she’d photographed a friend who wanted to mark the moment that she’d recovered from surgery for a lung malignancy. “She was proud of her scar because it was now a part of her story.”

Twenty-five people from around Oregon who were diagnosed with Stage 0 to Stage 4 melanoma agreed to participate in Dr. Griffith-Bauer’s SCAR Project. Participants completed a written exercise about his or her scar and then got their portrait taken in the resident’s self-made studio.

“Each patient experience was so touching and so different, because everyone had a different story,” said Dr. Griffith-Bauer. “Some were fighting for their lives so they could be there for kids or grandkids. What was most striking for me was how willing everyone was to go there with me. To be vulnerable. They bared their souls and bared their skin for me, which was really profound. I’m so grateful.”

In May, Dr. Griffith-Bauer displayed the photographs at the Department of Dermatology’s annual War on Skin Cancer event in Portland in order to raise awareness of skin cancers and melanoma. Some of the participants attended the gallery showing. Since then, one participant has died from melanoma, said Dr. Griffith-Bauer.

Today, Dr. Griffith-Bauer is a micrographic surgery and dermatologic oncology fellow at UCSF and hopes to resume the SCAR Project once she’s settled in practice, ideally back home in Oregon.

The portrait series, she says, was deeply moving and fulfilling. “It kept me grounded about what’s important in medicine: people and their stories.”

“We know our own bodies best and need to learn to trust those feelings and instincts. It could save a life.”

— SCAR Project participant

These “confectious diseases” may not be appetizing, but they are entirely consumable – giggle-worthy science comics drawn up by Jason McDermott, Ph.D. ’00. Featuring topics such as the peer review process, scientists’ dependence on coffee and the aforementioned, pun-heavy confectious diseases, Dr. McDermott’s comics provide a unique, humorous perspective about science that is accessible to those both inside and outside the scientific community.

There’s a good reason Dr. McDermott has a knack for capturing the struggles of scientists: research is his day job. After receiving his Ph.D. in biology from OHSU in 2000, Dr. McDermott now works as a senior research scientist at Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in Richland, Wash.

Dr. McDermott used to draw as a child but stopped as he got older. Then, a couple years ago, one of his colleagues described a metaphor that struck Dr. McDermott as so visual that he drew it and posted it on his nascent science blog. The positive feedback was encouraging enough that Dr. McDermott decided to draw about his personal experiences in science and share the resulting comics.

He eventually created a separate website called RedPen/BlackPen to showcase his art. As he got more serious about publicizing his comics, they became more popular, and in the past year, he says, RedPen/BlackPen has really taken off.

With that affirmation, Dr. McDermott began to include his art in his professional scientific presentations. When discussing if ever coffee, naturally, Dr. McDermott describes the difficulties scientists face when trying to convey complex ideas with jargon-heavy language.

“Visual communication,” he said, “is more approachable.”

Earlier this year, he created and presented an entirely hand-drawn poster about big data at a conference. Though apprehensive about how the poster would be received, Dr. McDermott said he had people stopping by to ask questions about it far ahead of his scheduled session.

“The comic element injected some fun,” he said, and became a good way to interest people in conversation.

With overwhelmingly positive feedback, Dr. McDermott says the experience has prompted him to rethink how scientists currently design and present their text-laden posters. He already has another illustrated poster in the works, one that will focus more on his area of research. Dr. McDermott uses computational approaches to discover new biomarkers from large, complex datasets.

Making science accessible to others motivates Dr. McDermott. But while a lot of headline-grabbing articles simplify science in favor of increasing page views, Dr. McDermott stresses that it’s important to communicate the nuances of how the scientific method works. It’s one of the goals of his comics.

Ultimately, he said, “if you don’t communicate your science to the outside world, you won’t be able to keep doing it.” But with his pen-and-ink approach, Dr. McDermott illustrates – quite literally – that it is possible to “distill [complex] ideas down to a more approachable thing.” One that makes people smile and want more.
Pendleton company builds its own path to health

By Rachel Shafer

Two years ago, Billy Nerenberg had a problem. The CEO of Cayuse Technologies, a Pendleton-based business services firm, faced a sharp increase in the company’s health insurance rates, causing it financial stress. Many employees were diabetic or pre-diabetic. They struggled with obesity and addiction. The company’s insurance utilization rate hovered around 163 percent.

