

Dr. Buehler retires from Munroe-Meyer Institute



Bruce Buehler, M.D.

After almost a quarter of a century as the director of the Munroe-Meyer Institute, Bruce Buehler, M.D., stepped down from his post on Oct. 1. Dr. Buehler also retired from his position as chairman of the pediatrics department, a title he held for 16 years.

During his tenure, Dr. Buehler earned multiple teaching awards at UNMC as well as the Outstanding Achievement Award from the College of Medicine in 1996. He continues to serve as editor of the Pediatric Annals journal and as a faculty member.

Michael Leibowitz, Ph.D., has been selected to serve as the interim director of MMI while a search for a permanent director is conducted. Effective Jan. 1, neonatologist John Sparks, M.D., took over as the chairman of the UNMC Pediatrics Department. Dr. Sparks comes from the University of Texas Medical School at Houston, where he held a variety of posts since 1991.

New geriatric center, student plaza announced

UNMC construction and expansion projects were recently approved by the University of Nebraska Board of Regents.

Thanks to a generous gift to the University of Nebraska Foundation by Paul and Lori Hogan, co-founders of Home Instead Senior Care, The Home Instead Center for Successful Aging will be built on the UNMC campus.

The 25,300-square foot facility will be built at the intersection of Leavenworth Street and 38th Avenue, which now houses annex buildings on the east side of campus. Demolition of the annex buildings is slated to begin late this summer with construction of the new building to be completed by late summer or early fall of 2009.

The \$10.2 million building will be funded entirely with private donations and will create physical space for both geriatric medicine and geriatric psychiatry.

Across campus, a student plaza will serve as the central outdoor area for student and campus activities and will be located directly north of the new Michael F. Sorrell Center for Health Science Education. The plaza will have a dual purpose as an ice rink in the winter months.



From left: Paul and Lori Hogan, co-founders of Home Instead Senior Care, with Jane Potter, M.D., and UNMC Chancellor Harold M. Maurer, M.D., pose with an artist's rendering of the new UNMC geriatric center.

Currently, the Sorrell Center budget calls for the construction of a four-story, state-of-the-art education center. Additional funding from Omaha philanthropist Bill and Ruth Scott allowed for a budget increase of \$5 million and thus a student plaza.

This latest project (student plaza) marks the fifth major gift the Scotts have made to the medical center in the past five years.

In 2003, their contribution to the Durham Research Center established the Ruth and Bill Scott Neuroscience Research Laboratories located on the third floor.

In 2006, they supported construction of the Sorrell Center by making the lead gift to the University of Nebraska Foundation. The Sorrell Center, which will serve as home to the UNMC College of Medicine, will be completed this summer, and students will start attending class in the building this fall.

The Scotts also made a second major gift in 2006 to honor a legendary UNMC internist, Fred Paustian, M.D., and his wife, Mary Ann "Maisie." The gift named the two primary amphitheatres in the Sorrell Center after the Paustians. In addition, one-half of a floor in the second research tower currently under construction at UNMC will be named the Frederick F. Paustian, M.D., Gastroenterology Research Laboratories. The second research tower is expected to be completed in January 2009.

In 2007, the Scotts established the Nebraska Arthritis Outcomes Research Center located on the third floor of Poynter Hall. The center conducts a variety of studies designed to provide a better understanding of arthritis by analyzing the many determinants used to predict outcomes for arthritis sufferers.



New student plaza

UNeMed Innovator Awards

Seventy-four scientists were recognized for their new inventions, patents and licensed technology at the 2007 UNeMed Research Innovation Awards in August. As the technology transfer partner of UNMC, UNeMed works with researchers to evaluate, protect and license the innovative discoveries made on campus. *Five scientists were recognized for their outstanding contributions to science and world health:*

UNMC researcher **Janina Baranowska-Kortylewicz, Ph.D.**, developed a series of drugs that seek and kill ovarian cancer cells responsible for the recurrence of the deadly disease. Dr. Baranowska-Kortylewicz credits her award to the work of her UNMC team, including organic chemist and co-inventor Zbigniew Paul Kortylewicz, Ph.D., who designed the synthetic and analytical methods and prepared the new drugs. A professor at UNMC since July 1995, she also attributes her success to the support of Charles Enke, M.D., chairman of UNMC's Radiation Oncology Department.

Surinder Batra, Ph.D., professor of biochemistry and molecular biology at UNMC, was chosen for his entrepreneurial research related to pancreatic cancer. Dr. Batra has had 11 New Invention Notifications (NINs) in the past 10 years, which have resulted in 13 U.S. and foreign patents and patent applications, six of which have matured into issued U.S. patents. Dr. Batra also was named one of UNMC's Distinguished Scientists in 2006.

Dmitry Oleynikov, M.D., was selected for his active role in developing robotic surgery techniques, including co-designing a family of micro robots to assist in surgical procedures. Dr. Oleynikov and his fellow inventors, including University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Shane Farritor, Ph.D., have produced 10 NINs in the past five years. The university has filed 15 U.S. and foreign patent and patent applications based on these NINs, of which two have matured into issued U.S. patents.

Kay-Uwe Wagner, Ph.D., developed a complex mouse model that - through a UNeMed licensing agreement - is now assisting researchers worldwide in the study of genes that play a role in the development of cancer. The Jak2 mouse model also is generating income to reinvest in Dr. Wagner's research and development. Dr. Wagner, an associate professor in the Eppley Institute since 2000, was named a Distinguished Scientist at UNMC in 2006.

