

Med School Watercooler

NEWS FROM FREDERICK P. WHIDDON COLLEGE OF MEDICINE
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA

Friday, June 11, 2010

USA Medical Students To Receive White Coats June 26



The University of South Alabama College of Medicine will hold its annual White Coat Ceremony at the USA Mitchell Center on June 26, 2010, at 10 a.m. During the ceremony, rising third-year medical students will be cloaked with their first white coats, the traditional dress of physicians for more than 100 years.

"The white coat symbolizes the profession and the trust and responsibility between a patient and their doctor," said Dr. Maggi O'Brien, associate dean at the USA College of Medicine. "It represents the privilege that physicians have in caring for patients and the confidence patients place in them."

In the United States, medical schools typically organize their four-year curriculum into two distinct parts - the preclinical and the clinical years. This tradition holds true at USA, where students spend the first two years in a classroom setting learning the fundamentals of basic science and pathology, followed by two years of hands-on training in the clinical environment under the supervision and mentoring of faculty and resident physicians.

The ceremony marks a significant milestone for these students - the point where they will begin their clinical rotations and start interacting with patients. Their third year begins on Monday, June 28.

For students, the White Coat ceremony serves as a reminder of the importance and responsibility they take by dedicating themselves to the care of patients. During the ceremony, the students in unison will take the Medical Student Oath, a promise to uphold the human aspects of medicine, such as sensitivity, compassion and respect for patients.

Each year, the USA Medical Alumni Association sponsors this event. For more information, contact Melodie Robinson at (251) 460-6805.

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Posted by [Med School Watercooler](#) at [10:29 AM](#) No comments:

Dr. Karen Fagan: Her Journey Through ELAM Program

Dr. Karen Fagan, associate professor of internal medicine and pharmacology who directs the pulmonary and critical care medicine division at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine, recently completed a fellowship in the 2009/2010 Hedwig van Ameringen Executive Leadership in American Medicine Program for Women (ELAM).

The program, which is offered through Drexel University, has the goal of increasing the number of qualified women candidates for leadership positions in the fields of academic medicine, dentistry and public health.

Dr. Fagan said the ELAM program was a tremendous experience. "The program helped me develop skills to be most effective in my current job," she said. "ELAM also gave me areas to develop that will allow me to continue to grow and evolve as an effective leader at USA and in internal medicine."



Participating in the program requires fellows to participate in a large individual leadership project over the course of a year in addition to working on smaller projects and collaborating with other fellows in the program. In this year's class there were a total of 54 women from North America – U.S. and Canadian medical, dental and veterinary schools. Overall the program has graduated more than 600 fellows in its 15 year history.

"This program gave me leadership skills and a comprehensive view of the various aspects of academic medicine," she said. "Our missions at USA -- service to the community, clinical service, education and research are complicated and difficult to execute. Leaders in academic medicine need to have an understanding and skills to meet those mission needs."

The ELAM curriculum included an assessment of each fellow's personal skills, education in financing, and an understanding of leadership.

"It was great to be able to find out the areas in which you need to further develop," Dr. Fagan said. "I learned how to manage people better, communicate more effectively, and delegate and support others so they can reach their maximum potential. These are skills that I will continue to work on and improve throughout my career."

The ELAM program has an intense curriculum on health care financing, specifically finance organization using budget development, planning for future growth and challenges. Fellows were given the task of critically assessing the finances of their own institutions as well as that of a fictitious, troubled medical school in need of a financial overhaul.

Dr. Fagan said the most enjoyable part of the program was learning how to better understand leadership. Participants were encouraged to do senior leadership interviews, and were required to meet with leaders in a variety of roles at their university.

"Meeting with the leaders at USA really gave me a broad view of not just the College of Medicine, but of USA as a whole," she said. "It gave me a real insight

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into people and the culture of the university – especially how leaders at our university view the challenges ahead. Everyone that I approached to interview from President Moulton to individual faculty members and administrators were very accommodating and informative.”

The ELAM program also gave Dr. Fagan the opportunity to network with other women in academic medicine. Participants were put into groups and would work on projects together, allowing everyone to hear different perspectives on today’s health care issues.

“The program really boosted my confidence, and it gave me a chance to learn from my experiences,” Dr. Fagan said. “I spent a year practicing skills through this program, and I want to use those skills to contribute to USA. I feel like now I can offer a payback to the university by being a more effective leader and by advancing our missions.”

Dr. Fagan was the fourth person from USA to participate in the program. “The College of Medicine has three women who have previously completed the ELAM program, and all of them have made important contributions to the university,” Dr. Fagan said. “My hope is to do the same.”

Dr. Fagan joined USA in March 2008 as both chief of the pulmonary division in internal medicine and associate professor in the Center for Lung Biology. Most of her research deals primarily with lung health, specifically pulmonary hypertension.

She received her medical degree from the University of California at San Diego School of Medicine in 1992, and completed a fellowship in pulmonary diseases and critical care at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center, where she also served as a National Institutes of Health trainee.

