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Virginia Commonwealth University's Medical College of Virginia Campus

School of Medicine eNews

Volume 13 - Number 3 - Summer 2014

We have email addresses for only about half of our medical school's **16,000** alumni, so to help keep your classmates connected, [please forward](#) this issue of *SOM eNews*!



Student News

Convocation 2014

In a host of ceremonies in May, degrees were conferred to M.D., Ph.D., and masters graduates. Follow this link to a [Convocation portal](#) where you'll find a photo gallery, video of convocation speaker Sheldon Retchin, H'80, playing the blues and a list of where the graduates are headed for residency training.

Learning the Ropes

The last few weeks have been filled with orientation activities. The 139 interns who arrived on the MCV Campus to begin training in their chosen specialty have learned core competencies at more than five dozen medical schools. Our Walk the Walk orientation differs from programs at other medical centers where newly arrived interns are often trained in specialty specific programs. Instead, our new arrivals are trained in interdisciplinary teams.

The M3s are also making a big transition: from the preclinical to clinical years. In nearly a half dozen workshops, 193 third-year students practiced clinical skills like drawing blood, intramuscular injections and inserting catheters. They also learned how to scrub, gown and glove to establish and maintain a sterile field in the operating room.

Read more about [Walk the Walk](#) and the [M3 orientation workshops](#).

Research News

Basic research finding: MS drug may have beneficial effects on memory

Biochemistry Chair Dr. Sarah Spiegel's research team has uncovered a new mechanism of action of fingolimod, a drug widely used to treat multiple sclerosis: elimination of adverse or traumatic memories. Read more about the [findings published by the Nature Neuroscience journal](#) on May 25 as an Advanced Online Publication.

Annual event showcases research of nearly 90 residents and fellows

The Annual Resident/Fellow Research Day has grown over the years, drawing five times as many submissions this year as it did in 2005. This year's winners presented on basic science and clinical research topics ranging from stem cells to decreasing acute inflammation in heart attack patients and the role of inflammasomal markers in Hepatorenal Syndrome Type 1. Read more about [Resident/Fellow Research Day](#).

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Mark your calendars for

Reunion Weekend 2015

April 17-19, 2015
For Class Years
ending in a '5 or '0.

Reunion Weekend 2016

April 15-17, 2016
For Class Years
ending in a '6 or '1.

Reunion Weekend 2017

April 7-9, 2017
For Class Years
ending in a '7 or '2.

Reunion Weekend 2018

April 20-22, 2018
For Class Years
ending in a '8 or '3.

Have you or a fellow alumnus [done something newsworthy](#)? Give the Alumni and Development Office a heads up via our online update form.

Clinical News

VCU Medical Center wins national honors for safety and quality

The American Hospital Association recognized the VCU Medical Center with its AHA-McKesson Quest for Quality Prize®. It was selected in part because of training that resulted in a 50 percent reduction in serious safety hospital events. Read more about [safety initiatives](#) that include an electronic early warning system that alerts caregivers in real time of a patient's declining health status and a community clinic that has enhanced care for the sickest, poorest patients.

Debilitating mosquito-borne virus immigrates to Southeast U.S.

Originating in Africa, Chikungunya has been spreading in the Caribbean since December and now confirmed cases have been reported in Georgia, Tennessee and North Carolina. Dr. Michael Stevens, a graduate of the Class of 2004 and now on faculty in the Division of Infectious Diseases, has treated the illness. He [answers questions about the virus' transmission and treatment](#).

Alumni News

Reunion Weekend 2015: April 17-19

MD alumni whose graduation year ends in a '5 or '0 should mark their calendars. Activities kick off with Friday evening's Class Parties. There's also a CME course, campus tours and many opportunities to reconnect with classmates.

On Saturday night of Reunion Weekend, we'll honor distinguished alumni with the [Outstanding Medical Alumnus Award](#) and the [Caravati Service Award](#). Please let us know who among your classmates deserves recognition! [Submit this online nomination form](#). Preference is given to alumni nominees who are celebrating a Reunion year.

Attention Alumni in Virginia's Peninsula Area!

