

## A Word from the Dean



As many of you know, October is an exciting month for first-year medical students, for this is when the Medical School holds its Ceremony of Commitment to Medicine. During this event, Medical

School officers, faculty, fellow students, and family members will watch as the members of the Class of 2010 receive their white coat, symbolizing their entry into the world of medicine.

October is especially eventful for the entire Division of Biology and Medicine as well, because we will soon dedicate, in a ceremony involving President Simmons, Chancellor Robert, and MIT President Susan Hockfield, Brown's largest capital project ever – the Sidney E. Frank Hall for Life Sciences. As many of you may know, this new building will be home to the departments of Neuroscience and Molecular Biology, Cell Biology and Biochemistry. This is a momentous development indeed and one that is critical to our ever-growing excellence in the life sciences.

Also this month, I, along with my colleagues and medical student Gita Suneja, will be hard at work on a strategic plan for the Division of Biology and Medicine, its seven teaching hospital partners, and its 700 strong full-time faculty body.

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## Medical Student Affairs

Philip Gruppuso

Associate Dean for Medical Education

I have recently been approached by several students asking advice on the subject of research. Their questions seemed to focus on several areas. The most common first question I hear goes something like, "Do I need to do research to get a good residency?" There is no doubt that the most competitive residencies use all of the discriminating factors at their disposal to identify top candidates, and that one of these is research experience. However, even the most competitive residencies take students with minimal or even no prior research experience. That being said, it is important to distinguish yourself as committed to your area of interest, and a scholarly focus is a good way to do that.

"What should I look for in a research opportunity?" The most rewarding and enriching research experiences provide a difficult-to-achieve balance between mentoring and guidance versus the independence that allows a student to be creative and follow their own initiative. The sort of research experience you choose will depend a great deal on the amount of time you can commit to it. In general, a month or two is not long enough to expect "ownership" of a project. In contrast, students deciding to commit a more substantial amount of time should expect that they will not just provide technical support for a project. Rather, they should expect that they will be given the opportunity to present their work and expect that their contribution might translate into first- or second-authorship should the work come to publication.

"But is a short research experience worthwhile?" One or two-month long research rotations have spawned many research careers. A brief experience may be long enough to become "hooked" by the process of generating and testing a hypothesis. I've known many students who were surprised to learn that the basic or clinical research environment excites them as much as the clinical environment does.

One last point that I always make to students is that the relationship between clinical care and biomedical research, be it clinical, basic or epidemiological, is obvious to those who do both. The common ground between the intellectual processes required for both endeavors, the reward of discovering something (whether it be a patient's diagnosis or a new research finding) and the knowledge that bridges both domains is apparent to most all physician-investigators. And the opportunity to become acquainted with a faculty member who can serve as a mentor and career advisor is a frequent side-benefit to research experience during medical school. So, if you don't have prior research experience and would like to try it, dive right in. The benefits are many.

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## Student Affairs

Alexandra Morang  
Director

The Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS) opened for the season on September 1st. ACGME accredited programs started downloading residency applications as of this date and will continue to do so until mid-November. So far, approximately three quarters of our fourth-year students have certified their applications and many have already received interview offers. An additional 9 students have posted their applications for the early match programs in Ophthalmology, ENT and Urology. Class of '06: most of the grades from the fourth quarter have arrived so please order your transcripts from the Registrar's Office if you haven't already done so. If you would like to check on the grades that have recently come in, just log on to OASIS. The highly popular mock interviews will be offered again this year starting mid-October. If you would like to schedule a practice interview, please call 863-1641 to make an appointment.

A committee of students and administrators has diligently been working on improving the BMS Student Resources website for the last several months and the new site was launched last month. Please check out the site [http://bms.brown.edu/\\_students](http://bms.brown.edu/_students), and give us your feedback. I think you will find the new site much more informative and easier to navigate. Thanks to student members Kartik Venkatesh, Albert Ahn, Nathan Kohler, Evan Leventhal, Erin McDermott, and Grace Ferris for their excellent input and advice. A special thank you to Sarah Baldwin-Beneich and Natalia Onufrieva from the offices of Advancement and Computer Services.