Dr. Fagan’s research has earned her multiple awards, including the Best Abstract Award from the American Heart Association, the Giles F. Filley Memorial Award for Excellence in Respiratory Physiology and Medicine from the American Physiological Society, and the Howard Hughes Individual Investigator Award from the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center.

Posted by Med School Watercooler at [9:45AM](#) No comments:

Thursday, June 10, 2010

Webinar for New LexisNexis Interface

The University of South Alabama Libraries is hosting a LexisNexis webinar training session on June 16, 2010, at 10 a.m. The session will be held in Room 305 of the USA Library.

This past spring, the LexisNexis Statistical Index database received a new interface for accessing statistical information and has been re-christened -- LexisNexis Statistical Insight.

This database provides fast and easy access to statistical information produced by U.S. federal agencies, states, private organizations and major intergovernmental organizations.

If you are involved in gathering statistical information from published sources, this would be a good opportunity to learn more about how to efficiently search this valuable database. The training workshop is open to everyone in the University community.

In addition, during the month of June, the USA Libraries will have a trial access to Statistical Insight’s companion database -- LexisNexis DataSets.

LexisNexis Statistical DataSets is a Web-based research solutions tool that provides fast and easy access to 1.5 billion data points from licensed and public domain datasets within an easy-to-use interface. With this new tool, you can scan the contents of over 530 datasets, select subjects and variables of interest,

and view your data in side-by-side tables and charts.

To access this trial database, go to the USA Library's home page and click on the "Articles, Indexes, and Databases" link:

<http://www.usouthal.edu/univlib/other.html>. Then look for "TRIALS" in green for the listing of current trial databases.

If you have any questions, contact Vicki Tate at vtate@jaguar1.usouthal.edu.

Posted by Med School Watercooler at [12:50 PM](#) No comments:

Wednesday, June 9, 2010

"The Challenges of Parkinson's Disease"



The June Med School Café lecture will feature Dr. Dean Naritoku, professor and chair of neurology at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine. His lecture, titled "The Challenges of Parkinson's Disease," will take place June 16, 2010, at the Chandler YMCA at 951 Downtowner Blvd. in Mobile. Lunch will be served at 11:30 a.m., and the presentation begins at noon.

Dr. Naritoku will lecture on Parkinson's disease, a degenerative disorder of the central nervous system that can impair cognitive and motor skills.

During his talk, Dr. Naritoku will outline the causes of the disease, as well as its signs and symptoms. He will also provide important information on current treatment options and promising new research.

Dr. Naritoku has close to 30 years of experience in academic medicine. Prior to joining USA, he served as professor and associate chair of neurology and director of the Center for Epilepsy at the Southern Illinois University (SIU) School of Medicine in Springfield, Ill.

At SIU, he also directed the office of therapeutics research and served as the fellowship director of clinical neurophysiology for the school of medicine.

Dr. Naritoku is board certified in neurology and clinical neurophysiology by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology, and is board certified by the American Board of Clinical Pharmacology.

Dr. Naritoku received his medical degree from Chicago Medical School and completed his internship in internal medicine at the University of Illinois in Chicago. He completed neurology residency training at Washington University in St. Louis. Following his residency, he completed a neuropharmacology and epilepsy fellowship also at Washington University.

The Med School Café lecture and lunch are provided free of charge, but reservations are required. For more information or to make reservations, please call Kim Barnes at (251) 460-7770 or e-mail kebarnes@usouthal.edu.

Med School Café is a free community lecture series sponsored by the USA Physicians Group. Each month, faculty from the USA College of Medicine share their expertise on a specific medical condition, providing insight on the latest treatment available.

Posted by Med School Watercooler at [4:05 PM](#) No comments:

Monday, June 7, 2010

NIH Funds Consortium to Develop Lab Models for Mitochondrial Diseases





recently funded a consortium between the Auburn University to develop lab models for rsities were able to secure \$1,469,078 in NIH 5.

ious studies at USA funded with the R21 grant, "high risk, high reward" proposals. These ceptional value on the entire field of study.

rofessor in the department of cell biology and l investigator of the project, said these studies, national and international maps as an authority

l approaches developed in the course of these ondrial research projects at USA," he said. "It tochondrial diseases, which often go

undiagnosed or misdiagnosed due to the complexity of the symptoms."

Mitochondria are cellular organelles that are often referred to as the "powerhouse" of the cell because they produce the bulk of ATP, which is an energy currency of the cell. Mutations in the mitochondrial DNA often result in mitochondrial diseases.

"The problem with the current research models for mitochondrial diseases is that they failed to faithfully recapitulate human disease," Dr. Alexeyev said. "The models we are working with can allow us to observe outcomes faster and more effectively."

According to Dr. Alexeyev, there are more than 100 known disease-associated mutations in mitochondrial DNA. "Mitochondrial diseases are hereditary diseases, caused by changes in the genetic information," Dr. Alexeyev said. "To model the human disease, we need to change the genetic information in the lab model's mitochondrial DNA."

Studies indicate that mitochondrial diseases are some of the most common genetic disorders. "They are progressive and incurable, and some are lethal." Dr. Alexeyev said. "Availability of reliable models will facilitate and accelerate finding effective treatments and ultimately a cure."

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