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Medical Scholars Update

Susan L. Rattner, MD, MS *

*Thomas Jefferson University

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Medical Scholars Update

The first group of Medical Scholars Program (MSP) students arrived on the Jefferson campus in August 1994 as members of the JMC Class of 1998. They are beginning the second phase of this curriculum initiative, which is jointly sponsored by Jefferson Medical College and the University of Delaware (UD). The MSP integrates baccalaureate education at UD with medical education at Jefferson to provide a specially selected group of students with an enriched curriculum in basic sciences, medical humanities, and health-care delivery. The focus of this program is to provide an educational experience that directs the student's attention and creativity to Medicine, from not only the biomedical perspective, but also from the health-care systems and socio-cultural perspectives as well.

The MSP is not an accelerated program in terms of time commitments. The students are expected to complete four years at the University of Delaware and four years at Jefferson. It is, rather, an enriched curriculum, which, through coordination of educational efforts, allocates time for in-depth study of subjects (such as health economics) usually only presented at an introductory level in traditional medical education. This program emphasizes interactive, small group learning activities and early clinical exposure.

At the time of matriculation at Jefferson, the MSP students will have completed histology, physiology, and biochemistry courses developed and taught jointly by faculty at both universities. They will have completed a minimum of 15 credit hours of course work in the Medical Humanities and Social Sciences, 15 credit hours in Political Science (public and health policy) and Economics (including health economics), and 6 credit hours of practicum experience in a health-care setting.

The first year of medical school (which is the third year of the program) includes Anatomy, Jan Plan courses, and the Life Cycle from the general curriculum and the following three special courses to meet MSP requirements. The Practicum in Health Care (course director-- Janice Nevin, MD, MPH; Randa Sifri, MD; and Peter Chodoff, MD, MPH) covers fundamentals in community health. Small group discussions focus on topics including community assessment, health promotion and disease prevention, health policy, health education, health-care utilization, and health-care delivery from an interdisciplinary perspective. Each student develops a health risk and needs assessment of a target population. The assessment includes measures of quality and outcome analysis.

Medical Humanities (course director-- Steven Rosenzweig, MD), covers the study and practice of medicine from the philosophical, historical, cultural, social, and personal perspectives. Small group discussions focus on the issues that impact the fundamental process of physicians caring for patients in our present era of increasing technology and bureaucracy.

In Basic Science Problem-Based Learning (course director-- Madhu Kalia, MD, PhD, MBA), clinical cases are used as the starting point for reinforcement and integration of principles of biochemistry, physiology, and histology. The topics are sequenced to achieve correlation with anatomy, which is being studied concurrently until December. Students are required to identify and teach each other the scientific

information requisite to addressing the case patient's medical problem. Relevant psycho-social, ethical, and economic issues are also explored. In this setting, which is a modified problem-based learning, the faculty serve to facilitate the process and act as content advisors.

The MSP students in the Class of 1998 are Lincoln Abbott, Lisa Baldessarre, Dave Compton, Constantinos Hadjipanayis, Phillip Huffman, and Renee Oberlander. The consensus of the faculty working with the MSP students is that they are self-motivated, enthusiastic adult learners. These students were selected in part for these attributes, and it is our hope that this experience preserves and enhances these qualities.

About the Author

Susan L. Rattner, MD, MS, is the Director of Special Curricular Programs in the Office of Academic Affairs at Thomas Jefferson University.