

Dr. Leibowitz fills big shoes at MMI

Bruce Buehler, M.D., left some big shoes to fill in 2007, when, after 25 years, he stepped down as director of UNMC's Munroe-Meyer Institute.

After a national search, the committee found their Cinderella in Mike Leibowitz, Ph.D., who already was serving as interim director.



Mike Leibowitz, Ph.D.

Dr. Leibowitz is "a perfect example of finding gold in our own backyard," said Thomas Rosenquist, Ph.D., vice chancellor for research and head of the search committee,

An associate professor and section head in pediatrics for rehabilitation medicine, Dr. Leibowitz officially became only the third director of MMI on May 1.

"With Chancellor (Harold) Maurer's leadership and support, our vision is to create the premier interdisciplinary center on disabilities in the Midwest," Dr. Leibowitz said.

Sharing the Vision of student-run clinics

Australian University professor Steve Trumble, M.D., traveled nearly 10,000 miles from his home in Melbourne to attend UNMC's SHARING the Vision conference and satisfy his skepticism about student-run clinics.

What he learned at the two-day conference in March changed his mind.

"I feared the clinics allowed students to practice their unformed skills on people who had no choice," he said.

"But it is clear that student-run clinics are places that people go to get the very best treatment and the students who lead them do so because they care about others' needs more than they do about their own," Dr. Trumble said.

The first-of-its-kind conference was organized entirely by UNMC medical students who oversee several student-run health clinics

in Omaha. It drew more than 190 individuals from 36 health professional schools across the United States, as well as Canada and Australia.



Conference organizers and SHARING Clinic board members, from left, Kendra Lesiak M2, Tyler Ketterl M2, and Natalie Stavas M2, stand with national speaker Richard Usatine M.D., assistant director of medical humanities education at the University of Texas Health Science Center.

New dean for UNMC's College of Public Health



Ayman El-Mohandes, M.B.B.Ch., M.D., M.P.H.

A global leader in maternal and child health issues, Ayman El-Mohandes, M.B.B.Ch., M.D., M.P.H., becomes the new dean of UNMC's College of Public Health, Sept. 1.

Dr. El-Mohandes is internationally known for his innovative solutions to eliminate health disparities. With uninterrupted funding from the National Institutes of Health since 1994, he collaborated with health departments, organizations and community members to improve outcomes of minority pregnant women and their children.

He joins UNMC from George Washington University, where he was chairman of the department of prevention and community health in the School of Public Health and Health Services, a practicing neonatologist and professor of pediatrics and obstetrics in the School of Medicine.

Prestigious fellowship funds student research in South Africa

Brady Beecham, an M.D./Ph.D. student, is in Durban, South Africa for the next year to conduct HIV/AIDS research with African scientist Quarrisha Abdool Karim, Ph.D.

Beecham is the first UNMC student to receive the Fogarty International Clinical Research Fellowship, a \$25,000 grant sponsored by the National Institutes of Health.

The Lincoln native is one of just 28 students from around the country to receive the fellowship, which allows recipients to study with top NIH researchers who work in developing countries.

The fellowship includes a strong mentorship component and Beecham – whose Ph.D. emphasis will be in HIV/AIDS epidemiology – is particularly excited to work closely with Dr. Karim.

“She’s one of the authorities on HIV/AIDS research, which is proving to be the defining epidemic of our era,” Beecham said.

While in South Africa, Beecham will conduct epidemiology work and also assist with clinical trials. While there, she will blog about her experiences. Read her updates at blog.unmc.edu/student/.



Brady Beecham

UNMC programs among the best in 2010 U.S. News rankings

UNMC continues to be positioned among the nation’s top programs in U.S. News & World Report’s 2010 edition of America’s Best Graduate Schools.

The rankings reflect UNMC’s longstanding hold in such program areas as primary care, rural health and physician assistant education.

U.S. News & World Report ranked the College of Medicine’s rural health medicine program 15th and its primary care program 17th.