Dong Wang, Ph.D., assistant professor of pharmaceutical science in the UNMC College of Pharmacy, developed a novel delivery method to administer oral hygienics and medications. The technology, which allows for agents to be delivered or released slowly over time, thus increasing the therapeutic index and overall performance, could be incorporated into oral rinses, toothpaste, chewing gum, breath mints and topical creams. Dr. Wang's research team has four NINs that have resulted in the filing of three provisional patents and one international patent application.

Diversity specialists named

In keeping with the chancellor's strategic plan and vision for UNMC to recruit and retain underrepresented, socio-economically disadvantaged populations and rural students and faculty, two diversity specialists were hired at UNMC.



Linda Cunningham

The diversity specialists will formulate departmental strategies for recruitment and retention as well as form relationships with area schools to encourage more students to consider health careers.

Linda Cunningham will be in charge of campus diversity and cultural competency efforts in the human resources department. In her new role, Cunningham will work with faculty and staff to examine the recruitment and hiring processes, retention, the value of diversity as a part of staffing within departments and employee satisfaction.



Anne Constantino

Anne Constantino will serve as the diversity specialist for both the College of Pharmacy and College of

Dentistry at UNMC. As a diversity specialist, Constantino already has outlined strategic goals, as well as a method to measure achievement.

Medical student Zac Handler interns at CNN



Zach Handler with Dr. Sanjay Gupta

Second year UNMC medical student Zac Handler spent the month of June working seven days a week as an intern for CNN's medical unit.

Handler was often sent along on news stories to help explain things the medical correspondents didn't understand. He also helped research, edit and write stories.

His mentor during the internship in Atlanta was neurosurgeon Sanjay Gupta, M.D., the famed doctor who appears daily on the national network.

Dr. Zucker named 2007 scientist laureate



Irving Zucker, Ph.D.

Receiving the highest recognition given to a UNMC scientist, Irving Zucker, Ph.D., was recently named the second UNMC Scientist Laureate for his outstanding research into heart failure.

Dr. Zucker was honored along with 26 other researchers who recently were named UNMC Distinguished Scientist and New Investigator award winners for 2007.

Dr. Zucker will receive a \$20,000 supplement for being named scientist laureate. UNMC will host an event on March 20 to publicly recognize each honoree's research accomplishments.

Early milestones noted for College of Public Health

Nine new faculty members highlight developments at UNMC's College of Public Health.

The college also received formal approval from the University of Nebraska Board of Regents to develop five departments, a new Ph.D. program and a new center.

Those departments include Biostatistics; Environmental, Agricultural and Occupational Health; Epidemiology; Health Services Research and Administration; and Health Promotion, Social, and Behavioral Health.

The new Ph.D. program is in environmental health, occupational health, and toxicology, and the new center is the Center for Environmental Health and Toxicology.

During the next two years, the College of Public Health will recruit 11 additional faculty members.

The college also has developed proposals for Ph.D. programs in health services research, health policy and health administration, and health promotion and disease prevention research.

The number one priority on UNMC's capital plan is the construction of an on-campus building to house the college. A campus location for the building has been selected and preliminary construction plans have been drafted.

Early plans call for the building to provide space for 40 faculty, laboratories, conference and seminar rooms and distance education capabilities.

Program designed to increase pediatric dentists practicing in rural Nebraska

The College of Dentistry is implementing a new telehealth and service learning program for its pediatric dental residents with the goal of increasing the number of pediatric dentists practicing in rural areas.

Kimberly McFarland, D.D.S., assistant professor, and Timothy Durham, D.D.S., professor, College of Dentistry, recently received a three-year, \$1 million grant from the Human Resources and Services Administration.

The grant will allow them to use technology to implement rural health rotations as part of the dental pediatric residency training process. During the course of the grant, the Pediatric Dental Residency Training Program will place 24 residents in three underserved areas of the state next year.

Children's Hospital, UNMC College of Medicine, announce pediatrics affiliation agreement

An affiliation agreement between Children's Hospital and the UNMC College of Medicine will help elevate Omaha's world-class status in the area of child health care.

Gary A. Perkins, president and CEO at Children's Hospital, and John Gollan, M.D., Ph.D., dean of the UNMC College of Medicine, said the institutional affiliation agreement brings together the pediatric expertise of UNMC and Children's for the health of heartland children.

In addition to providing quality, cost effective health care for children, the affiliation will enrich academic experiences for pediatric residents, medical students and other health professionals, and greatly advance clinical and basic science research opportunities for the prevention and treatment of childhood conditions and diseases. With the affiliation, Children's Hospital and UNMC will jointly align resources to enrich education, research and clinical care opportunities.

"There is a tremendously exciting synergy that is possible by taking full advantage of the expertise both institutions bring to this relationship," Perkins said. "This is an unprecedented opportunity to transform pediatric health care, education and research in the region."

"The affiliation will enable the institutions to recruit the nation's highest caliber pediatric specialists and scientists whose desire is to provide patient care in a children's hospital setting while also being a catalyst for improving children's health through teaching and research," Dr. Gollan said.

With the affiliation agreement, the UNMC Department of Pediatrics will be based primarily at Children's Hospital. Certain specialty pediatric services already in place at The Nebraska Medical Center will remain there, such as neonatal intensive care and solid organ and bone marrow transplantation. ∞