## Curriculum Affairs

Dick Dollase  
Director

The Teaching Academy is up and running. The 28 Teaching Fellows met for orientation sessions in early September. The goals of the Teaching Academy and the schedule of implementation were

outlined by Steve Rougas, '09, Carmelle Romain, '09, Jack Rusley, '09 and Beverly Young, '06. Dean Monroe, course leader of Doctoring, also spoke about the vision and mission of the Teaching Academy.

By mid-September almost all of the Teaching Fellows have met with first-year students in providing them with additional clinical practice in regard to the first-year Doctoring course. First-year students' evaluations of the practice sessions have been very positive. As one member of the class of '10 put it, the clinical skills practice session was "excellent! It was a low pressure setting that enables honest and constructive learning. Keep it up! This is extremely helpful." A Teaching Fellow also expressed the view that the first-year students he coached "found this aspect of the class very useful." The fellow continued, "I would have appreciated the extra practice without pressure setting that the academy provides!"

Additional clinical skills sessions are planned for October and November. A more comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of the Teaching Academy will be undertaken at the end of the fall semester.

## student news

Five Brown medical students, each as first author, have been selected to present their work at the annual American College of Gastroenterology scientific session in Las Vegas, NV, in October, 2006: Sarah Denucci, "Splenic vein thrombosis and gastric variceal bleeding due to metastatic lymphoma"; Shani Belgrave, "Hemobilia with gallbladder necrosis: report of 2 cases"; Elizabeth Won, "Sebaceous gland carcinoma as the initial clue to occult colon carcinoma" (Muir-Torre syndrome); Warren Young, "Budd-Chiari syndrome due to IVC obstruction by leiomyosarcoma"; Shahida Farooqi, "Abdominal compartment syndrome in lymphoma."

These presentations are part of an initiative by Edward Feller, MD (Clinical Professor of Medicine) and Samir Shah, MD (Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine) and other faculty to use case reports and case series as a teaching and writing tool for medical students and to support students in presenting their findings at national scientific meetings. This collaboration has produced 28 student presenters at this national GI meeting. This project has produced seven other Brown students who have been winners (2001, 2002, 2005, 2006) or finalists (2000, 2003, 2004) in the annual "National Clinical Vignette Competition" of the American College of Physicians (ACP), presented at the ACP Annual Scientific session.

## Admissions and Financial Aid

Kathy Baer  
Director

Financial Aid Briefing for PLME and EIP Seniors: Are you interested in learning about the financial aid process for medical school? If so, mark your calendars for our annual financial aid briefing on Monday, October 16 from 4:00pm to 5:00pm in Smith-Buonano Hall, Room 106. We will review the application process, funding options, personal finance tips and other important considerations. Your medical education does not need to be funded with only loans. We encourage you to plan early and consider all of the options. Please check your email for ad-

ditional information. Parents, spouses and partners are, of course, welcome to join you.

**Financial Aid Refunds:** If you have not yet received your refund check from the Bursar's Office for the first semester, please contact Filomena Zani (Filomena\_Zani@brown.edu, 863-1142). At this point, all financial aid recipients who are eligible for a refund should have received their checks.

**Personal Financial Planning Curriculum:** I am working on this year's schedule of workshops designed to address common financial issues faced by medical students. The primary goal of these workshops is to provide students with practical knowledge necessary to make effective financial decisions. Based upon feedback from many medical students during the last year, we will focus on three areas this year: understanding the importance of credit (including credit reports, credit scores, how to "rehabilitate" a low credit score, facts and fallacies); tax issues; and the long-term cost of borrowing (e.g., calculating your loan payments vis-à-vis future income, financial impact of loan repayment programs). We will be in touch with you soon with more details.

**Residency Interviewing Expenses:** As you start your residency interviews, we remind you to save receipts for residency interviewing expenses, as these costs may be tax deductible if you itemize your deductions on your tax return. Please also remember to keep track of any moving expenses in the spring as they, too, may be deductible under certain circumstances. If you are not familiar with this tax terminology, don't worry! We will provide additional guidance in early February at our tax workshop and at our annual financial planning workshops next spring.