Dean of Medicine Jerry Strauss will host a reception for medical school alumni who live in Virginia's Tidewater area on Sunday Sept. 28 at the home of Vaughan Howard, M'77. Mark your calendar - invitations will be mailed this summer.

[Go online](#) to give us your latest contact information to be sure that you'll get an invitation to future events in your area.

Alumni in the News

As pediatric chief resident at Johns Hopkins, the [Class of 2009's Branden Engorn](#) served as co-editor of the 20th edition of The Harriet Lane Handbook - the go-to resource for pediatric residents throughout the U.S. - and probably the rest of the free world too. The Atlanta Business Chronicle recently caught up with [Housestaff alumnus Jeffrey Marshall](#) who's medical director of the cardiac catheterization laboratory at Northeast Georgia Medical Center. The Fredericksburg Freelance Star talked with the [Class of 1979's Rebecca Bigoney](#) who's executive VP and CEO of Mary Washington Healthcare in Fredericksburg. We salute the [Class of 1947's Ralph Riffenburgh](#) who retired in May. He opened the Pasadena Eye Medical Group in California 60 years ago and has provided care to some of his patients for 40 years.

School News

Standardized patients on the MCV Campus

Thanks to a partnership with VCU's School of the Arts, standardized patients



In the **Annual Fund**, gifts of all sizes combine to create medical student scholarships that will be awarded next fall. You can make your [gift online](#).

Check out the upcoming [CME offerings](#) from the medical school's Office of Continuing Professional Development & Evaluation Studies including conferences.



Take a look at the spring 2014 issue of the medical school's [Dean's Discovery Report](#).

[Past issues](#) of SOM eNews are online.

We're interested in your comments on this communication. Please [email](#) us your thoughts.

play a big role in education and training in the medical school. What's it like on the other side of the exam table? "I've been the chest pain guy. I've been the spitting up blood guy," says John Ogle, a standardized patient whose regular gig is as a journalist with Richmond's public radio station. Read more about how an [area journalist goes from reporting to participating](#).

2 PharmTox Faculty honored by NIDA

NIDA's International Program honored Charles O'Keeffe with its Award of Excellence in International Leadership for his role in advising three U.S. presidents on drug policy issues and as a frequent consultant to the WHO and other U.N. agencies. Department Chair Dr. William Dewey received a special recognition award from NIDA's International Program for excellence in scientific accomplishments and for his devoted service to the addiction research community. Read more about their [remarkable careers in the field of drug abuse research](#).

Autism expert addresses employment prospects

In a pair of recently published op-ed columns, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation's Paul Wehman, Ph.D., wrote about the challenge and necessity of helping those with autism find meaningful, gainful employment. In a piece published in the Washington Post, he tells the story of Sean who spent the first weeks of his life in a local Peds ICU. Now Sean's back there again, this time on a 10-week internship. Read more about [autism and \(un\)employment](#).

CME Opportunities

For additional information and to register for the courses below, visit www.cme.vcu.edu or call (804) 828-3640 or (800) 413-2872.

VCU Annual Pain Management & Spine Symposium

October 18 - 19, 2014

Norfolk Waterside Marriott Hotel in Norfolk, Va.

Whether chronic pain is a side effect or the primary problem, all aspects of the patient's life can be affected. A comprehensive assessment and understanding of pain is crucial to the development of a successful treatment plan. This symposium is planned for physicians and other healthcare providers who diagnose, manage and treat pain.

13th Annual Alumni Update Course

April 18, 2015

MCV Campus

The one-day program will cover the latest in a broad range of fields. The course coincides with Reunion Weekend but is open to all alumni. Mark your calendar now, topics will be announced in the fall.

Richmond CME for Docs

4th Wednesday of each month, 6 - 8 p.m.

Bon Secours Heart Institute, 7001 Forest Avenue, Richmond

A collaboration between Bon Secours Medical Group and the VCU Office of Continuing Medical Education has resulted in a relevant, evidence-based CME series. The monthly lectures are aimed at helping physicians to improve and enjoy the practice of medicine. Offered at no charge to participants, the lectures are open to physicians and physician extenders.

For More Information:

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[VCU](#)
[VCU Medical Center](#)



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