WE'RE PULLING THE PIECES TOGETHER FOR MICHIGAN
COMMMUNIQUE

Volume 37, Issue 2

By Jason Cody

With the grand openings of both our new building at the Macomb University Center on February 22 and our renovated facilities at the Detroit Medical Center on September 17, we’ve brought to completion the establishment of our two southeast Michigan sites. It has been a long journey: from the initial concept in 2005 to the selection by the MSU Board of Trustees in May 2007, to the approval by the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation in September 2008, to the enrollment of our first expansion site students in June 2009.

There’s every indication that this endeavor is fulfilling its promise — with the success of distance learning, enhanced student recruitment, service to the communities of southeast Michigan, increased access for students in the most populous part of the state, and enabling the increase in our class size from 200 to 300 to address the growing demand for our graduates.

It sounds so simple in a few paragraphs, but I know that it was not easy. In this product are the contributions of time, talent and resources of hundreds of faculty, staff, students, alumni, other members of the osteopathic profession, donors, community allies, and our partner institutions in the Statewide Campus System. We increased our workload, our stress, and our responsibility to achieve it. I want you to know how much I appreciate the vision, labor and sacrifice so many committed to make it possible.

We’re already moving on to new challenges, not the least of which will be the introduction of an additional entering class at each of the sites in June. There are unprecedented economic issues for MSUCOM as Michigan struggles to reinvigorate itself in the new economy. It’s time to reassess and refine our curriculum, including clinical education. With national health care reform we must be part of positive change to make care both accessible and affordable. (No less a person than Martin Luther King Jr. noted that, “Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and most inhumane.”) Finally, our scope must broaden in response to the clamor for international health.

So let’s pause a moment, breathe deeply, roll up our sleeves and continue to make this the best osteopathic college on the planet!

William D. Strampel, D.O., Dean

For the tenth year in a row, MSUCOM has been ranked as one of the top 10 medical schools for primary care by U.S. News and World Report – placing 7th among all osteopathic and allopathic medical schools in the nation.

MSUCOM, expanding its role in educating the next generation of Michigan doctors, celebrated Feb. 22 the opening of its new campus at Macomb Community College’s University Center in Clinton Township.

The event, held at MSU’s new facility at the university center, marked the culmination of several years of planning for the college’s expansion into southeast Michigan. "But perhaps more important than anything, the presence and commitment of a world-class university such as Michigan State University is a strong vote of confidence in the future of Macomb County," Jacobs said.

"It is a confirmation of our unique strengths, our possibilities and our potential."

William Strampel, dean of the College of Osteopathic Medicine, said the college has been overwhelmingly impressed with the support from leaders throughout the Macomb County community.

"We are located at a state-of-the-art educational institution situated among a high concentration of osteopathic physicians and partner hospitals,” he said. “The faculty, staff and students of the MSU College of Osteopathic Medicine wish to extend their appreciation to all persons whose efforts contributed to the establishment of the college at the Macomb University Center.”

During the event, guests heard from Simon, Jacobs, MSU Trustee Faylene Owen, associate dean at the Macomb site.

MSU College of Osteopathic Medicine’s expansion into southeast Michigan also includes a new campus site at the Detroit Medical Center in downtown Detroit, where a renovated facility welcomed students in fall 2009.

Plans for the expansions have been in the works for several years; sites were approved by the MSU Board of Trustees in May 2007, and the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation approved the expansion in September 2008. Through partnerships with a number of universities, the Macomb University Center provides area residents increased access to advanced education by providing upper-level baccalaureate, master’s and doctoral degree programs. The center opened in 1991 and now enrolls more than 3,000 students each semester in programs offered by nine partner institutions.