Lastly, if you are concerned about how to pay for residency interviews and relocation expenses, please be aware that

several lenders offer loans to fourth-year medical students specifically for this purpose. Unlike most student loans, your eligibility is based upon creditworthiness as well as your current level of educational and consumer debt. These loans generally are less expensive options than credit cards; however, we urge you to borrow conservatively, as the interest rates are adjusted quarterly and have no rate cap. Please check your class listserv for an email with a list of recommended lenders and their contact information.

## Minority Medical Affairs

Alicia Monroe

Associate Dean of Medicine

Each year thousands of African American, Hispanic, Asian and other minority group members suffering from leukemia, lymphoma and other blood diseases require a peripheral stem cell or bone marrow transplant in order to survive. Only 25-30% of all individuals will have a suitable sibling or other family donor. Unfortunately, a severe shortage of minority donors exists on the National Marrow Donor Program registry. Consequently, for example, only 45% of black individuals find a matched, unrelated donor. This is in contrast to as high as 90% successful donor matches for certain racial and ethnic groups.

In collaboration with the National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP), the Rhode Island Blood Center, the Student National Medical Association (SNMA) and with the support of the Office of Minority Medical Affairs, a Brown minority bone marrow/peripheral stem cell donor drive will be held on Tuesday, October 24 from 11:00am to 3:00pm in Sayles Hall. The first step in the donor registration process requires donors to listen to a brief explanation of the marrow or peripheral stem cell donor procedure. A painless buccal swab will also be lightly scraped from inside the donor's mouth. For more

## october calendar

October 5  
MMI Seminar, Thomas Lane, Ph.D.  
BMC 291, Eddy Auditorium  
4:00 p.m.

October 16  
Annual Financial Aid Briefing  
Smith-Buonano, Room 106  
4:00 - 5:00 p.m.

October 18  
20th Annual Katz Lecture  
Speaker, Mary E. Tinetti, M.D.  
BMC 291, Eddy Auditorium  
4:00 - 6:00pm

October 21  
White Coat Ceremony  
Alumnae Hall  
4:00 p.m.

October 25  
Brown Minority Bone Marrow and  
Peripheral Stem Cell Donor Drive  
Sayles Hall  
11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

October 25  
Edds Lecture, Dr. Eric Olson  
"Molecular Control of Cardiovascular Development and Disease"  
MCB Room 202, Purple Palace  
12:00 - 1:30 p.m.

October 25  
PLME Freshmen  
Whole Patient Program  
Faculty Club  
5:30 p.m.

information or to volunteer, contact: Sybil\_Dessie@brown.edu, Junious\_Mathis@brown.edu or Edward\_Feller@brown.edu

Please come and support this donor drive. You may help save a life!

# opportunities

American College of Physicians Abstract Competition. Don't miss this opportunity to submit a medical abstract to the 14th annual competition with a chance to win an expense-paid trip to Internal Medicine 2007, April 19-21 in San Diego, California. Submission deadline is November 1, 2006. Submissions can be made electronically at [www.acponline.org](http://www.acponline.org).

The Osler Library Research Travel Grant is designed to assist scholars who need to travel and establish temporary residence in Montreal in order to use the resources of the Osler Library. An award of \$1,500 (Canadian) for 2-4 weeks in 2007. For more information contact Pamela Miller at [Pamela.Miller@McGill.Ca](mailto:Pamela.Miller@McGill.Ca) or 514-398-4475 ext. 09870. Deadline to apply is December 31, 2006.

Fogarty International Center/ Ellison Medical Foundation Fellowships offer a one-year clinical research training experience for graduate level U.S. students in the health professions. This is an opportunity for highly motivated individuals to experience mentored research training at top-ranked NIH-funded research centers in different countries. Each fellowship will be for a one year period. The term will begin with an intensive orientation program on the NIH campus in Bethesda, MD in July 2007. This will be followed by 10+ months of intense research training at the foreign site. Applications are due December 8, 2006. To access the application and to learn more, please visit [www.aamc.org/overseasfellowship](http://www.aamc.org/overseasfellowship).

