1991-09

Campus Update: September 1991 v. 3, no. 8

BOSTON UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER

Boston University Medical Campus

Campus UPDATE

September 1991 Vol. 3 No. 8

BUSM greets students of the class of 1995

The School of Medicine Class of 1995 has arrived. Its members—81 men and 53 women ranging in age from 19 to 38 and representing 20 states, a U.S. territory and one foreign country—spent the last week of August in an orientation program designed to introduce them to the School, to the study of medicine and to the issues confronting medical students today. The group includes 13 students who are simultaneously pursuing Ph.D. and M.D. degrees.

Racism and sexism in medicine, the risk of chemical dependency among physicians, and a new professional code of conduct for physicians were the major topics for discussion for the incoming class. "We want this new class of students to start thinking now about some very important issues that will confront them as physicians," said Arthur Culbert, Ph.D., associate dean of student affairs at BUSM. "Gender and racial bias in medicine is a reality, and physicians are as vulnerable as any group—if not more so—to the possibility of alcoholism and drug abuse."

First-year BUSM students Beth DeFreitas of New York, Lars Ellison of Connecticut and Steve Vaughn of California, make the rounds of the Medical Campus during orientation.

Today's physicians are being confronted with new ethical dilemmas, such as the termination of life and whether to treat AIDS patients, Culbert noted. "Putting these issues on the table the first week of medical school will, we believe, help students begin to address them long-term," he said.

Orientation also proved to be a good way for students to meet their fellow classmates and the faculty, and to settle into the BUSM community. Amongst the events held were a sightseeing trolley tour of Boston and a visit to Thompson Island in Boston Harbor. □

Retirement-fund seminars are under way

The Office of Personnel will host three retirement seminars at the Medical Campus during September to allow interested employees to learn more about the University's retirement funds. The same seminars will be held at other times on the Charles River Campus. Representatives from each investment firm participating in the University's retirement plan, as well as an independent financial planner, will be on hand to discuss retirement investment planning. A representative of Lincoln Investment Planning, which was added to the fund in June, will attend, as will representatives of the two other firms under the plan: Fidelity Investments and Teachers Insurance Annuity Association/College Retirement Equity Funds (TIAA/CREF).

The seminars will be held in the Keefer Auditorium at the following times: Tues., Sept. 10, 2 to 4 p.m.; Fri., Sept. 20, 10 a.m. to noon and 1 to 3 p.m.; Fri., Sept. 27, 1 to 3 p.m.

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Culbert delves into role as new associate dean of student affairs

Arthur J. Culbert, Ph.D., the new associate dean of student affairs at the School of Medicine, has stepped into a role that accents much of the work he's been doing for the last 18 years. From his early days as a research assistant in the Department of Socio-Medical Sciences (a position he held while he worked on his Ph.D. in that department), to his current position as an associate professor of socio-medical sciences and community medicine, the 40-year-old professor said he's found his greatest satisfaction interacting with students—as a teacher, a counselor and a friend. A self-proclaimed advocate for the students, this affable, indefatigable man considers his new responsibility an opportunity to continue his efforts on their behalf.

"I've always been a student advocate," he said. "I've built my success here on being able to stick up for students, carrying their message to the dean and the administration."

Culbert said he developed an appreciation of the pressures of medical school when he was working toward his Ph.D. here at the School. "Unless you're in a medical school and you see the rigors placed on these young people, it's really hard to get an appreciation for

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The seminars will be held on the Charles River Campus, in the George Sherman Union, room 315, at the following times: Mon., Sept. 16, 10 a.m. to noon; Tues., Sept. 17, 1 to 3 p.m.; Thurs., Sept. 19, 10 a.m. to noon and 1 to 3 p.m.; Mon., Sept. 23, 10 a.m. to noon; Tues., Sept. 24, 1 to 3 p.m.; Wed., Sept. 25, 10 a.m. to noon; Thurs., Sept. 26, 1 to 3 p.m.

At the time of the seminars, employees will be able to obtain written and video material from both Fidelity Investments and TIAA/CREF.