Among those attending the grand opening were William D. Strampel, MSUCOM dean; Candice Miller, U.S. Representative for Michigan’s 10th District; Faylene Owen, MSU trustee; James Jacobs, president of Macomb Community College; Lou Anna K. Simon, MSU president; Joseph DeSantis, Macomb Community College trustee; Nancy Falcone, chairperson of the Macomb Community College Board of Trustees.
By Craig Reed

There are many paths which draw individuals toward medical school. In first-year student Jay Anderson’s case, that journey started with engineering. “I have always been good at math,” explained Jay. “I went into engineering as an undergraduate at the University of Detroit Mercy, but by the time I finished my degree, my interests began to change. I had an interest in going to medical school, but I wasn’t sure I could make it through the program. I decided after graduation to teach English in China for a year. That experience made me a lot more confident, and once I was back in the United States, I felt I had no excuse for not trying to do what I wanted to do.”

Going to medical school at the DMC site has been a great fit for Jay. “My father served in Vietnam and gets his medical care near campus. Every week I get to have lunch with him. Being at the DMC has helped me be a far more serious student than I was as an undergraduate.”

For Jay, Detroit is a city he knows well. “I’ve been here long enough to see the slow revitalization of certain neighborhoods,” said Jay. “Some places that looked so run down years ago are now seeing stores moving in. I enjoy living here. You can find so many interesting places once you get past the surface. It’s just frustrating how slowly things change at times.”

While still in his first year, Jay has some ideas of what type of doctor he would like to be. “My original interest was in orthopedic surgery due to my engineering background,” said Jay. “However, several cousins of mine had children with health problems which gave me a chance to see pediatricians in action. Now I’m leaning towards pediatric surgery. I want to be the person who knows enough to help children thrive.”

By Craig Reed

Many medical students develop a desire to become doctors early in life, but the reasons why can be a bit of a mystery, as it is for first-year Kate Karpinski. “When I was in the second grade, I remember my teacher having to look up how to spell ‘neonatologist’ because that’s what I wanted to be. I don’t know how I decided that when I was so young, but it’s stuck with me and this summer I’ll be shadowing a neonatologist. I’m excited and nervous about this opportunity, but everything I’ve learned about it so far makes me think this is the right field for me,” she said.

When Kate was considering where to go for medical school, she had an important factor to consider: her fiancé and fellow first-year student Anthony Brune. “We met as undergraduates and applied at the same time to the same medical schools. We were super lucky to both be accepted into MSUCOM at Macomb, which is near where Anthony lives. Everyone has been asking us when we’ll get married and our answer is ‘June 15, 2013’ – strategically placed between graduation and the start of our internships,” said Kate.

So far, classes at Macomb have been going well for Kate. “The class size is small; everyone knows you and is ready to help you,” she said. “The new building we just moved into has been great. We’ve also had many opportunities to get to know local doctors who are highly involved in the community, to volunteer and to compete with our sister site at DMC in various sporting events. It’s important to be a part of the community during our medical school experience.”

By Craig Reed

The journey of every MSUCOM student begins with a summer of gross anatomy. “Gross anatomy takes up all my time during the summer months,” explained anatmist Jeremy Laukka. “I have been working hard with lectures, labs and review sessions. On the days when we have an exam, a group of anatomy faculty work together with our list of unit objectives and decide which donated bodies would work best for each exam question.”

Once summer is over, Laukka continues to work within the anatomy lab as well as lecture. “During the fall, I teach and oversee the dissection laboratory for first-year students. It is through the diligent work of these students that we have quality specimens prepared for next summer’s gross anatomy class,” said Laukka.

“Some students find that this line of work is not for them, but others uncover hidden talents and interests while taking the course. It’s not uncommon for them to observe normal anatomical variations, but they get to see and feel diseased organs before they have had their first pathology class. Visual learners get a lot from this experience.”

Laukka is also involved in teaching histology and neuroscience classes, usually at the Detroit Medical Center (DMC) site. He finds teaching to be a fulfilling and rewarding experience. “I am finishing up my Ph.D. in molecular medicine and genetics this year from Wayne State University School of Medicine,” said Laukka. “So when I talk with students, they know I am going through some of the same things they are, and this makes it easier to connect with them. Teaching has made me a better student as well. When I present my Ph.D. work at conferences, I don’t just state facts; I educate them about my work.”