The P.E.O. Foundation is a nonprofit Iowa corporation operated exclusively for educational and charitable purposes. The Ruth G. White Scholarship Fund and the Dorothy C. Wisner Scholarship Fund award scholarships each spring, through this Foundation, to California women studying in the broad field of medicine. To learn more visit [www.peocalifornia.org](http://www.peocalifornia.org) or contact [ruthgwhite@peocalifornia.org](mailto:ruthgwhite@peocalifornia.org)

The American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) through the Neurosurgery Research and Education Foundation (NREF) is pleased to announce the new AANS Medical Student Summer Research

Fellowship (MSSRF) program, beginning summer 2007. The fellowship is open to medical students in the United States who have completed one or two years of medical school and wish to spend a summer working in a neurosurgical laboratory, mentored by a neurosurgical investigator who is a member of the AANS. Ten \$2,500 fellowships will be available each year. Applications due by February 1, 2007. To learn more, or to download an application visit [http://www.aans.org/otherresearch/med\\_student\\_research.asp](http://www.aans.org/otherresearch/med_student_research.asp). For questions please contact Terri Bruce at [tlb@aans.org](mailto:tlb@aans.org) or at 847-378-0500.

The AMA Foundation is offering the following 2007 Scholarship & Research Opportunities.

Seed Grant Research Program provides \$2,500 grants to medical students, physician residents and fellows in a variety of research areas, such as cardiovascular/pulmonary diseases, HIV/AIDS, leukemia, neoplastic diseases, and secondhand smoke. Application available September 2006, deadline December 1, 2006. To learn more about any of the following opportunities visit [www.amafoundation.org](http://www.amafoundation.org).

National and Regional Student Research Forums. These annual forms offer young investigators the opportunity to present their research, receive meaningful feedback, and participate in scholarly discussions with peers and established scientists. To learn more visit [www.amafoundation.org](http://www.amafoundation.org)

Western Student Medical Research Forum, abstract deadline October 3, 2006. Forum date: January 31-February 3, 2007 in Monterey, California.

Midwest Student Biomedical Research Forum, abstract deadline: December 8, 2006. Forum date: February 23-24, Omaha, Nebraska.

Eastern-Atlantic Student Research Forum, abstract deadline: January 2007. Forum date: February 21-24, 2007 in Miami, Florida. National Student Research Forum, abstract deadline: January 2007. Forum date: April 26-27, 2007 in Galveston, Texas. [ion.org](http://ion.org)

## PLME

Julianne Ip, Associate Dean  
Hilary Sweigart, PLME Manager

**FRESHMEN** — The second Whole Patient Program is scheduled for Wednesday, October 25 at 5:30pm at the Faculty Club and will feature Assistant Professor Ana Tuya, MD, Assistant Director of the Reynolds Project at Brown Medical School, and Staff Physician at the PACE (Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly). More details will be sent to you shortly. All freshmen are expected to attend this program and you should reserve your spot by emailing [Joan\\_Fullerton@Brown.edu](mailto:Joan_Fullerton@Brown.edu).

Check out the Orientation, Picnic and Convocation Snapshots at "Welcome PLME Class of 2010" or <http://bms.brown.edu/plme/slideshow>. Send the link to your family!

**SOPHOMORES** — Mark your calendar for the Educational Plan meeting to be held on November 29 beginning at 11:30 AM. You will receive more information on this in November.

**SENIORS** — If you intend to matriculate into the Brown Medical School in the fall of 2007, you must complete an AMCAS application prior to your promotion. The medical school's admission office will be sponsoring a class meeting in October to explain the AMCAS process to you and to answer any of your questions. It is imperative that you take part in this meeting and adhere to the admission's office deadlines.

KUDOS to Larry Kwon, '08, who arranged for Dr. David L. Katz, a nationally renowned authority on nutrition, weight control, and the prevention of chronic disease to speak on campus as part of the PLME's Whole Physician Program.

**REMINDER TO ALL STUDENTS** — Believe it or not, it's already time to make an appointment to meet with your advising

dean to discuss courses for next semester! Preregistration for Semester II is October 23–November 3.