For additional information or to schedule an individual appointment, contact either Maud Carty, benefits manager, or Joanne Fay, benefits specialist, in the Office of Personnel, at 638-4610 (x4610). □

Employee ID card office moved

The Medical Center office in which all employees receive new and replacement identification cards has been moved to the Collamore Building, room 212, (C-212) in the UH Department of Human Resources. Later in the fall it will be moved into permanent headquarters in the same hallway. The office is open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., but employees should call ahead at 638-6880 (x6880) to let office personnel know they are coming. If an employee cannot make it to the office during the established hours, special arrangements can be made for the office to open at another time. Medical Campus employees must receive identification authorization forms from the Office of Personnel before getting their I.D.s made. □

Culbert maintains open-door policy for students

Arthur Culbert and first-year BUSM student Jagruti Patel of Beverly, Mass., spoke during the opening day of orientation. Charles Wennogle looks on in the background.

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what tremendous demands are placed upon them, in terms of their time, and how that impacts on their social life and their relationships with other people," he said.

Culbert experienced his own pressures as a student when he was working part time while pursuing a graduate degree before coming to the School. His sideline work, however, was what put him on course at the School of Medicine. At the time, both he and his wife, who also was pursuing a graduate degree, were working part time at a local watering hole. "A guy named Norman Scotch, who was a regular there and ... the cousin of the Norman Scotch who is director of the School of Public Health, said, 'My cousin's coming here from Johns Hopkins to start this department. So you should go look for a job.' So I was hired as his research assistant to begin what was then a fledgling Department of Socio-Medical Sciences."

Today, as associate dean of student affairs, Culbert's primary concern is the academic and personal well-being of the students. He makes himself available to discuss whatever issues students may be struggling with, whether they be personal, academic or career related, and encourages this interaction by maintaining an open-door policy in his office on the first floor of the Instructional Building. "I get up every day between 4:30 and 5 a.m. and do all of my writing and work at home before I come here," he said. "Then, in order for me to be effective in my job, the door's got to be open. If students want to come see you, they have to have access to you. I would like to try to continue in the tradition of Dr. McNary, to be very accessible to our students." William F. McNary Jr., Ph.D., the former associate dean of student affairs, died in May.

BUSM Dean Aram V. Chobanian has confidence Culbert will succeed. "His superb relationship with students and his in-depth knowledge of the School should make him an appropriate successor," the dean said.

Culbert's work in the classroom also has been geared toward advising and guiding students. His courses, offered through the Department of Socio-Medical Sciences and Community Medicine, are aimed at helping students make decisions about their careers. For the past six years he has been the course manager for a required first-year course that examines how people formulate career choices.

This course serves to "take the students' blinders off," Culbert said. "One of my jobs here is to expose these students, expand their minds as it relates to the organization of medical care and where they fit in as future clinicians. What's important to me is that they choose a career that meets not only their professional needs but their personal needs as well, and that could include such issues as what part of the country they work in and what practice setting they choose."

Crucial to providing effective academic and career counseling in a medical school today, said Culbert, is understanding the changing nature of the medical profession and the attitudes of the students entering it. "You have to be aware of issues like reimbursement and national health insurance, as well as domestic abuse and AIDS," he said.

As part of the required first-year socio-medical sciences course, Culbert and his colleague Lee Strunin, Ph.D., assistant professor of social and behavioral sciences, run an AIDS Day that examines medical students' knowledge and attitudes about treating patients with the disease. During this program, held on the last day of the course, the students review the results of an AIDS questionnaire they filled out on the first day of the course. Three years ago, Culbert and Strunin surveyed the attitudes of all first- and second-year students at the four medical schools in Massachusetts about their attitudes towards treating patients with AIDS. There were 670 respondents. The results of the survey, which Culbert and Strunin

