Dear Students, Faculty and Staff,

The new academic year has commenced, and we welcome the Class of 2016 to the campus. We look forward to the accomplishments of our students, faculty and staff in the year ahead.

SOM WELCOMES LARGEST CLASS IN ITS 36-YEAR HISTORY

The 162-member Class of 2016 took the first steps in becoming physicians at the annual White Coat Ceremony held on August 5th. Not only is this class the largest in SOM’s 36-year history, it is also one of the most selective, chosen from more than 4,200 applicants.

As I welcomed the students, their families and friends, I reminded them that the medical profession at its very heart is service to humanity. This is quite evident as the students recited the “Pledge of Commitment,” in which they promised to “show compassion and respect for all others” and to “strive to develop those qualities that will earn the respect of my patients, my colleagues, my family and myself.”

US Army Col. Charles Callahan, DO, a member of the Class of 1984 and the 2012 SOM Distinguished Alumnus, presented the White Coat Ceremony keynote address. While highlighting some of the changes that have taken place in medicine during the 32 years since he entered SOM, Col. Callahan pointed to one thing that hasn’t changed—when the students put on their white coats, they will also be taking on the privilege “to be bedside, when your patients experience the most significant events of their lives.”

Students were also addressed by SOM Student Council President Nosheen Jawaid ’14, who encouraged them to pursue leadership positions and to be involved in community service and research projects.
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The White Coat Ceremony concluded with the induction of 17 SOM students from the Class of 2013 into the Gold Humanism Honor Society, along with faculty members Marita Lind, MD, assistant professor, Pediatrics, Child Abuse Research, Education and Service (CARES) Institute and Kevin Overbeck, DO, assistant professor, Family Medicine, New Jersey Institute for Successful Aging (NJISA). Established over a decade ago, the honor society recognizes individuals for “practicing patient-centered medical care by modeling the qualities of integrity, excellence, compassion, altruism, respect and empathy.” The Class of 2013 inductees are:

Andrew Buchholz of River Edge, NJ
Ross Cohen of East Brunswick, NJ
Michael Favara of Aberdeen, NJ
Elizabeth Golden of Vineland, NJ
Yousef Hamdeh of Clifton, NJ
Gwendolyn Hunter of Palermo, NJ

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SOM Student Council President Nosheen Jawaid, a member of the Class of 2014, welcomes the students to SOM.

Eric Lella of Voorhees, NJ; Alexandra Martino of Ocean Township, NJ; Simran Ahluwalia of Cherry Hill, NJ and Jinisha Patel of Edison, NJ are proud members of the SOM Class of 2016.

Sujana Bhattacharyya of Jersey City, NJ embarks on her medical school career at SOM.

Lian Zhu of Somerset, NJ; Sada Randall of Roselle, NJ and Kyle Kreitman of Norwood, NJ look on as US Army Col. Charles Callahan, DO delivers the White Coat Ceremony keynote address.

Air Force Captain David Kephart of Atco, NJ is a member of SOM’s Class of 2016. Capt. Kephart, a pilot, was deployed in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

Jozelito Numa of Jamesburg, NJ is all smiles as Thomas A. Cavalieri, DO, FACOI, FACP, AGSF, Dean, UMDNJ-School of Osteopathic Medicine (SOM) presents him with his white coat.

Joseph Lee of Burlington Twp., NJ and Edwin Theosmy of Neptune, NJ recite the “Pledge of Commitment” at the annual SOM White Coat Ceremony held on August 5, 2012.

Sean Nasso of Jackson, NJ
Yewade Ng of Marlboro, NJ
Brittany Perry of Folsom, NJ
Sergio Pulido of Toms River, NJ
Neiman Ramjattan of Jersey City, NJ
Michael Rivero of Williamstown, NJ
Alexandra Schieber of Philadelphia, PA
Douglas Stranges of Seaville, NJ
Matthew Vargas of Lake Worth, FL
Bruce Weng of East Brunswick, NJ
Camylla Wright of Hackensack, NJ
The White Coat Ceremony kicked off a week of orientation and social activities for the Class of 2016. In addition to learning the layout of the campus as well as the services available to students, the class also enjoyed several extracurricular activities to interact with each other and the Class of 2015. These included a volleyball/barbecue night sponsored by the SOM Student Council and SOM Alumni Association; bowling sponsored by the Class of 2015; and the Osteoblast Party sponsored by the Student Osteopathic Medical Association (SOMA).