Also ranked among the top in the country: the UNMC School of Allied Health Professions’ physician assistant program (ranked 14th) and physical therapy program (33rd), the College of Pharmacy (29th) and the College of Nursing’s master’s programs (32nd).

UNMC launches TV segments on Omaha station

When it comes to your health, you want to hear from the experts.

That’s why UNMC initiated a partnership with Omaha’s KETV NewsWatch 7 earlier this year. The partnership, called “Ask UNMC,” allows viewers to ask pharmacists, nurses,



dentists, doctors, researchers and physical therapists questions about everyday health concerns.

The one-minute segments air during five newscasts each weekend and provide timely, educational health information to the public. Ask your own question or view the library of segments at www.unmc.edu/askunmc.

Pharmacy ranks sixth nationally in research funds

The College of Pharmacy ranks sixth nationally among 110 pharmacy schools in terms of National Institutes of Health (NIH) research dollars per Ph.D. faculty member.

The rankings – compiled annually by the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy – show that the College of Pharmacy’s 18 Ph.D.-level investigators collectively received more than \$5 million in NIH funds in 2008. That equates to about \$280,434 in NIH funds for each pharmacy Ph.D. faculty member.

THE COLLEGE OF PHARMACY'S 18 PH.D.-LEVEL INVESTIGATORS COLLECTIVELY RECEIVED MORE THAN \$5 MILLION IN NIH FUNDS IN 2008.

UNMC faculty honored

Six UNMC faculty members were honored last spring for outstanding research, teaching and community leadership.



Stephen Rennard, M.D.



Jeffrey Baldwin, Pharm.D.



Stan Harn, D.D.S.



Marlene Lindeman



Connie Miller, Ph.D.



Jennifer Parker, M.D.

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA'S OUTSTANDING RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY (ORCA) AWARD

Stephen Rennard, M.D., Larson professor of internal medicine-pulmonary medicine, was named the recipient of the ORCA this year.

"The universitywide awards recognize faculty whose research and teaching have made an impact on students, the university and the state," said University of Nebraska President James B. Milliken. "The strength and reputation of any university depends on the quality of the faculty, and we have some of the best in the country on our four campuses."

UNMC SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

Jeffrey Baldwin, Pharm.D., associate professor in the College of Pharmacy, was honored for his scouting activities, as well as his role as a board of director's member and camp counselor with Camp CoHoLo and other service activities.

"Dr. Baldwin's remarkable community service contributions have had local, national and, potentially, even international impact," his nominator said. Last year when a deadly tornado ripped through a Boy Scout camp, Dr. Baldwin assisted emergency personnel in their medical efforts, helped identify victims from the storm and helped with camp evacuation.

Stan Harn, D.D.S., professor in the College of Dentistry, was recognized for developing and acting as curator for the dental museum, coordinating Children's Dental Day and running logistics for the dental SHARING clinic.

And that's just what he does in his spare time. Most of the time the professor of oral biology teaches gross anatomy to the students in the College of Dentistry.

OUTSTANDING TEACHER AWARDS

Marlene Lindeman, assistant professor in the College of Nursing and psychiatric clinical nurse specialist, has impacted many lives in and out of the classroom. Lindeman is a teacher, counselor and mentor.

Seldom in her office, she's either with students in one of Omaha's in-patient or community clinics. She also has a small practice at the college's nurse-run clinic at the Family Health Care Center in south Omaha that allows her to keep in touch with what's going on in clinical practice.

Connie Miller, Ph.D., assistant professor in the College of Nursing, is all about quality and interprofessionalism.

She recently redesigned the clinical expectations for undergraduate students in the cardiac intensive care unit to reflect concerns identified in the Institute of Medicine report on quality and safety in health care. Because her pilot study was so successful, these expectations have been implemented on all four UNMC College of Nursing campuses across the state.

Jennifer Parker, M.D., assistant professor in the College of Medicine, brought a unique skill set to UNMC when she started in 2003. She was the first faculty member to have clinical appointments in both internal medicine and pediatrics.