“It’s been stimulating to collaborate with the faculty here,” continued Laukka. “The facilities at the DMC are ideal for learning, and the students are enthusiastic. It’s rewarding when you can see the benefits of your efforts to teach them.”

By Craig Reed

Clinical faculty have a vital place in educating MSUCOM students. For Patrick McClellan, D.O., teaching is one of the ways he gives back to his profession. “When I was younger, my parents had helped me pay for my undergraduate education, but I had no resources for continuing my education any further,” said McClellan. “By chance, around this time I came back to my hometown for a friend’s wedding and stayed at his parents’ house. His father was a D.O. After talking with his father about my future plans, he suggested I go to medical school, which I did. He not only helped me get into medical school, but he also allowed me to stay at his house and paid for my tuition. It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and I knew after starting my first class that this was the right thing for me.”

McClellan graduated from Des Moines College of Osteopathic Medicine in 1964 and has been mentoring MSUCOM students since 1972. During his more than 40 years at Mount Clemens Regional Medical Center, he worked to improve access to health care in the Detroit area by establishing mobile clinics which still travel to indigent neighborhoods today. Though he retired from the classroom in 2007, McClellan remains active teaching in East Lansing and Macomb County. “If you can teach basic history taking and how to perform a physical exam, you’ve given that student a tremendous leg up,” said McClellan. “Medical education has changed a lot since I went to school. There are so many smart individuals working to make medical school better.”
By Craig Reed

When classes at MSUCOM started being offered at three different sites, an extra level of coordination became necessary to harmonize all the activities – especially in the delivery of the curriculum. This is one of the many duties Course Assistants Sue Kwiatkowski at the Detroit Medical Center site and Simone Wesley at the Macomb University Center site tackle each day.

“As a course assistant, my job is to take care of the faculty, to make certain things go smoothly and the faculty have everything they need,” said Kwiatkowski. “I assist in the hiring of simulated patients so the students have some practice working with live patients, create small working groups and take advantage of the college’s vast number of clinical faculty in our area to help lead course groups.”

“Keeping everything coordinated can be a juggling act,” explained Wesley. “We have to work with clinical faculty schedules without creating any scheduling conflicts for the students and make certain the students are clear on where they need to be.”

Family is an important part of life for both Kwiatkowski and Wesley. “With sons who live in Florida and Kentucky along with a husband who works in North Carolina, we travel often. We are very close and do what we need to make it work,” said Kwiatkowski. “We also have a daughter, a freshman at MSU, who is part of an international dance group, so we travel to support her as well.”

When not traveling to see her family, Kwiatkowski can be found hitting the books at Northwood University as she finishes up her bachelor’s in business management. “I enjoy the opportunity to learn. No matter where you go in life, business skills are an asset,” said Kwiatkowski.

“Everyone in my family lives close by,” explained Wesley. “One thing we have in common is that we are all involved in education. My husband works at a community college, my stepson teaches at a middle school, and we have two children in college and one in high school right now.”

As a way of relaxing and staying in shape, Wesley is an avid participant in Zumba®, a popular exercise that incorporates many dance moves from salsa and other Latin dances.

While it is important Kwiatkowski and Wesley stay on top of numerous fine details, they both find the work very rewarding.

“One of the favorite things I get to do is interact with the students,” said Wesley. “I know they will one day be physicians who will help so many people and may uncover new cures. I feel fantastic to be part of something like this.”

“It’s such a pleasure coming to work at the DMC,” said Kwiatkowski. “This job has energized me to new levels. It’s a close-knit group here, yet everyone who works here is a part of something much larger: Michigan State University.”

Kwiatkowski hires the DMC’s simulated patients and organizes small group sessions for the students.
On behalf of the Michigan Osteopathic College Foundation and the Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support of the 2010 MOCF Ball – “Puttin’ on the Glitz.”