To solve the problem, Nerenberg turned to his wife, Rhonda, who is a nurse, and local physician Russell Harrison, M.D., to create a company wellness program. Dr. Harrison recruited who is a nurse, and local physician Russell Harrison, M.D., to create a company wellness program. The students put in for a pot of money, and they talked a guy into doing it. This guy came through the lunch room streaking. No one knew who this guy was he was so fast. People were just laughing their heads off! They couldn’t get anyone to do it without getting paid. But I understand that. Medical school is expensive.

These days, I’m reading a lot. I go to farmers’ markets. I went to Alaska on a boat, and I loved it. I was worried about falling off the toilet on that boat, but just so you know, they have handles on either side so you can’t fall off.

I don’t miss getting in my car at 4 a.m. to get up that hill to make coffee. But do I miss my peeps. I made so many good friends over the years. A big hug and kiss to all my OHSU peeps.

Welcome new council members

The School of Medicine Alumni Association Council is a group of active alumni and faculty committed to the betterment of OHSU and its community. Twenty-eight members strong, the 2017-2018 council is gearing up for another academic year full of events to support the school and its students, including the Cultural Events and Student Wellness Program, Holiday Reception and Medical Specialty Simulation Center.

Attendees who register with their interprofessional team of two or more will receive a discount. The course is eligible for AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™.

WANTED: volunteers for M.D. admissions

Help shape the future physician workforce by participating in OHSU’s M.D. admissions process. As a rater in the multiple mini interview, you will conduct a series of short interviews with applicants using standardized scenarios and questions. Volunteers should be physicians (practicing or retired), providers, scientists or others with a connection to health care and a strong interest in identifying future physicians. Training is provided. Email mdinterviews@ohsu.edu to learn more.

Interprofessional training offered

OHSU will host its first-ever interprofessional continuing education course, “Current Issues in Healthcare” (see page 23). Topics include immigrant/refugee health, gender identity diversity in health care and cannabinoid concerns. Optional tours will be offered of the Mark Richardson Interprofessional Simulation Center.

Outcomes

A wellness program at Cayuse Technologies resulted in major improvements to employee health. From left, Rhonda Nerenberg, Billy Nerenberg and P.A. Erika Acuna play key roles in the program.

Breakfast at Laurie’s

After 50 years of working in the Mackenzie Hall cafeteria, Laurie Litowsky retired from OHSU earlier this year. The beloved cashier and Mac Hall mainstay is known for her friendly chitchat, Trailblazers mania, wall of pet photos and a raucous sense of humor. This fall, Bridges sat down to reminisce with Litowsky on her long career. Here are highlights.

Back in the day, the hospital had a mental ward. They used to bring patients in to the lunch room to have a treat and a coffee. I remember one of the fellows, he didn’t want to go back. He ended up eating cigarette butts under the table. But he got a little outing. Everyone was welcome in the lunch room.

Speaking of cigarettes, all the doctors and nurses smoked back then. They were smoking like all get out!

For a while, I was the donut lady. I made the donuts and frosted them. I taste-tested so many of those donuts, it wasn’t even funny. There’s nothing like a homemade donut. Nothing.

The medical students, bless their hearts, they were raqqué and wild. I think this was back in the seventies. The students put in for a pot of money, and they talked a guy into doing it. This guy came through the lunch room streaking. No one knew who this guy was he was so fast. People were just laughing their heads off! They couldn’t get anyone to do it without getting paid. But I understand that. Medical school is expensive.

These days, I’m reading a lot. I go to farmers’ markets. I went to Alaska on a boat, and I loved it. I was worried about falling off the toilet on that boat, but just so you know, they have handles on either side so you can’t fall off.

I don’t miss getting in my car at 4 a.m. to get up that hill to make coffee. But do I miss my peeps. I made so many good friends over the years. A big hug and kiss to all my OHSU peeps.
My ‘dietetic intern’ class (10 members originally, now nine) still get together every couple years from all over the country. At first it was every 10 years, but now we’re down to every two weeks.

James Chan, M.D. ’68, D.Sc., wrote, “I’m a Tufts University professor of pediatrics and director of research at the Barbara Bush Children’s Hospital in Portland, Me. I joined Maine Medical Center (MMC) in 2002 and continue to serve on research committees at MMC, Tufts and NIH. I received the Henry L. Barnett Award – the American Academy of Pediatrics’ highest nephrology honor – in 2011. My family and I live in mid-coast Maine. We are kayaking, gardening and food enthusiasts.”