## PLME Senate

Jenna Kahn  
Co-President

The PLME Senate is excited to announce all of the programs that it has in store for the semester for both PLMEs and the Brown community. The PLME Senate had its first meeting on September 10<sup>th</sup> with a great turnout of the class of 2010 and other returning classes. Elections for class representatives were held on September 17<sup>th</sup>. Congratulations to Zachary Marcus, Alex Fambles, and Mansi Shah for becoming the class reps of 2010. Also congratulations to Lisa Ratanaprasatporn and Katrina Chu for being our new webmasters.

The social chairs, Maya Barsky and David Fan put together a pizza party at our first PLME Senate meeting on September 10<sup>th</sup>. It was a huge success and allowed PLMEs of all classes to get together. This year there will also be many various activities including get togethers to watch movies and t.v. shows like Grey's Anatomy or ER. More information to come on these events.

PLME Apparel is now here! Back by popular demand, our caduceus logo is available on sweatshirts (\$25) and t-shirts (\$12); sweatpants with our newer logo (\$20) are also available. Color choices and ordering instructions have been sent out to all classes via email; apparel will also be sold at our upcoming events including the Whole Patient programs and other social events. All orders must be in by Friday, October 13<sup>th</sup>. Please contact ([Carly\\_Seidman@brown.edu](mailto:Carly_Seidman@brown.edu)) or ([Jenna\\_Kahn@brown.edu](mailto:Jenna_Kahn@brown.edu)) if you have any questions regarding apparel.

Our PLME Senate meetings are held on Sundays at 5:00pm in Faunce 201. Re-

member that all are welcome and encouraged to come to these meetings. We appreciate and encourage your feedback with events and are open to any new ideas. If you have any questions please feel free to contact Jenna Kahn or Carly Seidman.

## Healthy Medical Students Student Health Council

If you're like most medical students you probably already know this, but in all likelihood don't put it into practice. So, I thought we'd use this column to refresh some important tips on—we-love-it, can't-get-enough-of-it—SLEEP. Here's how to get a good nights rest even in medical school.

1. Sleep is as important as food and air. Most adults need between 7.5 to 8.5 hours. About 50% of medical students get less than 6 hours—buck the trend!
2. Keep regular hours. Try to go to bed and get up at the same time everyday, even weekends. Getting up at the same time is most important.

## Advising Reminder

### MD 2010 and 2009

If you have not met with your advising dean this semester, please make an appointment to come in and discuss how things are going for you. The advising deans are always available to assist and guide you in your professional development. Call your dean's assistant to schedule a day and time that is convenient, or send a quick email to your dean with your phone number.

3. Avoid stimulants like caffeine late in the day. If you're used to caffeine for evening studies, try slowly moving your last caffeinated drink earlier and earlier.

4. Use the bed for sleeping. Do NOT study in bed.

5. Don't stress if you feel you are not getting enough sleep. It will just make matters worse. You will sleep eventually.

6. Avoid exercise near bedtime. No exercise at least 3 hours before bed.

7. Don't go to bed hungry.

8. Avoid looking at the clock if you wake up in the middle of the night. This is very difficult for most of us, so turn the clock away so you would have to turn it to see the time. You may decide not to make the effort and go right back to sleep.

9. If you can't get to sleep for over 30 minutes, get out of bed and do something boring in dim light.

10. If you have problems with noise, use a white noise generator. An old fan will work.

11. Know that the "night cap" has a price. Alcohol may seem to help you get to sleep but it will lighten your sleep. (It also worsens sleep apnea.)

12. If you have a sleeping partner, ask them if they notice any snoring, leg movements, or pauses in breathing. You may have a sleep disorder. If you have any concerns see your doctor. (YES, as a medical student it's appropriate for you to have and go see a doctor! More on that in an upcoming article!)

Sweet Dreams!

(Tips adapted from [www.sleepnet.com](http://www.sleepnet.com).)

## A Word from the Dean Continued from page 1

This plan is intended to capitalize on our collective strengths and transform our weaknesses into opportunities for improvement. It is my goal that Brown's biomedical and public health enterprise be programmatically coordinated so as to act as a united whole, thereby living up to its full potential. I see us ranking among the top third and eventually the top quartile of academic medical centers in the nation. The plan also entails building a dedicated South Providence-based educational facility, known as the Medical Education Institute. The plan will also involve creating and nurturing to-be-determined centers of scientific excellence.

## the pulse

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