Orientation Week culminated with the annual Community Service Projects on Saturday, August 11th. Students, alumni, faculty, staff and friends volunteered at one of two sites: Urban Promise Academy in Pennsauken, NJ or the Heart of Camden in Camden, NJ.

Volunteers at Urban Promise helped with the organization’s Alumni Reunion, which celebrated the at-risk youth from Camden who graduated from the organization’s Academy. The Urban Promise Academy serves students who have not met their academic potential in traditional school settings and often enter two to three grade levels below national standards. The SOM volunteers assisted with event set up, serving food, and seating guests.

The Heart of Camden team worked on “The FireWorks,” where they were involved in transforming a vacant fire house built in 1889 into an art studio for local community use. The Heart of Camden aims to improve the quality of life for families residing in Camden’s Waterfront South neighborhood.
George J. Scott, DPM, DO, FACOFP, assistant professor and director of the Department of Family Medicine Residency Training Program has been named the president of the New Jersey State Board of Medical Examiners. The primary obligation and responsibility of the State Board of Medical Examiners is to protect the citizens of New Jersey through the proper licensing and regulations of physicians and other health care professionals who are licensed in the state. To safeguard the public, the state established laws and regulations that govern the practice of medicine, and it is the responsibility of the State Board of Medical Examiners to regulate the practice of medicine through enforcement of the Medical Practice Act.

In his capacity as president of the State Board of Medical Examiners, Dr. Scott chairs the Board’s monthly meetings and serves on numerous committees, among them the Executive Committee, Priority Review Committee, South Jersey Preliminary Evaluation Committee, and the Screening Committee. As Board president, Dr. Scott also participates in numerous statewide task forces and is involved in a multitude of regulatory, public policy, and disciplinary matters involving the practice of medicine. Dr. Scott was originally appointed to the Board in 2005.

SOM PHYSICIAN NAMED PRESIDENT OF NJ STATE BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS

On August 24, 2012, the Transition Steering Committee that will guide the transfer of SOM to Rowan University on July 1, 2013 held its first meeting on the Stratford campus. This 16-member group, led by UMDNJ Interim President Dr. Denise V. Rodgers and Rowan President Dr. Ali Houshmand, began defining the structure and process for transition planning just two days after Governor Christie signed A-3102, The New Jersey Medical and Health Sciences Education Restructuring Act, into law on August 22, 2012. Bill-signing events were held on the Rutgers campuses in Newark, New Brunswick and Camden. I attended the event in Camden, accompanied by Vivian Lubin, SOM Chief Operating Officer. The speakers, who included Rochelle Hendricks, New Jersey Secretary of Higher Education; Senator Donald Norcross, D-5, a co-sponsor of the Senate bill; Senate President Stephen M. Sweeney, D-3, also a co-sponsor; and Governor Christie, emphasized the benefits of the restructuring to the state and, in particular, the South Jersey region. Dr. Rodgers marked the occasion of the bill signing, which she termed “…a historic day…,” with a statement expressing appreciation to the UMDNJ community for building an institution with a lasting legacy; her statement is available at:


The Transition Steering Committee will be appointing a series of Integration Teams in such areas as Academic and Educational Programs, Student Services, Clinical Programs, Research, Finance, Human Resources, Buildings and Facilities, Information Services, Compliance, Legal Affairs, and Government and Public Relations. The teams, which will begin their work in September toward the goal of ensuring a smooth and successful transition, will include members from Rowan, SOM and UMDNJ Administration.

SOM’s initial interactions with Rowan’s President and leadership team have been extremely positive. This fall, we hope to provide opportunities for as many of you as possible to meet Dr. Houshmand and hear his vision for SOM and Rowan University. Dr. Houshmand will be the featured speaker at the September annual general faculty meeting on September 19, 2012, and he also will be the guest at a Dean’s Forum and a meeting with student leaders on September 20, 2012.

We are confident that the restructuring that lies ahead will allow our school to build on its success, enabling SOM to be at the forefront of medical education, health care and biomedical research. As the transition planning advances, we will continue to keep you informed.