Willy Lensch, Ph.D. ’02 (above), right, has been appointed chief of staff to Dr. George Daley, dean of the faculty of medicine at Harvard University. Dr. Lensch previously served as executive director of the Harvard Department of Stem Cell and Regenerative Biology. Dr. Lensch wrote his OHSU lab coat at the Boston March for Science in April.

Michael “Mike” Powers, M.D. ’83 R ’88 F ’91, was appointed July 18 as the inaugural holder of the Credit Unions for Kids Professorship in Pediatrics in the OHSU School of Medicine. Dr. Powers is School of Medicine Alumni Council president this year.

During his general surgery and urology residency at OHSU, Nick Tadros, M.D. ’08 R ’16, M.C.R. ’12, completed a two-year research fellowship and a master’s degree in clinical research. He went on to complete a male infertility fellowship at the Glickman Urological and Kidney Institute, Cleveland Clinic from July 2016 to June 2017. He is currently an assistant professor of urology, co-director of the Andrology Fellowship, and director of infertility and sexual health, at Southern Illinois University.

In memoriam

Per Thorborg, M.D., Ph.D., F.C.C.M., died April 22, 2017. Dr. Thorborg was a professor of anesthesiology and perioperative medicine, OHSU School of Medicine.

Douglas Weeks, M.D., died October 16, 2017. Dr. Weeks was a professor and former chair of pathology, OHSU School of Medicine.

Noah Beadell, M.D. ’54, of Lincoln, Neb., died May 26, 2017, at age 72.

David G. Clark, M.D. ’79, of Tacoma, Wash., died September 1, 2017, at age 71.


Harry Evans, M.D. ’57, of Palm Desert, Calif., died April 2, 2017, at age 91.


Dee Fuller, M.D. ’58, of Idaho Falls, Idaho, died April 30, 2017, at age 83.


Errett Hummel, Jr., M.D. ’56, of Redmond, Ore., died April 11, 2017, at age 77.


William Keppel, M.D. ’79, of Lake Oswego, Ore., died March 21, 2017, at age 68.


Martin Ovitz, M.D. ’55, of Portland, Ore., died June 7, 2017 at age 88.


David R. Rullman, M.D. ’58, of Portland, Ore., died August 18, 2017, at age 85. In memoriam is also online at www.ohsu.edu/alumni.

Upcoming Events

For the latest information and more events, go to www.ohsu.edu/som/alumni.

Continuing Professional Development

For more information and to RSVP, please call 503-552-0667.

FEB. 8

7 p.m.

7 p.m.

FEB. 12–16

MARCH 2

MARCH 9

THE TOWN CLUB, PORTLAND

DOERNBECHER CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL, PORTLAND

PEDIATRIC MENTAL HEALTH: EQUIPPING THE PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER

PEDIATRIC MENTAL HEALTH: EQUIPPING THE PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER

MAY 10–11

MULTNOMAH ATHLETIC CLUB, PORTLAND

Sommer Memorial Lectures/ OHSU School of Medicine Alumni Scientific Session

Schedules are subject to change. Please contact 503-494-8700 or cme@ohsu.edu for brochures and program updates. For the latest information on these and other continuing professional development events, visit www.ohsu.edu/som/cme.

Calendar

2017-2018 Marquam Hill Lectures

For more details, visit www.ohsu.edu/mhlectures. Each lecture is recorded and posted to the website.

FEB. 8

Your Zip Code/Your Health

David Bangsberg, M.D., M.P.H.

APRIL 9

Holding Fast to Dreams:

Creating a Climate of Success for All Students in STEM and Beyond

Mark O. Hatfield Endowed Lecture by Freeman Hrabowski, University of Maryland
“IT WAS TIME TO PAY IT FORWARD”

As a medical student, George Olsen, M.D. F ’70, experienced firsthand the generosity of others who had gone before him. “I was helped by scholarships and financial support,” he said. “I have never forgotten it.” Now an emeritus professor in the Department of Physiology and Pharmacology, Dr. Olsen has mentored many generations of OHSU students over more than 40 years as teacher and researcher.

Dr. Olsen recently funded the George D. Olsen, M.D., Medical Student Scholarship, providing support, in perpetuity, to a medical student. The award also recognizes Dr. Olsen’s gratitude for the excellent medical care that graduates of the OHSU School of Medicine have given to his family over the years.

“Working directly with OHSU students has given me an added appreciation of the help I received,” he said. “I am now in a position to pay it forward.”

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