The event celebrated the opening of our two new educational sites in southeast Michigan (Detroit Medical Center and Macomb University Center) with more than 800 guests joining us for a wonderful evening in support of the college and the Michigan Osteopathic College Foundation.

We are pleased to report that the 2010 event surpassed all previous years, with net proceeds of more than $300,000. All of the proceeds will be added to the MOCF Endowment fund at MSU. Over the past five years, this event alone has resulted in an increase of more than $1 million to the endowment, supporting student scholarships, community outreach, and educational programs at MSUCOM.

We anticipate that next year’s event will be another sold-out evening, so we encourage you to mark your calendars now for the 2011 MOCF Ball, which will be held on Saturday, February 5, 2011, at the Ritz-Carlton, Dearborn.

Thank you again for your support of the MOCF, the MSUCOM, and the osteopathic profession in the state of Michigan.

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Together we DO make a difference!
Cath Kerschen quietly asked the baby in her lap to put a wrapper in the wastebasket across the room and he did precisely that, smiling all the way.

It was a small thing, but it spoke volumes.

Even though he wears clothing that fits a 12-month-old, Johnny, walking reliably at two, only looks like a baby. Even though he had been raised in a non-English-speaking environment, he had hit the island nation. “My first thought was that he was not near the epicenter,” Dr. Kerschen said, “but as I watched CNN, I became more concerned. There was no information and no one was available at the orphanage. Finally, that day when he was sitting in her lap. ‘I knew he was home,’ she said, ‘when he suddenly leaned forward and gave me a kiss.’

Johnny’s father had brought him, weighing only nine pounds, to the orphanage when he was eight months old since his mother had died and he couldn’t care for him. He visited the child faithfully every week. Dr. Kerschen said that although Johnny was withdrawn initially, that changed one day when he was sitting in her lap. “I knew he was home,” she said, “when he suddenly leaned forward and gave me a kiss.”

Sealed with a Kiss

by Pat Grauer

Kerschen is a ’92 alumna and associate professor of internal medicine.

Development
Alumni Altruism

by Craig Reed

Macomb County has been an epicenter of an important osteopathic creed — give back to the profession — through a variety of support, especially for MSUCOM students.

“I was born and raised in Macomb County and have practiced medicine my entire career here,” said ’82 alumna Kari Hortos, associate dean for MSUCOM at Macomb University Center. “This is the heart of community based medicine, and it’s important to me to foster students involved in the community. This is an experience I want to expand through supporting programs and scholarships which encourage this.”

Macomb alumni have been generous, offering their time to help teach our students, their experience in order to mentor others, and finances to support quality medical education. “My wife and I always felt we were blessed to be accepted into medical school and given the opportunity to help others,” said ’85 alumnum Joseph Naughton, director for medical education at Henry Ford Hospital in Macomb County. “We benefited from those who came before us. Now it is our turn to help others reach their goals. We donate to the college, but we also give of our time. I teach clinical skills and the ‘Doctor Patient Relationship’ course, but we both take students into our offices and show them how D.O.s practice medicine.”

Hortos and the Naughtons, along with ’99 alumna Lori Dillard have all recently joined MSU’s Presidents Club — MSU’s largest donor recognition society for donors who commit between $10,000 to $24,999 over the course of five years to MSU and the students these donations benefit. “Making certain students have the resources they need is a priority,” said Dillard, who is clinical faculty for MSUCOM. Dillard teaches students about osteopathic manipulative medicine, and demonstrates an important trait in the profession: a strong commitment to community. “Part of supporting the college for me means giving to fundraisers and attending student social events. It’s important that you support them more than academically. They need to see us outside the classroom and know that even after they have graduated, we are still here for them.”

WHERE ARE YOU?

Please keep us informed of recent moves or changes in your practice. It is important for college reports, grant writing, etc., that we have up-to-date information on our alumni. Changes to your information can be made on the MSUCOM website under the alumni section or by calling (877) 853-3448.