GOVERNOR CHRISTIE SIGNS MEDICAL AND HEALTH SCIENCES EDUCATION RESTRUCTURING ACT, TRANSITION STEERING COMMITTEE HOLDS FIRST MEETING

Pictured (from left): Rowan President Dr. Ali Houshmand joined New Jersey’s Secretary for Higher Education Rochelle Hendricks; Rutgers-Camden Chancellor Dr. Wendell Pritchett; former Assembly Speaker Joseph Roberts Jr.; Assembly Higher Education Committee Chair Celeste Riley; Senator Donald Norcross and Senate President Steve Sweeney to witness Governor Christie’s signing of the legislation.
I am honored to have recently been appointed Chair of the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA). I will serve a two-year term beginning with this academic year.

The COCA is recognized by the US Secretary of Education as a reliable authority in accreditation of degree programs leading to the first professional degree in osteopathic medicine and is the only accreditor for such programs. Its 17 members are appointed by the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) President and are limited to three consecutive three-year terms. Having served on the COCA since 2008, I look forward to assuming this important national leadership role in osteopathic medical education.

UPCOMING EVENTS

“KEY ESSENTIALS FOR OPTIMIZING PATIENT CARE”
CME PROGRAM BEGINS ON SEPTEMBER 8, 2012

The Department of Family Medicine and Kennedy Health System are co-sponsoring a new CME Series entitled, “Key Essentials for Optimizing Patient Care” beginning on September 8th. The series includes six 5-hour blocks covering topics in Geriatrics, Psychiatry, Pain Management, Gastroenterology, Palliative Care and Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine, as well as one 7-hour block focused on Cardiology, Nutrition and Interactive Cardiac Simulation Lab, for a total of 37 Category 1A CME credits. For more information about this series, contact the Department of Family Medicine at 856.566.6085. You can also visit som.umdnj.edu/cme1a for additional details.

11TH ANNUAL 9/11 REMEMBRANCE BLOOD DRIVE – SEPTEMBER 12, 2012

Each September, SOM remembers the 2001 terrorist attacks on New York, Washington and Pennsylvania by holding a Red Cross Blood Drive as a tribute to those who lost their lives on that day and to help boost the area’s critically low blood supplies. This year’s blood drive will be on Wednesday, September 12th from 9 am to 2 pm in the MPR. To donate, go to:
http://www.redcrossblood.org/make-donation enter sponsor code: 022198 or
http://www.redcrossblood.org/make-donation?field_sponsor_code_value=022198

UNIVERSITY DAY – SEPTEMBER 27, 2012

Stratford campus faculty, staff and students are invited to this year’s University Day Program on Thursday, September 27th (11:00 am - 1:00 pm) on the Newark Campus in the Delta Dental Conference Center. On the Stratford campus, a V-tel broadcast of the program will be shown in Room 276 in the Academic Center and Room 3000 in the UDP.

FIRST ANNUAL OSTEOPATHIC PRE-MEDICAL STUDENT CONFERENCE – SEPTEMBER 29, 2012

SOM is inviting pre-medical students and advisors to our campus to learn more about osteopathic medicine, osteopathic medical schools, and how to start a Pre-Student Osteopathic Medical Association (Pre-SOMA) chapter at their college or university. Informational sessions, an osteopathic medical student Q & A panel, an osteopathic medical school admissions panel and recruitment fair will be presented. The event is sponsored by the SOM chapter of the Student Osteopathic Medical Association (SOMA) and the Admissions Office. To register, go to http://som.umdnj.edu/education/admissions/PreMedConference.html or email umdnjsompresoma@gmail.com.

15TH ANNUAL UMDNJ-SOM GOLF CLASSIC – SEPTEMBER 30, 2012

Join alumni, faculty, students and staff at the 15th Annual UMDNJ-SOM Golf Classic, Sunday, September 30th at 8:45 am (shotgun start). The tournament will be held at Harbor Pines Golf Course in Egg Harbor Township, NJ, featuring large fairways great for golfers of all skill levels, a driving range and new clubhouse. The Golf Classic includes 18 holes of golf, continental breakfast, lunch, gifts and prizes. Proceeds from the event support student scholarships at UMDNJ-SOM. For more information, call the Office of Alumni & Student Affairs at 856.566.6740.

CALLING ALL ANGELS GALA BENEFITING CARES INSTITUTE – OCTOBER 18, 2012

The Child Abuse Research, Education and Service (CARES) Institute will hold the Calling All Angels Gala on Thursday, October 18th from 6 to 10 pm at the Crowne Plaza in Cherry Hill, NJ. Tickets include a cocktail hour and silent auction, as well as buffet dinner and live auction. Advance ticket purchase required. Visit www.CARESgala.com for ticket and sponsorship information.