"The medicine-pediatrics combination is new to the Midwest," she said. "It's more common in other parts of the country. But, I've always thought medicine and pediatrics are complimentary, not mutually exclusive."

Dr. Parker is the weekly lecturer for the junior internal medicine clerkship and teaches the EKG portion of the clerkship.

UNMC research funding tops \$100 million

Research funding at the University of Nebraska Medical Center soared 22 percent to more than \$100 million during the past fiscal year. More than \$76 million of that funding came from federal sources.

UNMC's net research funding support for fiscal year 2008-2009 was nearly \$100.5 million – an increase over last year when UNMC investigators brought in \$82.2 million in external research funding.

"This is like breaking through the sound barrier for us," said UNMC Chancellor Harold M. Maurer, M.D. "But we're not satisfied with \$100 million. We would like to hit \$200 million by the end of 2012."

In 1998, when he became chancellor, Dr. Maurer challenged UNMC's researchers to double funding in five years and triple it in 10. Researchers have exceeded that goal, increasing funding 322 percent in that time period.

"The new twin research towers helped make all of this happen," Dr. Maurer said. "The buildings allowed us to recruit top researchers from around the country."

Durham Research Center and Durham Research Center II, which opened in May, are home to a combined total of 215 labs and more than 550,000 square feet of space dedicated

to research. Nearly 400 research projects are underway at UNMC today, in bench science labs, translational research centers and clinical trials.

Thomas Rosenquist, Ph.D., vice chancellor for research, said that rising above the \$100 million mark in extramural support is a major benchmark for the UNMC research initiative.

"UNMC research is like a rocket rising above 100,000 feet, now we have momentum and we've risen above the major forces holding us back. Now we can accelerate more rapidly to the next benchmark, \$200 million. The developing initiative in clinical and translational research will be the booster that gets us there," he said.

"This achievement is a great tribute to the outstanding corps of UNMC scientists, who continue to amaze me with their innovation, energy, and growing reputation among scientists around the world," Dr. Rosenquist said.

Research at UNMC has helped to provide economic development to the citizens of Omaha and Nebraska, Dr. Maurer said. "New people with good paying jobs are moving here because of research."

Every \$1 million in research funding generates about 32 new jobs, Dr. Rosenquist said. The \$100 million a year in research funding equates into about 3,200 skilled jobs.

Some of the funding highlights at UNMC this past year were:

- \$17.2 million NIH renewal grant, the largest grant in Nebraska history, to James Turpen, Ph.D., to support the INBRE program aimed at producing more scientists in the state.
- \$11.1 million program project grant to Ken Bayles, Ph.D., from the NIH to research this country's most dangerous bacterial pathogens - community-acquired methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (CA-MRSA), nicknamed the "superbug."
- \$10.6 million COBRE grant from the National Center for Research Resources to Alexander Kabanov, Ph.D., to research nanomedicine, drug delivery, therapeutics and diagnostics.
- \$9.1 million National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute program project grant renewal to Irving H. Zucker, Ph.D., that will allow a team of UNMC cardiovascular scientists to continue its groundbreaking heart failure research.



Ruth Macnamara, Ph.D.

Assistant dean named to nursing division in Norfolk

A 40-year veteran of academic nursing who has worked tirelessly to help expand nursing education in Nebraska was named interim assistant dean of the new UNMC College of Nursing Northern Division in Norfolk.

Ruth (Pakieser) Macnamara, Ph.D., took the position July 1 and will identify a permanent assistant dean by January 2011. The Norfolk facility, named the J. Paul and Eleanor McIntosh College of Nursing, is scheduled to open in 2010 and will house nursing programs of UNMC and Northeast Community College.

Dr. Macnamara has served as an associate professor and clinical instructor in mental health nursing since 2007. In the past year, she has laid the groundwork for UNMC's newest division, which will serve the northeast region of Nebraska.