Upcoming Events

September 24 Osteopathic Open Golf Tournament Eagle Eye Golf Course Bath, Michigan

September 24 Silverfest Weekend Continuing Medical Education and Evening Reception

September 25 Silverfest Weekend Tailgate MSU vs. Northern Colorado

October 24-28 American Osteopathic Association Convention San Francisco, California Alumni event on the 25th.

Seminar In The Sun

More than 60 MSUCOM alumni, family and friends attended the annual Seminar in the Sun which was held at The Grand Palladium Lady Hamilton Resort in Montego Bay, Jamaica, from March 6-13. Participating physicians learned the latest on healthy lifestyle and prevention care while enjoying the beautiful Caribbean weather.

Sideline View of March Madness

This year’s Final Four showing of Michigan State University’s men’s basketball team was filled with hope and excitement as well as disappointment. For ’87 alumnus and team physician Jeff Kovan, it boiled down to the rest of the season. This tender moment was captured by columnist Mitch Albom in his article published in the Detroit Free Press. You can read the full article by going to www.com.msu.edu and click on “alumni.”
MAOFP

The Michigan Association of Osteopathic Family Physicians Biannual Conference was held January 21-24 in Bellaire, Michigan, and MSUCOM alumni were out in force. More than 200 alumni, family and friends attended the MSUCOM reception on the 23rd. Alumni were greeted by both Dean William Strampel, who gave a welcoming speech, and Senior Associate Dean Donald Sefcik. Alumni of all ages mingled and reconnected with their peers while also meeting current MSUCOM students.

ACOFP

The American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians Annual Convention was held March 18 through the 21st in Las Vegas, Nevada. The MSUCOM alumni reception on the 18th was hosted in the Kahunaville Tropical Restaurant at the Treasure Island Hotel. The event drew more than 75 alumni who met with Senior Associate Dean Donald Sefcik, renewed old friendships, and watched the MSU basketball team beat New Mexico State — the first of a series of wins that would lead the Spartans to another Final Four showing.

Awards

Student Clubs Win Hat Trick

The American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ACOFP) student group was this year’s recipient of the 2010 A.T. Still Award for its efforts to integrate osteopathic principles and practices into family medicine in the tradition of osteopathic medicine founder A.T. Still.

Adam Hunt: Student D.O. of the Year

MSUCOM’s Student Government Association (SGA) recognized third-year student Adam Hunt with the “Student D.O. of the Year” award. The award is given to an exemplary student who best represents the ideals of the osteopathic profession.

New Leader

New Vision

It’s been a whirlwind at MOA since I started in January, but we’re off to a great start. My primary focus has been on ramping up on the volumes of information available to me in my new role. There’s a lot of history and other information to learn, as well as people to meet, roles to learn and meetings to attend — all with the goal of making MOA work better for you.

The first thing I can happily report: MOA is a strong association with a staff that’s committed to providing great service and helping you succeed. I’ve met with each staff member individually to discuss his or her role and duties. They’ve been very welcoming and accommodating, and I’ve been impressed with the work they do every day.

In addition, I’ve met with as many of our partners and stakeholders as possible to see how our relationships can help make our association even stronger. In today’s world, no one can go it alone, and MOA is no exception. Partnering with those groups, organizations and others who share common goals will help us all achieve more.

One of my main goals this first quarter of 2010 has been to empower each MOA staff member to look at everything we do to see how we can be more efficient, effective and innovative. I want to respect the traditions that make our association and osteopathic medicine great, while continuing to look for new ways to deliver real value to our members.

Our staff has embraced this new philosophy, and we’re already starting to see exciting results.

Equally impressive is the commitment of each member of our Board of Trustees to ensuring MOA is a strong voice for osteopathic medicine. I’m excited to work with them as we guide the association through the many challenges and opportunities we’re sure to face.