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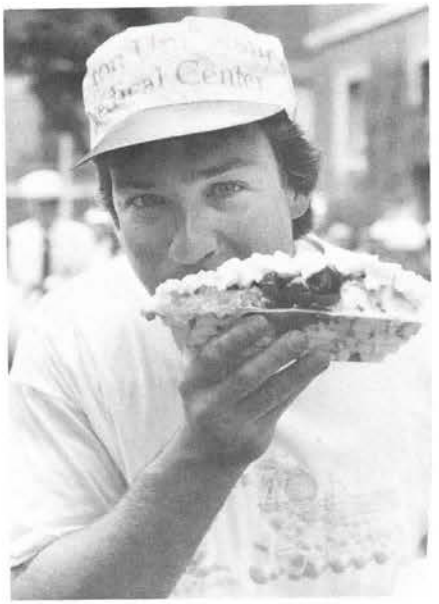
Summer of 1991 Ice Cream Social

Braving puddles and foreboding storm clouds, some 2,050 Medical Center employees turned out last month for the 10th Annual Ice Cream Social, proving that the weather doesn't daunt employees tantalized by the opportunity to create their own decadent ice cream sundaes. The festive atmosphere was marked by colorful balloons, the rhythmic tunes of the reggae band "Urban Renewal" and bright Medical Center caps, which were distributed to all employees attending. BUSM and UH administrators rolled up their sleeves for the occasion, serving as ice cream scoopers and handing out the caps. Some employees even registered to vote at a table set up at the event. □



Frank La Rosa, a third-year student in the M.D./Ph.D. program at the School of Medicine, saw no need for a spoon.

Donna Vignogna, division director of Ambulatory Care Services at UH, and Jim Chalmers, an employee relations representative in the Medical Campus Office of Personnel displayed their wares at the cap table.

Ralph Cairns, a data entry operator in the Accounts Payable Office of the Medical Campus Office of Financial and Business Affairs knows that every real sundae has whipped cream on it.

Showing constraint, La Donna Hudson, an employment specialist, and Elaine Ditmer, the manager of employment and employee relations, both of the Medical *Campus Office* of Personnel, resisted dipping into the ice cream bins while they were serving their colleagues.

Denise Lobb, an administrative coordinator at the Goldman School of Graduate Dentistry, and Teresa Haddad, secretary to the registrar at the Goldman School bond over their ice cream.

Pauline Pierce, senior secretary in the School of Medicine Department of Medicine, was intent on creating the perfect sundae.

Even in the classroom, Culbert advises and guides students

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plan to publish soon, report for the first time what medical students in more than one medical school consider their oligation to be concerning treating HIV positive and AIDS patients during medical school, and how these views will impact not only on their choice of career but what hospital they want to go to and what specialty they choose.

"No one's ever taken the time to ask medical students what they do or don't know about these issues," he said. Such understanding is necessary, he said, "before we, as medical educators, can determine policies on what we should be teaching in this area." Culbert hopes to begin development of a curriculum on AIDS across all four years of medical school.

In addition to his work in the classroom, Culbert has played a key role in developing significant academic programs. He founded and directs the Early Medical School Selection Program, begun in 1982, which is designed to attract minority students to the School, and he established the computer laboratory, called the Laboratory for Instructional Technology, in 1985. In the computer lab, he is working to develop an interactive video program that evaluates students' attitudes toward AIDS and medical practice-related issues.

Culbert's energy and commitment to the School isn't lost on the students. "He's a workhorse," said Lisa Scarfo '92, the president of the Student Committee on Medical School Affairs (SCOMSA). "He's always doing a million things and he still keeps smiling."

The respect is mutual. Culbert has not lost sight of the fact that the School exists first for its students. "If it weren't for students, none of us would be here," he said. "First and foremost it is an institution for the students to become doctors. They are our most important commodity." □

Campus Update is published monthly by the Boston University Medical Campus Office of Business Affairs: William J. Gasper, associate vice president. Article ideas may be addressed to Mr. Gasper or to Michael J. Donovan, director of Personnel. The publication is produced by the Office of Publication Services: Owen J. McNamara, director; Jennifer C. O'Brien, editor/writer; Catherine LeBlanc, designer.