I’m looking forward to working with all of you for a great future for Michigan’s osteopathic physicians and your patients. If you’re not yet a member, visit our website at www.mi-osteopathic.org or call us at (800) 657-1556.

Thank you, MSUCOM, for the opportunity to serve as your alumni president, and special thanks to Dean Strampel and his leadership, which has helped this college thrive and grow through these tough times. Also, I wish all the best to our new alumni president, ’75 alumna Mary Jo Voepel, whose valuable experience in leadership and community service will no doubt take our alumni association to a whole new level. Best of luck to everyone and as always . . . Go Green!

Steven Dupuis, D.O., president, MSUCOM Alumni Association Board of Directors
The Call of Adhan

by Craig Reed

The room is divided into two by a curtain. One side is reserved for men, the other for women. On both sides, MSUCOM medical students work diligently with patients, asking questions about their health, taking their blood pressure and checking their cholesterol levels. A voice over the loudspeaker interrupts the flow of work. Many of the students look confused about what is happening. For the patients however, it is a familiar sound. It is the adhan, the call to prayer, which is an important aspect of the religious practice for many who attended the health clinic, held at the Islamic Center in East Lansing.

"Held it was important to have a health clinic specifically for Muslims," explained second-year Fadi Ali Alkhalifah, president of the Islamic Medical Student Association (IMSA) and coordinator for this particular event on behalf of the student group, Community Integrated Medicine. "Many of the medical students from our college will be practicing medicine in areas where Muslims live. This was an opportunity for non-Muslim students to ask questions about Islam and to learn how to better communicate with someone from that culture."

"It was nice to see people from so many different races, ethnicities and age groups to show the diversity among Muslims," said second-year student Nida Hussain, secretary for IMSA. As the only female Muslim osteopathic student at the clinic, her experience was unique in some ways. "Since the health fair was taking place in the mosque, I initially felt confused as to whether I should be covering my head as a way of showing respect for being in a place of worship."

"Overall it was a positive experience," continued Nida. "We helped those who came to the clinic, but it also reconnected us with the reason why we came to medical school in the first place. It’s important to take advantage of these opportunities."

Medicina en Guatemala

by Craig Reed

It is our first day of work in the clinic, and I am sitting on the bus feeling very hesitant and uncertain about what today will be like.

We pull into Tecpan. There are many people waiting to see us, already lined up in front of most of the classrooms. We try to organize as quickly as possible, but it is our first day after all, and I do not know exactly how to set up.

-Robin Page-Echols, MSUCOM fourth-year medical student

Medical mission trips give doctors and medical students a step onto the international stage to offer comfort and aid to those in need. Last March, a group of seven MSUCOM medical students along with several alumni joined a two-week mission organized by DOCARe International to help more than 3,000 patients in Guatemala.

"I had heard from other students about how positive an experience they had last year on this trip so I decided to sign up," explained second-year Yvette Gross. "We saw a lot of patients with lower back pain thanks to the hard manual labor they do, but also stomach pain. We figured out that their stomach problems were due to their traditional gath. Their outfits have belts they tie so tightly, it causes their internal organs to move. The O.D. holistic perspective helped us identify the problem. If we had only been looking for illnesses, I think we would have missed the clothing being the source of the problem."

"When I first started the mission trip, I needed a lot of help - especially in how to set up the clinic," continued Yvette, "but by the end of the trip, I was doing more on my own and making recommendations to the doctor overseeing me on how we should treat each patient’s problems. I’m looking forward to doing more of these in the future. You get an amazing amount of hands-on experience by going on these trips."
Alumna Cathy Kerschen shares the story of adopting her Haitian son.

WHAT'S INSIDE:
Meet some of the faculty and students of southeast Michigan.
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MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
College of Osteopathic Medicine

JOIN US in celebrating
the classes of '75, '80, '85, '90, '95, '00

SILVERFEST 2010
September 24-25
MSU vs. Northern Colorado

OSTEOPATHIC OPEN 2010
September 24
Eagle Eye Golf Course